

South REPF 2023/24 - officer evaluation report

Scoring summary for Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Total Project Cost	Amount Requested	Suggested score
SREPF\100023	Thomley Hall Centre Ltd	Eco-Friendly Interactive Water Feature	£193,000	£75,000	10
SREPF\100090	Stanley & Pickford	Farm Shop Upgrade	£41,023	£30,000	8
SREPF\100037	Bishopsland Educational Trust	Renovation of a Grade II listed National Trust set of buildings (called Hills Yard) to create offices, silversmithing and jewellery workshops, incubation workshops, exhibition and meeting spaces	£250,000	£30,000	7
SREPF\100032	Chiltern Hills Fram Ltd	JoJo's Vineyard tourism project	£4,818	£4,818	4
SREPF\100095	Chiltern Hills Farm Ltd	JoJo's Tourism project - stretch tent	£6,900	£6,900	3
SREPF\100047	FH Nixey and Co	Install Solar panels	£25,534	£8,534	3
			Total Requested	£155,252	
			Total Budget	£91,000	
			Budget Remaining	-£64,252	

Scoring and award matrix for REPF Grant applications

Suggested Scores	Scores: The scoring thresholds which identify what priority level the project falls into can be amended, depending on the number of applications received and potential allocation of funds to ensure maximum community benefit. As agreed by the Cabinet Member.
7 - 12	Project is recommended for funding
0 - 6	Project is not recommended for funding

Projects MUST score at least one point in the Project outputs/outcomes section in order to be recommended for funding.

Need for project.

Points		
0	No evidence of need for project has been provided	
1	Limited evidence for need for project has been provided	A small scale survey of employees or service users has been carried out.
2	Good evidence of need for project has been provided	A larger scale survey has been carried out asking the wider community
3	Detailed evidence of need for project has been provided	A full business plan or formal community consultation have been provided.
+ 1	If no other projects like this are located locally	Is there a similar facility or business within a reasonable distance or not. For example, EV charging points, will the project provide the only charging point in a village, or are there already several public charging points available in the village.

Climate Action

Points		
-1	The project will negatively impact on the council's climate agenda,	The project will have a detrimental effect on the local environment without any mitigation in place, this could be via destruction of green space and wildlife habitat, increase in greenhouse gas emissions, installation of non-energy efficient equipment, or purchase of new diesel or petrol vehicles etc.
0	The project has not considered its impact on the environment, or not provided any information in this area.	No evidence of environmental impact of the project has been provided in the application form.
1	The project will have some positive impact on the council's climate agenda	Small scale improvements such as replacing some lightbulbs with energy efficient ones, installing bike racks, implementing an energy smart meter
2	The project will have a positive impact on the council's climate agenda	Installation of EV charging points, renewable energy systems, creation of green spaces for nature, creation of new cycle paths or active travel routes.
+ 1	The organisation applying has a sustainability/climate action forward plan or strategy in place	Evidence of a climate action policy has been provided

Social Action

Points		
0	The project has no wider community benefits	The project only benefits the immediate applicants, such as a private business e.g. installation of equipment to cut costs for the business
1	The project has limited wider community benefits	The project will benefit a small number of groups or individuals, less than 50 people
2	The project has several wider community benefits	The project will benefit a large number of community groups or more than 50 people

Projects MUST score at least one point in one of the following sections.

Projects outputs/outcomes

Applications applying for **Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas** will be assessed against the following outputs/outcomes. Please note, projects will be scored against their highest achieving output i.e. if a project will increase productivity by over 10% and safeguard 3 jobs it will score 3 points. The jobs safeguarded will be brought to the grant panels attention but not scored.

Points	Jobs safe-guarded	Adoption of new to the firm technology or process	number of firms with improved productivity
0	0 jobs safe-guarded	Adoption of 0 new to firm technology or processes	Expected 0% increase in productivity
1	1-5 jobs safe-guarded	Adoption of 1 new to firm technology or processes	Expected 1%-5% increase in productivity
2	6-10 jobs safe-guarded	Adoption of 2 new to firm technologies or processes	Expected in 6%-10% increase in productivity
3	10+ jobs safe-guarded	Adoption of 3 or more new to firm technologies or processes	Expected over 10% increase in productivity

Applications applying for **Capital grants for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation areas** will be assessed against the following outputs/outcomes. Please note, projects will be scored against their highest achieving output i.e. if a project will create a new business and create 3 jobs it will score 3 points. The jobs created will be brought to the grant panels attention but not scored.

Points	Jobs created	Number of new businesses created
1	1-5 jobs created	
2	6-10 jobs created	
3	10+ jobs created	New business created

Applications applying for **Capital grants for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups** will be assessed against the following outputs/outcomes. Please note, projects will be scored against their highest achieving output i.e. if a project will increase user numbers by over 50% and increase perceptions of facilities by 20% it will score 3 points. The increase in perceptions will be brought to the grant panels attention but not scored.

Points	Expected improved perceptions of facilities or amenities	Increase users of facilities or amenities
1	1-25% expected increase in perception of facilities or amenities	1-25% expected increase in user numbers
2	26-50% expected increase in perception of facilities or amenities	26-50% expected increase in user numbers
3	50%+ expected increase in perception of facilities or amenities	50% + expected increase in user numbers

Thomley Hall Centre Ltd	Ref	SREPF\100023
--------------------------------	------------	--------------

Project Name: Eco-Friendly Interactive Water Feature

Project Description: Thomley plans to install a 100m² Eco-Friendly Interactive Water Feature (IWF), creating a safe, fun and accessible place where people with and without disabilities from South Oxfordshire can enjoy safe, water-based play.

Key features:

- 100m sq. rubber splash pad
- Flush mounted play items (jets, automatically refilling buckets, etc.)
- Interactive, user-controlled features
- Fully accessible for wheelchairs and people with mobility impairments
- Zero depth
- Compliant with all UK safety standards
- Modular design that can be adapted and added to
- Included in Thomley's existing Planned Preventative Maintenance programme

N.B. This application is for capital costs only.

Once completed, the IWF will be used to deliver structured physical activity and/or sensory activity sessions as a part of our regular daily activities. Each day at Thomley has a specific visitor focus and IWF activities will be planned accordingly to accommodate the needs of visitors on the day:

- Preschool Days
- 13+ Days
- Disability Family Days (adapted activities for whole-family participation)
- Open For All Days (open to everyone, with or without disabilities)
- Quiet Days (for visitors who need a calmer environment)

The IWF will be available for unstructured play whenever not in use for a structured activity.

The goals of the IWF are linked with the objectives of Thomley's strategy (Survive, Adapt and Thrive – 2021-2024):

- Develop our site to its full potential – This includes building new programmes and services for visitors, and creating new, sustainable income streams that reduce reliance on grant funding.
- Demonstrate and measure our impact – It is essential that our activities deliver impact so we attract and retain support from beneficiaries, funders and partners.
- Grow awareness of Thomley – We must reach and support as many people as possible by improving our marketing and communications.

Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.

Location of Project: Worminghall

Potential number of beneficiaries: 11646

Total project cost	£193,000
Organisation's contribution	£0

Other secured funding	£104,000
REPF Grant Requested	£75,000
Organisation's latest bank balance	£242,222.74

Scoring

<p>Need for Project 2022 user consultation providing evidence of need for this project. No other facility like this for disabled people exists locally. Although other splash parks exist they do not have the disabled facilities for changing/bathrooms that Thomley provide.</p>	Score	3/4
<p>Action on Climate Emergency The project will have some positive impact on the council's climate agenda. The project has considered its environmental impact and how to mitigate them. The organisation have supplied their climate action policy allowing them to score an additional point.</p>	Score	2/3
<p>Social Action Thomley has a large customer base that they are able to evidence via their booking system</p>	Score	2/2
<p>Project Outputs "10+ jobs safe-guarded Adoption of 1 new to firm technology or processes Expected over 10% increase in productivity"</p>	Score	3/3
<p>Financial and project management plans Project plan attached. Applicant has received funding from South Capital grant scheme in 2022/23 towards this project, however this does not preclude them from applying to this scheme for additional funding.</p> <p>Demand for services and other similar facilities There is a high demand for the services Thomley provide as they are the only disability focused play centre in the county of this scale. They have a significant customer base and offer a unique venue to the families with young people with disabilities.</p> <p>Project completion within timeframe 4 month project which should complete within the required timeframe</p>		
<p>DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Applicant has applied for funding for three separate projects, one under each intervention. Should panel recommend funding more than one of their projects we would need to ensure that any additional costs not covered by REPF grant funding could be financed and projects completed within the timeframe.</p>	Total score	10/12

Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

As a part of Thomley's Marketing and Communications Strategy, we perform market research and regularly survey our visitors to better understand their needs.

Adding an IWF was the number one choice of respondents in our 2022 Visitor Surveys. Thomley's visitors shape our services, programmes and developments in a number of ways:

- Ongoing, informal conversations with staff and management
- End-of-activity surveys
- Regular, large-scale visitor surveys
- Visitor Voice group that meets regularly with staff and management
- Visitor representation on the Capital Projects sub-committee of our Board

In our surveys, parents and carers described the challenges their children with disabilities face:

- Don't have access to play, leisure and recreation facilities/opportunities
- Don't have access to age appropriate social/friendship opportunities
- Don't have access to age appropriate developmental/transitional opportunities
- Lack the skills to be independent
- Don't have freedom of choice
- Lack places to be able to take risks

A key differentiating feature of Thomley's IWF will be its focus on accessible, inclusive activities for people with disabilities.

Our market research shows there are no disability-focused interactive water features/splash pads located within an hour's drive of Thomley. The closest comparable provision is Willen Lake Splash 'n' Play (37 miles/63 minutes from Thomley), who offer dedicated SEN sessions once per week.

There are also interactive water features/splash pads in the following locations:

- Cuttleslowe and Sunnymead Park (10.7 miles; 24 minutes)
- Hinksey Park (12.3 miles; 32 minutes) currently closed
- Riverside Park (17.4 miles; 37 minutes)
- Abbey Meadows Splash Park (16.1 miles; 40 minutes)
- The Leys (20.9 miles; 42 minutes)
- Wantage Memorial Park Splash Pad (27.1 miles; 53 minutes)
- The Embankment, Wellingborough (61.4 miles; 77 minutes)

These are all public access facilities, and do not offer any disability-focused provision.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project
11646

Who will benefit from your project?

- 4,164 people with autism and/or other disabilities
- 1,238 people with disabilities other than autism
- 5,495 parents, carers, siblings and family members
- 749 non-disabled people who have limited experiences of disability
- 20+ community and disability groups

The IWF will be fully accessible for people who use wheelchairs or mobility aids. Use of the IWF will not require swimming costumes; this will make it accessible for people who are unable to easily change their clothing or who choose to not wear swimming costumes because of their personal beliefs or practices.

Thomley has developed an outcome and impact model (<https://thomley.org.uk/Thomley/#/slide-16>) that is aligned with our Theory of Change (<https://thomley.org.uk/Thomley/#/slide-3>). The activities provided by the IWF will help people with disabilities make progress towards all 7 of our key outcomes:

- empowerment (trying new things; engaging with others; engaging with activities; making choices independently; confidence in group situations)
- physical wellness (engaging in physical activity)
- emotional wellness (being involved in activities; engaging with others; being relaxed; showing positive behavioural changes; coping with difficult situations)
- positive relationships (using appropriate skills; increased interactions; socialising outside of Thomley)
- developing skills (trying/doing new things; actively choosing activities; informing themes, and activities; using a skill learnt at Thomley, at home or somewhere else)
- inclusion (feeling welcomed at Thomley; feeling accepted by other visitors; embracing differences)

Parents and carers (<https://thomley.org.uk/Thomley/#/slide-23>) will also benefit in the following ways:

- Feeling relaxed
- Feeling positive/able to cope
- Feeling less isolated
- Able to share and benefit from the experiences and support of other parents and carers
- Able to take a short break from their caring role
- Able to understand/embrace differences

We track progress towards all of the above outcomes by gathering on-the-day feedback supplemented by regular, large-scale visitor surveys (<https://thomley.org.uk/Thomley/#/slide-17>).

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve its own environmental sustainability?

Thomley has an Environmental Policy that commits the Charity to minimising the impact of its activities on the environment. Included in the Policy is a commitment to 'minimise toxic and greenhouse gas emissions generated by our activities.'

Thomley has taken the following steps to improve its environmental sustainability:

- Site-wide audit conducted to identify and address energy, waste, and water usage reduction opportunities
- Biodigester installed to break down food waste and other organic material
- Replacement of all lighting to energy-efficient LED bulbs
- Elimination of single-use plastic items in our café
- Planned capital projects include solar panels and EV charging points
- Adoption of hybrid working for staff members who do not need to be on site to carry out their duties
- Use of Cloud-based computing systems to reduce the amount of computer hardware we need to purchase and replace
- Extension of our Sensory Garden to create more green space
- Creation of a Horticultural Area that allows us to grow vegetables and fruit that are used in our café

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

The primary environmental impacts of the IWF are increased water consumption, energy usage, and emissions related to energy consumption. The secondary environmental impacts are increased emissions from visitor travelling to and from Thomley.

Water consumption will be minimised by the interactive features of the IWF, that are only activated when in use. Pressurised water is stored in a holding tank ready to be sent to the play features. Once a user activates a bollard or foot actuator the water is then pumped to the waterplay items through individual solenoid valves and pipes. Water is collected via a drainage system and sent directly to the Grey Water tank. The water is stored in the Grey Water tank and will then be extracted via a bowser connection and used to water Thomley's Sensory Garden, Horticultural Area, and other parts of our eight-acre site that require watering.

Emissions from energy usage will be mitigated by the installation of solar panels that will generate electricity to power the IWF.

Emissions generated by visitors travelling to and from Thomley will be mitigated by the installation of EV charging points for vehicles and e-bikes.

These capital developments will further establish Thomley as a destination where visitors are able to stay for the entire day, reducing the need for onward travel to other visitor attractions.

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

We project installing an IWF (new-to-firm technology) will increase visitor numbers to Thomley by 11% its first year of operation, generating an additional £37,125 in new visitor income and secondary visitor income per year (a 21% increase in productivity), and safeguarding 12 FTE jobs.

Increased visitor numbers at Thomley will directly result in increased sales in our café on the day and will also lead to greater awareness of our other services that will result in an increase in long-term income from more stays in our overnight Camping Pods and Camping, increased bookings of Sensory Play rooms, increased enrolment in Achieve Life Skills programme. The IWF will create opportunities for Thomley to operate unique fundraising events that utilise the IWF as a focus.

We will use Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and an Electronic Point of Sales (EPoS) systems to track visitor numbers and income. We will be able to demonstrate our outcomes through this data, as well as through our management accounts and annual accounts.

Our project outcomes are linked to the strategic objectives of Thomley's current strategy (Survive, Adapt and Thrive – 2021-2024):

- Develop our site to its full potential – This includes building new programmes and services for visitors, and creating new, sustainable income streams that reduce reliance on grant funding.
- Demonstrate and measure our impact – It is essential that our activities deliver impact so we attract and retain support from beneficiaries, funders and partners.
- Grow awareness of Thomley – We must reach and support as many people as possible by improving our marketing and communications.

Stanley & Pickford	Ref	SREPF\100090
Project Name: Farm Shop Upgrade		
Project Description: We are planning to upgrade our farm shop provision in the following ways - refurbishment of our toilet block to provide up to date services to our customers, including the use of recycled rainfall water. - upgrade our internet and electricity infrastructure. - upgrade our till software and hardware, moving our systems onto the cloud to improve our shop efficiencies, productivity and protect jobs.		
Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.		
Location of Project: Stanton St John		
Potential number of beneficiaries: 50000		

Total project cost	£41,023
Organisation's contribution	£11,023
Other secured funding	£0
REPF Grant Requested	£30,000
Organisation's latest bank balance	£295,440

Scoring

Need for Project Limited evidence of need for project. Pictures of toilet block and shop show the need for updates, but no customer survey or staff survey has been provided.	Score	1/4
Action on Climate Emergency The project will have a positive impact on the councils climate agenda. They have thought about the environmental impact of their project and a members of several schemes to improve environmental impact. LinkLinking Environment and Farming (LEAF) scheme, they are a supplier for McCain Foods and we were the face of their new Regenerative Agricultural TV campaign "Let's all chip in" which was seen by 97% of all adults in the UK over the summer of 2023. They have a commitment that all their McCain farms will have sustainable processes on their farm by 2030 and we are part of that.	Score	3/3
Social Action There is no wider social benefits to the project. Customers will benefit from having better toilet facilities and WiFi, they aslo regularly run school trips, educating local schools on the importance of where food comes from, the environment it supports and what they can do to help their local area.	Score	1/2
Project Outputs "10+ jobs safe-guarded Adoption of 3 or more new to firm technologies or processes Expected in 6%-10% increase in productivity"	Score	3/3
Financial and project management plans Project plan attached. Bank statements provided show orangisation is in an overdraft which they plan		

to use to fund the remaining project costs.

Demand for services and other similar facilities

project will benefit business by allowing them to reduce their reliance on fluctuating electricity prices, and have a smoother point of sale process which would improve the customer experience.

Project completion within timeframe

4 month project which should allow the project to complete within the required timeframe.

<p>DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS The bank statements provided to support the application show that the organisation is working with a considerable overdraft. The applicant has stated that they intend to finance the project using this overdraft. Advice from the panel as this might not be unusual for a rural farm business.</p>	<p>Total score</p>	<p>8/12</p>
---	---------------------------	--------------------

Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

Toilet Block

Our toilet block was installed in 1996 with a small extension in 2015 and they are currently not fit for purpose. We are now hosting larger events over the year with more than 3,000 people on site in a day. The flushing systems cannot cope with such high-capacity use and needs to be changed. The hand driers are old and inefficient. We have had comments from customers about the rustic look of the toilet block.

Electric and WiFi

Our WiFi cannot support our small business as it is, a webpage takes over 30 seconds to load, and laptops cannot be connected to the wifi as capacity does not allow. Our customers and staff members cannot work remotely in the farm shop, limiting the number of people that might stop into work with us. We are also at capacity for our electric in the farm shop, we cannot further develop our chilled, freezer and café offering. We have had feedback both from customers and staff members wanting to develop the retail outlet.

Cloud

Our EPOS system is moving to the cloud in 2024, there is no requirement to sign up immediately but within the next two years the whole system will be online. If we do not upgrade with RCS we will need to spend at least three times the amount and move to another company with an outlay of three times as much equipment and software to move to a different EPOS company.

The closest pick your own to us Millets Farm in Abingdon; we are the only soft fruit pick your own in our area.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project

50000

Who will benefit from your project?

Toilet Block

Our current customers and staff will all benefit from an upgraded toilet block. The new toilet block will be easier to clean for our staff members at the end of the day and provide a cleaner experience for both staff and customers. The upgrade will also enable us to bring into use our rain water harvesting tank.

Wifi and Electric Upgrade.

Wifi will benefit our customers directly as well as being a necessity for our tills and operating systems. The electric supply upgrade is an essential component of the upgraded toilet block and will bring into greater use our Flower Tunnel for our customers and visitors.

Cloud based till system

Our staff members will be able to connect to the internet quickly for emails, stock ordering and research. Improving their working experience in the farm shop. Customers will be served faster, offered a great range of products and stock quantity will be managed better improving the service offered to them.

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve it's own environmental sustainability?

As a member of the NFU we are working towards the Net Zero goal of 2040. As a business we have an Energy Plan which is reviewed annually with new targets set and goals reviewed. As part of our Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) scheme we have been monitoring our carbon for the last seven years, which has seen a significant reduction. We also have a Landscape and Conservation Plan and Audit for the farm.

As a farm shop and local food producer, people who shop and pick fruit from us are buying items with very much less food miles than imported food from say Spain. We are consistently reducing our reliance on pesticides and cultivations.

We are a supplier for McCain Foods and we were the face of their new Regenerative Agricultural TV campaign "Let's all chip in" which was seen by 97% of all adults in the UK over the summer of 2023. They have a commitment that all their McCain farms will have sustainable processes on their farm by 2030 and we are part of that.

We have solar panels on both our farm shop and farm buildings and have already received SSE permission for further installation of panels up to 75Kw in our shop car park and farm buildings which with the existing PV panels will lead us to a total of nearly 150Kw. We regularly run school trips, educating local schools on the importance of where food comes from, the environment it supports and what they can do to help their local area.

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

This project will have a positive impact on the environment, below are some of the steps we are taking and the impact it could have in the future.

Our toilet block will use reclaimed water from our flower tunnel for flushing and cleaning, reducing our reliance on potable water by 6,000 cubic metres a year. Installing underground pipe work to the farm yard will enable us to use more water we harvest from our polytunnels to wash our farm machinery and in our staff toilet block. The taps in our toilet blocks will have automatic shut offs, minimising any wastewater, the toilet and urinals will be water efficient. Our hand driers were chosen for their low usage of electric and high output.

Good quality WiFi has little effect on the environment either way but has become a business and personal necessity. It does mean that updates to computer systems can be done remotely without the need for an engineer to visit. Our customers can find out what we are doing on the farm via our website more efficiently. Presently our irrigation system on the PYO is operated via the cloud which requires good broadband.

The electric cable installation will allow for connection into our existing PV solar panels (50Kw capacity) on the farm building roofs. A further 50 Kw of PV on additional farm shed roofs has been approved by SSE for connection (which we have not yet installed). This will allow green PV electric generation and any future PV generation to be transferred to the toilet block and onwards from there.

The Farm Shop location has also gained permission from SSE to increase the PV panels from the existing 16Kw with an additional 25Kw (yet to be installed). In time we will be able to install EV (electric vehicle) chargers in either or both of the Farm Shop car park and Farm Buildings and use this solar power generated electricity more efficiently.

The whole farm is under LEAF management, reducing our carbon impact is one of the main arms of their standard and we are assessed annually to see that we are working towards the reduction in carbon output from our farm. The more we can sell locally and direct to customer the lesser our impact on the environment.

After a seven year hiatus, we now have the 108 public bus running from the City Centre to Stanton St. John, enabling more customers to visit us using sustainable transport. We encourage our customers to visit by bike where possible and have a large bike rack. The H5 bus route runs hourly between Bicester and the JR via Headington. This stops some 200m from the edge of our PYO and thus not far for our customers to walk to us.

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

10+ jobs

This year the farm shop was granted planning permission to be open over the winter. We are a summer-based business focusing on selling our PYO produce, we no need to be a sustainable business throughout the year. Our employment varies, in the winter we employ around eight people who directly support the farm shop and in the summer this is over 30 with all our PYO staff. With all these new developments, these jobs are protected and enhanced.

Three systems

The EPOS system on the cloud will be a new system and process for us to use, increasing our stock control levels, and speed of service.

The internet will enable us to process orders quicker, connect all our card and tills machines to the wifi and allow our customers to use the wifi and work from our café.

The electric cabling will connect our farm shop to our PV panels in the farmyard, enabling the shop to be run on cleaner greener energy.

The recycling of water using our tank and UV system is a new process for the farm, something we will roll out across the whole business.

Productivity increase

The wifi and EPOS system will greatly increase our productivity, using stock information based on previous purchases we will also be able to analyse sales and information in real time online - this flexibility enables us to make faster decisions and work from anywhere.

The electric cable will connect our PVs to the areas where electric is required on a steady basis in particular the summer months when fridges and irrigation pumps require a steady electrical load. It will allow the toilets and reclaimed water systems to operate. We can sustain our business at both the farm shop and café with increased use of our Flower tunnel.

Bishopsland Educational Trust	Ref	SREPF\100037
Project Name: Renovation of a Grade II listed National Trust set of buildings (called Hills Yard) to create offices, silversmithing and jewellery workshops, incubation workshops, exhibition and meeting spaces		
Project Description: Hills Yard is a derelict Grade II listed yard in Buscot and is part of the National Trust's Buscot and Coleshill Estate. Originally built as a cattle yard in the 19th Century, in recent years it has been used for light industrial purposes. We have agreed a 35 year lease with the National Trust to restore and enhance the site. Planning permission is expected in mid November 2023.		
Commencing in early 2024 we will convert a number of the buildings to create a large silversmithing workshop capable of providing teaching to 12-14 Makers, 3 staff offices, a student kitchen and rest area, student toilets, dedicated smaller workshops for specific silversmithing tasks, a quiet jewellers and creative space and temporary visitors reception. This work will include heritage grade sustainable insulation to meet MEES requirements, heritage grade replacement/repair of roof lights and windows, repair of stable doors and addition of heritage grade secondary glazing to external doors and windows and the installation of two air source heat pumps.		
In 2024 Bishopsland will relocate from its current location in Dunsden, where we have been based for 30 years, to this new facility at Hills Yard, Buscot. This will allow for a significant expansion and development of current activities. We are not requesting from the REPF funds towards relocation costs, but are bidding for capex funds to contribute towards the renovation, restoration and fit-out of the Hills Yard site, leased from the National Trust.		
Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.		
Location of Project:		
Potential number of beneficiaries: 460		

Total project cost	£250,000
Organisation's contribution	£52,000
Other secured funding	£0
REPF Grant Requested	£30,000
Organisation's latest bank balance	91000

Scoring

Need for Project	Score	2/4
The need to move from their current location is due to the non-renewal of their current lease, and has resulted in them identifying a new base in Hills Yard. The site is close to the National Trusts Heritage & rural skills centre at Colehill which they would benefit from. They have not provided much evidence of the		

need for the project due to this being a leasing issue and relocation rather than an expansion of their existing services. They have stated that there is only a very small number of places that provide the type of silversmithing courses that they provide - none of which are in our area.		
<p>Action on Climate Emergency</p> <p>The project should have minimal impact on the council's climate agenda. Silversmithing is a low energy business with no heavy machinery used. The organisation encourages its students to use local public transport and provides bicycles for travel around site. They have provided a copy of their climate policy.</p>	Score	2/3
<p>Social Action</p> <p>The project has limited wider community benefits, it will primarily benefit the immediate applicants and their students.</p>	Score	1/2
<p>Project Outputs</p> <p>"1-5 jobs safe-guarded Adoption of 1 new to firm technology or processes Expected in 6%-10% increase in productivity"</p>	Score	2/3
<p>Financial and project management plans</p> <p>The relocation of the business is costly however they have financial reserves that can be put towards this. They have a robust project plan in place.</p> <p>Demand for services and other similar facilities</p> <p>They are the only local silver smith training school of this size teaching advanced skills in the area. With their current lease coming to an end, if they do not relocate the expertise and opportunity for passing on these skills could be lost within our districts. They will be in close proximity to the rural skills centre at Coleshill.</p> <p>Project completion within timeframe</p> <p>6 Month project</p>		
<p>DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>Will contribute positively to the Rural Skills centre at Coleshill.</p>	Total score	7/12

Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

Bishopsland needs to vacate its current premises in Dunsden in summer 2024. This necessitated the search for new premises and our Board determined that Hills Yard provided the most effective and efficient solution. National Trust's Heritage & Rural Skills Centre has opened at the Coleshill site and that provides an umbrella group of other heritage skills organisations all operating within a few miles of each other. We believe that a concentration of heritage skills organisations around Coleshill demonstrates the need for the facilities and the businesses/charities that operate there. Bishopsland is the only silversmithing organisation that will be operating as part of the Heritage & Rural Skills Centre. The popularity of heritage craft skills and business is growing.

The renovation of Hills Yard is integral to Bishopsland being able to continue to operate in Oxfordshire. As we have been providing silversmithing skills training for 30 years we know that there is a need for the programme we provide and we are able to fill the course with 12-14 talented makers each year. With University teaching of metalwork at under-graduate and post-graduate level declining (courses being withdrawn and/or advanced skills training being left off their curriculums) there is no competitor to Bishopsland. Skills that we will teach at Hills Yard, such as 'silver spinning' are currently on the Heritage Crafts critically endangered list <https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/redlist/categories-of-risk/>

We held a Buscot community consultation on 17 October and there was overwhelming support for our plans for the Yard with the Parish Council voting to approve our planning application on the night.

Hills Yard is derelict and the plans which the National Trust had for the site (cookery school and offices) proved financially unviable. The Estate management team are fully supportive of our plans to upgrade the site.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project
460

Who will benefit from your project?

Bishopsland is the only organisation that offers advanced level silversmithing and jewellery skills & business development. The most critical beneficiaries therefore are our the 12-14 participants on our programme each year. Benefits will be enhanced workshops, improved residential accommodation and being part of wider heritage craft skills community. We plan to replicate our first 30 years over the next 30 years at Buscot so this category will reach 360 talented craftspeople in the period.

We hold a series of exhibitions and events that showcase contemporary silversmithing and jewellery throughout the year and plan to use both Coleshill Estate facilities and Buscot village hall for these events. Visitor numbers at each event are normally 80-100 people per event and local community Arts groups and residents will be welcome.

3 staff - better working conditions & access to local facilities such as Buscot cafe, shops & businesses at Faringdon & Lechlade

15 sessional tutors (freelance) - better workshop environment with much enhanced Health & Safety

approx 5-10 local residents - we will employ an admin assistant, grounds maintenance, cleaners, a regular driver, site maintenance

local business - we will require catering, florists, visitor and sessional tutor accommodation, hardware suppliers. There will also be 15 staff/students new to the area shopping in the local community, going to local pubs, restaurants, hairdressers etc

local residents who will be able to participate in our evening & weekend courses and summer schools (attendees at which will require accommodation, food etc thus helping the local economy)

Based on our experience in South Oxfordshire over 30 years, we know that our presence supports the creation and success of local craft businesses. Some of our attendees will set up their businesses locally to Bishopsland, hence our plan to create 4 incubation workshops at Hills Yard.

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve it's own environmental sustainability?

Bishopsland Educational Trust is a signatory to the Goldsmiths Ethical Making Policy, details here: <https://ethicalmaking.org/news/pledge-signing-bishopsland-educational-trust>. As part of this commitment we have removed the use of a number of plastics, acids and non sustainable products from our operation.

Silversmithing is a low energy business as we focus on hand skills, with no reliance on heavy machinery and the related power consumption that requires.

To support our students financially whilst they spend 10 months with us, we provide bicycles and encourage the use of local bus services. Usually less than 1/3 of our cohort own cars hence the reliance on car clubs, walking, cycling etc.

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

The environmental benefits of this project are one of the key reasons we are most excited about the renovation of Hills Yard. We will be:

installing sustainable, heritage grade insulation

installing air source heat pumps

installing solar panels (phase 2)

installing LEDs by replacing current strip lighting

installing a hand dryer in the new toilet block

the site will be planted for bio-diversity and low energy maintenance

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

3-5 jobs safeguarded (excluding freelancers) : Buscot is a rural area with limited employment options. Bishopsland will transfer 3 staff roles to the site, 2 of which will live within walking distance. Our teaching will be delivered by approx 15 sessional tutors each year. All will stay in the area, thus bringing revenue to the local hotels, shops, restaurants, meeting venues. We will also need to hire local people/firms to provide key services - cleaning; grounds maintenance; odd job repairs, catering, taxis - and will be looking to hire a part time administrator.

Adoption of 1 new to firm technology process : our current site in S Oxfordshire was converted in the early 1990s. It has no LEDs or sustainable energy. Moving to Hills Yard and renovating the site provides the opportunity to install sustainable energy, starting with air source heat pumps in two of the buildings. Phase 2 of the renovation will include the installation of solar panels.

Expected 6-10% increase in productivity : Hills Yard provides more space to be able to run our teaching programme alongside other activities:

1) we will offer summer school, evening and weekend classes in silversmithing (ie spoon or box making, raising vessels) and jewellery making - this will bring revenue to the charity and income to the area as attendees will stay and eat locally

2) phase 2 development will include the creation of 4 incubation workshops that we will rent to newly established silversmiths/jewellers. This keeps craftspeople in the area and will be a stream of revenue for the Trust

3) we have a tools library which loans, gifts and sells second hand quality tools to emerging makers. Hills Yard will has space to allow us to properly run the library and generate revenue for the Trust

Chiltern Hills Fram Ltd	Ref	SREPF\100032
Project Name: JoJo's Vineyard tourism project		
<p>Project Description: The tourism project will introduce 2 gazebos and a stretch tent to JoJo's Vineyard to develop a visitor experience at JoJo's. The timber framed gazebos will allow groups of between 6 - 12 people to enjoy a private meeting environment after a tour of JoJo's vineyard.</p> <p>The stretch tent will allow for for smaller groups to enjoy tasting events at JoJo's. Vineyard tourism is on a sharp increase as a key revenue generator for a vineyard and winery business. With the growing number of vineyards in South Oxfordshire, JoJo's needs to improve it's offering for customers for in vineyard experiences. We are asking for funding for 1 gazebo. We will fund the 2nd gazebo and the stretch tent.</p> <p>Our aim is to: Increase the number of visitors to JoJo's Vineyard Increase the number of bottles of wine sold at JoJo's Vineyard Increase the number of staff active on the site through the year Increase in the number of local business we engage with JoJo's Increase revenue and profitability of JoJo's Vineyard</p>		
Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.		
Location of Project:		
Potential number of beneficiaries: 10		

Total project cost	£4,818
Organisation's contribution	
Other secured funding	£0
REPF Grant Requested	£4,818
Organisation's latest bank balance	131729.1

Scoring

<p>Need for Project Some research has been carried out into what other local vineyards offer, and experiences has been identified as an area that they could expand into. The stretch tent will allow them to hold outside events protected from the weather.</p>	Score	2/4
<p>Action on Climate Emergency The project is unlikely to effect the council's climate agenda negatively or positively. No environmental policy has been provided.</p>	Score	0/3
<p>Social Action There is no wider social benefits to the project.</p>	Score	0/2
<p>Project Outputs "1-5 jobs safe-guarded Expected in 6%-10% increase in productivity"</p>	Score	2/3

<p>Financial and project management plans No project plan attached, but details included on other application. This application relates to a Gazebo.</p> <p>Demand for services and other similar facilities Research has been carried out into other local vineyards and the services they provide. It has been identified that tours and experiences are an area that could be expanded into as offer on this is limited locally.</p> <p>Project completion within timeframe 2 month project</p>		
<p>DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Have not scored minimum required. Not recommended for funding.</p>	<p>Total score</p>	<p>4/12</p>

Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

The increase in wine tourism has been highlighted in a previous question. Locally other vineyards offer similar experiences, but the Chiltern Vineyards can become a destination for wine lovers if we offer quality facilities for consumers to visit. JoJo's is setting itself to be a premium vineyard experience.

The vineyards in a 10-15km all have their own unique market segment, we won't compete directly with any of them. A summary of local vineyards has been carried out, results are:

Hundred Hills vineyard - Private tours only

Fairmile Vineyard (7miles away) – pTent for meetings. Tours yes

Oakengrove Vineyard (8miles away) – Meeting room. Tours yes

Chiltern Valley Vineyard (6 miles away) – Wedding venue. Tours yes

Brightwell Vineyard – No meeting facilities. Tours yes

Wyfold Vineyard – No meeting facilities. Tours – No. Grape producers only.

Windsor Vineyard – Meeting – No. Tours - No

Harrow & Hope Vineyard – Meeting facilities – Yes. Tours – yes

Dawes Hill vineyard – Meetings – No, Tours – yes

Ewelme Vineyard – Tours – No, Meetings – No

Yew Tree Vineyard – Tours – No. Meetings No

Stanlake Park – Tours – Yes. Meetings – yes

Dropmore Vineyard – Tours – Yes. Meetings – No

Seer Green – Tours yes. Meetings – No

Hendred Vineyard – Tours yes. Meetings – No

Chafor Vineyard – Tours yes. Meetings – No

Wyfold Garden – Tours – No. Meetings - No

Off the Line vineyard – Tours – No. Meetings – No.

So there's a blend of vineyards offering experiences in the area and others who don't.

Feedback from consumers at the trade events in 2023, the majority of customers asked about tours to at the vineyard. This has encouraged us to focus on experiences in 2024.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project
10

Who will benefit from your project?

Customers of JoJo's vineyard will benefit from the new gazebos. The number of visitors expected are:

For the guests who would like to have food on their visit we will use local suppliers which will come from local suppliers - Businesses benefiting - 5

The local pub, the Five Horse Shoes will be able to offer packages of drinks in the vineyard and lunch in the pub - Business benefiting - 1

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve its own environmental sustainability?

The vineyard uses regenerative techniques to grow grapes in the most sustainable way possible.

JoJo's is a member of the WineGB sustainable wines scheme.

The gazebos are sourced from the UK

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

Visitors to the vineyard can cycle or walk to the vineyard or drive. As the vineyard is in a very

rural location, 10miles away from Henley on Thames public transport is limietd. We will encourage the use of taxis for visitors where possible.

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

The outcomes from the project will be

- 1) Increase the number of visitors to JoJo's Vineyard - from 6 in 2023, to 308 in 2024
- 2) Increase the number of bottles of wine sold at JoJo's Vineyard tastings - from 12 in 2023 to 450 in 2024
- 3) Increase the number of staff active on the site through the year - from 0.1 in 2023 to 1.5 in 2024
- 4) Increase in the number of local business we engage with JoJo's - 1 in 2023 to 6 in 2024 through the provision of food hampers for guests
- 5) Increase revenue and profitability of JoJo's Vineyard tastings - £220 in 2023 to £21,770 in 2023

As we're starting from a very low base the improvements will be easy to measure. They key to reaching the success targets will be marketing and letting customers / visitors know that tours available for tours and tastings.

In 12 months time I hope discussions will have taken place for a Chiltern Hills vineyard tour programme.

Chiltern Hills Farm Ltd	Ref	SREPF\100095
Project Name: JoJo's Tourism project - stretch tent		
<p>Project Description: The tourism project will introduce 2 gazebos and a stretch tent to JoJo's Vineyard to develop a visitor experience at JoJo's. The timber framed gazebos will allow groups of between 6 - 12 people to enjoy a private meeting environment after a tour of JoJo's vineyard. The stretch tent will allow for smaller groups to enjoy tasting events at JoJo's. Vineyard tourism is on a sharp increase as a key revenue generator for a vineyard and winery business. With the growing number of vineyards in South Oxfordshire, JoJo's needs to improve it's offering for customers for in vineyard experiences. We are asking for funding for 1 gazebo. We will fund the 2nd gazebo and the stretch tent.</p> <p>Our aim is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of visitors to JoJo's Vineyard Increase the number of bottles of wine sold at JoJo's Vineyard Increase the number of staff active on the site through the year Increase in the number of local business we engage with JoJo's Increase revenue and profitability of JoJo's Vineyard 		
Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.		
Location of Project:		
Potential number of beneficiaries: 6		

Total project cost	£6,900
Organisation's contribution	
Other secured funding	£0
REPF Grant Requested	£6,900
Organisation's latest bank balance	131729.1

Scoring

<p>Need for Project</p> <p>Some research has been carried out into what other local vineyards offer, and experiences has been identified as an area that they could expand into. The stretch tent will allow them to hold outside events protected from the weather.</p>	Score	2/4
<p>Action on Climate Emergency</p> <p>The project is unlikely to effect the council's climate agenda negatively or positively. No environmental policy has been provided.</p>	Score	0/3
<p>Social Action</p> <p>There is no wider social benefits to the project.</p>	Score	0/2
<p>Project Outputs</p> <p>1-5 jobs safe-guarded</p>	Score	1/3

<p>Financial and project management plans Project plan attached, purchase of stretch tent (one has previously been hired to hold events in 2023)</p> <p>Demand for services and other similar facilities Research has been carried out into other local vineyards and the services they provide. It has been identified that tours and experiences are an area that could be expanded into as offer on this is limited locally.</p> <p>Project completion within timeframe 5 month project</p>		
<p>DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Not scored minimum required and not recommended for funding.</p>	<p>Total score</p>	<p>3/12</p>

Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

The increase in wine tourism has been highlighted in a previous question. Locally other vineyards offer similar experiences, but the Chiltern Vineyards can become a destination for wine lovers if we offer quality facilities for consumers to visit. JoJo's is setting it's self to be a premium vineyard experience. The vineyards in a 10=15km all have their own unique market segment, we won't compete directly with any of them. A summary of local vineyards has been carried out, results are:

Hundred Hills vineyard - Private tours only
Fairmile Vineyard (7miles away) – pTent for meetings. Tours yes
Oakengrove Vineyard (8miles away) – Meeting room. Tours yes
Chiltern Valley Vineyard (6 miles away) – Wedding venue. Tours yes
Brightwell Vineyard – No meeting facilities. Tours yes
Wyfold Vineyard – No meeting facilities. Tours – No. Grape producers only.
Windsor Vineyard – Meeting – No. Tours - No
Harrow & Hope Vineyard – Meeting facilities – Yes. Tours – yes
Dawes Hill vineyard – Meetings – No, Tours – yes
Ewelme Vineyard – Tours – No, Meetings – No
Yew Tree Vineyard – Tours – No. Meetings No
Stanlake Park – Tours – Yes. Meetings – yes
Dropmore Vineyard – Tours – Yes. Meetings – No
Seer Green – Tours yes. Meetings – No
Hundred Vineyard – Tours yes. Meetings – No
Chafor Vineyard – Tours yes. Meetings – No
Wyfold Garden – Tours – No. Meetings - No
Off the Line vineyard – Tours – No. Meetings – No.

So there's a blend of vineyards offering experiences in the area and others who don't. Feedback from consumers at the trade events in 2023, the majority of customers asked about tours to at the vineyard. This has encouraged us to focus on experiences in 2024.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project
6

Who will benefit from your project?

Customers of JoJo's vineyard will benefit from the new gazebos. The number of visitors expected are:
For the guests who would like to have food on their visit we will use local suppliers which will come from local suppliers - Businesses benefiting - 5
The local pub, the Five Horse Shoes will be able to offer packages of drinks in the vineyard and lunch in the pub -
Business benefiting - 1

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve it's own environmental sustainability?

The vineyard uses regenerative techniques to grow grapes in the most sustainable way possible. JoJo's is a member of the WineGB sustainable wines scheme.

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

Visitors to the vineyard can cycle or walk to the vineyard or drive. As the vineyard is in a very rural location, 10 miles away from Henley on Thames public transport is limited. We will encourage the use of taxis for visitors where possible.

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

The outcomes from the project will be

- 1) Increase the number of visitors to JoJo's Vineyard - from 6 in 2023, to 308 in 2024
- 2) Increase the number of bottles of wine sold at JoJo's Vineyard tastings - from 12 in 2023 to 450 in 2024
- 3) Increase the number of staff active on the site through the year - from 0.1 in 2023 to 1.5 in 2024
- 4) Increase in the number of local business we engage with JoJo's - 1 in 2023 to 6 in 2024 through the provision of food hampers for guests
- 5) Increase revenue and profitability of JoJo's Vineyard tastings - £220 in 2023 to £21,770 in 2023

As we're starting from a very low base the improvements will be easy to measure. The key to reaching the success targets will be marketing and letting customers / visitors know that tours are available for tours and tastings.

In 12 months time I hope discussions will have taken place for a Chiltern Hills vineyard tour program

FH Nixey and Co	Ref	SREPF\100047
Project Name: Install Solar panels		
Project Description: We are looking at installing solar panels on the roof of one of our barns. This will have main objectives. 1) We will be producing clean electricity. 2) Our business will be more resilient and less dependant on the fluctuations of the electricity market		
Application Theme: Capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas.		
Location of Project:		
Potential number of beneficiaries: 3		

Total project cost	£25,534
Organisation's contribution	£17,000
Other secured funding	£0
REPF Grant Requested	£8,534
Organisation's latest bank balance	70000

Scoring

Need for Project No evidence of need for project has been provided, however it is for the installation of solar panels to make organisation more carbon neutral.	Score	0/4
Action on Climate Emergency Installation of solar panels will have a positive effect on the council's climate agenda. No climate policy provided.	Score	2/3
Social Action There is no wider social benefits to the project.	Score	0/2
Project Outputs 1-5 jobs safe-guarded	Score	1/3
Financial and project management plans No project plan attached, but small scale project to install solar panels on barn.		
Demand for services and other similar facilities project will benefit business by allowing them to reduce their reliance on fluctuating electricity prices.		
Project completion within timeframe 1 month project		
DEDUCTIONS, CONCERNS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Not scored minimum required and not recommended for funding.	Total score	3/12



Applicant responses

Need for Project

How do you know there is a need for your project?

We feel there is a need for this project on the farm to help reduce our carbon footprint and help to make our products more carbon neutral.

Social Action

Please provide an estimate of the number of people who will benefit from your project

3

Who will benefit from your project?

The farm business will benefit and enable us as a business to stay relevant in the local area. This could help the business providing local jobs in a rural area.

Action on Climate Emergency

Please tell us about any steps your organisation has taken to improve it's own environmental sustainability?

3 years ago the farm installed a biomass boiler which provides heat to 3 rural properties and some units on the farm. This replaced 2 oil boilers and replaced electric storage heaters in 1 cottage. The installation of solar panels on the farm will help on our journey to keep our carbon footprint falling towards net zero.

Please tell us about the environmental impact this project may have.

This project will reduce our reliance on the national grid and will help us to produce green energy. With 2 electric cars on the property it will help to make our motoring greener by being able to charge our vehicles using the solar panels. It could reduce our CO2 emissions by about 8T per year.

Project outcomes

Tell us more about the key outcomes you want to achieve through your project, and how you will know if it was a success.

The outcome I would like from our project is for our farm to minimise import of electric from the grid. We will also be able to export some green electric to the grid as well. It is our first step to completely reduce our reliance on the grid and become self sufficient with electricity.