

The Bayston Hill Net Zero Working Group has identified a possibility to access funding from the Community Energy Fund which, for Shropshire, is run by the Midlands Net Zero Hub. This is a competitive grant mechanism intended for urban and rural communities to develop community energy projects. In the Fund's Stage 1, of most immediate relevance to our current plans, up to £40,000 would be available to assess project feasibility. In Stage 2, up to £100,000 can be awarded to support more detailed feasibility analysis, including planning applications etc. We understand from the Midlands Net Zero Hub that funding windows will open at various points throughout 2024.

We would like to be in a position to make an application for this funding, when the next window opens, to assess the feasibility of undertaking a more ambitious upgrade of the Pavilion, aligned with the Council's commitment to net zero. Specifically – and reflecting the eligibility requirements for the Fund (see bullet 3 below) – we envisage seeking funding to assess how this upgrade could be undertaken in a way that would bring benefits to the local community. There are a number of ways that this might be achieved including installing PV and selling the electricity to the grid to create a community energy fund and/or to sustain EV charging points; or developing a mini renewable heat network that would support both this building and the YCB. There may well be other options – these could be explored if funding was secured.

To be eligible for Stage 1 funding, a number of conditions must be satisfied:

- Applications must be led by legally constituted organisations, including parish councils
- Applications must relate to projects that would be at least 50% community-owned (which we understand is satisfied by the building being owned by the Parish Council)
- Applications based on single buildings must create an asset that benefits the community beyond meeting the building's own energy needs
- Applications should relate to projects that should require planning permission and significant pre-planning development
- Applications must be able to show that the proposed project has benefited from some community engagement
- Initial conversations, but not formal advice, should have been sought from the Local Planning Authority
- Ideally, the project should be sufficiently well-advanced that three quotes for undertaking the work have been sought (although this is not essential)

The list of criteria that need to be satisfied illustrates that there would be material work to be undertaken to be in a position to make an application. We request that the Council approves for the Net Zero Working Group (and others) to take forward this work with the intention of being in a position to make an application later in the year. Further approval from Council would be sought prior to submitting an application.