

# Response 23

## Respondent Details

Information	
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Your details	
<b>Parish/town council name</b>	South Lenches Parish Council
<b>Your name</b>	patrick twist
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<b>Project name</b>	-

Does this application have the support of your parish/town council? If your answer is 'no' please discuss it with them before proceeding.

Yes

Project name

The Lenches Open Air Theatre

Project description Provide a short description of your project including what it is, where it will be located and why it is needed (max 300 words).

The South Lenches has its sports field in Ab Lench Road, Church Lench (WR11 4UQ). Established at the start of this century, it enjoys outstanding views across the Severn valley to the Malverns. The main sports ground comprises a well maintained cricket and football field. The location would readily allow for wider uses. Our project involves creating an open-air performance area by terracing the extensive bank on the north-west corner of the field to provide seating for an audience of approximately 250. The slope and curvature of the bank lends itself naturally to the creation of an auditorium overlooking a well protected area of the sports field. We would move the cricket square to accommodate portable staging. We would also extend the existing pavilion (situated immediately to the right of the proposed terrace). The extension would replace the two unsightly metal containers currently used for the storage of machinery and would provide storage space for costumes and props and a changing area for visiting troupes.

This project would provide a unique outdoor facility for performances of all types which does not exist in Wychavon district, nor indeed in the wider region. It would prove a genuine legacy for the long term. The business plan for the theatre would involve using it over a twenty week period every summer with the objective of putting on a performance on average every other week. GLADS, our local amateur dramatic society, are very enthusiastic about the project and we have already approached the Royal Shakespeare Company. The fact that there is no comparable facility in the region gives us confidence that it is needed and that it will prove very attractive both locally and more widely. At Stage Two we would produce evidence to clearly demonstrate that this is the case.

Proposed timescales Give an indication of start and completion dates for your project.

We would anticipate being able to commence the initial processes of the appointment of designer and cost consultant immediately after being awarded a grant in March 2020. Our outline construction plan breaks the project down into five phases, totalling sixteen months, each with a gateway review to ensure that plans are on track. These are: (1) the design phase including the appointment of a designer and taking the design from concept to detailed design; (2) the cost and procurement phase including the tendering of contractors; (3) the planning stage which will occur once the design is complete and the project is confirmed as within budget; the fourth phase is the appointment of a contractor, contractor mobilisation and discharge of planning condition; the final stage is the construction of the theatre and associated works. Many of the phases overlap. Our outline construction plan would be refined and confirmed during the Stage Two process.

Project impact Tell us what difference your project will make to your community (max 200 words).

We have taken soundings from a number of community organisations, all of which have been supportive. In addition to GLADS, the current users of the sports field also welcome the proposal. If our EoI were approved we would conduct detailed community engagement to confirm full support. Although promoted by South Lenches PC, this is a project which would benefit the whole of Wychavon and indeed the wider region. Community engagement at Stage Two would extend beyond the South Lenches area. The Open Air Theatre will allow for the staging of a wide variety of cultural events for the benefit of the District and the wider region. Likely events would include GLADS, travelling theatre players, historic re-enactments, music festivals, and classical concerts. The project would support the sustainability of the Lenches Club, itself an important community asset situated within 75 metres of the proposed terracing. If the project were as successful as we intend and high profile events came to be staged at the theatre an increase in tourism to Wychavon, with consequent benefits for the District economy, would be anticipated. The modern pavilion provides good toilet and washing facilities so there would be no need for additional services and sufficient parking already exists.

Indicative costs Provide an estimation of the likely project cost and the amount you intend to request from the Community Legacy Grant scheme.

<b>Estimation of total project cost</b>	£100,000
<b>Amount you intend to request from the Community Legacy Grant scheme</b>	£90,000

How do you intend to fund any balance?

The balance of funds will be provided by The Lenches Sports and Recreation Club from its own resources. The LSRC is the charity which owns the site on which the project will be undertaken. It was established twenty two years ago and is prudently run. It has applied for and been awarded grants over the last twenty years and has a proven track record of delivery. Last year it resurfaced the club's three tennis courts at a cost of £42,000, all of which (bar a grant of £1,500 from Worcestershire CC) was provided from own funds.

Are you submitting more than one application this year?

No