

Reference: 8/09/2006

Applicant: Beaumont College

Scheme Name: All Terrain Access Project

Outline:

The College is run by the charity Scope working with disabled people. We cater for residential and day students aged between 16 – 25 years with cerebral palsy and associated difficulties. The majority of our students have mobility problems and have to use a wheelchair. There are a variety of wheelchair designs to suit individuals. We want to purchase a number of all terrain wheelchairs that can have a general use and allow our students greater choice in where we can take them for outdoor activities - the ability of the proposed units allowing use both indoors and in "4x4" mode is an essential feature to allow use in college and out in the countryside. The project will now purchase a total of **five** all terrain wheelchairs, in place of the originally proposed 2 manual and 1 powered chair.

These will be used to open up sites within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that so far have been inaccessible to our students. Students from Beaumont College have been visiting sites with the AONB for many years, enjoying access to the countryside, but in a restricted and limited manner. The ability to venture further afield, away from made paths, using the all terrain wheelchairs will increase their enjoyment and give enhanced opportunities for developing a greater understanding of the natural beauty of the countryside they access. Chairs will be available for use at Leighton Moss by the public on pre-booking with RSPB.

Expenditure:

2006/07	COST	VAT
Equipment costs:	£ 12,000	
Total cost of Project:	£ 12,000	

Requested funding: £6,000 – 50%

Decision: **Approved**

Comment: The Panel considered this matter at length as there was some measure of direct opposition from one member of the panel. Also the proposal is substantially changed with the omission of a powered chair. The AONB Officer had already informed the applicant that the level of funding available was reduced to £ 6 - 7,000 at up to 60% grant. The applicant has confirmed that the match funding required for support at a 50% grant rate is available immediately.

A number of conditions were imposed upon the applicant to ensure that a minimum of three of the units would be available for use by the public at RSPB Leighton Moss.