

Introduction to Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Parish Council to an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish, and which is not directly controlled or administered by the Parish Council. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be “in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it” and “the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure.” Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

Policy

The Parish Council awards grants, at its discretion, to organisations which can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to achieve an objective which will benefit the Parish by:

- Providing a service.
- Enhancing the quality of life.
- Improving the environment.
- Promoting the Parishes of Puddletown, Tolpuddle, Burleston and Athelhampton in a positive way.

The Parish Council will not award grants to:

- Commercial organisations.
- Purposes for which there is a statutory duty upon other local or central government departments to fund or provide.
- “Upward funders” i.e. local groups where fund-raising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution.
- Political parties.
- Religious organisations; unless for a purpose which does not discriminate on grounds of belief.*
- Individuals for their sole benefit.

Only one application for a grant will be considered from any organisation in any one financial year. Ongoing commitments to award grants in future years will not be made. A fresh application will be required each year. Grants will not be made retrospectively.

***Financial Assistance to the Church**

In addition to the above, the extent to which a Parish Council may financially support the Church is limited by The Local Government Act 1894 which is still in force. The NALC legal topic note L01-18 - Financial Assistance to the Church shall be a consideration when assessing applications from a Church.

Application Procedure

Requests for financial assistance are to be submitted with an application form to the P APC Clerk.

Amounts in excess of £500 are required to be applied for by 1st November, at the latest, in the financial year preceding their funding requirement. Only emergency requests* or applications for amounts not exceeding £500 shall be considered after this date.

Applications for amounts exceeding £500 shall be accompanied by a copy of the organisations accounts statement for the last complete financial year.

Organisations will normally be expected to have clear written aims and objectives, a written constitution, and a separate bank account.

*An emergency request can be submitted for a contribution towards the cost of an expense which was unforeseen or where an organisation has not been able to secure the income that was expected and cannot cover an expense without financial assistance.

Assessment Procedure

At the Parish Council's annual budgeting meeting budgets will be set from which grants will be awarded during the following financial year. These amounts will principally be for grant requests that have already been received by the Parish Council, in accordance with the application procedure, and which it envisages may be granted. Any amount included within the budget for a specific applicant does not guarantee an award; a decision upon an award will remain for approval by the Parish Council at the appropriate meeting. An additional amount will be reserved for other grant requests received during the financial year, taking into account the limits under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Parish Council will consider any applications that have been submitted in advance, at its June meeting. Further grant requests, once received in writing, will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council. Once the Grants budget is exhausted, the Parish Council will only consider emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations with which it has close links.

Successful Applications

Once a grant application has been approved, the payment of the grant shall be added to the payment schedule for authorisation at the next Parish Council meeting. Where the applicant has requesting urgent funding, the Parish Council may at its discretion authorise payment at the same meeting at which the application is approved.

A grant award must only be used for the purpose stated on the application. If the applicant is unable to use the awarded funding, or any part of it, for the purpose stated, then all unspent funds must be returned to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council shall in April of each year, request a grant report from all organisations in receipt of a grant in the previous financial year and those who were in the last financial year, given an extension to spend a grant previously awarded.

For awards not exceeding £500, this report shall consist of a brief statement confirming the amount of the awarded grant that has been spent and what it has been spent on. For awards exceeding £500 a more detailed breakdown of expenditure will be requested. The Parish Council may, on receipt of the report, request proof of expenditure.

If the entire amount awarded has not been spent then the applicant may request an extension which the Parish Council shall consider at its next meeting. Following receipt of the report, the Parish Council will request return of unspent funds if applicable or will confirm an extension if approved.