

Weldon Parish Council

S137 Grants Policy



Background

The Parish Council has to have a legal power or duty before it can incur any expenditure. There is no specific power which allows the Council to give public money to groups and organizations. The Council relies on a general power contained in Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Council may only use this power if, and only if, it is satisfied that the expenditure is in the interests of the Parish as a whole or part thereof. The maximum amount that the Council can spend on Section 137 is fixed by the Government and the maximum amount possible per elector is currently £8.12 per elector set for the year 2020 - 21. There are currently approximately 4000 electors giving a S137 Grant maximum expenditure of £36480 for the year. Obviously, any award has to fit within the budget constraints of the Council.

1. Definition of a grant

A grant is defined as an award to an organisation or group to undertake voluntary or community activities for the benefit of the Parish. The organisation/group themselves determine their activities and procedures and the Council makes a financial contribution as a grant award.

The Council is not and cannot be required to award any grant to any group, organization, and must not give any grant to an individual.

2. Scope of funding

Funding support **may** be available for voluntary and community sector organisations and local bodies which:

- are based in the Parish, delivering activities or services to our parishioners (Regional/National charities are unlikely to be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the project is specific to the parish of Weldon, with an obvious benefit to the area); **or**
 - are newly formed groups intending to provide facilities not yet available to residents; **and**
 - have not previously applied for a grant from the Parish Council in the current financial year (1st April to 31st March).

3. Availability of funds

The availability of funds to support voluntary activity is dependent on the Council's overall financial position and the choices it makes when allocating its resources. The Council will only consider supplying direct support in the form of grants to eligible bodies as set out in Section 4 (Eligible groups). Retrospective applications will not be considered.

4. Eligible groups

These will usually be:

- a non-profit making body or one where accrued income is recycled for the benefit of the Parish;
- working for the benefit of the Parish;

- independent, determining their own aims and objectives;
- formally constituted, with a committee made up of volunteers comprising the governing body;
- groups with a formal constitution and/or which have charitable status.

Eligible groups may also include voluntary organisations which employ paid staff for their expertise where the group does not have the necessary skills. Individuals are not eligible for grant support from the Council.

The Council will only award a grant to eligible groups which:-

- have clear plans for the grant and the organization;
- achieve quality and provide an effective service;
- have common and transparent arrangements for agreeing objectives;
- undertake monitoring performance and evaluation

In order to maintain a consistent approach, all requests for grant funding will be reviewed by the Council in the following areas to achieve value for money:-

- Level of service and quality
- Financial management and the real need for Council assistance
- Cover gaps in existing provisions
- Meeting changing needs
- Attracting new funding
- Reducing duplication

5. Decisions

Decision making will be on the basis of the information provided in the completed application form, and fulfilling the requirements of this document. A decision will usually be made by Full Council at their next meeting, agenda time permitting, or at the one immediately after, unless further information is required.

6. Performance management

The Council recognises that Performance Management is an important means of showing that public money is spent the right way and achieves best value.

In the allocation of funds, there will be a need to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation which focuses on outcomes. To achieve this, it is proposed that:

- Monitoring should be proportionate to the amount of funding awarded
- Monitoring should also be used to demonstrate achievement
- There is a need to keep information collecting as simple as possible for groups

7. Risk management

There are associated risks involved with providing funding support. Voluntary and Community groups will be encouraged to carry out risk assessments to identify possible areas of concern, for example audit processes and systems to minimise fraud and purchasing public liability insurance. There may be other areas to consider allied to proposed activities.

8. Acceptance of a grant award

Accepting an award means the recipient:

- will provide a report for Parish Council for presentation to the Council or the following Annual Parish Meeting (at the discretion of the Parish Council) outlining how the grant has been utilised, how it has assisted the organisation and what it has achieved;
- agrees to the Parish Council publishing the above report and/or its own article about the grant as the Council sees fit;
- will be accountable for funds and will provide a receipt;
- will sign a disclaimer releasing the Council from any responsibility for the event or activity;
- acknowledges that the grant does not imply or constitute any employer/employee relationship;
- will claim the grant within two months of approval;
- will acknowledge the financial support from the Council in publicity;
- acknowledges that any grant approved will be paid no sooner than 21 days prior to the event, if appropriate.

9. Application forms may be obtained from:

Sue Cook, Interim Clerk

scweldonpc@gmail.com