

Stocksfield Parish Council

Grant Award Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Stocksfield Parish Council (the Council) has various powers which it may exercise and which enable it to award grants for a variety of purposes. Where no specific power exists, the Council can make an award under Sec 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1.2 The Council distinguishes between grants and donations only in that a donation does not require a specific purpose and can be made without application by the beneficiary or in response to a written request, whereas a grant must be subject of a formal application and can only be made for a specific purpose. A grant cannot, therefore, be made for 'general running costs'. In all other respects, any reference within this policy to a grant includes reference to a donation unless otherwise stated.

1.3 The Council distinguishes between grant applications up to £500 and those over £500 so that, amongst other things, the latter may be incorporated into the Council's budget and precept setting process.

1.4 Applications will be invited locally using NE43 News, the Parish notice boards and the Council's website, in accordance with the timescales within this policy.

2. Eligibility

2.1 The Council accepts grant applications from any group or organisation that is based in or operates within the Civil Parish of Stocksfield. Individuals and commercial organisations are ineligible to apply.

2.2 The Council will not consider applications from or in relation to:

- i) political groups or for a political purpose
- ii) religious organisations unless the purpose does not discriminate on grounds of belief and does not promote a religious belief
- iii) any purpose that benefits privately owned land or premises unless it is owned by an eligible organisation making the application
- iv) any expenditure that has already been incurred.

2.3 The Council will not approve grants that commit expenditure over more than one financial year.

2.4 Usually only one grant will be made to any group or organisation in any financial year.

2.5 For grant applications over £500, applicants must be properly constituted organisations with clear written aims and objectives, a written constitution and a separate bank account which is controlled by more than one signatory. Applications must include copies of the organisation's most recent accounts and budget for the next or current financial year.

2.6 For grant applications up to £500, applicants are required to demonstrate that suitable safeguards exist to ensure that any grant awarded is used for the purpose specified within the application and that the management of the group or organisation is adequate.

2.7 Applications must meet all criteria described within this section (Eligibility), sections 3 and 4 (Application processes) and section 6 (Conditions).

3. Application process – grants over £500

3.1 The Council considers grant applications over £500 once in each financial year which takes place during its budget setting process for the following financial year.

3.2 All applications for grants over £500 must be received by the Council prior to 1 October each year. Applications will be considered by the GGAG during October and a recommendation will be made to the next Parish Council meeting at which the Council considers its budget for the following financial year. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the application after the Council has set its annual precept. Successful grants will be made available after receipt by the Council of the first instalment of the Council's precept in April of the following financial year. In appropriate circumstances the Council may waive this requirement and pay the grant from reserves, pending the payment of the precept.

4. Application process – grants up to £500

4.1 The Council considers grant applications up to £500 throughout the financial year.

5. Decision making

5.1 The Council will judge each application on its individual merits. In particular it will consider:

- the extent of benefit (direct or indirect) to the community, including the number of residents benefiting
- the degree to which the application meets the objectives of the Parish Plan
- the likelihood of the project or service being provided if the grant was not made
- the reputational benefit to the Parish
- evidence of other fundraising activity
- the existence of clearly defined and deliverable aims of the project
- the applicant's ability to manage and monitor expenditure

5.2 In respect of grants made under Sec 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required only to incur expenditure which in the members' opinion is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The section also allows expenditure to other funds, including charitable bodies, operating in the United Kingdom. The Council will only incur expenditure under this section in compliance with the legislation and up to the statutory annual limit.

5.3 The Council reserves the right to make a grant by way of donation to eligible organisations.

5.4 In respect of the timescales for making a recommendation and/or a decision as described within this policy, the Council is entitled to delay any recommendation or decision if it considers it appropriate for any reason.

6. Conditions

6.1 All applications must be made on the Council's Grant Application form. Additional information can be supplied. Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant.

6.2 Where a grant of any value is awarded towards a project whose total cost exceeds £5,000, the applicant must demonstrate a fair process exists for awarding contracts.

6.3 Where a grant over £500 is awarded, the applicant must provide evidence to confirm the purpose to which the funds were used. The Council reserves the right to require the applicant to submit a written report and/or attend a subsequent Council meeting to give a verbal account of the applicant's activities in relation to the grant.

6.4 Any grant awarded must be used for the purpose described within the application.

6.5 The Council reserves the right to impose any appropriate condition on any grant award.

6.6 The Council can require the applicant to repay any grant which is not used for the purpose stated within the application or where any condition imposed is not complied with.

6.7 In submitting an application to the Council, the applicant accepts all the terms of this policy. Nothing stated within an application can amend or remove any of the terms.

6.8 A grant application is received by the Council if it is received by email at the Clerk's normal email address or delivered to the Council's Parish Office. Where an application is received by email, the original signed application must also be forwarded to the Parish Office.

6.9 The Council aims to award grants fairly using the terms of this policy. It accepts that, on occasions, a degree of subjectivity is unavoidable. It will endeavour to explain any decisions to unsuccessful applicants but it is under no obligation to do so. There is no appeal process.

Adoption and Review History	
Adopted at Parish Council Meeting on	02/03/15
Reviewed and amended on	07/12/15
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