

LICHFIELD CITY COUNCIL GRANT AWARD POLICY

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- Contribute towards a vibrant and active community in the Parish of Lichfield City
- Acknowledge the strength and diversity of the voluntary and charitable sector and the contribution it makes to the residents of the City of Lichfield
- Provide a framework by which applications are considered in order to promote transparency and fairness in the grant awarding process
- Provide benefits to the City commensurate with expenditure

DEFINITION OF A GRANT

A grant is 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, organisation, and must not give any grant to an individual.

POWER TO AWARD GRANTS

The City Council must have a legal power or duty before it can incur any expenditure. Parish Councils have a number of powers which enable them to make grants to local organisations including:

- Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 confers wide powers on a Local Council concerning recreation facilities, whether inside or outside its area, including powers to provide grants to others who provide such facilities.
- Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a parish council to contribute to expenses associated with dancing, the theatre, bands, knowledge and practice of arts and crafts and associated refreshments, programmes and advertising
- The Local Government Act 1972, Section 142 and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 confers wide powers on Local Councils to make grants to advice and assistance agencies
- Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Local Councils to make grants to voluntary bodies where no specific grant-making power exists in other legislation. Such grants are subject to additional controls including expenditure limits set by the Secretary of State and based on the number of electors in the Parish. Grants made under this power must be recorded by separate account. The Council must also be satisfied that the expenditure is proportional to the benefit to the Parish.
- Powers conferred to qualifying Parish Councils under the 'General power of Competence'.

AVAILABILITY OF GRANT FUNDING

The level of funding for grant aid is dependent on the Council's overall financial position and the choices it makes when allocating its resources. There is no compulsion upon the Council to provide any grant funding in any given financial year.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Local voluntary organisations, community groups and sports/recreational clubs based within the City can apply. Eligible groups will usually be expected to meet the following criteria:

- A non-profit making body or one where accrued monies are recycled for the benefit of the Parish
- Based in the Parish and operate for the benefit of the residents of the Parish
- Have a constitution, set of rules or documented objectives
- Have a bank account and appropriate financial controls in place

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.

WHAT CAN THE GRANT BE USED FOR?

Grants can be used for capital or revenue expenditure but only for the purpose specified in the grant application.

Capital expenditure – eg. land and buildings

Revenue expenditure – eg. insurance, heat and light

AMOUNT OF GRANT AWARD

Due to the level of available funding, the majority of grants will be relatively small (below £500) due to the City Council's desire to accommodate as many worth applications as possible. Larger grants are available but the City Council reserves the right to attach greater conditions to such an award as it deems appropriate.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Application forms should be submitted by the deadline, usually the first week of January each year. Application forms are available from the City Council's website at www.lichfield.gov.uk or from the City Council's Offices at Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield, WS13 6LU, telephone 01543 250011

EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applications for grant funding will be considered in the first instance by the City Council's Grants Advisory Committee which consists of nine of the City Council's 28 Councillors. The Committee usually meets in February of each year to make recommendations to Council regarding the amount (if any) of grant to be provided to those who have applied. The final decision on grant award is then made by the City Council at its March meeting.

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

- Have clear plans for the grant and the organisation
- Achieve quality and provide an effective service and/or benefit to members of the community
- Be able to demonstrate that the funding has been used for the purpose it was awarded

For larger grants and in addition to the above:

- Undertake monitoring performance and evaluation

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

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

In addition, the following criteria will be used to assess applications:

- The completeness and accuracy of the application form
- Whether the organisation is based in Lichfield City and serves a significant proportion of parish residents
- The nature of the benefit it provides to residents and who it is benefitting
- The impact on the community as a whole and its target demographic (if any) if the organisation were unable to continue due to lack of funds
- The possibility of more appropriate sources of funding
- Performance in regard to City Council requests for progress reports etc. following receipt of previous grants

Decision making will be on the basis of the information provided in the completed application form and fulfilling the requirements of this document.

Notwithstanding these guidelines, the City Council will exercise its discretion to consider each individual application. If a prospective applicant is uncertain as to whether they may qualify for financial assistance, further advice is available from City Council officers at Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield WS13 6LU or 01543 250011.

The City Council appreciates that the fixed deadline may result in some worthy causes not being eligible for funding due to timing. For this reason, some funds from the Grant Aid budget are held for the remainder of the year to allow the City Council to support such events or causes that may emerge prior to the next round of grant awards. In such circumstances the grant application will be considered by the City Council at its next appropriate meeting following receipt of a qualifying application. The application should be put in writing for the attention of the Town Clerk and deposited at the City Council's offices at Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield WS13 6LU. The amount of grant awarded in such circumstances will not normally exceed £300.

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

RISK MANAGEMENT

There are associated risks involved with providing funding support. Voluntary and Community groups are 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.

ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT AWARD

As a condition of grant award and at the discretion of the City Council, the recipient will provide a report for presentation to the Council or the following Annual Town Meeting outlining how the grant has been utilised, how it has assisted the organisation and what it has achieved. The City Council may select a percentage of organisations who have been awarded a grant each year to provide this report; selected organisations will be notified of the requirement in good time, and certainly no less than two months prior to the Council or Annual Town Meeting at which the report is to be presented.

In any event, if a grant **exceeds £2,000** the Council will require a written report in the year after the Grant has been awarded explaining how the grant monies have been spent and the benefits it has brought to the community.

Acceptance of the grant award also places the following conditions upon the Body to whom the grant has been awarded. The Body;

- 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 as appropriate
- Will comply with all prevailing legal and statutory requirements relevant to its activities
- Acknowledges that the grant does not imply or constitute any employer/employee relationship
- Will acknowledge the financial support from the Council in publicity

Failure to comply with these conditions will be considered in any future grant application.

RECEIPT OF GRANT AWARD

Those bodies who successfully apply for a grant will be notified as soon as possible following the meeting of the City Council at which grant allocation is considered (usually the March meeting in any given year)

Grants will be paid by Bank Transfer. Those recipients receiving a grant which exceeds £2,000 will be required to submit a written report in the year after the Grant has been awarded explaining how the grant monies have been spent and the benefits it has brought the community. Recipients may also be asked to present their report in person at the Annual Town Meeting in June.

PUBLICATION OF GRANT AWARD

The names of bodies who have been awarded a grant and the amount of that grant will be a matter of public record, both in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Grants Advisory Committee and subsequent Council meeting. The name of the Body and the amount of grant awarded for the current and previous four financial years is also published on the City Council's website in the interests of transparency.

Policy Adopted: 23 April 2018

Dates for Review:

February 2019 - 2023: No material amendments

July 2023: Reference to payment by cheque updated to bank transfer, clarification on reporting requirements at Annual Town Meeting.