

DORCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL

GRANT POLICY

Grants Policy Introduction

A grant is any payment 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.

Power to award grants

General Power of Competence

Dorchester Parish Council has adopted the General Power of Competence and is able to award grants on this basis. However, the Parish Council will continue to use the Section 137 finance framework.

Section 137

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other statutory duty. The amount they can spend is limited by the number of persons on the Electoral Register. Dorchester Parish Council is committed to giving financial support to local initiatives but has a responsibility to distribute grants in a fair and equitable manner to reflect the value of the organisations, services or activities to the residents of Dorchester.

To this end the Council will consider only donating to organisations, services or activities that can demonstrate the money will make a real difference to the services that they offer to the Parish.

Budgeting within the Council's precept

The Council allocates funds for the purpose when setting its annual precept. Whilst regular requests may often be anticipated, Council should also allow for unexpected requests by reserving funds for unexpected grant requests.

Policy

Any, and all grant requests are to be made to the Parish Clerk and will usually be considered by the Council at its Full Council meetings. Each request will be considered individually and will be treated on its own merits.

The Council will award grants, at its discretion, to organisations that can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to the benefit of the Parish by:

- providing a service;
- enhancing the quality of life;
- improving recreation and / or sports;
- improving the environment;
- promoting the Parish in a positive way.

The policy and procedures are based on the principles of fairness, responsiveness to local need, generosity and accountability.

Exemptions

The Parish Council will not award grants to:

- private individuals; other than exceptional circumstances, and then it is not forgone that a grant will be provided.
- 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 fundraising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution;
- political parties;
- religious organisations, unless for a purpose that does not discriminate on grounds of belief.

This list is not exclusive and may be added to at the Council’s discretion.

Further questions that may be considered

- Will the grant bring a direct benefit to all or part of the Parish or to all or some residents?
- Can it be demonstrated how the grant will be used? • Is the benefit commensurate with the expenditure?
- What other funding is available which might achieve the resulting benefit?
- Should the request be funded by another statutory body/authority?
- Is there evidence (usually the last audited accounts) of the financial need for the grant?
- Will the grant be used for the purpose specified and if not used for that purpose, does the applicant understand that it must be returned to Dorchester Parish Council?
- Does the Council have the precept funds to award the grant?
- Does the overall grant funding remain within statutory limits?
- Has a grant to the applicant already been awarded in this 12 month period?

Additional information

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. This will be at the discretion of the Council.

Grants will not be made retrospectively.

The Parish will not generally fund 100% of costs; matched funding is usually required. However, Council reserves the right to award a higher ratio of the project cost should it resolve to do so.

Grant applications should ideally be submitted on a Grant Application Form accompanied by a copy of the latest set of approved accounts, but at the Council's discretion other applications may be considered if sufficient information is provided.

Return of funding

If the grant is not spent within twelve months from the date awarded, the Council reserves the right to ask for repayment. In addition, the Parish Council reserves the right to reclaim the grant in full if:

- the contract is breached and monies are not being used for the purpose specified on the application;
- if the organisation has submitted any dishonest or misleading information on the grant application;
- if the organisation ceases to exist, becomes insolvent or goes into administration, receivership or liquidation.

Publicity

Organisations receiving grant funding from the Parish Council are asked to include mention of the financial support in any publicity associated with their project or event.

Outcomes

All those making requests are to be subsequently advised of the Council's decision.

This Policy was adopted by the parish council on 10th July 2024 and will be reviewed in two years, or sooner should legislation dictate.