

ST HELENS PARISH COUNCIL



GRANTS POLICY

This is the Grants Policy Statement of ST HELENS PARISH COUNCIL:

It is the policy of St Helens Parish Council to make grants to both individuals and other groups or organisations from time to time, the discretionary powers to do this being provided in law. Decisions to award grants may be made by the Council if eligibility criteria set out in this policy are met, but will be subject to funds being available and other competing demands.

The contribution made by many organisations and individuals to the wellbeing of the local community of St Helens is recognised by the Council as important to our society. The purpose of any grant or subsidy given by this Council is to support initiatives in the local community and/or to help create opportunities, for either individuals or groups, that are not otherwise funded by the Local Authority or other bodies as a matter of course or *may not reasonably be expected to be able to access funds from other sources*. It is not the intention of the Council to create a culture of 'dependency' but rather to use its influence and limited available resources to promote the growth of 'social capital' in a vibrant and active community through first-steps opportunities which can enable both individuals and organisations to move towards their full potential for society's benefit.

The Council particularly welcomes applications that have demonstrable benefits in, for example, health and wellbeing (of self or others); lifestyle improvements (such as initial take-up of sport); digital inclusion; art and culture; improving the natural environment; inter-generational activity, support for the vulnerable; addressing social isolation although this illustrative summary is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the council's Equalities and Inclusion Policy.

ALLOCATION

The Council may make either a one-off grant (per year) or a number of grants over successive years. In none of these cases should recipients consider that future funding is assured, and at no time will a commitment be given by the Council that funding will continue past the year end. Only one award per applicant will be made each year.

The powers to make grants derive from two areas of legislation. Therefore, this Policy is set out in two sections, Section A for organisations, community groups, clubs, societies and charities and Section B for individuals.

In making an offer of grant support, the council may impose specific terms and conditions relevant to the case to ensure that public funds are being used appropriately and for the purpose for which they were intended. The Council may require the full or partial return of a grant if the terms of its offer are not being met.

SECTION A

Organisations, community groups, clubs, societies and charities

CRITERIA

The following eligibility criteria will be used by the Council in coming to its decision. However, in considering the information available to the Council, it may reserve its right not to make a grant award, or to offer a sum less than that requested. Whilst a standard application form is not required, any applicant for a grant must make sure it explains:

1. How much is required, and how the amount of expenditure can be demonstrated as proportionate to the number of people in the parish who will benefit;
2. How the grant will benefit a group of people within the parish, with any supporting research or consultation evidence, and with reference to the illustrative themes in the introduction to this Policy;

3. What the Grant is to be spent on, and how it will be accounted for. Evidence of a bank account requiring at least two signatures to operate will be required. A grant cannot be spent on publicity, unless it is incidental to the main purpose of the grant;
4. What the total expenditure on the project is likely to be, with a breakdown of significant cost headings, and what other sources of income are being sought in addition to the grant;
5. What the aims and objectives of the organisation making the application are. Applications from religious groups will not be eligible, unless it can be shown that the project benefit will be openly accessible to all, whatever their beliefs.

The Council will not make grants to:

1. Organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party or to discriminate, either intentionally or otherwise, on the grounds of any protected characteristic in the Equalities Act 2010;
2. Private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus;
3. Upward funders (local groups whose fundraising is sent to their central HQ for redistribution);
4. Professional fundraisers;
5. Projects that are already completed;
6. Organisations or groups which are not financially sound. For those not already known to the Council, two years of accounting records, independently verified, must accompany the application. For new groups, evidence of how accounting will be provided during the project must be given.

SECTION B

Individuals

CRITERIA

The Council may make grants to individuals using the General Power of Competence (GPC), if it has adopted the power which it may do subject to it meeting certain eligibility criteria set out in law. Having taken the Power and subsequently the eligibility ceases, the Council will no longer be able to make grants to individuals and only Section A of this Policy will apply, with powers reverting to those contained in S.137 of the Local Government Act, 1972. The Council adopted the GPC at its Annual Meeting in May 2017 and must on each occasion it is used be able to demonstrate the decision as 'reasonable'.

The following eligibility criteria will be used by the Council in coming to its decision. However, in considering the information available to the Council, it may reserve its right not to make a grant award, or to offer a sum less than that requested. Whilst a standard application form is not required, any applicant for a grant must make sure they explain:

1. How much is required;
2. How the use of the grant will benefit or develop the individual and, consequently, the community or society as illustrated in the introduction to this Policy;
3. How the amount and benefit can be demonstrated as being reasonable;
4. On what is the grant to be spent and, if relevant, what would be the significant cost headings;
5. From what other sources of grant are funds being sought in support of the initiative, and how much;

The council will not make grants to individuals:

1. intending to support or oppose any particular political party or to discriminate, either intentionally or otherwise on the grounds of any protected characteristic in the Equalities Act 2010;
2. operating, or intending to operate, as a business to make a profit or surplus;
3. upward funders (whose fundraising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution);
4. professional fundraisers;
5. for projects or activities that are already completed;
6. that are not financially responsible. Those that are declared bankrupt or with convictions for fraud will not be considered. Persons under 18 must have the support of another over 18 and with bank account facilities into which funds may be paid, who will undertake to act as guarantor for the above eligibility criteria and any additional terms and conditions;
7. That are not normally resident in the parish of St Helens.

BOTH SECTIONS

TIMING

The Council will accept applications throughout the year. However, there is a limited budget and approved allocations will be made on a first-come first-served basis.

As the budget is first drafted in November of the financial year before, it is important to discuss with the Clerk if you have a significant requirement that may impact on the level of precept to be levied within the Council Tax regime.

REPORTING

The Council may impose a condition on a grant award requiring the recipient organisation or individual to make a report on how the funds were spent, either at the conclusion of the project or at intervals.

The Council may require the recipient to acknowledge the Council's support in any publicity generated by the project.

APPLICATIONS

As there is no formal application form, potential applicants should contact the Clerk to the Council in the first instance to discuss their proposals and how a suitable application might then be framed. The emphasis is on proportionality to the circumstances, with applicants recognising the need for the Council to ensure appropriate stewardship of public funds.

The Council welcomes and encourages applicants to attend the meeting at which the application will be heard, in order that councillors can meet them and seek any clarification arising from the material presented. The decision as to whether a grant should be made, and for how much, will be confirmed in writing to the applicant as soon as practicable by the Clerk.

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