COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY

Purpose

1. This policy sets out a clear, transparent and accountable process for allocating, managing and evaluating grant funding from West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council (the Council). It aims to ensure that public funds deliver the greatest practicable benefit to the local community.

2. The Council aims to encourage and support projects and activities led by community and voluntary organisations that benefit residents of the parish.

Introduction

3. A grant is a payment made by the Council to an eligible organisation for an agreed purpose that benefits the parish or its residents. The funded activity is not directly controlled or administered by the Council.

4. The Council will consider applications from community organisations that can demonstrate a clear need for financial support and clear benefits for the community. Examples include:

    - Providing a service
    - Enhancing the quality of life
    - Improving recreation and or sports
    - Improving the environment
    - Community cohesion and engagement activities
    - Promoting West Rainton and Leamside in a positive way

Policy

5. The Council offers three types of funding:
    a) Annual Application Funding (AAF)
    b) Major Project Funding (MPF)
    c) Emergency Support Funding (ESF)

6. Applications are accepted only from not-for-profit community or voluntary groups and charitable organisations. Applicants must be based in the parish or demonstrate that their work will directly benefit residents of the parish.

Annual Application Funding

7. Annual Application Funding (AAF) supports regular, planned events and activities. The maximum award is £500.

8. AAF applications must be submitted directly to the Parish Clerk by 30 November each year. Applications will be considered as part of the budget-setting process for the following financial year and must relate to a project or activity beginning in that financial year.

9. AAF applications must be made using the grant application form and include all required supporting information and documents.

Major Project Funding

10. Major Project Funding (MPF) supports larger or exceptional projects. The Council will determine the amount awarded according to the merits of the application and the available budget.

11. MPF applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

12. MPF applications must be made using the grant application form and include all required supporting information and documents.

Emergency Support Funding

13. Emergency Support Funding (ESF) provides financial assistance to eligible organisations facing an exceptional and unforeseen need that cannot reasonably wait until the Council's annual grant cycle. Applicants must demonstrate that the need is urgent, could not reasonably have been foreseen and that delaying a decision would create a significant risk to the activity, organisation or community benefit.

14. ESF applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

15. ESF applications must be made using the grant application form and include evidence of the urgency, the consequences of delay and all other required supporting information and documents.

Eligibility

16. The Council will not fund:

    i. private individuals;
    ii. political parties;
    iii. religious organisations, unless the proposed activity provides a clear community benefit regardless of religious belief;
    iv. national organisations, unless the proposed activity will substantially benefit residents of the parish;
    v. late AAF applications, unless the Council agrees that exceptional circumstances justify consideration under MPF or ESF;
    vi. activities or services that another public body has a statutory duty to fund or provide;

vii. AAF applications exceeding £500. Applications for larger awards must be made under MPF or ESF, as appropriate; or
viii. costs incurred before the Council has approved the grant.

17. To qualify for an award, an applicant must demonstrate:

- a clear need for the proposed activity or project;
- a direct and proportionate benefit to the parish or its residents; and
- that the organisation and proposed activity comply with applicable equality law and do not unlawfully discriminate. Lawful, proportionate restrictions may apply where they are necessary to the activity, such as an age range for a youth group.

18. An organisation may normally receive only one grant in a financial year. The Council may approve an additional ESF award where an exceptional, unforeseen need arises after an earlier award.

Grant application and award process

19. All applications must be made using the Council's grant application form.

20. Application forms can be downloaded from the Council's website at www.westraintonandleamsidepc.gov.uk or requested from the Parish Clerk at clerk@westraintonandleamsidepc.gov.uk.

21. Completed applications may be submitted to the Parish Clerk by email or post.

22. On receipt, the Parish Clerk will check the application and supporting information for completeness and contact the applicant about any queries or omissions. This administrative check does not guarantee that an application is eligible or will receive funding.

23. If demand exceeds the available budget, the Parish Clerk will assess eligible applications against the published criteria and make recommendations to the Council. Priority will be given to applications that best support documented Council priorities and demonstrate the greatest need and proportionate benefit for the parish or its residents.

24. The Council will consider all eligible applications and any recommendation from the Parish Clerk. The Council alone will decide which projects or activities receive funding.

25. A Council Member connected with an applicant organisation must consider whether they have an interest to declare under the Code of Conduct. The Member may seek advice from the Parish Clerk or Durham County Council's Monitoring Officer.

26. The Council may request further information or invite an applicant to a Council meeting where this is necessary to assess or prioritise the application.

27. The Parish Clerk will notify every applicant in writing of the Council's decision.

28. Every award is conditional on the applicant accepting the Grant Conditions in Appendix A and any additional conditions stated in the award letter.

29. The Council may attach additional conditions to an award where they are relevant and proportionate to the funded activity.

30. The Council's decision is final and there is no right of appeal.

31. The Council may decline an application that is ineligible, does not sufficiently meet the assessment criteria or is inconsistent with the Council's objectives. The written decision will provide a brief reason.

32. A grant does not commit the Council to continuing or future expenditure unless the Council has expressly approved that commitment.

Due Diligence

33. The Council will complete proportionate due diligence before awarding a grant. Depending on the applicant and activity, this may include checks on legal status, governance, safeguarding arrangements, insurance, financial management, accounts and Disclosure and Barring Service requirements. The Council may request other evidence where reasonably necessary.

Approval and Review Arrangements

34. This policy was approved by the Council at its meeting on [INSERT APPROVAL DATE].

35. The Council will review this policy annually.

Appendix A

Grant Conditions

1. The grant must be used to benefit the parish or its residents, and expenditure must be proportionate to that benefit.

2. Recipients must seek value for money and obtain competitive quotations where appropriate.

3. Recipients are responsible for complying with all legal and statutory requirements relevant to the funded activity and for maintaining appropriate insurance.

4. The grant may be used only for the purpose approved by the Council. Any material change requires the Council's prior written consent. Otherwise, the Council may require repayment.

5. The recipient is responsible for administering and accounting for the grant. It must retain evidence of expenditure and provide it to the Council on request.

6. The Council may require repayment of all or part of a grant where the recipient does not comply with the award or these conditions, does not use the full award for the approved purpose, or provides materially inaccurate information.

7. Failure to comply with these conditions may affect the outcome of future funding applications.

8. Payment will be made only after the Council receives a completed grant acceptance form confirming agreement to these conditions and any additional conditions in the award letter.

9. Payment will be made by BACS transfer to a bank account held in the organisation's name, not to an individual.

10. If the organisation disbands or the funded activity does not proceed, the Council may require repayment of all or part of the grant.

11. Recipients must obtain the Council's written consent before disposing of equipment or resources purchased wholly or partly with the grant.

12. Recipients must acknowledge the Council's support and, where reasonably practicable, include the Council's logo in relevant promotional material.

Appendix B

Guidance Note for Applicants

1. Choose the appropriate funding route

- Annual Application Funding (AAF): up to £500 for regular, planned events and activities. Apply by 30 November for activity beginning in the following financial year.
- Major Project Funding (MPF): for larger or exceptional projects. Applications may be submitted throughout the year.
- Emergency Support Funding (ESF): for exceptional, unforeseen and urgent needs that cannot reasonably wait until the annual cycle. Applications may be submitted throughout the year.

2. Check eligibility

Your organisation must be not-for-profit, voluntary or charitable and must be based in the parish or provide a direct benefit to parish residents. Read the Eligibility section of the policy before applying. The Council does not fund retrospective costs.

3. Complete the application

Use the Council's grant application form. Explain the need, intended community benefit, delivery timetable, full project cost, amount requested, other funding and how success will be demonstrated. The declaration must be signed by a person authorised to act for the organisation.

4. Provide supporting information

- constitution or governing document;
- latest bank statement showing current balances;
- latest accounts or, for a new organisation, a budget and business plan;
- current financial information relevant to the application;
- relevant award letters from other funders;
- details of the organisation's bank account for payment;
- project or activity dates;
- competitive quotations where appropriate; and
- for ESF, evidence of urgency, why the need was unforeseen and the consequences of delay.

If a required document is unavailable, explain why in the application.

5. Submit the application

Send completed applications to the Parish Clerk by email or post. Contact details:
West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council
C/O 62 Trevelyan Place, Peterlee SR8 2NL
Email: clerk@westraintonandleamsidepc.gov.uk
Website: www.westraintonandleamsidepc.gov.uk

6. Assessment and decision

The Parish Clerk will check the application for completeness and may request further information. Eligible applications will be assessed against the policy criteria. The Council will make the final decision and notify the applicant in writing. There is no right of appeal.

7. If funding is awarded

Before payment, the organisation must accept the Grant Conditions in Appendix A and any additional conditions in the award letter. Payment will be made by BACS to an account held in the organisation's name.