

Week St Mary Parish Council

Grants & Community Benefit Fund Policy

1 Receipts from Community Benefit

1. Each new renewable energy development will be invited to consider making a Community Benefit payment. The response to the request will be widely published in the community.
2. Each company or individual agreeing to make a Community Benefit payment will enter into a formal legally binding agreement with the parish council. The parish council has developed a standard agreement document for the purpose, which can be amended to suit individual circumstances.
3. All grants received from companies and individuals intended to be used for Community Benefit will be kept in a separate ring-fenced reserve category within the normal parish council accounting procedures.

2 Management of Community Benefit Fund

1. The Community Benefit Fund will pay all administration and legal costs associated with the fund.
2. All transactions on this reserve, including transfers between account categories, will be by resolution of full council.
3. Distribution of fund should be in accordance with the council's policy for the award of grants from the Community Benefit Fund in Section 3 below with follow up action to measure success of the outcome. Grantees should be required to provide feedback.
4. The parish council can initiate its own projects. These should conform to the same requirements for evidence and reporting as any other applicant.
5. An element of match funding should be sought wherever possible, either from the applicant's own funds or from a third party. Evidence will normally be required for large grants showing that this has been explored including projects which the parish council is managing.
6. A separate annual report will be produced detailing all transactions for presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting and published on the website.

7. The investment strategy of the fund will be determined by the parish council and reviewed/amended at least annually. This will be determined as part of the council's annual budget review and approval process. The Council will determine whether to reserve a portion of the fund annually in order to fund long or medium term projects. All other receipts into the fund including any interest will be available for distribution annually through the Grant Scheme.

3 Distribution of Grants

A grant is any payment made by the council to be used by an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the parish, or residents of the parish. The parish council awards grants, at its discretion, to organisations which can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to benefit the parish by, for example:

- Providing a service
- Enhancing the quality of life, Improving the environment
- Improving recreation, sports
- Promoting the Parish of Week St Mary in a positive way

1. Applications are categorised as either a **Small Grant Application** (up to £500) or a **Large Grant Application** (above £500). There is a separate application form for each type of grant. The process for a small grant does not require the applicant to provide as much supporting documentation. Both application forms are available from the parish council clerk or can be downloaded from Week St Mary Village Website
2. Members of the council or the clerk to the council can receive applications in the first instance. The clerk must receive the application at least 7 days before the parish council meeting in order that the item can be put on the agenda. The designated councillor will then collate all the information from the applicant ready for presentation at the appropriate council meeting. Applicants should attend the meeting to answer any questions.
3. Applications for grants should be submitted by either March 25 for consideration and possible award at the April parish council meeting, or by September 25 for consideration and possible award at the October parish council meeting. Grant applications with an element of match funding or volunteering are likely to be given priority. Grant applications will be registered in advance of the applicable parish meeting. At the parish meeting, qualifying applications will be scored according to the criteria outlined in this document. The highest scoring applications may then be awarded funding until the available budget for the period (6 months for small grants, 12 months for large grants) is exhausted.
4. Funds available are very limited and the parish council can give guidance to applicants as to how much money is likely to be available in a specific financial year.

5. The applicant organisation must be either non-profit or charitable. Applications will not be considered from private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus unless this is incidental to the provision of benefit to the community.
6. Grants will not be made for purposes that are likely to displace from or compete with business or activity from existing enterprises or organisations in the parish.
7. Grants will not be made retrospectively.
8. Applications will not normally be considered from national organisations or local groups with access to funds from national ‘umbrella’ or ‘parent’ organisations, unless funds are not available from their national bodies, or the funds available are inadequate for a specified project.
9. An organisation should have a bank account in its own name with two authorised representatives required to sign each cheque. For large grants, the parish council will require sight of the most recent two years’ accounts independently examined by a third party demonstrating organisational viability.
10. The administration of and accounting for any grant shall be the responsibility of the recipient. All awards must be properly accounted for and evidence of expenditure should be supplied to the parish council as requested.
11. Only one application for a grant will be considered from each organisation in any one financial year.
12. Ongoing commitments to award grants or subsidies in future years will only be made where it is vital to the success of the project. Normally a new application will be required each financial year.
13. Each application will be assessed on its own merits.
14. The parish council may make the award of any grant or subsidy subject to such additional conditions and requirements as it considers appropriate. For example, large grants may be paid on completion of the project following the production of the organisations’ accounts.
15. The parish council reserves the right to refuse any grant application which it considers to be inappropriate or against the objectives of the council.
16. Any grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded unless the written approval of the parish council has been obtained for a change in use of the grant monies. Any unspent portion of the grant must be returned to the council within one year from the date it was received.
17. The parish council may make the award of any grant, loan, or subsidy as it considers appropriate in the event of any unforeseen urgent event.

18. Nothing contained herein shall prevent the council from exercising, at any time, its existing power, in respect of providing financial assistance or grants to local or national organisations, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 137, or the General Power of Competence.

Approved by council: June 1, 2023

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