



Grant Aid Policy

1. General

The Town Council reserves each year a sum of money for disbursement on grants to organisations, for subsidised hire of its venues and for activities which contribute constructively to the life of the town. These grants are limited and can, therefore, only be made available to those organisations that can demonstrate a need for assistance within the above town limitation, and generally are not a statutory charge on other local, or central, government departments.

The Council acknowledges that new community organisations may experience difficulties obtaining funding from other sources, the Council will therefore give special consideration to applications for grant aid from such groups.

There is no maximum amount that grants can be applied for however, the budget is £20,000 for any given fiscal year (1 April – 31 March) so applications will be judged on their merit based in the application and how they meets the criteria below.

2. Application Process

2.1 To ensure that fair and proper consideration can be given to all requests, the Council requires the following to be submitted:

- A completed application form;
- The most recent full set of accounts available;
- A financial projection or budget for the period following the accounts;
- Any additional information the organisation considers will support their application for grant-aid.

2.2 If the organisation is a new entity with no accounts available, please provide a Business Plan, stating aims and objectives, along with a financial projection for at least the current fiscal year.

3. Deadlines

3.1 Applications are considered by the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee bi-annually. The deadline for receipt of applications is 12 noon on:

- 31st May 2024 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 10th June
- 24th January 2025 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 3rd February

3.2 Applicants will be advised approximately four weeks after the above dates whether their application has been successful or not after ratification by the Full Council. The Town Council's decision is final.

4. Criteria & Guidance

4.1 Council Aims & Objectives

The Council has the following objectives in its Strategic Vision. In offering financial support, all applicants must identify which objective its project/purpose

- 4.1.1 A vibrant local economy – promote local businesses and help develop locally controlled economies which put Witney first whilst preserving and enhancing our history and unique identity.
- 4.1.2 An engaged and supported community – actively seek engagement with all residents and work with others to enable them to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- 4.1.3 A beautiful Witney – further improve and develop our open spaces and work to protect and enhance our environment.
- 4.1.4 A forward-looking Town Council – represent residents and businesses on key strategic issues facing the town.
- 4.1.5 An empowered community – encourage collaboration for the overall success of the town through the facilitation and championing of change programmes and initiatives.
- 4.1.6 A respectful community – promote inclusivity and always treat people fairly and with respect regardless of race or racial group, sex or sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, gender identity or disability

4.2 Climate Emergency

- 4.2.1 Witney Town Council declaring a Climate Emergency on 26 June 2019, and is committed to the vision of carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest
- 4.2.2 Witney Town Council works with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy.

4.3 Social Value

- 4.3.1 The Council recognise the social, economic and environmental value attributed to the services provided by Community Organisations/Groups and charities to residents.
- 4.3.2 Applicants should be able to identify the additional benefits of their application and demonstrate how this improves their lives

5. Type of Organisation & Locality

- 5.1 Applications will only be accepted from Charitable and/or non-profit-taking organisations; the Council regrets therefore that applications from Commercial organisations will not be considered. National appeals are, with limited exceptions, regrettably outside the legal scope of the Council's grant-aid scheme.
- 5.2 Organisations applying to Witney Town Council should be local to Witney or, if just outside the boundary, its work should be of significant benefit to the Town and its residents.
- 5.3 In relation to points 2.1 and 2.2, in order to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, organisations should provide a registered charity or company number on their application form.

- 5.4 The Council is prevented by statute from giving financial assistance to individuals, charities operating overseas or to a fund established to help persons outside the UK.
- 5.5 Only if sporting organisations can demonstrate that they have been unsuccessful in obtaining funding from their national bodies or West Oxfordshire District Council will Witney Town Council consider their application for grant-aid.
- 5.6 Schools and educational establishments may apply to the Town Council for assistance but must demonstrate that community engagement has taken place to support their application.
- 5.7 Churches and Ecclesiastical Establishments may apply for funds towards their facilities, but the Council does have specific duties it must undertake in this area due to legislation, so any decision will be at the discretion of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

6. Type of Financial Assistance

- 6.1 The Council would prefer to provide financial assistance towards specific projects or purchases of equipment; however, it will also support ongoing revenue costs if the organisation can demonstrate their lack of funds and the adverse effect on the Town and its residents if the organisation is unable to continue or are hampered by lack of funds;
- 6.2 The Council will also consider assistance in kind, such as use of rooms at reduced or free rent within these terms of grant-aid.

7. Exclusions

The Town Council will *not* fund the following: -

- 7.1 An application where the *sole* aim is to raise money for charity or to distribute money to others, whether they be individuals or organisations. Any charity that may benefit as a result of a grant application should be listed in the application. However, the Town Council may fund an event raising money for charity if the event has benefit to the community.
- 7.2 An application that aims to support or promote the religious/political beliefs/interests of an individual or organisation. Applications must demonstrate that the project will be of benefit to the wider community. However, this does not necessarily exclude activities on the premises of or organised by a particular religious/faith group or political party.
- 7.3 An application in relation to the provision of hospitality.
- 7.4 An application to fund the salary of a project organiser. Witney Town Council may fund the cost of an entertainer at an event but not the salary of the producer/director of the event.
- 7.5 An application for a retrospective event/project (unless the delay has occurred due to the Council's meeting calendar).

8. General Conditions:

- 8.1 Applicants can only apply once in any 12-month period.

- 8.2 Grants should be spent within the year, for the purpose for which they were given.
- 8.3 Grants cannot be made to cover money already spent.
- 8.4 The Council reserves the right to request a copy of invoices and/or other documentation as evidence that the expenditure has been incurred.
- 8.5 All organisations receiving grant-aid, as a condition, are required to provide the Council with a written report within 12 months of the award date to demonstrate how the funds were expended. Where funds have been provided towards running costs, an overview of the organisation during that time are acceptable.
- 8.6 If an organisation dissolves the Council would expect the organisation to reimburse the grant-aid awarded.
- 8.7 The giving of a grant one year does not set a precedent for another year.
- 8.8 The Town Council is committed to adhering to the Equalities Act 2010. Any application which, in the Council's opinion, does not meet this legislation will be refused.
9. Confidentiality, Transparency & Data Protection
- 9.1 The Council is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 but must be transparent about the granting of its public funds to external parties. The Council will:
- Publish a link to the Town Council's Privacy Notice on the Grant Aid Application Form
 - Publish the application form in its publicly viewable agenda pack for the deciding committee with the named contact on the form (less other personal details and signature)
 - Share supporting information of the application in its publicly viewable agenda pack unless advised it is commercially sensitive, or it falls under an exemption from disclosure under legislation.

10. Witney Town Council is committed to:

- Publicising the availability of grant-aid widely throughout the Town.
- Reviewing the grant-aid budget annually during its budget-setting process.
- Periodically reviewing the criteria for awarding grant-aid to community organisations.

For any further information, please contact the Witney Town Council Finance Department on info@witney-tc.gov.uk

All completed applications with supporting information should be returned to the above email address for the information of the Responsible Financial Officer.