

---

**Agenda Item:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 25 November 2024

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk/RFO

---

The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with grant requests from local organisations so they may agree dispersal.

### **Background**

The Council maintains budgets for general discretionary grants and subsidised letting grants for groups or organisations which require financial assistance towards projects, costs and venue hire in order to provide services for the residents of Witney. Grant requests are usually considered by this Committee bi-annually at meetings in June and January, however there is occasion when they need to be considered at other times of the year due to Council Committee timeframes.

In the current year the budgets are as follows:

- Discretionary Grants (4100/407) - £20,000
- Witney Town Council 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (4149/408) – “£50 for Fifty” - £2,500
- Subsidised Lettings – Corn Exchange/Burwell Hall (4110/407) - £1,800
- Subsidised Lettings – The Leys/Other (4110/202) - £10,000
- Annual grants - There are also specific budgets for a number of annual grants to organisations.

At the beginning of this financial year there was no funds brought forward from the previous 2023/24 financial year.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Witney Town Council 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - £50 for fifty grants**

At the meeting of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee it was agreed to delegate authority to officers, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to consider and approve grants under this scheme.

The following grants have been approved and Members are requested to note and endorse these awards:

	Group or Organisation	Reason for Request	Application Form Completed	Supporting Documents Received	Recommendation From Chair
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Witney Boy's Brigade	Looking for a tablet/computer to go with a recently purchased projector	Yes	Yes	Grant
2	4 <sup>th</sup> Witney Guides	To buy equipment/crafts to use at meetings and complete badges. E.g. paper, paints, brushes etc.	Yes	Yes	Grant
3	Junior Parkrun	Some equipment needs replacing, noticeably finish tokens used every week to allocate the children their finish position. These cost £40. Use the balance of the £50 to buy some more foam hands for Marshalls to use when cheering on and high fiving the junior park runners	Yes	Yes	Grant
4	St Mary's Cogges Community Garden	Improve facilities which include a gazebo for shelter, new storage box for the front, new tables and protection covers for chairs. We also buy seeds and compost for next year	Yes	Yes	Grant
5	Tower Hill FC	Contribution towards purchasing a set of 7-a-side portable goals which will benefit the following teams training sessions.	Yes	Yes	Grant
6	Windrush Church	Enable us to purchase some new toys for the children.	Yes	Yes	Grant
7	Witney Wolves Basketball	We require new basketballs which can cost up to £80 each	Yes	Yes	Grant
8	Witney Ringing Society	Towards installation of a simulator within the tower (St Marys).	Yes	Yes	Grant
9	Witney & District Twinning Association	In spring next year, the group will be organising a celebration weekend (1 <sup>st</sup> May Bank Holiday) to mark 45 years of twinning with Le Touquet and 35 years with Unterhaching. We would like to produce a pop-up banner to mark the occasion and then use subsequently with twinning partners and the association. We have been quoted £115 – the £50 will go towards this	Yes	Yes	Grant
10	Witney Arts & Crafts Society	Help to pay for demonstrators to come in and teach new skills. They are expensive and take a big chunk of the money.	Yes	Yes	Grant

6 50:50 grants were awarded at the last meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September (minute no. F543 refers). With the ratification of these 10 awards, this brings the total number of awards to 16.

In the original criteria, it was agreed the £50 for Fifty fund would close after this meeting. Due to the positive response to the scheme and a remaining budget of £1,700, Members may like to resolve that the fund is extended until February 2025 with a final push on communications before that time.

### **Subsidised Letting**

1. Witney Food Revolution - A request for subsidised letting to cover the cost of room hire and exclusive use of the bar to hold an anniversary fund raiser for the Witney Food Revolution at Witney Corn Exchange on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The sum being £237.50. The documents can be seen as **Appendix A**.
2. Seniors Christmas Party – To note a grant application form has been submitted for this event at Burwell Hall on 21 December 2024. At the last meeting of this Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the request was approved (minute no. F543).

### **Correspondence**

To note the letter of thanks from Home-Start Oxford in relation to a previously issued grant. (Attached as **Appendix B**)

To note the letter of thanks from Witney Town Band concerning their Autumn Concert held at the Corn Exchange on 17<sup>th</sup> November, and request for a subsidised use next year. (**Appendix C**)

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – the groups applying for the 50:50 grants reach a large demographic of the town
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of the report.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The Council has policies and criteria for which it uses to award its grants to ensure public funds are allocated and used appropriately. If awards are deviated from these criteria, a robust reason should be given and agreed by the Committee.

The Council must ensure they are satisfied with the information provided in order to award funds and request further information if not. To not do so could incur reputational risk.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Benefits to Witney's community - young, elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable people within the town are all covered both independently and jointly by several of the applicants. All groups provide social value for residents and help combat obesity, food poverty and social isolation.

## **Financial implications**

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2023, the Council invoked the General Power of Competence under which the ability to award these grants is made.

- The remaining grants budget balance is £10,920 (4100/407)
- The remaining subsidised lettings budget for the Corn Exchange is £4,956 (4110/407)
- The remaining £50 for Fifty grants budget is £1,700.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Endorse the award of grants of £50 to 1<sup>st</sup> Witney Boy's Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Witney Guides, Junior Parkrun, St Mary's Cogges Community Garden, Tower Hill FC, Windrush Church, Witney Wolves Basketball, Witney Ringing Society, Witney & District Twinning Association and Witney Arts & Crafts Society from the Town Council 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary grants fund "£50 for Fifty."
2. To consider extending the £50 for Fifty grant fund until February 2025.
3. To consider the application by Witney Food Revolution for a subsidised letting at the Corn Exchange Witney, in the sum of £237.50.
4. To note a subsidised letting form has been received for the Burwell Seniors Christmas Party on 21 December 2024.
5. Note the correspondence from Home Start-Oxford.
6. Note the correspondence from Witney Town Band and request for a sub-let in 2025.