
Agenda Item: Grants & Subsidised Lettings

Meeting Date: Monday, 9 June 2025

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
- Subsidised Lettings – Corn Exchange/Burwell Hall (4110/407) - £1,500
- Subsidised Lettings – The Leys/Other (4110/202) - £5,500
- Annual grants - There are also specific budgets for a number of annual grants to organisations. For this meeting, they are covered in a separate report.

The RFO is currently completing the 'end of year' accounting processes so any carryover from the 24/25 year will be advised at the next meeting.

Current Situation

Discretionary Grant Applications

1. Apollos Clothing – A grant application form has been received asking for £1,080.00 to purchase 120 pairs of shoes. The group were invited to apply to both Witney Town Council and Witney Town Hall Charity and the application has been passed to the Charity for consideration. The application form and supporting information is attached as **Appendix A**.

Subsidised Lettings

1. Witney in Pink – A request has been received for £300 (£287) to use the Corn Exchange to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Witney in Pink. The application and supporting information can be seen as **Appendix B**.
2. Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action Group (OCVA) – To note an agreement made by officers to provide subsidised use of the Corn Exchange [on 3 September 2025] for a public awareness session to the sum of £140.00. In return, the Council received free access to the organisations funding database.
3. Centenarian birthday – To approve free day-time use of the Main Hall of the Corn Exchange for a small party to mark the occasion on Friday 22nd August 2025.

Other Matters

1. Le Touquet Youth Council Event – At the Stronger Communities meeting on 2 June, the Mayor advised the Le Touquet Youth Council would be visiting Witney from 8-10 July. The Committee was supportive of holding an event with the Witney Youth Council in the Gallery Room on 8 July.

This Committee is asked to endorse a budget for the above event, planned for Tuesday 8th July for the sum of £500 to provide a fish and chip supper and £70 for subsidised hire.

2. The Town Council has been awarded a grant of £1,236.24 towards 2x replacement springers (play equipment) at the Leys play area by Witney Town Hall Charity.

Grant monitoring 2024-25

West Oxfordshire Community Transport

The Council provides financial support each year for the sum of £23,500. Confidential bus usage figures from December - May (except February) are provided as **Appendix C**.

£50 for 50 Grants

Officers are still awaiting five sets of receipts from the twenty-three groups/organisations who were awarded from the scheme and continue to pursue them for the information.

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 application helps to provide financial equality by providing shoes to those who are unable to afford them.
- 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 – the group promotes sustainability of clothing.

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, and disadvantaged within the town are all covered both independently and jointly by several of the applicants.

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.

- Any discretionary award of subsidised let can be covered from the existing budgets listed at the beginning of the report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the grant request from Apollos Clothing.
2. Consider the request for subsidised use of the Corn Exchange from Witney in Pink, and for a centenarian birthday party.
3. Note the award for subsidised use of the Corn Exchange for OCVA.
4. Consider the recommendation of the Stronger Communities Committee to fund a small civic event welcoming the Le Touquet Youth Council on 8 July.
5. Note the grant awarded to the Council from Witney Town Hall Charity.
6. Note the bus usage figures from West Oxon Community Transport and update on monitoring of the £50 for 50 grants.