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**Agenda Item:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 21 July 2025

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

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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.

### Current Situation

#### Discretionary Grant Application

1. Witney Flood Group – A grant application request for £800 has been received asking for funds towards providing the group's service – marketing, website, conferences/events, advice on planning applications and future mitigation solutions + any contribution to pay experts to provide the above. The full application and supporting documents are attached as **Appendix A**.

#### Subsidised Lettings

1. Witney Jazz – a subsidised letting request for £160 has been received towards the cost of the Corn Exchange for a Blues concert, with proceeds going to charity. The full application and supporting documents are attached as **Appendix B**.

2. Mayor of Witney - a subsidised letting request for three free uses of the Corn Exchange or Burwell Hall has been received to assist in fundraising throughout the mayoral year (£160 per session). The full application is attached as **Appendix C**.
3. Climate Fair – a proposal for use of the Corn Exchange in order to facilitate a Climate Fair event (£320) is expected from the Climate & Biodiversity Committee. Details are attached as **Appendix D**
4. Aspire – a subsidised letting request for hire of the Gallery Room at the Corn Exchange to showcase young people’s art following their art course – to celebrate their talents and introduce more people to the work of Aspire. Details are attached as **Appendix G**.

### **Correspondence**

1. Correspondence has been received from Apollos Clothing in relation to the grant awarded at the last meeting and is attached as **Appendix E**.
2. Correspondence has been received from Lowland Rescue Oxford in relation to the grant awarded by this Committee earlier in the year and is attached as **Appendix F**.

### **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 – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
- b) Biodiversity – Witney Flood Group continue to promote incentives via education and the maintenance of our rivers that should enhance local biodiversity within the town.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Witney Flood Group exists to educate and lobby authorities on flooding and help find solutions to mitigate against it. Increased flooding events may be linked to climate change.

### **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 - disadvantaged residents would benefit from the services provided by Witney Flood Group.

## **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 discretionary grants budget is £15,925\*
- The remaining subsidised lettings budget is £214\* *To award all of the requests would exceed the annual budget.*

\*These amounts do not include any carry forwards from the 2024/25 year and are based solely on what has been agreed at previous meetings.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the grant request from Witney Flood Group.
2. Consider the requests for subsidised use of the Corn Exchange from Witney Jazz, Climate Fair, Mayor of Witney and Aspire.
3. Note the correspondence from Apollos Clothing and Lowland Rescue Oxford.
4. Consider creating a policy specifically for Subsidised Lettings.