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**Agenda Item:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 22 September 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 Applications

1. Thames Valley Police – A grant application for £2,500 has been received from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, requesting funding towards the purchase of an electric bike. The full application is attached as **Appendix A**.
2. Rotary Club of Witney – An application requesting an annual contribution of £3,750 towards the Christmas Lights Switch-On event has been received. The full application and supporting documents are attached as **Appendices B and C**.

## Youth Services Grant

All grant recipients have expressed their gratitude to the Council, and the award agreements have been duly signed and returned.

There were two points noted by the Stronger Communities Committee on 15 September which are repeated below for transparency,

‘Unfortunately, the **Friends of Springfield School** have been unable to facilitate the therapeutic horse-riding sessions proposed in their application. The group is now exploring alternative, similar youth services that may be more feasible as a replacement. They have been advised any new proposal funding would be subject to the Council’s discretion and cannot be guaranteed.

Following the agreement of grant allocations in July, a representative of the **Parish of Witney** asked for the parishes aims and activities to be updated with the following, which was an agreed statement on their website. They were awarded part funds for an enrichment programme.

*‘Our churches share a common purpose: to help each person in our communities grow deeper in their knowledge of and relationship with God. Our vision is to be a community of mercy and kindness.*

*We cherish the Eucharist and the Daily Office, and we are an inclusive church committed to a hospitable Christianity where everyone is welcome.*

*As an outward-looking church, we seek to demonstrate God’s love through our actions. We actively engage with 11 schools, 6 nursing and care homes, and provide outreach to new housing communities and those in need throughout the area.’*

## Correspondence

Correspondence has been received from Be Free Young Carers in relation to the grant awarded last year and is attached as **Appendix D**.

The following was also publicised in relation to a recent grant award by Ducklington Sports Club.

<https://www.ducklingtonsportsclub.co.uk/news/grant-funding-from-witney-town-council>

## 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 Christmas Lights Switch-on Event provides a free family-friendly event which is inclusive to all.

- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – The provision of a bike for the Witney Neighbourhood Policing team may help with alleviating crime and ASB in Witney.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of this 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 – the provision of a bike would lead to a more visible police presence which makes the community feel safer. The lights switch-on event is an annual social event and, judging by resident survey feedback, is important for the wellbeing of residents and for businesses.

## **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 £10,925
- The remaining budget (4104/408) allocated for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event is £2,325 (a shortfall of £1,425).

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the grant request from Thames Valley Police Witney Neighbourhood Team.
2. Consider the grant request from the Rotary Club of Witney, noting any additional funds would need to be sought from another budget.
3. Note the updates concerning the Youth Services Grant.
4. Note the correspondence from Be Free Young Carers and Ducklington Sports Club.