



Policy Document

Subsidised Lettings Policy

1. General

This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for providing subsidised or reduced-rate hire of Town Council facilities to eligible organisations. It is intended to support local voluntary and community groups whose work benefits the residents of Witney, in line with the aims of the Council's Grant Aid Policy.

2. Eligibility & Criteria

To be eligible for a subsidised letting, applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit, charitable, voluntary, or community organisation.
- Deliver activities that provide measurable benefits to the residents of Witney.
- Demonstrate financial need or limited access to alternative funding sources.
- Be compliant with all necessary safeguarding, insurance, and licensing requirements.

Commercial enterprises, political parties, or individuals are not eligible for subsidised lettings under this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the hire of any Witney Town Council-owned venues or open spaces, including but not limited to:

- Public Halls
- Public event spaces
- Sports pitches/Recreation Grounds

Subsidies may be awarded in the form of a percentage reduction from the standard hire rate. The following guideline bands apply and will be judged in line with the Council's Bookings Policy group charges.

3.1 Level Percentage Reduction

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|---------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 1 | 25% | Organisations delivering community benefit with some external funding available or charging for services. |
| Level 2 | 50% | Local groups run by volunteers with limited funding, open access to the public. |

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|---------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 3 | 75% | Registered charities or CICs offering free-to-access services for vulnerable or underserved groups. |
| Level 4 | 100% | Events or services wholly initiated or supported by the Council with exceptional community benefit and no funding. |

Reductions are at the discretion of the Council and subject to budget availability.

4. Application Process

4.1 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 including a summary of the event or activity.
- The most recent full set of accounts available.
- Evidence of benefit to the local community.
- Any additional information the organisation considers will support their application for subsidised hire.

4.2 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 and the latest bank statement if available.

5. Deadlines

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

- 30th May 2025 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 9th June.
- 23rd January 2026 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 2nd February.

The Council may approve up to 60% of the annual budget after the first round of applications.

5.2 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.

6. Considerations for Approval

In evaluating applications, the Council will consider:

- Alignment with strategic priorities and community objectives (below;)
- Financial need and available funding.
- Frequency and duration of use.
- Previous use and conduct (if applicable).

Council Aims & Objectives

- 6.1 The Council has the following objectives in its Strategic Vision. In offering financial support, all applicants must identify which objective its project/purpose:
 - 6.1.1 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.
 - 6.1.2 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.
 - 6.1.3 A beautiful Witney – further improve and develop our open spaces and work to protect and enhance our environment.
 - 6.1.4 A forward-looking Town Council – represent residents and businesses on key strategic issues facing the town.
 - 6.1.5 An empowered community – encourage collaboration for the overall success of the town through the facilitation and championing of change programmes and initiatives.
 - 6.1.6 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.

6.2 Climate Emergency

- 6.2.1 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.
- 6.2.2 Witney Town Council works with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy.

6.3 Social Value

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

7. General Conditions

In addition to the criteria listed at the beginning of the guidance, the following also applies:

- 7.1 Applicants can only apply once in any 12-month period.
- 7.2 The giving of a grant one year does not set a precedent for another year.

- 7.3 An application for a retrospective event/project will not be subsidised (unless the delay has occurred due to the Council's meeting calendar).
- 7.4 In order to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, organisations should provide a registered charity or company number on their application form, if applicable.
- 7.5 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.

8. Confidentiality, Transparency & Data Protection

- 8.1 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 Subsidised lettings Application Form
 - Publish the application form in its publicly viewable agenda pack for the deciding committee with the named contact on the form (but without 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.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if required by legislative or strategic changes.

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, 22 September 2025.
Minute no: F544

Next scheduled review date: September 2026

For any further information, please contact the Witney Town Council Communities 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.

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