
Agenda Item: Grants & Subsidised Lettings

Meeting Date: Monday, 24 November 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.

Current Situation

Subsidised Letting Applications

1. Witney Food Revolution

An application has been received for £228.33 to cover the cost of exclusive use room hire at the Corn Exchange for an anniversary fundraiser for the organisation. The full application is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. Senior's Xmas Party

An annual Christmas lunch has been held at Burwell Hall for residents of the area since 2022. This year's event is being held on 20th December on the hall hire would usually cost £168.00

Other Grants/Financial Support

1. Witney Carnival

The Carnival Committee have submitted a grant application form for the 2026 event for a sum of £2,500. The full application is attached as **Appendix B**.

2. Christmas Lights Switch-on

The Council has yet to receive a request for the 2026 event as requested following the previous meeting. Based on the 2025 request, the RFO has entered an amount of £3,500 into the budget for approval.

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 and the Carnival provide free family-friendly event which is inclusive to all. WFR and the Senior's Xmas Party provide cost effective and accessibility to food/events for potentially more isolated members of society.
- 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 – Supporting community engagement in greener practices.

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.

Providing funds for community events, including those for older residents, strengthens community cohesion, reduces isolation, supports wellbeing, and encourages connections, helping build a more inclusive and resilient community.

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.

- There is no budget remaining for subsidised letting in 2025/26 (4110/407)
- The remaining budget for discretionary grants (4100/407) is £9,925

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the subsidised lettings requests from Witney Food Revolution and for the Burwell Senior's Christmas Lunch.
2. Consider the budget request and amounts for the 2026 Witney Carnival and Christmas Lights Switch-on events.