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**Agenda Item:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 2 February 2026

**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**

### **Subsidised Letting Applications**

There are no subsidised letting applications for the current financial year. Applications have been received from Witney Food Revolution and Witney Photo Group for the new year and will be considered at the next meeting on 30 March 2026.

### **Discretionary Grants**

#### **1. Witney Woodland Volunteers (WWV)**

A grant application for £653 has been received from WWV to help towards public liability insurance costs. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices A & B.**

## **2. Windrush Church of England Primary School**

A grant application has been received from Windrush School to pay for all or part of the cost of a talk about Mary Ellis – a local woman who flew spitfires in WW2 (one of the streets at Windrush Place is named after her.) The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices C & D.**

## **3. Be Free Young Carers**

A grant application for £3,000 has been received from Be Free Young Carers in order to register young carers in Witney and deliver 1-2-1 emotional support. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices E, F & G.**

## **4. Oasis Family Church**

A grant application for up to £14,750 has been received from Oasis Church towards the cost of a new gas boiler at Ceewood Hall. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices H, I & J.**

## **5. Broadhill Preschool**

A grant application for £6,206 has been received from Broadhill Preschool to resurface a boat area with all weather professionally fitted rubber mulch. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices K & L.**

## **6. Oxfordshire Foster Care Association (OFCA)**

A grant application for £400 has been received from OFCA for the booking of the cinema to provide foster carers and their children an opportunity to do something together. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices M & N.**

## **7. West Oxfordshire Performing Arts Foundation (WOXPAF)**

A grant application for £3,500 (or any contribution) has been received from WOXPAF to support the delivery of the inaugural Oxfordshire Festival of Speech, Drama & Musical Theatre in Witney in October 2026. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices O, P & Q.**

## **8. Windrush Community Choir (a community activity of Windrush Church)**

A grant application for £2,350 has been received from Windrush Community Choir to help with further growth. The full application and supporting documents can be seen in **Appendices R & S.**

## **Other Grant/Financial Report**

**9. Oxfordshire Play Association** – An application requesting £1,000 to support a 2026 Witney Playday has been received.

This amount has been agreed in budget-setting for 2026-27. The full application and accounts can be viewed as **Appendices T & U**.

## **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 – Providing grants to local groups and organisations may have a positive impact on equality by supporting inclusive activities and services for people from diverse backgrounds, including those with protected characteristics.
- b) Biodiversity – one of the applicants has a direct impact on the improvement of biodiverse areas within the town.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from the contents of the report although support for disadvantaged young people may lead to fulfilling lives.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – please see biodiversity section above.

## **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 £8,200
- The budget for an OPA Play Day in 2026 is £1,000 (4106/408)

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the discretionary grant requests as presented, and award as agreed.
2. Note the grant application from Oxfordshire Play Association for a Play Day in Summer 2026 as agreed during budget-setting.