
Agenda Item: Grants & Subsidised Lettings

Meeting Date: Monday, 30 March 2026

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) - £1,800
- 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

All applications relate to the new financial year. The Council's subsidised letting policy, as agreed by the Committee on 22 September 2025 is attached as **Appendix A**.

1. Witney Photo Group

An application has been received for the cost of Corn Exchange Hall hire on Saturday 13th June for a photographic exhibition of members' work. This equates to £320.00 (£266.67 + VAT £53.33). The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix B**.

2. Witney Food Revolution

An application has been received for £274.00 (£228.33 + VAT £45.67) to cover the cost of room hire and exclusive use of the bar to hold an annual fund raiser for the Witney Food Revolution. The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix C**.

3. Witney Town Band Training Band

An application has been received for cost of Corn Exchange hire for a fundraising concert. This equates to £215.50 (£179.58 + VAT £35.92). The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix D**.

Discretionary Grants

1. Friends of Witney Community Primary School

A grant application has been received asking for £5,000 'to fund much needed new playground equipment and repairs to existing old equipment not fit for purpose supporting the children to be active.' The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix E**.

2. Witney Shed

A grant application form has been received asking for £450 towards battery drills and impact screw drivers. Battery saw and two batteries. The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix F**.

3. Hanborough Cricket Club

A grant application form has been received asking for £5,000 towards the purchase and build of a community cricket net. The full application and sorting documents are attached as **Appendix G**.

Other Grant/Financial Matters

4. Witney Town Band

An application requesting £750 has been received for providing attendance at three civic events throughout the year. This is an annual grant and the uplift from £660 is referred to in the full application which can be seen as **Appendix H**.

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 assisted the Council and other local groups through the provision of bird boxes, hat boxes, hedgehog boxes etc.
- 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 – one of the applicants uses offcuts of wood to create sustainable environmental pieces.

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 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.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the subsidised letting requests as presented, and award as agreed.
2. Consider the discretionary grant requests as presented, and decide whether any allocations should be made now, if at all, and/or whether they should be deferred to the meeting of this Committee on 22 June 2026.
3. Consider the annual grant request from Witney Town Band.