

This is an informal meeting and we cannot make any decisions here. However it is proper that we can discuss facts so we all understand the implications. I would be grateful if anyone has anything to add or correct within this statement.

Firstly I need to declare what my objectives are. I personally think that we should always try to support our sports and community groups in Farnsfield. Where financial support is needed we should always do this in a transparent and fair way following our financial rules as closely as we can.

As a result of various correspondence, I've been looking into the way Farnsfield Parish Council have dealt with grants in 2018/19. (*editors note – error , should have said 2017-18*)

During this period, Grants were awarded to Farnsfield Pre school Playgroup, The Cricket Club, Bowls Club and Tennis Club.

Playgroup had an exemplary application supplying all relevant information. The bowls club and Cricket Club applications lacked some of the necessary documents. I think it was sloppy, but overall the grants were used for the intention declared on the forms.

The money applied for by the Tennis Club and transferred by the Clerk in June 2018 has not been spent on the extension mentioned in the application. The money should still be there. There are many irregularities in the application and the approval of the grant. I think that FPC have a duty to reclaim that money without conditions. We should make every effort to get the money back by consulting directly with the Tennis Club officials. If we do not succeed then we cannot just let it drop. It is not our money.

After that, without any preconditions we can discuss any future grants.

Most significant irregularities

1. The rules at the time stated that “once a grant has been allocated it must be spent within one year”. This is on Page 4 of 14 of the application form. The TC claim not to have received this part of the form and signed it without having read the terms of the grant.
2. Section F of the application states that “Grants are paid after work has been completed (need to discuss) and the expenditure has been incurred.....” I cannot find any record of a discussion. The grant should clearly not have been paid by the PC until works had been completed. Why did the PC pay the money over immediately?
3. The application, p8 of 13, Q 14 claimed that the tenure was freehold when it is without doubt leasehold. It is unclear why this was answered incorrectly but Q15 says that because the remaining lease is less than 25 years the project would **not** be eligible for funding.

4. FPC policy was to allow applications of up to £5,000 in any financial year for any organisation. It must be match funded. This application was asking for £10,000 and stated that it was not match funded. It should not have been approved.
5. The project was due to start December 2017 and to be completed Jan/early Feb 2018. The award was made in June 2018. It was recorded in Appendix 2 at the PC meeting on 26th June

On the basis that the Parish Council held over the request from last year it is proposed that the full amount is granted, which is within the Community Grant policy.

I cannot find the policy that allows the carrying over of awards from one financial year to another. In addition this application was for **£10,000** in 2017/8. Not £5,000 and then a further £5,000! *(Editors Note. It was pointed out after this report that the application did not mention £10,000. That was the award. The application was for 100% of £34,395.17)*

The 13th March email from the treasurer of TC offers to use the money within 6 months from receiving planning consent. On the grant application it said that planning consent was not required. If we agree to the request and planning is never applied for, we would never get the money back.

If we can get this money returned without conditions, we should be able to reboot the grant process in the correct manner and under the current rules.
I do not think we should play the blame game but we have to find a solution as painless as possible.