Alton Parish Council

Grant Application and Awarding Policy

Adopted by Alton Parish Council

On

10th March 2020

To be reviewed every two years

or

On Change of Legislation

Background

Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, Alton Parish Council (the Council) has discretionary powers to award grants to local groups or organisations.

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organisation for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be “in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it” and “the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure.” (Local Government Act 1972 section 137).

The Council will use the criteria set by Department for Communities and Local Government Act to determine the maximum amount of grant aid that will be available on an annual basis.

The Grant Process Overview

To apply for a Council grant you must be a charity, community group or local voluntary organisation with a dedicated bank account, operating or providing a service to the community of Alton Parish.

The Council defines a voluntary group as a not-for-profit organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee. Grants are usually offered on a one-off basis to support a particular project, event, activity or the purchase of equipment.

They are also open to new groups wishing to start up and receive a small contribution towards their running costs.

The Council particularly welcomes applications from small or newly formed groups and those that have not applied to us before.

Grants must be spent within 12 months of issue.

Receipts for all spend must be provided and unspent monies returned.

To be considered for an award, applicants must make a written application using the Grant Application form which can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or from our website

All valid grant applications will be initially assessed by the Finance Committee and presented to the following meeting of the Parish Council with a recommendation if eligible for consideration.

Applications which do not comply with the requirements will be dismissed.

Applicants will be notified by the Clerk, of the Council's decision.

Criteria used by the Council to determine whether to issue a grant

In general, the council will use the following primary criteria when deciding whether to issue a grant:

1. That the grant will bring a direct benefit to the parish or any part of it for some or all the inhabitants

2. That the benefit gained will be commensurate with the expenditure incurred. This means that a council will not spend a disproportionately large amount on something which has no, or very little, direct benefit. For example, spending the whole of the Council's allowance under Section 137 for the benefit of two people would be unlikely to confer commensurate benefit to the expenditure incurred

3. That we can legally issue a grant (see Legal Restrictions section)

4. That the Council hasn't, or will not, exceed the legal maximum amount of grant aid during the current financial year

Secondary criteria under consideration may include

- Whether the organisation has completed the grant form correctly and in full
- Evidence of a well-managed group including previous experience and track record
- Financial sustainability and viability of group and/or project
- Evidence of compliance with previous grant award conditions
- Whether the organisation has a closed or restricted membership
- Evidence of appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures where applicable

What will not normally be funded

- Grants that are covered under other mechanisms, such as Burial Grounds.
- The activities of religious organizations, unless they can show they operate clear and open community activities which do not require membership or connection to the organisation and that the application will be of benefit to the community.
- General operational and maintenance costs.
- Events that have already occurred, equipment already purchased, works already started or completed.

- Repayment of loans or cost of services, equipment or provisions in anticipation of a grant.
- Repayment of loans.
- “Upward funder” i.e. local groups where fund-raising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution.
- Applications will not normally be considered from national organisations or local groups with access to funds from national “umbrella” or “parent” organisations; unless funds are not available from their national bodies or the funds available are inadequate for a specified project.
- Grants cannot be paid to the church in line with S6(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1894 (1894 Act) Please see NALC Legal Advice L01-18.

Legal Restrictions

For Legal reasons, the council cannot accept Section 137 Grant applications from:

- Individuals or appeals supporting an individual.
- Organisations which support or oppose any political party.
- Organisations that discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief or age.
- Organisations or establishments for whom Central Government, Health Authorities, or the County Council are the appropriate sole statutory funder.
- Organisations that do not provide a service to the community of Alton Parish.
- General appeals.

- Religious groups where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs.
- Arts & sports projects with no community or charitable element.
- Medical research, equipment or treatment.
- Animal welfare.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance should submit:

1. A completed application form, which includes:
   - Details of the project or activity, for which the grant is sought.
   - Details of the benefit to the local community within the Parish.
   - Details of the number of beneficiaries and what proportion of members/beneficiaries are residents of Alton Parish.
   - Details of any restrictions placed on who can use/access their services.
2. Confirmation that it complies with its equality obligations under the various pieces of anti-discrimination legislation.
3. A copy of their trading account and balance sheet for the last financial year or, for new initiatives, a budget forecast. (Note: The organisation must demonstrate a clear need for financial support.)
4. A copy of their written constitution, together with details of their aims and purpose.

5. A copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy (where the organisation works with or provides services to children, young people, or vulnerable adults).

    a Organisations that fall within this category must demonstrate that they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse any application where adequate safeguarding measures are not evidenced.

6. All applications should be sent to the Parish Clerk as detailed on the application form.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All questions on the application form should be fully answered and additional appropriate information, which supports an application, must be provided for the request to be considered by the Parish Council.

Successful Applications

The grant will be paid by cheque. It must be acknowledged promptly by the organisation, stating the amount granted and acceptance of any additional conditions and requirements imposed.

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that a grant has been received from Alton Parish Council.

Any grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded unless the written approval of the Parish Council has been obtained for a change in use of the grant monies, and any unspent portion of the grant must be returned to the Parish Council by the end of the financial year following the year in which it was awarded.

The Parish Council reserves the right to request feedback or receipts to demonstrate how the money has been spent and/or to inspect the outcome of the expenditure.

The Parish Council reserves the right to withdraw or reclaim grant funding if an organisation is found to be in breach of safeguarding responsibilities or fails to maintain appropriate safeguarding standards.

Publicising the Grant

Alton Parish Council requires that grants are publicised. Successful applicants will be required to:

- Mention the grant in any press releases, online communications and website
- Non-compliance of publicity requirements is a breach of the funding agreement and may result in your grant claim being reduced, withdrawn or reclaimed.

Applicants must cover the cost of publicising the grant and this cannot be included in claims for grant reimbursement.

Objections to expenditure

Expenditure will be open to be challenged by the auditor, or by a local government elector objector at audit (Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014), on the basis that the expenditure is larger than the direct benefit to the area or residents would justify.

Data protection

We will use the personal data provided on the application form to process your application and to monitor the project.

In limited circumstances, we may be required to release information, including personal data and commercial information,

on request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If you feel that any information about your application or project should not be made publicly available, please contact us to discuss this.

Related materials

S6(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1894
Sections 137 and 137(A) Local Government Act 1972
NALC Legal Advice L01-18.

Grant Application Checklist

Before submitting, please ensure all relevant items below are completed.

ELIGIBILITY
- ☐ - We are a charity, voluntary or not-for-profit organisation
- ☐ - We have a constitution or governing document
- ☐ - We have a bank account in the organisation's name
- ☐ - Our project benefits residents of Alton Parish

PROJECT
- ☐ - We have clearly described the project/activity
- ☐ - We have explained the benefit to the community
- ☐ - We have identified beneficiaries
- ☐ - The project has not already started
- ☐ - The grant will be spent within 12 months

FINANCIAL INFORMATION
- ☐ - We have provided accounts or a budget forecast
- ☐ - We have demonstrated need

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
- ☐ - Completed application form
- ☐ - Constitution
- ☐ - Financial information

SAFEGUARDING (if applicable)
- ☐ - We have an up-to-date safeguarding policy
- ☐ - DBS checks in place where required
- ☐ - Procedures for reporting concerns are in place
- ☐ - Staff/volunteers have safeguarding awareness

DECLARATIONS (required)
- ☐ - We are not a political organisation
- ☐ - We do not discriminate unlawfully
- ☐ - The application is not for an individual

IF SUCCESSFUL
- ☐ Funds will be used for the approved purpose
- ☐ Evidence of spend can be provided
- ☐ Unspent funds will be returned
- ☐ The Parish Council will be acknowledged in publicity

Incomplete applications may not be considered.