

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 6th July 2021**

LJ/2021

24th June 2021

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 10 – GRANT FUNDING

AIM

1. To consider a policy for Town Council Community Grant Funding

BACKGROUND

2. The Town Council has a budget for grant funding.
3. Much but not all of the budget is earmarked for specific causes (e.g. this year youth club provision).
4. There are no rules or guidelines regarding the allocation of 'spare' grant funding money.
5. The Mayor has recently been approached by an organisation for a small grant (£500) which she is keen to support in some fashion. The Mayor has suggested to the Town Clerk that some policy and perhaps a standard form would be helpful to both applicants and councillors.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

6. Grant funding by Town Councils is made available through the direct taxation of the residents of the parish of Bridgnorth and the awarding of grants would benefit from having an objective approach that might strive for: equitable treatment, the opportunity to be considered, proportionality and the responsible spending of public money.
7. We have in the recent past received relatively brief emails asking for money for some cause. Often this has required back and forward correspondence to appreciate the nature of the grant.
8. When considering grant applications, it is likely that councillors will wish to fully understand the 'why' and the 'what for' of the application and it is clearly useful for the public record for that to be documented in some consistent manner. A standard application form can provide any applicant with a guide to, the information which the

Council might need before it can make a decision (rather than write a lengthy piece of prose that might miss some important facts).

9. It is not considered necessary for a low-level grant scheme policy to be lengthy, it merely needs to provide some general principles and framework.
10. I would suggest that it is inadvisable to provide revenue funding for groups or organisations (funding that groups will begin to rely on or expect each year) and that, grant funding is best utilised to help new organisations grow, existing organisations undertake something new and novel or to provide financial support in a time of unavoidable crisis.
11. The Town Council will be reassured if the administration of an organisation is in good order. It is useful for recent accounts, bank statements, minutes of meetings, constitution to accompany a grant application.
12. The Town Council is advised to consider proportionality when allocating funds i.e. how many residents benefit but that might need to be tempered with the impact/community benefit on a small and/or neglected group.
13. It is helpful if groups do not see Bridgnorth Town Council as the go to place for funds when the group includes residents from neighbouring parishes. E.g. the local water polo team might have significant participation from people who live in Tasley and if this were the case then, it would not seem unreasonable for Tasley Parish Council to be approached as well as Bridgnorth Town Council. That is not to say that approval of such a grant application would be dependent upon others contributing. Furthermore, part of the team building and community cohesion aspects of clubs are created through their own fund raising activities.
14. It is likely that The Town Council will generally not want to provide funding for regional or national charities, bearing in mind the source of the grants fund (direct taxation of Bridgnorth residents).
15. I have produced both a draft policy and a draft application form for consideration by the Town Council which seek to convey the general principles of grant funding for Bridgnorth Town Council. The application form looks to capture suitable information for a grant application to be considered in an objective and consistent manner.

FINANCIALS

16. No direct financial implications. A policy and a standard form are likely to improve documentation for internal audit.

SUMMARY

17. Having received an informal request for grant funding support the Mayor has suggested that consideration be given to adopting a policy and an application form.

18. There are some benefits in having both including: clarity of purpose; management of expectations; and consistent forms of application that capture relevant and meaningful information needed before coming to a decision.

OPTIONS

- A. Continue to consider grant requests on an ad-hoc basis without any formal process (the status quo).
- B. Adopt the draft policy and application form.
- C. Form a working group of some councillors to consider the draft and at a later date submit a revised draft of the policy and application form to The Town Council for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

19. It is recommended that the Town Council RESOLVES:

To adopt the draft policy and application form



Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk

Encl.

- 1. Draft Grant Policy
- 2. Draft Grant Application Form

(IN YEAR) GRANTS POLICY – BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Background:

In July 2021 Bridgnorth Town Council considered that a formal Policy be produced, regarding the handling of grant requests. The purpose was to provide guidance to councillors in order that they could provide a generally consistent approach, ensuring grant funding is targeted appropriately and that public money was spent well.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications for grant funding must be made on the form prepared by the Town Council and submitted to the Town Clerk.

- The Town Council can agree to change the application form at a council meeting.

Grant applications will be considered at designated Town Council meetings and should arrive no later than 10 days before the meeting¹.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS

Eligibility

The Clerk and the Mayor (or their deputies) are delegated to sift all applications prior to submission to Full Town Council using the following guidance criteria:

1. Applications should demonstrate a need for seed² or crisis³ funding.
2. Applications should contain sufficient information to allow an objective decision to be reached by the Town Council.
3. Applications should be for local community groups.
4. Where applications will also benefit non-Bridgnorth residents, evidence should exist that demonstrates other sources of appropriate funding are being or have been pursued.
5. Applications should not be considered for retrospective grants.
6. Applications from groups that have recently⁴ received a Town Council Grant should demonstrate an overriding or particularly novel reason.
7. Applications should cover activities to which the Town Council has a legal power⁵ to contribute.

In exceptional circumstances The Town Mayor can exercise some discretion when considering whether an application is eligible for consideration that does not readily fall within the guidance criteria. Examples may include:

1. National charities that are conducting activities in the Town, primarily for the benefit of the residents.
2. Participation in civic events.

¹ To enable the application to be sifted and then forwarded to members prior to any meeting.

² Seed Funding – To assist new community groups in starting up or, existing groups starting up a new or one-off venture.

³ Crisis Funding – Should be used to address items that could not have readily been foreseen. Consideration will be given to the expertise of the applicant.

⁴ Within the past 24 months.

⁵ The legal right to choose to do something.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLCIATIONS BY FULL TOWN COUNCIL

Eligible applications will be distributed with the (grants designated) Town Council meeting agenda, for consideration by the Town Council.

A list of non-eligible grants should be tabled at the meeting.

At the beginning of the agenda item to discuss grants, members should firstly consider whether each application is worthy of discussion⁶:

- Consider if the application has sufficient information to make a judgement.
- Consider if there is sufficient community benefit to be gained to grant public money raised through direct taxation of residents.

At this stage the Town Council can choose to identify those applications that it will not consider. In practice it is probably only fair to consider every request provided that at least one member present is supportive of, as it does not necessarily follow that discussion will lead to an award of a grant.

Levels of Grants

The meeting should identify a provisional amount (if any) of funding for each application. Once all the applications have been considered the total amount should be tallied to see if there are sufficient funds in the budget.

If the provisional total is within the budget then, the Town Council can vote to approve the grants en masse or modify the provisional proposal.

If the provisional total exceeds the budget the Town Council may:

- Vire funds from other budgets⁷
- Reconsider all the provisional amounts to ensure that grants budget is not exceeded.
- Make part payment of one or more grant applications and inform the applicant(s) that the Town Council may be able to assist further if they are able to find additional funding.

SUMMARY

The policy is intended to be a guide and can be re-written at the will of the Council. The policy cannot override existing or future legislation. Where the policy is silent, vague or becomes redundant in part, members should follow the spirit of the policy 'To strive for equitable treatment, the opportunity to be considered and the responsible spending of public money.

Authority: Adopted by resolution - Minute ????? (dated ?? July 2021).

⁶ There is a high probability that at least one member may be aligned to a particular community group by nature of being a member and members should consider whether they have a personal interest.

⁷ Caution should be exercised.

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION FORM (July 2021)

Please refer to the Town Council Grants Policy

1	Name of Group/Organization		
2	Correspondence Address		
3	Meeting Place/ Location of Activity		
4	Purpose of Group/Organizationⁱ		
5	If the group involves young people do you have a child protection policy?		
6	How often do you meet?		
7	Is the group affiliated to any governing body?		
8	Total Number of Participants		Number of Participants from the 4 wards of Bridgnorth
9	What is the value of the grant funding required?	£	
10	What is the grant funding to be used for?		
11	To whom should cheques be made payable to?		
12	If you are a registered charity please provide your registered charity no.		
13	Please provide a copy of your most recent annual accounts, i.e. Income & Expenditure and Balance sheet, your most recent bank statement along with any recent minutes of meetings that might show a financial position of your group.		

Additional Commentsⁱⁱ Other sources of fundingⁱⁱⁱ
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I confirm that, I have considered the Bridgnorth Town Council policy for In year Grant Funding.

I further acknowledge that if the group is unable to use the grant for the stated purpose(s) (within 12 months of the award), all monies must be returned to Bridgnorth Town Council.

I acknowledge that Bridgnorth Town Council is to be provided with receipts, proof of purchase or clear evidence of expenditure within 12 months of the grant being received. Bridgnorth Town Council reserves the right to request evidence to confirm that grants are spent in line with the original application. Where it is not satisfied that this is the case monies granted are to be returned.

Details of Applicant:

Signature		Name	
Date		Tel No.	

Applications should be forwarded to **Grant Applications, Bridgnorth Town Council, College House, 4 St Leonards Close, Bridgnorth, WV16 4EJ**

Telephone: **01746 762231** / e-mail: **info@bridgnorthtowncouncil.gov.uk**

Notes:

- Grants cannot be awarded to individuals.
- Grants will not be made retrospectively.
- The Town Council does not encourage groups to become reliant on grants and therefore will not generally make awards for similar items on a regular basis.
- The grant must be used for the purpose for which the application was made.
- Receipts, proof of purchase or clear evidence of expenditure should be provided to the Town Council within 12 months of the grant being received.
- If the group is unable to use the grant for the stated purpose (within 12 months of the award), all monies must be returned to Bridgnorth Town Council. Bridgnorth Town Council reserves the right to request evidence to confirm that grants are spent in line with the original application. Where it is not satisfied that this is the case monies granted are to be returned.

Check List

- On completion of your application form please ensure that you have remembered to sign and date the form, and to attach, e-mail, post or present the following:
- A copy of your constitution.
- A copy of your audited accounts, or details of annual income and expenditure.
- Quotations, estimates or information on the project/item for which funding sought.
- Where some of the potential beneficiaries of grant funding are from outside of Bridgnorth (e.g. Tasley, Eardington, Worfield or Astley Abbots), we would normally expect an indication that those parish councils have also be approached to provide support.
- Any additional information in support of your application.

ⁱ Attach a copy of your constitution or summarise activity/purpose.

ⁱⁱ Provide any further comment that will assist the Bridgnorth Town Council in reaching a decision.

ⁱⁱⁱ Provide any evidence of other methods of fund raising currently being undertaken.