



DONATIONS, GRANTS and LOAN POLICY

Resolved at the Council Meeting 7th November 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Policy describes how Little Marlow Parish Council (“**Council**”) will make donations and grants, and lend, from its funds.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1. For the purposes of this Policy:

A **Donation** is given without the need to be specific about how it is used, whereas a **Grant** must be spent specifically for the purpose agreed.

A **Loan** may or may not specify a purpose, but must be repaid in full.

For example a donation may be given towards sports club for the general running costs without being specific about what it is spent on whereas a grant would be given towards the cost of specific project such as installation of a new security system. In reality most applications under this policy will be defined as a grant and be subject to the following considerations.

- 2.2. The Council’s aim is to ensure that all our award-making activity is:

- 2.2.1. open
- 2.2.2. transparent
- 2.2.3. fair
- 2.2.4. competitive
- 2.2.5. supports local organisations

- 2.3. Our awards are open to established voluntary or community groups, as well as new or informal groups of parishioners who are or intend by the date of application to become formally constituted.

3. PARISH COUNCIL POWERS and SECTION 137

- 3.1. A parish council has a number of powers granted under various Acts of Parliament which enable it to spend money. Since 2008 the “Power of Wellbeing” and more recently the “General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011” allow parish councils more flexibility in how they spend money within the local community. In order to use either of these powers it is necessary that a parish council has a qualified clerk, and at least two thirds of the councillors have been elected rather than co-opted or appointed.
- 3.2. Currently the Council meets these criteria therefore all donations and grants fall under the statutory power of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits it to spend up to a certain limit on anything which in the opinion of the Council is in the interests of Little Marlow Parish, or any part of it, or is in the interest or all or some of its inhabitants.

- 3.3. This amount is limited to a figure per head of the electorate on the electoral role on the 1st January before the commencement of the financial year. The figure is index-linked and is advised by NALC annually.
- 3.4. The Council has no obligation to spend all or any of the money available under S.137. This money is not 'gifted' to the Council; it forms part of the Precept which the Council makes upon the District Council. The cost of any grants or donations is therefore reflected in residents' council tax bills.

4. WHO CAN APPLY?

To be eligible for the award of a grant under Section 137 an organisation must:

- 4.1. be established for charitable, benevolent, social, cultural, recreational or philanthropic purposes,
- 4.2. have a constitution, or set of rules, which define its aims, objectives and operational procedures,
- 4.3. be able to provide a copy of its latest annual accounts and/or most recent bank statement. Accounts are to be checked and signed by a person independent of the group,
- 4.4. have a bank account operated by a minimum of at least two joint signatories.

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1. The following requirements exist for a projects to be funded:

- 5.1.1. The project should be something that makes the local community a better place in which to live, work or visit.
- 5.1.2. It should benefit people who live in Little Marlow Parish.
- 5.1.3. There must be clear evidence that local people support the project and are involved in carrying it out.
- 5.1.4. Applications do not have to be from groups that already exist.
- 5.1.5. Each group may only make one application per financial year.
- 5.1.6. Applications will be considered for day-to-day running costs and individual projects.

5.2. The following are not eligible:

- 5.2.1. Support for individuals or private business projects.
- 5.2.2. Projects that are the prime responsibility of other statutory authorities.
- 5.2.3. Projects that improve or benefit privately owned land or property.
- 5.2.4. Projects that have already been completed or will have been by the time the grant is made.

6. CONDITIONS OF SUPPORT

The Council may make the award of any grant subject to all or some of the following conditions. Required conditions will be at the discretion of the Council and take into account your organisation's individual circumstances.

- 6.1. The application must be made using the official Council grant application form which is available from the Clerk and on the Council's web site.
- 6.2. Where part of the expenditure on a specific project sourced from a supplier exceeds £1,000, quotes from at least three suppliers must have been received.

- 6.3. Details must be provided of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or own fund-raising activities.
- 6.4. Funding must only be used for the purpose agreed with the Council and if the monies are not spent on the items agreed, they must be returned.
- 6.5. Funding must be spent within the financial year awarded and cannot be added wholly or partly to your reserves.
- 6.6. If project costs are more than anticipated on the application, any shortfall must be met by the applicant. The Council will not be in a position to make up any shortfall.
- 6.7. In order to fully understand your project or activity, Councillors may wish to visit your project or activity, prior to the project or activity commencing. They may also wish to conduct a site visit once your funded project is underway.
- 6.8. As a minimum, you will write to confirm receipt of the cheque for audit purposes, or as the cheque is handed over you will sign a form or receipt at the same time.
- 6.9. The need to provide evidence of expenditure (receipted invoices) to the Clerk to the Council on completion of your project will be discretionary – based on the amount given and the purposes given. (If required, this evidence of expenditure should be equal to, or more than, the total of the amount of the grant detailed on your application.)
- 6.10. Any unused funds at the end of the financial year in which the grant is paid out must be returned to the Council.
- 6.11. You must acknowledge the Council's support in all publications, publicity and annual reports.
- 6.12. You should show the funding awarded separately in your published financial accounts and the Council should have access to your financial records, on request, where appropriate.
- 6.13. A representative of your organisation should give a report at the Annual Parish Meeting (held on an evening between March and May each year) on how you spent the money and if appropriate how your project went.

7. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR LOANS

Under certain situations consideration may be given to loan applications from organisations as previously defined in this policy under the following terms:

- 7.1. The maximum period of repayment of a loan is 5 years.
- 7.2. The interest rate applied to the loan shall be the average base rate, as supplied by the Council's bankers, plus 1.0% or 4.0% whichever greater.
- 7.3. Under normal circumstances only one application will be considered in any one Financial Year and will be determined by the availability of Council's financial reserves.
- 7.4. Before a loan is authorised, the Council must ensure that guarantees/guarantors for repayment are found to be acceptable.

8. WHEN TO APPLY

- 8.1. The Council prepares its annual budget during November/December. Organisations should therefore write/apply by the end of October in time to be considered for the main bids. Any award granted would become available for payment after April the following year.
- 8.2. This is a competitive process against other bids and the quality of each bid is important.
- 8.3. All groups will be treated equally. If an organisation has had a grant previously, they are not guaranteed to receive financial support again but are not excluded from applying again. A fresh application will be required each time.

8.4. Whilst ad-hoc requests can be made at any time, there is no guarantee that any funds will remain available.

9. HOW WILL DECISIONS BE MADE?

The decisions will be made by the Council. The Council's decision is final. Unfortunately we may not be able to fund all projects as there may be more applications than there is money available, however all applications will be considered carefully. Due account will be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or own fund-raising activities.

10. HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be made in writing. Please apply to the Clerk for a standard application form or download one from the parish council website at <http://www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk>