



MIDDLETON CHENEY Parish Council

Parish Meeting Room
Main Road
Middleton Cheney
OX17 2LR

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Grants and Donations Policy

1. Definitions

1. A grant is awarded for a particular defined purpose.
2. A donation is awarded for general purposes.

2. Power

The Council regularly receives requests for grants and donations from a variety of organisations, and the aim of the Grants and Donations Policy is to encourage and support activities and projects which will benefit the Parish of Middleton Cheney and its Parishioners.

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 places restrictions on Parish Councils when it comes to making grants and donations to other organisations or bodies. One of those restrictions (paragraph 1 of Section 137) requires that such expenditure

“...is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants...”

The normal use to which this power is applied by local Councils is to provide funding to local organisations, e.g., Pre-School Groups, Youth Groups, Senior Citizens Groups etc., but one of the most important restrictions is that a grant or donation cannot be made to an individual for their own use, no matter what use and how good a cause that use may be (e.g., sponsorship for studying exchanges).

However, there may be occasions where the grant or donation can be paid to an individual where that individual is carrying out a service which benefits the local population. e.g., a Community First Responder (an NHS trained volunteer) whose role is to be the first on the scene as the result of an emergency call within a designated area (the Parish) to provide immediate life-saving support and who is required to raise funding to contribute towards the cost of the necessary equipment. It is clear that any grant or donation made by the local Council will directly benefit recipients of the service and it is, therefore, our opinion that the grant or donation can legally be given.

For Parish Councils in England for 2023/24, the amount that can be spent for the benefit of the area or for all or some of its inhabitants is £9.93 per elector in the Parish. This does not include spending which facilitates, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the Parish Council’s statutory powers, or in relation to Parish property.

3. Background

Any grants and donations made available are funded directly from the Parish Precept. The Precept is a tax that the Parish Council charge their local electors to meet its budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide (with the exception of grant monies received by the Parish Council for particular projects, and ring fenced for that purpose).

4. The Parish Council’s Timetable and Process

Work on the preparation of capital and revenue estimates for the Parish Council starts in September/October for the financial year commencing the following 1 April. The Parish Council expects to conclude this work in November in

order that the Parish Council's budget, and hence its precept demand, can be agreed at a meeting of the Parish Council in December.

For the Parish Council to include provision for a major item in its budget estimates, detailed information is required the previous summer/early autumn. Applications for small grants or donations can be made at any time of year, but the Parish Council will generally not consider an application for an amount in excess of £250 for the current financial year, or for the following financial year if the application is received after the end of September.

5. Policy

1. Any grant made by the Parish Council must directly benefit the Parish of Middleton Cheney or its Parishioners. The Parish Council cannot make donations to individuals unless the Community directly benefit. (Thus, the Parish Council cannot, for example, make a grant to a disaster appeal unless the disaster in some way affected the Parish or a substantial number of Parishioners.)
2. Grants and Donations cannot be made to fund political activities.
3. All proposed expenditure must be detailed in the Parish Council's annual budget meeting, to enable calculation of the Council's precept demand.
4. The organisation making a grant request should be a non-profit making voluntary organisation where membership is open (i.e., no discrimination of membership on grounds of sex, race, religion etc.) Grant requests from a charity registered with the Charity Commission can be considered, providing its primary purpose is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to the Parish, or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. (See paragraph 1 of Section 137, Local Government Act 1972).
5. The Parish Council will not fund events or activities which can be funded by the relevant participants, or which can or will be self-supporting by means of donations, or grants from other organisations etc.
6. The Parish Council will endeavour to provide assistance and support where appropriate to groups and organisations in the Parish wishing to access grants.

6. Applications

1. All applications for grants or donations shall be made in writing to the Clerk to the Council, who shall arrange for those applications which meet the Council's criteria to be considered at the next meeting of the Council.
2. In the case of an application which the Clerk determines does not meet the Council's criteria, the Clerk will provide a written explanation of their decision to both the applicant and the Council.
3. The grant available is normally limited to a maximum of £250 per application.
4. Only one grant will be given to any group or organisation, or for any particular purpose, in any financial year (1st April to 31st March).
5. If the Council considers that there are exceptional circumstances, then it can decide to exceed the above limits on amount and number of grants.
6. Grants cannot be awarded after the relevant event or project has been completed.
7. Applications must complete the Council's application form. Please download the form from the Parish Council website or request a copy from the Clerk to the Parish Council.
8. Applications which meet the criteria, and where the amount requested is £250 or less, will be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council, and applicants will be notified in due course.
9. Any applications which meet the criteria, and where the amount requested is in excess of £250, will be considered after the deadline of October 1st, and decisions will be made before the Parish Council sets its budget for the following financial year. All applicants will be notified after the Parish Council has resolved to adopt the relevant proposed budget (usually at the Parish Council meeting in December).
10. Successful applicants shall provide details of to whom payment should be made and acknowledge receipt of the payment.

7. Conditions

1. The Parish Council will assess applications with particular reference to the number of Parishioners likely to benefit, or whether any particular category of Parishioners would receive specific benefit.

2. Where a request for a grant/donation is agreed, the Council shall determine the amount, using the figure stated by the applicant as a guide only.
3. The grant or donations shall be used only for the stated purpose otherwise the monies shall be returned to the Council, except where the Council's prior written consent has been given for the funds to be used for another purpose. The Council may also specify a timeframe within which the funds must be spent. The Council may require documentary evidence as to how and when the funds were spent
4. The Council may request that applicants provide written feedback explaining how the grant/donation has benefited their group/organisation. If feedback is required, this will be communicated in the decision letter.
5. The Council reserves the right to impose other conditions that it deems necessary in order to protect public money.
6. The Council reserves the right to request repayment of any grant/donation where an applicant does not comply with these conditions.

8. Notes

1. The Council's decision on any application is final and there is no right of appeal.
2. The Council reserves the right to decline any application without giving reasons for its decision.
3. The Council will not commit to any continuing expenditure.
4. Where a Member of the Council is a member of a group/organisation applying for funding, that Member must declare, in accordance with its Code of Conduct, an interest in the matter and refrain from voting. Advice may be sought from the Monitoring Officer.

Document History

Version	Author	Date	Changes	Status	Minute ref
1.0	Mark Allen	20-03-2023		Draft	
1.1	Mark Allen	07-04-2023	#1	Draft	
1.1	P Davis	17-04-2023	None	Adopted	23/107