

Debenham Parish Council

Funding Policy

Introduction

Debenham Parish Council has powers granted to it in legislation to award funding and grants to local organisations, to support their activities in the Parish.

Over the years many varied groups have benefited from this funding, allowing them to provide services and activities that otherwise may not have been available to the residents of the Parish.

The awarding of funding/grants is taken very seriously by the Parish Council, it understands that it is responsible for public funds and the distribution of these funds needs to be properly managed.

This application document outlines the background to the grants scheme. Please take the time to read these pages carefully. A well presented and clear grant application, that contains all the required information, will greatly assist the Parish Council when considering grant applications.

We hope that organisations that apply for funding/grants understand that we require detailed information to enable the Council to assess applications. The Council undergoes rigorous internal and external audits that scrutinise the process carefully and it has to demonstrate that it has taken great care in the awarding of public funds.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any assistance.

Good luck with your application.

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Printed copies of this document are available.
An electronic copy in PDF format, is available on the Debenham Website.

These notes explain the background to the Council's financial grants scheme. Please read them carefully before you complete the Grant Application Form.

Our Policy

Grants/funding awarded should be in line with the following guidelines:

1. Grant/funding applications can be made by local community groups, voluntary organisations and sports/recreational clubs, all must be of a non-commercial nature.
2. The expenditure must bring some direct benefit to the area or part of it, or to some or all of the inhabitants; this means that it must be possible to point to some way in which, in the broadest sense, the area or its inhabitants will be better off as a result of the expenditure.
3. Direct benefit must be commensurate with the expenditure involved; it is for the Council, acting reasonably, to judge whether this test is met, but they need to consider whether the expenditure is reasonable in relation to the degree of direct benefit that it will produce.
4. Expenditure within the stated financial and legal parameters must be included within the budget of the Council.
5. Any grant/funding application must be seen to be of benefit to residents within the Debenham Parish Council boundary, (hereafter referred to as "the Council").
6. Grants can only be used for capital projects and not for revenue support (there is some discretion here).
7. Normally only one grant will be given in a Council fiscal year.
8. Grants will be considered by the full Council.
9. The funds available for grants are limited and may be used up early in the financial year as the Council will receive grant applications throughout the year.
10. The application must be on the Grant Application Form with all requested supporting documentation for it to be considered.
11. Grant applications will be assessed on the following criteria, which are in no priority order.
 - Filling gaps in provision
 - The assessment of the project's viability
 - The robustness or sustainability of the project
 - The majority of benefactors should be residents of the Parish
 - Availability of Parish Council funds for grants.
12. Grants for assistance in the running (revenue) costs of an organisation will be considered but will normally be limited to three years and may be reduced by one third each year, to encourage the organisation itself to develop sustainable funding.
13. The Parish Council reserves the right to reject applications or to reduce the award made. Under some circumstances the grant may be provided in kind rather than cash. Grants will not be considered, or awarded if previously considered, if the applicant has any monies overdue to the Parish Council, such as hall or pitch hire costs.
14. Awards will not be made:
 - To bodies that could be funded by their national or umbrella body
 - For buildings that are uninsured.

15. Awarded organisations must:

- Acknowledge Debenham Parish Council for receipt of the grant in ways to be agreed with the Parish Council
- Cheques must be made payable to the organisation's bank account not to any individual
- Agree to site or project visits by a representative of the Council
- Supply independently audited annual accounts: Firstly, in support of their application, and following payment of the grant, the Parish Council would expect accounts which specifically itemise the grant.

Conditions

1. Applications will not normally be considered from individuals (exceptional circumstances will need to be demonstrated).
2. Applications will not be considered from organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party, or to discriminate on the grounds of race or religion.
3. Applications will not be considered from private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus.
4. Applications will not be considered from "upwards funders", i.e. local groups whose fund raising is sent to their central headquarters for redistribution.
5. 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.
6. Applications from religious groups will be considered where a clear benefit to the wider community can be demonstrated, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Compliance with this requirement will need to be demonstrated throughout the project.
7. Applications from education, health or social services establishments may be considered where the organisation can demonstrate that it is working in partnership with other groups and where there are benefits to the wider community.
8. The organisation must have clearly stated aims and objectives.
9. The organisation must provide a written Constitution that has been formally adopted by the members of that organisation, or a similar document of agreement between individuals where their association is less formal.
10. The organisation must provide, or propose to provide, an activity or service that is believed to be clearly needed by the local community, or by a particular group of residents.
11. The organisation is required to submit audited accounts or accounts that have been independently examined by a suitably qualified person, for the previous two financial years or, in the case of a newly formed organisation or less formal group, a comprehensive budget and business plan.
12. The organisation is required to have a bank account in its own name with at least two authorised representatives required to sign each cheque, or similar robust financial control system.
13. In the case of an advance payment, written confirmation may be required stating that the money will be used for the purpose requested, as well as a monitoring and evaluation statement at the end of the project period or the financial year, whichever is the sooner.

14. Debenham Parish Council reserves the right to reclaim the grant in the event of it not being used for the purpose specified on the application form.
 15. Grants will not be awarded retrospectively, for costs incurred in the past. Grants can only be applied to future funding requirements.
 16. Debenham Parish Council reserve the right to recoup any equipment provided by the grant should the organisation cease to exist within 3 years of the grant being paid.
 17. Organisations that receive a grant will be required to acknowledge Debenham Parish Council's contribution on all publicity and printed material.
 18. Organisations that are registered charities will be expected to have submitted all annual returns and accounts required by the Charity Commissioners. Charities that are shown on the Charity Commission's website (www.charity-commission.gov.uk) to have returns or accounts that are overdue will have their grant application deferred for consideration until such time as the returns and accounts have been submitted to and registered by the Charity Commission.
 19. For funding applications up to £1,000 the applicant should demonstrate that at least five hours of volunteer time has been recorded and noted on the application*.
 20. For funding applications up to £5,000, the amount of external funding secured must be no less than fifty per cent of the total project cost.*
 21. For funding applications over £5,000, the amount of external funding secured must be no less than seventy-five per cent of the total cost of the project*.
- **These conditions do not preclude the Parish Council from making a final decision in cases where extenuating circumstances may apply, meaning that the applicant is unable to meet some of them. Applications are considered on a case by case basis. The same principle also applies to applications where the applicant may meet all the necessary criteria but the application is unsuccessful.**

Large & Capital Grants – Additional Conditions of Funding
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1. The Parish Council defines a large grant as one in excess of £750.
2. Organisations requesting funds for buildings must provide evidence of security of tenure in the relevant property for a minimum of 7 years from the date that the grant is considered.
3. Organisations requesting funds for buildings must provide proof that the property is adequately insured.
4. Where the Parish Council deems it appropriate, organisations will be required to provide progress reports or to allocate a place on their management or executive committee for one or more Parish Council representatives.
5. Where deemed necessary, the Parish Council may request site visits and meetings with the applicants to discuss the viability of the proposed project.
6. As much notice as possible is required for any large grant application, this will ensure that if the grant is to be awarded the Parish Council can make appropriate budgetary provision. The grant award maybe phased over a number of years.

Timetable

1. The Parish Council considers grant applications between April 1st and March 31st.
2. Applications must be received seven days before a full Council meeting.
3. Start of financial year, from when grants can be paid is April 1st.
4. Dates of the Parish Council's meetings are posted on the Parish Council notice boards and are detailed on the Calendar page on the Debenham website.

Reviewed on: 14th April 2025

Next review due: March 2026