Grant Policy

Full Council Approved:	October 2017
Last Reviewed:	October 2026
Due for next Review:	October 2029

1. Policy Statement

Fleet Town Council recognises that grants are an important means of supporting local organisations, voluntary groups and community initiatives that enhance the wellbeing of residents and contribute to the social, cultural, environmental, sporting and recreational life of the town.

This policy establishes a fair, transparent and consistent framework for the assessment and award of grants, ensuring that public funds are distributed responsibly and deliver clear community benefit.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all discretionary grant applications submitted to Fleet Town Council.

The Council operates a single Community Grants budget for discretionary grant applications.

Recurring annual grants approved by the Council, including grants funded through separately identified budget provisions, will continue to be funded through their existing arrangements unless otherwise determined by the Council.

This policy should be read alongside the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and annual approved budget.

Nothing within this policy obliges the Council to award any grant.

3. Statutory Authority

Fleet Town Council will only award grants where it has the legal power to do so under the relevant legislation.

Applications will only be considered where the proposed activity or project provides a demonstrable benefit to Fleet or its residents.

The amount of any grant awarded shall be proportionate to the anticipated community benefit and subject to the availability of funding.

4. Grant Administration

4.1. Decision Making

Responsibility for determining grant applications is delegated to the Policy & Finance Committee within the annual grants budget approved by Full Council.

Grant applications will normally be considered at the four scheduled Policy & Finance Committee meetings each municipal year.

Where an application is considered urgent and cannot reasonably wait until the next scheduled meeting, it may be referred to Full Council for determination.

4.2. Grant Limits

There is no prescribed maximum grant available to any individual organisation, subject to the approved annual budget.

Applications exceeding **£1,000** may be considered where the Committee considers that the level of community benefit justifies an award above this amount.

4.3. Frequency of Applications

Only one application from any organisation will normally be considered during any financial year.

The Council may consider additional applications where they relate to separate, unrelated projects or events that each demonstrate clear community benefit.

4.4. Application Process

Applications must be submitted using the Council's prescribed Grant Application Form available on the Council's website.

Applications must include all supporting information requested by the Council.

This may include, where appropriate:

- governing document or constitution;

- latest annual accounts;
- recent bank statement;
- project budget;
- quotations or estimates;
- evidence of match funding;
- safeguarding policy (where applicable); and
- any other information reasonably requested by the Council.

Applications that are incomplete or unsupported by the required documentation may be rejected by the Executive Officer without being referred to Committee.

4.5. Grant Aid in Kind

The Council may provide Grant Aid in Kind in the form of the waiver or reduction of standard room hire charges at Council community facilities where the activity provides demonstrable community benefit.

The delegated Grant Aid in Kind scheme is subject to the following conditions:

- the activity must provide demonstrable community benefit and be delivered by a not-for-profit organisation, public service, registered charity or constituted community group;
- Grant Aid in Kind may only be used to offset the standard room hire charge;
- other services, including technical support, staffing and equipment hire, are not eligible;
- Grant Aid in Kind may only be awarded where the room is not already booked by a paying customer and the booking does not displace potential income;
- the Executive Officer may approve individual requests for Grant Aid in Kind of up to £75 under delegated authority up to a maximum aggregate value of £500 in any financial year.

Grant Aid in Kind awards shall be recorded and reported in accordance with the Council's arrangements for grant awards.

The Council may review the delegated limits and conditions of the Grant Aid in Kind scheme from time to time.

4.6. Presentations

The Committee may invite applicants to attend a meeting or give a short presentation where this would assist the assessment of an application.

5. Assessment Criteria

All applications will be assessed on their individual merits.

In determining applications, the Committee will have regard to:

- the benefit to Fleet and its residents;
- the number of people expected to benefit;
- the longevity and sustainability of the project;
- value for money;
- the level of community need;
- the organisation's financial position;
- evidence of self-help or volunteer contribution;
- availability of match funding or alternative funding sources;
- previous grants awarded by the Council and compliance with any previous grant conditions; and
- the availability of funds within the Council's approved grants budget.

Where the total value of applications exceeds the available budget, applications will be prioritised using the above criteria.

Organisations holding unrestricted financial reserves significantly exceeding their operational requirements may be required to demonstrate why grant funding is necessary.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Councillors shall declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other registrable or non-registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Members with an interest shall act in accordance with the relevant legal requirements and the Council's adopted procedures.

7. Conditions of Grant

All successful applicants shall be deemed to have accepted the conditions contained within this policy.

Unless otherwise agreed by the Council:

- grants will not be awarded retrospectively;
- grants must only be used for the approved purpose;
- grant funding must not be transferred to another organisation without the Council's prior written approval;
- grants must be spent within twelve months of payment unless an extension has been approved by the Council.

Where grant funding is not fully utilised within twelve months, any unspent balance shall normally be returned to the Council unless satisfactory evidence is provided that exceptional circumstances have delayed the project.

The Council may determine that grants shall be:

- paid in advance;
- paid in stages;
- reimbursed upon receipt of invoices or receipts; or
- subject to additional grant conditions,

depending upon the nature and scale of the project.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

The Council may require successful applicants to provide evidence demonstrating that grant funding has been used appropriately.

This may include:

- copies of invoices or receipts;
- a short project report;
- photographs;
- publicity material acknowledging the Council's support; and
- details of the outcomes achieved.

Failure to provide reasonable evidence of expenditure may affect future grant applications.

The Council may also maintain records of Grant Aid in Kind awards for monitoring and reporting purposes.

9. Recovery of Grant

The Council reserves the right to require repayment of all or part of a grant where:

- false or misleading information has been provided;
- grant conditions have been breached;
- the grant has not been used for its approved purpose; or
- the funded project does not proceed and the grant is no longer required.

Where Grant Aid in Kind has been awarded and the conditions of the award are subsequently found not to have been met, the Council may require the standard room hire charge to be paid.

10. Publicity

Successful applicants shall, where reasonably practicable, acknowledge the Council's support in publicity, printed material, websites and social media using wording such as:

"Supported by Fleet Town Council."

Successful applicants also grant the Council permission to publicise grant awards and details of the supported project through its own publications, website and social media channels.

The Council may promote the availability of its grant funding through its website, social media channels and other appropriate communication channels.

The Council may publicise Grant Aid in Kind awards in the same manner as cash grant awards.

11. Eligibility

Eligible Applications

Grants may be awarded towards:

- capital expenditure for new or improved community facilities or equipment;
- provision of community services;
- projects that improve the wellbeing of Fleet residents;
- events that enhance the profile of the town and demonstrate community benefit;
- transport costs for community activities;
- training or specialist advice that provides long-term benefit to the organisation and community; and
- other activities considered by the Council to provide significant community benefit.

Grant Aid in Kind may be awarded towards eligible room hire in accordance with Section 4.5 of this policy.

Eligible Organisations

Grants may be awarded to:

- local clubs, societies and voluntary organisations;
- registered charities;
- community interest companies operating on a not-for-profit basis;
- organisations supporting disadvantaged or vulnerable groups within Fleet; and

- organisations located outside Fleet where clear evidence demonstrates significant benefit to Fleet residents.

Grant Aid in Kind may also be provided to a public service, not-for-profit organisation or constituted community group where the requirements of Section 4.5 are met.

Ineligible Applications

Grants will not normally be awarded to:

- individuals;
- commercial organisations operating for private profit;
- political organisations or campaigns;
- organisations promoting party political activity;
- projects that are the statutory responsibility of another public authority;
- retrospective expenditure;
- repayment of loans or debts;
- charitable donations made by an applicant organisation to third parties;
- activities taking place during normal school curriculum time;
- projects primarily promoting religious beliefs where there is no wider community benefit; or
- room hire at any venue, including Council premises, unless the Council is satisfied that the event provides clear community benefit and the organiser is unable to generate sufficient income or does not hold significant unrestricted reserves.

The provision of Grant Aid in Kind for room hire at Council premises is subject to the specific conditions set out in Section 4.5.

12. Equality and Data Protection

Applications will be considered fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

Information provided as part of a grant application will be processed in accordance with the Council's Privacy Notice and applicable data protection legislation.

13. Related Documents

- Financial Regulations
- Standing Orders
- Code of Conduct
- Equality Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Grant Application Form