

Cosgrove Parish Council

Grant Awarding Policy and Procedure

Introduction to Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Parish Council to an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish, and which is not directly controlled or administered by the Parish Council. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be “in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it” and “the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure.” Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

Policy

Cosgrove Parish Council awards grants, at its discretion, to organisations which can demonstrate a clear need for financial support to achieve an objective which will benefit the Parish by:

- Providing a service
- Enhancing the quality of life
- Improving the environment
- Promoting the Parish of Cosgrove in a positive way

The Parish Council will not award grants to:

- Commercial organisations
- Purposes for which there is a statutory duty upon other local or central government departments to fund or provide
- “Upward funders” i.e. local groups where fund-raising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution
- Political parties
- Religious organisations - unless for a purpose which does not discriminate on grounds of belief

Only one application for a grant will be considered from any organisation in any one financial year. Ongoing commitments to award grants in future years will not be made. A fresh application will be required each year.

Grants will not be made retrospectively.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance for amounts over £500 are required to apply by 1 September, at the latest, in the year preceding their funding requirement.

Organisations requesting financial assistance for amounts under £500 can submit applications for consideration at a full Council Meeting, which is usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. Any such applications should be submitted a minimum of two weeks before a Council Meeting.

All requests for financial assistance should submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts.
- Latest bank statement
- The number, or percentage, of members that belong to the organisation and that live within the Parish.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can use/access their services.

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Organisations will normally be expected to have clear written aims and objectives, a written constitution and a separate bank account.

Whilst the Parish Council would not normally consider applications for Capital Projects, any such applications will require a more substantial case with supporting evidence of the community benefit.

Assessment Procedure

At the Parish Council's annual budgeting meeting in October, an amount will be set from which grants will be awarded during the following financial year. This amount will principally be for grant requests for over £500 that have already been received by the Parish Council, in accordance with the application procedure, and which it envisages may be granted.

Any amount included within the budget does not guarantee an award; a decision upon an award will remain for approval by the Parish Council at the appropriate meeting. An additional amount will be reserved in the budget from which grant requests for under £500 may be made. A maximum award of £499 only for any such applications will be considered.

Once the grants budget is exhausted, the Parish Council will only consider emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations with which it has close links.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. To ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, however, the Parish Council will consider the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund-raising activities.

Successful Applications

A grant award must only be used for the purpose stated on the application. If the organisation is unable to use the money, or any part of it, for the purpose stated, then all monies, or unexpended part of such monies, must be returned to the Parish Council. The Parish Council may request proof of expenditure.

Following receipt of your grant:

- a) The grant monies must be spent within 12 months following approval of your application.
- b) Following completion of your project or within 3 months of spending the grant monies, you must write a short report to the Council explaining how the monies were spent and how your project has progressed and provide documentation as evidence of spending.
- c) A progress report must be provided to the parish council if no grant money has been spent within 6 months explaining the reasons for the delay.
- d) Subject to council consideration, full or partial return of the grant money awarded may be requested. If requested, your group is expected to make the payment within 4 weeks of the council's notice.
- e) If applicants do not intend to spend the money within 12 months, then prior written approval must be sought before the end of this period.

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment was received from Cosgrove Parish Council. Where appropriate, the Parish Council will affix a label to equipment.

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Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the Parish Council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user.

Adopted by Cosgrove Parish Council February 2025
To be reviewed in January 2027