

Feckenham Parish Council Grants and Donations Policy

Introduction

Feckenham Parish Council regularly receives requests for grants and donations from a variety of organisations. This policy document is intended to guide the Council itself about the scope and mechanism for awarding grants, and to set out guidelines for applicants to help with their requests for financial support. Feckenham Parish Council operates two types of grants, a Section S137 grant (made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972), and an unrestricted grant or donation made entirely at the discretion of 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 some of it” and “the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure”. In order to deliver the most benefit for the residents of Feckenham and surrounding villages, the Parish Council will apply these same principles to the award of unrestricted grants although the Council retains the authority to make individual decisions based on the merits of each application.

Who can apply?

Local community groups, voluntary organisations, and sports/recreational clubs, all must be of a non-commercial nature. Any grant application must be seen to be of benefit to residents of Feckenham Parish.

How can the grants be used and how are they decided?

Grants can normally only be used for capital projects and not for revenue support. Feckenham 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, and promoting the interests of the Parish of in a positive way

The Parish Council will hear the application and make a final decision. Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Parish Council will consider the amount and frequency of any earlier 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.

The Parish Council may set an annual budget from which grants will be awarded during the budget year. The availability of funds is dependent on the Council's overall financial position and the choices it makes when allocating its resources. Where possible it actively encourages organisations to seek grants from other agencies to finance projects.

When and how should an application be made?

All applications are to be made on a form that can be obtained from the Parish Council Clerk. Grant applications will be considered by the Council at the next available Parish Council meeting; or annually, according to the Council's financial position and other commitments. Funds will be paid to successful applications by cheque. Normally only one grant will be given in a Council fiscal year. On-going commitments for grants in future years will not be made. A fresh application will be required each year.

What is needed with the application?

Depending on the nature of the application, the following may be required:

- Full and complete copies of your accounts for the last two years (only if your organisation has been in existence for that period), bank statements for last 3 months. A member of your organisation indicating their position should countersign these documents.
- A detailed budget plan and supporting evidence.
- A copy of your organisation's Constitution, Terms of Reference, or Rules.
- The number, or percentage, of members that belong to the organisation and that live within the Feckenham Parish area.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can use/access the organisation's services.
- Should you have had an earlier grant from the Council, it is wise to check that you have included a full report of your earlier award.
- Evidence of other awards towards the project, e.g. lottery funding, other bodies.
- For grant requests for projects, the Parish Council will require that the organisation have robust tendering process, e.g. obtaining a minimum of three tenders. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process.
- Should a grant be more than £1,000 the Parish Council may decide to make a first award only, until proof of the project or invoices be given to the Parish Council.

Feckenham Parish Council expects applicants to get the best value for money for any equipment or service, so applicants will need to give a detailed justification if they have not used the cheapest quotes.

VAT

Grant awards will not cover reclaimable VAT.

What will not normally be funded?

- Private individuals
- The activities of political organisations
- The activities of religious organisations, unless they can show they operate clear and open community activities which do not require membership or connection to the organisation and that the application will be of benefit to the community.

- General operational and maintenance costs.
- Events that have already occurred, equipment already purchased, works already started or completed.
- Repayment of loans or cost of services, equipment, or provisions in anticipation of a grant
- Organisations that have a closed or restricted membership
- Organisations that are the responsibility of another public body/agency, however some form of matched/joint funding might be considered.
- “Upward funding” i.e. local groups where fund-raising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution.
- Purposes for which there is a statutory duty upon other local or central government departments to fund or provide.

This list is not exclusive and may be added to at the Council’s discretion.

Grant conditions

- The grant can only be used for the purpose stated in the application and the Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant not being used for the specified purpose of the application.
- Organisations are responsible for ensuring that they are following all legal and statutory requirements.
- Should, for any reason, the organisation disbands during the period of the grant the Council may ask for all or part of the monies to be repaid.
- Prior approval of the Council is needed for any change of purpose of the grant.
- Organisations must contact the Council before disposing of any equipment or resources purchased or part purchased with a grant from the Council.
- Acknowledgement of the financial support received from the Council is needed on documentation and any promotional literature or other media operation.
- To be eligible for a grant an organisation shall not discriminate on grounds of racial origin, gender, disability, age, (except for obvious reasons, such as becoming a member of a Youth club), and political or religious persuasion.
- More than one project may be included in a grant, though one completed application form per project is required.

Reporting

All grants awarded will be subject to a 6 month ‘report back’ to Feckenham Parish Council about the progress and/or community benefit.

The Parish Council requires that grants be publicised. The requirements will be set out in the grant award letter.

Successful applicants will have to:

Mention the grant in any press releases, online communications, and websites; and display a poster, plaque, or billboard, depending on the amount of funding received and the type of investment.