BOTTESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE CONSIDERATION AND AWARDING OF GRANTS AND DONATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bottesford Parish Council annually sets a grant aid budget in order to provide financial assistance to organisations, projects and activities which provide services that benefit the residents of the parish. Requests are received from voluntary and community organisations. Applicants for funding must meet the main eligibility criteria set out in this document in order to be considered for grant aid. It is at the discretion of the Parish Council as to what extent such requests must meet the criteria as set out in this document.

1.2 The grant aid budget is discretionary funding and as such is separate from any other services, which the Parish Council may fund under contract to fulfill statutory obligations or the delegated works of its sub Committees or Lead Member projects.

1.3 In the event of the Parish Council receiving more requests for funding, in any one financial year, than there are budgeted resources available; it will fund only those to which it assigns the highest priority.

2. POLICY OF THE PARISH COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

2.1 Before considering whether to make grants/donations to any organisation/project, the policy requires three main checks to be made against the following criteria:

2.1.1 The organisation/project is properly constituted, structured and administered in relation to its financial management and controls. Evidence needs to be sought that appropriate management mechanisms are in place and that accountability is provided through formally elected or delegated members/managers/leaders. Depending upon whether the organisation/project is based in the Parish, or elsewhere, this may require the production of the most recent set of audited accounts or annual income and expenditure information. The provision of a copy of the latest set of accounts would not normally be necessary for well known national or local organisations /charities based within Bottesford Parish and predominately serving local residents.

2.1.2 The organisation/project needs to show evidence of efforts made to raise their own funding requirements.
2.1.3 It is important that the Parish Council knows whether other bodies are being asked to award or have already approved awards, e.g. District Councils. The fact that other granting bodies have been asked for, or have made grants/donations to an organisation/project, does not exclude Bottesford Parish Council from awarding. Each case should be determined on its own particular merits, after appraisal of the information provided.

2.2 In addition to the three main checks above, the Parish Council may wish to seek evidence against all or some of the following supplementary criteria:-

- there is clear evidence of local need or demand for the proposed project/activity
- the grant will help provide a facility or service that will be of real and direct benefit to local residents
- local residents will lose, or have significantly diminished, a service if grant is not awarded
- the applicant does not clearly fall within the remit of some other agency, company, e.g. hospital, private school
- the applicant is not seeking funding for significant capital e.g. equipment, buildings
- the project/activity has a starting date within nine months of the date of request for grant aid
- the project/activity is properly thought through, is viable, of good quality and will ensure proper use of public funds, providing best value and value for money
- the organisation/project can demonstrate that it has the experience and competence to undertake what is proposed.
- the project/activity has defined aims, outputs, beneficiaries and outcomes, e.g. the impact
- mechanisms are in place for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the project/activity
- the organisation/project demonstrates clear knowledge and commitment to equal opportunities and Health & Safety
3. APPRAISAL PROCESS

3.1 Having made the three main checks and such assessment against the supplementary criteria as is deemed appropriate the policy of the Parish Council is:-

3.1.1 Not to make grants and donations to organisations that make, or attempt to make, profit for the benefit of members or owners over and above revenue expenditure, e.g. running costs, staff costs, premises maintenance and general overheads.

3.1.2 So far as organisations and charities are concerned, only to make grants and donations to those, which are overwhelmingly run by volunteers.

3.1.3 Not to make grants and donations to national organisations/charities, unless the request comes from a local branch. In this case there should be clear evidence of the grant used by that local branch and that there accrues a specific and direct benefit to local residents according to need. Examples of local branches of national organisations/charities, which might fall within this definition, are Relate, Samaritans, CAB etc. The definition would not include such national charities as, for example, Cancer Research etc.

3.1.4 To focus the bulk of the grant/donation expenditure, primarily, upon organisations/projects located within Bottesford Parish, and recognised as being Parish based and predominately serving the local community of the Parish of Bottesford.

3.1.5 Not to make grants/donations to locally based organisational/charities in the immediate vicinity of Bottesford, but outside Bottesford Parish, unless they meet the criteria for locally based branches of national organisations/charities.

3.1.6 Not to make grants/donations to organization/projects outside Bottesford Parish.

3.1.7 The maximum award of any grant/donation to any organisation/project should not exceed £2,500 in any one financial year (this figure to be reviewed annually. Where consideration is to be given, exceptionally, to making a grant/donation which exceeds this agreed maximum figure, the Parish Council will be provided with a written paper from a delegated member setting out a case against the relevant criteria in this document.
3.1.8 All requests for grant aid are to be received in writing (see application form attached) by the Parish Clerk. Such requests need to address the main relevant supplementary criteria of this policy. The Clerk will promptly pass such requests to the council to assess the request against the criteria for deliberation and possibly investigation. A recommendation will be tabled at the next meeting of the Council. The recommendation will be debated and voted upon in accordance with standing orders. This procedure has the advantage of maintaining the confidentiality of the full financial matters provided by applicants as the public debate need only be based upon the recommendation.

4. BUDGET FOR GRANTS/DONATIONS

4.1 The budget for grants/donations provision year 2016/2017 is to be set at £10,000

4.2 Lead Members for Finance should recommend to the Parish Council each year an appropriate annual budget for expenditure on grants/donations. In addition, it would be for the Lead Members to recommend to the Parish Council whether there should be any transfer (virement) of the grants/donations budget to other budget heads during the financial year if it becomes clear that the grants/donations budget is likely to be underspent.

4.3 It is important that when the Parish Clerk knows there is an application for grant aid on the agenda of a meeting of the Finance members that the amount remaining uncommitted in that financial year be made at the meeting for member’s information.

5.0 PARISH COUNCIL CONTROL OF THE TIMING OF MAKING GRANTS AND DONATIONS

5.1 The Parish Council has not specified that all of those organisations/project requiring grants or donations should make their bids to the Parish Council at a particular point/date in the financial year in order for the Parish Council to ensure that grants/donations do not, or would be unlikely to, exceed the overall annual budget for such expenditure.

5.2 Currently bids come in, uninvited as and when the organisation/project/individual feels the need to seek a grant/donation. As the Parish Council only makes small grants this process is deemed beneficial for smaller organisations/projects who may not be able to plan their financial needs so far in advance.

6. CLAWBACK/SUSPENSION OF GRANT AID

6.1 The Parish Council reserves the right to claw back grants awarded, or suspend grant in the process of being awarded. Such circumstances would arise, for example, where a grant had been used for purposes other than those for which it was awarded.
6.2 Should the Parish Council become aware of any financial mismanagement, or had other serious concerns regarding the operation, management or running of an organisation/project by the recipient of a grant, or any of the resultant services or activities, it reserves the right to suspend grant aid payments, or in extreme circumstances demand clawback. Should such circumstances arise the Parish Council will, in the first instance, seek explanation and try to assist in the resolution of such problems/difficulties.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 The development of monitoring and evaluation systems, particularly in respect of outcomes, is an area of good management practice all voluntary sector organisations should be prioritising. The Parish Council would welcome the provision of findings from grant-aided organisations/projects. Such information will assist other applicants in the overall management and development of activities/projects. The Parish Council would not seek to penalise grant requests from organisations/projects which have identified areas of weakness through the process of monitoring and evaluation that they are planning to address and change with a view to continuous improvement.

This Policy Statement was adopted by the Bottesford Parish Council on 9th November 2015