



COMMUNITY GRANT POLICY

Version 1 as adopted by Full Council on 15th January 2024

Revision by the Finance Committee due: January 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Helsby Parish Council is committed to encouraging, supporting and promoting local volunteer organisations and charities and each year we will make provision in our annual budget for community grants.
- 1.2. As these funds come from the taxpayer, it is important to ensure that any grant expenditure by the Council is open, transparent and easily understood. The Council can only award grants using certain legal powers and must be confident that any grant awarded will benefit those who live or work in Helsby.
- 1.3. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of grants and is designed to act as guidance both for applicants and councillors when considering applications.
- 1.4. The Council will usually award grants through applications made at the annual Grant Show. The scheme opens for applications each January and the show is typically held at the end of February. Grants are usually for the value of £1,000 although this may vary from year to year. This is a 'participatory budgeting' event, where the Parish Council passes control of the decision making to local groups attending the event.
- 1.5. In exceptional circumstances, the Council may also consider grant applications for under £1,000 at other times of the year. Requests for amounts greater than £1,000 may also be occasionally considered at the Council's discretion (see Section 4 for further details).

2. Grant Show Grant Awarding Criteria

- 2.1. Eligible organisations/projects include non-profit voluntary and community, 'friends of' groups, educational establishments and local social/environmental projects. This list is not exclusive and may be amended at the Council's discretion to the specific needs of the grant being considered.
- 2.2. In addition, groups/projects must:
 - Be active in the Helsby area;
 - Send a member/representative of the group to attend the event;

- Show how the project/activity makes a difference to the local Helsby community;
- Show how the amount of grant fits with the estimated costs of the project/activity;
- Prove that the project/activity is sustainable;
- Show how the project/activity provides an improvement in current activity or starts a new activity;
- Indicate who is likely to benefit; and
- Indicate when the project is likely to start and be completed.

2.3. The following will not be eligible for funding:

- Individuals or appeals supporting an individual;
- Supporting political parties or anything party political;
- Religious organisations (unless for non-religious activities);
- Activity that brings the Council into disrepute or any illegal activity;
- Salaries;
- Lobbying against Council policy;
- Anything that is in a mainstream Council budget (e.g. core school expenditure);
- Anything contrary to the Council's policies or financial regulations; and/or
- Supporting any organisation which, in the view of the Parish Council, has racist, extremist or other policies which the Parish Council deems to be unacceptable.

2.4. Successful applicants must have a bank account in the organisation's name that requires at least two signatures and must send their constitution with the completed application form. They must also have a safeguarding policy if working with children and/or adults at risk. The Parish Council may ask to see policy documents and other information such as risk assessments, insurance details and financial accounts prior to awards being made.

2.5. Retrospective applications where the expenditure has been made, the project has been carried out or the event has taken place will not be considered.

3. Grant Show Application Process

3.1. Applications for funding must be returned using the Grant Show application form. Any applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

3.2. Applications will be appraised against the criteria above to identify eligibility and highlight any issues/concerns (e.g. health and safety, legality). Where expenditure on a single item exceeds £500, the applicant should demonstrate that best value has been sought; this may be by submitting quotations.

3.3. Successful applicants will be notified by e-mail to confirm eligibility and attendance at the event. A summary of successful applications received will also be circulated. If a representative from the group cannot attend the event,

the project will NOT be part of the voting process and therefore not eligible for funding.

- 3.4. At the event, groups will be asked to deliver a 3-minute presentation about their project and how it benefits the local community. Groups may also bring along display boards and other material and a projector/laptop will be available for use.
- 3.5. Each group will then be asked to vote for their preferred projects. The projects which receive the most votes will be presented with a certificate of funding at the end of the evening. Voting should be based on whether the project meets the funding criteria and has wider community benefit, rather than on the presenter's abilities. Groups from outside the parish who can demonstrate direct benefit to the area may request a grant, though priority should be given to local groups and organisations. If insufficient applications are received, Helsby Parish Council reserves the right to cancel the event but may still consider applications.
- 3.6. Confirmation of successful groups being allocated funding will be made at the event. Once a grant declaration has been signed by the respective group, payment will be made by bank transfer usually in the week following the event. In exceptional circumstances, and only by special request, payment can be made by cheque.
- 3.7. During the course of the project/activity, the Council may monitor progress. If a project is not being delivered as outlined, Helsby Parish Council reserves the right to recall funds from the organisation.

4. Grants requested under Exceptional Circumstances

- 4.1. As set out above, the Council may consider grant applications at any time outside of the Grant Show process, but these must only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Council will only consider one application from an organisation within any financial year. Applicants that were successful at the previous Grant Show cannot apply for any additional grants during the same year.
- 4.2. Applicants should complete an application form as supplied by the parish clerk and the application must meet the criteria set out under Section 2. Applicants must state why they haven't made an application through the latest Grant Show. Once submitted, the Council will determine if the application meets the grant criteria. The Clerk or a designated councillor will then collate all the necessary information from the applicant ready for presentation and discussion at an appropriate Council meeting.
- 4.3. All grants and their amounts are awarded at the Council's discretion. The Council's decision is final and there is no right of appeal. All applicants will be notified of the Council's decision.

- 4.4. If successful, a grant award letter will be sent to the recipient and payments shall be made to the organisation within four weeks. Payments will be made by bank transfer, to a bank account in the name of the organisation only. In exceptional circumstances, and only by special request, payment can be made by cheque.

5. Terms and Conditions

- 5.1. Successful applicants must complete an evaluation report within twelve months of receipt of the grant on a prescribed form. This report should set out how the money has been spent, including copies of invoices and receipts, plus attendance numbers, photos, press clippings, etc. where applicable.
- 5.2. Applicants must not change the use of their grant award without the written permission of the Council.
- 5.3. Receipts for all expenditure above £200 shall be provided as part of the evaluation to demonstrate the grant was spent appropriately.
- 5.4. The Council reserves the right to reclaim any funds not spent in accordance with the application, left unspent after one year of receipt or in full/partially for breach of conditions. Funds may also be reclaimed if, for any reason, the organisation disbands.
- 5.5. Applicants must acknowledge the Council in any publicity relating to the grant and agree to the Council publicising details of any grants it makes.
- 5.6. The Council shall apply any additional conditions it deems necessary as part of the grant award. These will be set out, where relevant, in an award confirmation letter.