

STRETTON ON DUNSMORE PARISH COUNCIL

Small Grants Policy

Background

Stretton on Dunsmore Parish Council (SODPC) is funded by the residents of Stretton on Dunsmore and therefore has only limited funds available to assist community organisations located and working in Stretton on Dunsmore for the benefit of the community.

Subject to funding being available, SODPC is committed to providing assistance and support to local community groups which are set up to promote community life for Stretton residents. The Council's financial support is provided by way of small grants/donations which are decided against criteria set by, and which can be amended from time to time by, SODPC.

In order for the Council to be able to assess applications rationally and objectively, many of which will inevitably be totally dissimilar in content, it is both necessary and helpful to assess all applications received against a range of criteria. These are designed to be a general indication of need but are not exclusive and can be flexibly applied.

The Parish Council's policy on community grants is based on the principle of promoting the development of partnerships which encourage and enable local community organisations to deliver local projects to the residents of the Parish.

In general, the following principles apply:

1. Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
2. Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit the people living in the Parish or will benefit the environment of Stretton on Dunsmore.
3. Any assistance given will be subject to on-going monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the outcome of the grant.
4. Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis.

Aims

SODPC provides a grant funding scheme to support the following aims:

1. To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
2. To help the parishes' voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.
3. To ensure the provision of services, needed by the residents, via the voluntary sector.
4. To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
5. To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all parishioners of Stretton on Dunsmore to the services it provides and funds.
6. To improve or enhance the local environment.
7. To achieve value for money.

The Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee. The Council can only donate funds to organisations if the Council have a 'Power' to do so. For instance by law parish councils cannot contribute towards the maintenance or improvement of Church of England premises or, in certain circumstances, to property held in relation to other denominations and faiths.

Process

To apply for a SODPC grant you must be a charity, community group or local voluntary organisation with a constitution* and dedicated bank account*, operating or providing a service to the community. All funding requests must use the application form and applicants should provide all information requested. (* please enclose documentary evidence as appropriate)

Applicants are advised that the amount of money available for grants varies each year, depending on the overall council budget.

SODPC supports a wide variety of grants/donations. The Council particularly welcomes applications from small or newly formed groups and those that have not applied to us before.

Stretton on Dunsmore Parish Council uses the following criteria to decide on grant applications:

1. Whether the group/project has followed our grants process and meets our requirements and grant giving policy.
2. Level of benefit to Stretton on Dunsmore and the impact the grant will make.
3. Evidence of a well-managed group including previous experience and track record.
4. Financial sustainability and viability of group and/or project.
5. Evidence of partnership working.
6. Evidence that funding has been sought from other sources and the level of match funding available.
7. Evidence of compliance with previous grant award conditions.

Stretton on Dunsmore Parish Council will not fund the following:

1. Organisations that do not provide a service to the community in Stretton on Dunsmore.
2. Individuals or appeals supporting an individual.
3. General appeals.
4. Statutory organisations or the direct replacement of statutory funding.
5. Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs.
6. Religious groups where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs.
7. Arts & sports projects with no community or charitable element.
8. Medical research, equipment or treatment.
9. Animal welfare.
10. Projects that may take place before an application can be decided.
11. Organisations that have a closed or restricted membership.
12. Equipment or other costs that have already been purchased or incurred prior to the application being considered.

Grants are usually offered on a one off basis to support a particular project, event, activity or the purchase of equipment. They are also open to new groups wishing to start up and receive a small contribution towards their running costs.

Applying

Groups must apply for funding using the appropriate application. Grant application forms can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available from the Clerk. The Clerk can also provide assistance to any group having difficulties completing the application form.

Grant applications will only be considered if all sections of the form are completed and appropriate supporting information/evidence is supplied where requested.

All valid grant applications will be assessed and presented to the Full Council meeting for consideration.

All applicants will be notified of the Councils decisions.

Payments

Grants will only be paid by cheque, made out to the named organisation.

Monitoring and reporting requirements

As a condition of receiving a grant from SODPC you are required to complete a short evaluation form.

Groups are expected to provide SODPC with written evidence of what the money has been spent on and the benefit it has brought to the people of the Parish. Such evidence of how the money has been spent should include copies of invoices and receipts, plus attendance numbers, photos, press clippings, etc. where applicable. This information should be submitted within 1 month of the event/project end or by the end of February each year whichever is sooner, so that it can be reported at the Annual Council Meeting.

General grant conditions

1. 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. However, if a group wishes to change the purpose of the grant they must seek approval by writing to the Council who will consider whether or not to approve the change.
2. Applications for projects where the work has already been completed will not be considered.
3. We will not support grants for the repayment of loans or cost of services, equipment or provisions in anticipation of a grant.
4. Small grants must be spent within 1 year of award. Any unspent monies left after this time must be returned.
5. Organisations are responsible for ensuring that they are in compliance with all applicable legal and statutory requirements (including those relating to health and safety and equalities).
6. Should for any reason the organisation disband or the project is not completed the Council may ask for all or part of the monies to be paid back.
7. Acknowledgement of the financial support received from the Council is required on documentation and any promotional material, including websites.

8. In order to receive payment organisations/groups must have a bank account into which grants can be paid; payments will not be made to private individuals.
9. Only one application per year will be accepted from any organisation.

Additional grant conditions may also be attached to any funding from SODPC and these will be set out in the award confirmation letter. Failure to comply with any conditions attached to a grant may result in the grant being repaid or affect future grant assistance.

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