

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY FOR COMMUNITY GRANTS



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Monmouth Town Council supports the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations because we believe that a vibrant Third Sector is vital to our community.
- 1.2 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred. The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme, ensuring that we comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code.
- 1.3 There is further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to the allocation of grants to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations through the Council's Community Grants Scheme. It does not apply to any other means of financial support from the Council that may be available under other schemes.
- 2.2 This policy will be utilised by Officers and Councillors to guide decision making around the Community Grants Scheme. The Council may apply discretion to the policy in exceptional circumstances if it is deemed appropriate.

3. PURPOSE OF GRANT FUNDING

- 3.1 Monmouth Town Council is committed to supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to help them deliver projects and activities which have a positive and beneficial impact on the local community and its residents.
- 3.2 The Council's Community Grants Scheme will make financial contributions to support certain Voluntary and Community Sector groups in Monmouth that actively assist the community to enjoy a better quality of life.

3.3 Funding will only be provided where it is demonstrated that a defined and positive impact will be made. Organisations must demonstrate an outcome focused approach and that their project and/or activity will clearly support one or more of the seven Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals which are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of more cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Periodically, the People and Places Committee can review the amount available to the Community Grants Scheme and how this may be allocated.

4. AVAILABLE FUNDING

4.1 Community organisations can bid for funding for core costs, projects, salaries, events and equipment costs.

4.2 The Community Grant Scheme application process will be opened twice a year. Community groups are able to make applications to the People and Places Committee for consideration when the application process is open. A community group can only apply for one grant per financial year, if successful.

5. WHO CAN APPLY

5.1 To be eligible to apply for a grant, an organisation must be able to prove that:

- it is voluntary, non-profit making and operated with no undue restrictions or limitations on membership;
- it is not a statutory organisation;
- they have a clear legal identity - they can demonstrate effective management of the organisation's business;
- it has a bank account in the name of the organisation;
- any proposed project and/or services are undertaken in at least 1 of the 5 wards of Monmouth, and/or will be wholly or principally for the direct benefit of residents in Monmouth;
- it actively promotes equality issues within its structure and operations;
- it meets all legal requirements;
- any previous grants received from Monmouth Town Council have been spent in accordance with the grant award

- conditions attached to them; and
- it does not have more than 12 months' worth of expenditure in reserves or savings.

6. **WHAT WILL AND WILL NOT BE FUNDED BY A GRANT**

6.1 The following highlights what types of applications will or will not be funded.

- Grant applications will only be considered for projects and activities that will be undertaken in 1 of the 5 wards of Monmouth, and/or will be for the direct benefit of its residents.
- Grants may be given to fund core costs of community groups, direct delivery of projects/activities and revenue or capital projects (excluding structural purchases i.e. building or building works).
- Grants will not be awarded to any organisation if it is deemed to be a political party, has the nature of a political party, or is engaged in campaigning for a political purpose or cause.
- Funds will not be provided for the furtherance or propagation of a faith promoted by any organisation which is, or is deemed by the Council to be, of a religious nature. This does not exclude applications from faith-based groups who want to deliver community-based projects.
- The programme will not fund structural purchases, i.e. buildings or building works.
- No ongoing commitment should be given to the funding of salary costs or the project. This is a one off payment.
- The Council reserves the right to not fund community organisations that have outstanding debts to the Council.

6.2 Any grant awarded must only be used for the approved purpose, i.e. applicants must be able to demonstrate how the funding will be spent as outlined in their grant application and they will have to retain evidence of actual expenditure.

7. **RISK CONSIDERATIONS IN GRANT GIVING**

7.1 The Council has a clear duty to ensure that best use is made of its resources. Risk is considered in this process in relation to failure to achieve best use of Council resources.

7.2 In order to achieve an appropriate balance between managing risk and supporting innovative ideas or new organisations, a grant limit of £3,000 will apply to:

- organisations that have been in existence for less than one year; and
- organisations that do not have audited accounts.

Any project or activity proposals above this amount will require the group or organisation to:

- have a good track record of delivery;
- be in receipt of a range of funding streams;
- be registered with either the Charity Commission or Companies House, or other appropriate government regulator; and
- have a set of their latest audited accounts.

Evidence of all the above will be provided through the application process.

8. GRANT CONDITIONS

- 8.1 Information on the conditions that will apply to a grant will be made available to all applicants before they apply. Monitoring information will be required on all grants (see section 10).
- 8.2 All grant offers will be subject to the grant recipient accepting the grant conditions. A full set of grant conditions and monitoring requirements will be agreed with grant recipients before the final grant award is made. No changes will be made after this time.
- 8.3 Monitoring will be signed off by the RFO before each payment is due, with any concerns being discussed with the Chair of the People and Places Committee. It may affect a community organisation's ability to receive future funding if they do not submit satisfactory monitoring returns when required.
- 8.4 Community Groups will not be able to carry any unspent funding into the following financial year without express permission from the People and Places Committee. Permission should be gained during a People and Places Committee meeting and be made through a resolution approved by the majority of the committee.
- 8.5 Community groups must have delivered their funded activities by the end of the grant funding year (i.e. 31st March). If this is not possible, permission should be sought from the People and Places Committee to extend expenditure into the next financial year. Permission should be gained during a People and Places Committee meeting and be made through a resolution approved by the majority of the committee.
- 8.6 Any funding which is not allocated will be returned to the Council budget at the end of the financial year.

9. **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

9.1 All opportunities for community grant funding from Monmouth Town Council will be openly advertised using a minimum of:

- Notice of the opportunity on the News and Events page of the Monmouth Town Council website.
- Through the usual Council communications channels including the local press and social media pages.

9.2 Information provided to grant applicants will include:

- the amount of money that is available in total;
- clear information on the purposes for which funding is offered;
- clear information on eligibility criteria;
- details of the full assessment criteria against which applications will be judged;
- a full list of conditions that will apply to the grant;
- the deadline by which applications must be submitted; and
- the date by which applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application.

Grant application forms will be made available in paper and electronic formats.

9.3 Applicants must complete a standard application form and provide any relevant supporting documents. This is to ensure objective assessment of all grant applications. The Council will not award any grant to an organisation whose application has not been formally assessed.

9.4 All grant applications will be assessed using pre-selected assessment criteria. The details of the assessment criteria will be made available to all applicants before they apply for funding. The assessment criteria will be chosen as relevant for the funding opportunity, but as a minimum will include:

- clear outline of how the purposes for which the grant is made available will be met;
- the outcome(s) that the proposal will achieve;
- the structure and delivery plan that will support the achievement of the stated outcomes;
- the clarity of the proposal's financial outline;
- the organisation's ability to successfully manage finance, evidenced by submission of accounts, bank statements and cash flow

forecasts as appropriate;

- the approach to health and safety, duty of care, and other appropriate best practice requirements including safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and the organisation's ability to successfully manage these on the project; and
- the sustainability of work after the period of grant support.

- 9.5 All assessment criteria will be based on meeting need within the community. There will be no pre-determined demographic allocation offunds. Some funding opportunities may be restricted to a particular delivery area, e.g. to a specific ward, but only where this is to address a specific identified need.
- 9.6 In the first instance, all applications will be reviewed by the Town Clerk to ensure they are eligible for scoring. Applications may be screened out at this stage if they do not meet the eligibility criteria as set out under "Who Can Apply" in the policy and/ or the application does not meet the guidelines as set out in "What Will or Will Not Be Funded" section of this policy.
- 9.7 Grant applications will then be assessed by the Community Grants Working Group. This panel will consist of a minimum of three Councillors who are members of the People and Places Committee with the Town Clerk providing a supporting role to the panel. A scoring matrix will generally be utilised to score applications. A copy of the matrix will be made available in the Guidance Notes for the Scheme.
- 9.8 If two or more applications submitted are similar in nature or the Community Grants Working Group consider them to be duplication, the Community Grants Working Group will implement the process detailed in 9.7 to determine which application should be awarded funding.
- 9.9 The Community Grants Working Group will report their recommendations to the People and Places Committee who will make the final resolution regarding all applications received.
- 9.10 Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application.
- 9.11 Complaints against the process used to award a grant will be dealt with using the Monmouth Town Council's Complaints Procedure.

10. **ASSESSMENT TIMESCALES**

- 10.1 There will be a minimum of three weeks from announcement of the grants opportunity to the closing date for applications, and a maximum of 6 weeks from the closing date for applications to applicants receiving notification of the outcome.

11. **MONITORING**

- 11.1 All grant funded projects will be monitored with applicants obliged to submit details of how the project is progressing.
- 11.2 Monitoring requirements that will apply to a grant will be commensurate with the amount of money awarded, and will be agreed by the Grants Team with the funded organisation before final confirmation of a grant award is made.
- 11.3 Receipts and other monitoring information may be requested by the Council as proof of spend within six months of the grant being received by the organisation.
- 11.4 Regular monitoring of the project will enable the Council to make sure that the outcomes and effectiveness of the funding as well as the funding expenditure are all consistent with the original funding proposal.
- 11.5 The Council reserve the right to withhold future payments and reject any further applications if they are dissatisfied with how grant funding has been used.