



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING

#### 1. BACKGROUND

Blyth Town Council was established in April 2009 and Members decided shortly after their election in June 2009 that they wanted to introduce funds for community activities.

The aim of community funding is to support community groups and organisations to deliver activities that contribute to achieving the Council's ambition for the Town.

Community Funding is generally not accessible for supporting the core funding/administration of a community group or organisation unless it applies to the initial/short term support of the project or organisation.

There may be occasions where the Council agree to part funding core costs, but this may only be available where the community group or organisation provides various programs and/or facilities for the whole of the community to benefit from.

Funding should only be applied for where there are specific projects that are in line with the Council's aims and objectives.

The funding is split into two categories and the total amount of funds available for 2024/25 is £173,300 however, this may change in coming years.

**The maximum grant payable to groups/organisations carrying out specific projects is set at £5,000.**

#### **Councillors' Small Schemes Funding**

Included in the funding is £16,000 for Councillors' Small Schemes. Each of the 16 Councillors has access to £1,000 for specific schemes or organisations that they wish to support. Councillors' proposals must be approved by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Community Development Committee and the Town Clerk. They can be made at any time during the financial year and any remaining allowance of £100 or over may be carried over to the next financial year with prior approval. Approval must be sought by 31 December in that year so that provision can be made in the following year's budget. Grants should be made in line with the Council's objectives.

## 2. COMMUNITY FUNDING FOR 2024/25

The budget for 2024/25 is:

FUND	BUDGET
Councillors' Schemes	£16,000
Community Support Grants	£157,300

Applications will be considered by the Community Funding Sub-Committee who will meet four times per year.

The closing date for applications is three weeks before the meeting.

Dates of meetings and closing dates for applications will be published for the beginning of each new financial year.

Applications should be posted/delivered to the Town Council's offices at the address on the application form.

A completed application form can be emailed to meet the closing date but this should be followed by a hard copy together with supporting documents.

## 3. WHO CAN APPLY?

**Any organisation or group seeking funding from Blyth Town Council will be:**

- ◆ Originating from within Blyth. Consideration may also be given to applications for funding originating from outside of the Blyth Town Council area, providing that persons residing within Blyth will benefit from the project and that satisfactory proof of such benefit accompanies any applications.
- ◆ A registered charity or not-for-profit organisation where any surplus income is used to promote the aims and objectives of the organisation.
- ◆ Established by a written Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- ◆ Run by an Executive Committee, group or officers or other such recognisable structure that demonstrates who is responsible for running the organisation.
- ◆ Required to produce an annual statement of accounts, or other such documentation, that shows annual income and expenditure activity and an account balance.
- ◆ One that has a bank/building society account.

Applications are excluded from commercial and religious organisations where they wish to use any funding for these particular purposes. Applications will be accepted where these organisations are requesting funding for more general community-based activities. Applications cannot be accepted from individuals, however, a club or group can apply for funding to support individuals, eg to allow a member or members to compete in a competition that wouldn't be possible without financial support.

Applications, on an individual or business nature, will not be accepted from existing Town/County Councillors or from their families.

- ◆ The application for funding must be in line with some or all of the objectives of the Council – see below.
  - ◆ ***To promote the environmental, social and economical wellbeing of the town and its community; and to develop an epidemic strategy and policy statement on Climate Change for the Council.***
  - ◆ ***To provide high quality core services in the most effective and efficient manner which will deliver the Council's agreed priorities and objectives.***
  - ◆ ***To provide leadership and be a voice for the community in all matters which impact on the town and its community.***
  - ◆ ***To work in partnership locally and regionally to meet common goals and outcomes.***

#### **4. CONDITIONS OF FUNDING**

Grants will be made subject to the following conditions:

- ◆ They can only be used for the purpose of the application.
- ◆ If the Town Council's grant is part of the overall cost, no monies will be paid until there is evidence that the entire objective is funded. The Town Council will forward to the organisation a letter of commitment to funding.
- ◆ The Council have the right to request repayment of funding should any grant or part of, not be used for the purpose given on the application form and agreed by Committee.
- ◆ Where a successful applicant satisfies the objectives of the application and there are Council funds that have not been utilised then notification to this effect must be given to the Town Clerk who will advise on the action that will be taken.
- ◆ No monies should be spent in advance of the application. Evidence of expenditure must be forwarded to the Council if requested.
- ◆ Grants will be paid by bank transfer to an organisation or group.

- ◆ The recipient must agree to participate in suitable publicity and to acknowledge the Town Council's contribution, eg by stating "supported by Blyth Town Council" and by displaying the logo on associated materials as appropriate.
- ◆ The recipient must agree to provide evidence of expenditure to account for the use of the grant.
- ◆ The recipient must agree to provide suitable feedback on the use of the funding, eg a short report, photos etc, and allow representatives of the Town Council to visit\* on request to monitor progress. *\*This will depend on the nature of the purpose of the grant.*
- ◆ Community organisations will only be eligible to receive one grant per financial year unless there are extenuating circumstances as deemed by the Committee.
- ◆ Applicants must submit a copy of the organisation's constitution, latest bank statement, a copy of last year's accounts and, if available, the current year's accounts to date with their application.
- ◆ A Safeguarding Policy which incorporates appropriate certificates in order for the project to be carried must be supplied where the grant will be used to support young and/or vulnerable people.
- ◆ In some cases there may be a significant period between the date of the previous year's accounts and the date of application. Irrespective of this period applicants should inform the Council if the financial position shown in the accounts is still reflective at the date of application.
- ◆ Where the organisation has previously successfully applied for funding, then the projects must be listed along with information on its outcomes – was the project delivered as per the application and what are the ongoing benefits/problems.
- ◆ Where an organisation is also seeking other avenues of funding for the project included on the application to the Town Council, then these details must be submitted. When the outcome is known the Town Council must be informed immediately as this may impact upon the Committee's decision.
- ◆ If a proposed grant is less than the amount requested, organisations will be required to provide information to demonstrate how they would use the reduced funding. This information must satisfy the Town Council before any payment is made.
- ◆ Applicants must supply all of the information requested within the policy/application form, otherwise the application may be deemed invalid. This would include proof of costs of project with a possible sight of estimates for the scheme/s.
- ◆ In some instances the sub-committee may find it beneficial for the applicant to personally present/clarify their case. The sub-committee are mindful that information requested may be confidential and it may be considered in a private part of the meeting (Part II).

- ◆ Applicants would be invited to attend a meeting of the Community Funding Sub-Committee or the Community Development Committee if this is decided by the sub-committee.
- ◆ Where an organisation has unrestricted funds in excess of 50% of their operating costs, then detailed information must be provided for any approved projects that have been agreed for implementation in the next 2 years. It is the aim of the Council to provide funds to those organisations whose balances are not sufficient enough to support a particular project.
- ◆ Where it is seen that the information contained within the application is not valid, then the application for funding will not be considered.
- ◆ Applicants to provide information to the Council on the expected long-term benefits, if any.
- ◆ All sections of the application form must be completed.
- ◆ As part of the condition of the grant organisations must provide a report within a maximum of three months or as soon as the project has been delivered, together with the impact it is having. Organisations will be invited to an annual event where the grant recipients can give a short presentation on the benefits that the grant has provided.

The Council operate the Community Grants Scheme taking into account the role of the organisation making the application as well as the expected outcomes of the funding request.

The Council also need to consider the governance arrangements in place from the applicant organisation. Applicants are asked to provide us with details of the following:

- ◆ Responsibilities of trustees etc.
- ◆ Controls within the organisation on a regular basis, eg monitoring arrangements for financial information.
- ◆ Regularity of meetings.
- ◆ Copies of the last three meeting agendas and minutes.

*Application forms and any information submitted to support an application will be held on file as follows before being destroyed:*

*Successful applicants - for five years following the year in which the grant was awarded.*

*Unsuccessful applicants - until the approval of the minutes of the meeting which declined the application.*

Special consideration may be given to an application at the discretion of the Community Development Committee or its Sub-Committee.

The Town Council has also considered revenue grants to organisations. It is suggested, unless an emergency situation occurs, that where a revenue grant is made, the Community Development Committee specifically state whether or not future applications from that applicant will be considered in the relevant financial year. Under normal circumstances only one application per year will be accepted.

If a grant is approved then the Committee would consider whether to pay the award in instalments, subject to a suitable condition regarding the continued existence of the applicant. The payment/s will be made in a timely manner to be in line with the project delivery.

The decision of the Committee is final and no appeals can be made or correspondence entered into against any determinations made.

Amendments to this Policy and Procedure can be made at any time and this would result in changes to current forms and guidance notes.

Updated March 2024