

Stocksbridge Town Council

GRANTS POLICY & GUIDELINES



1. General Principles

Stocksbridge Town Council is funded only by the local residents (not businesses) of the area (area defined as Stocksbridge, Deepcar and Bolsterstone) and therefore has only limited funds available to assist community organisations located and/or working in the area. The objective of the Council's Grants Programme is to support and encourage a diverse range of community activities, initiatives and events that meet the needs of and benefits all of the area's residents. The Council are keen to support activities that build the community cohesion necessary for a thriving and sustainable community.

Stocksbridge Town Council is committed to providing assistance and support to local community groups which are set up to promote community life for the area's residents. In order for the Council to be able to rationally and objectively assess applications, (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 Council's financial support is provided by way of Grants which are decided against the criteria in this document.

The criteria is reviewed annually by the Council's Finance Committee.

Stocksbridge Town Council's Policy on Grants is based on the principle of promoting the development of partnerships that encourage and enable local community based organisations to deliver local projects to the whole of the area.

In general, the following principles apply:

- Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
- Applicants must clearly show how any grants or assistance awarded will benefit the people and or the environment within the area.
- In general assistance will only be awarded throughout the year up to a value of £1,000.00 *
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis.
- Any unspent Grants, full or partial must be repaid to the Council unless otherwise agreed.

*In certain circumstances the Council may increase or decrease the award depending on the availability of funds or in acceptable circumstances where benefit to the community is assessed as part of the projected overall project costs.

2. The Aims of the Council's Grant Provision Policy

- To enable local people to set up and participate in groups and activities.
- To help the area's groups to improve effectiveness.
- To ensure the provision of services, needed by the area's residents.
- To ensure that groups give equality of access and opportunity for all Town Council residents to the services they provide.

3. Who can apply to the Stocksbridge Town Council Grant Scheme?

Groups based in the area who have:

1. a constitution or set of rules or equivalent, a bank or building society account.
2. have annual accounts that can be independently approved.
3. directly benefit the well-being of the Town Council's residents or the environment of the area as a whole.

4. General Conditions

1. That the applicants/beneficiaries be requested to recognise the Grant and or assistance received from the Council in any group publicity or advertising material e.g. Local Newspaper, website or programmes
2. That grants given by the Council must be used by the original applicant and must not be distributed to any other organisation, unless specifically authorised by the Council.
3. Cheques for grant awards are to be made payable to the organisation applying for the grant. Changes to this rule are at the discretion of the Finance Committee.
4. Grants must be used within 6 months, unless alternative arrangements have been made with the Council.
5. That all applicants be requested to demonstrate why the activity or benefit to the group would not take place if the grant was not approved.
6. Organisations may be required to provide a report on how previous monies awarded by the Town Council have been spent before they receive a further grant.
7. The non for profit organisation must have clearly stated aims and objectives. Only non-profit organisations are eligible to receive grants. No individuals or for-profit groups may apply.
8. Applications for funding should demonstrate contributions applied for or received from other sources.

9. Applicants must demonstrate that the project will be of benefit to the wider community.
10. Applicants should submit their latest accounts providing the organisation has been in existence for at least 18 months. If the organisation has been in existence for less than 18 months evidence that a separate bank account has been opened.
11. Membership organisations should show number of members and state what percentage live in the area.
12. Applicants must demonstrate equality of access and opportunity.
13. Activities of the organisation and in particular the project being considered for funding must be readily available to the community of the Town Council in general.
14. Groups awarded a Grant may be expected to complete an end of grant report and submit receipts no later than 3 months after the end date stated on their application and may be required to report back to Council in person.

5. What are Grants available for?

Stocksbridge Town Council's Grants are available all year round.

All projects that are open to the public or serve the public should reach a broad public audience therefore activities of the organisation and in particular the project being considered for funding must be readily available to the whole community within our area. Where possible, the applicant should give an accurate figure of the number of people benefiting from the use of this money i.e. the percentage of members residing in the area.

Any organisation applying for funding must be open to new members, if appropriate, who agree with their principles. Applicants must indicate the full scope of the projects and details of the group(s) who will benefit from the grant. Please note that the grant has to benefit the people of the area rather than non-residents or just the members of your organisation.

5A Eligibility

1. Eligible organisations include historical societies, cultural, community organisations, sports activities etc.
2. The capital costs, or a contribution towards the costs of, any new or replacement equipment that may be required to assist the group in its activities.
3. The costs, or a contribution towards the costs involved in the presentation of an event, concert, performance or specific activity produced by a local group.
4. The costs involved in the establishment of a new local voluntary or charitable group.

5. Stockbridge Town Council will consider applications even if the organisation has requested or receives match funding from other agencies or from their own fundraising. (A grant decision can be made in principle, subject to the receipt of match funding).
6. Transport Grants
 - A maximum Grant of up to £275.00* can be awarded in any financial year to a group for assistance with transport costs in order to take residents on outings etc.
 - The group must use Sheffield City Transport (SCT) minibus service, with SCT invoicing the Town Council directly for the council approved booking. The Clerk/Finance Officer will provide details to SCT of the groups awarded this Grant.

*Subject to annual review

5B Exceptions

1. No funding is available to contribute to a surplus for charitable distribution or to increase organisations reserves.
2. That applications from national organisations be rejected unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the grant would be used specifically for the inhabitants of the area served by the Council.
3. That no grants be given to applicants towards the relief of costs or expenses arising from or relating to credit or debts.
4. No grant will be given for the promotion of a party political viewpoint or for the promotion of a particular religion.
5. Retrospective applications will not usually be considered.
6. Stocksbridge Town Council will not enter into open ended agreements.
7. Grants will not be awarded to organisations who already hold surplus funds which are not being used for the general operation of the organisation or delivery of the project and are not earmarked reserves.
8. Grants will not be given to fund legal requirements of an organisation.

6. What happens after I apply for a Grant?

The Clerk will check your application form and enclosed documents to see if it is complete. If your application is not complete it may be returned to you for completion or you may be contacted for clarification and or additional information.

Grant applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- a completed application form
- how your group is set up and managed
- your finances and the financial need for funding

- what need/demand there is for your project
- support and involvement for the wider community
- efforts to secure other sources of funding
- if your project provides value for money for the residents of the area
- previous grant history (if applicable)

All grants will be reviewed and categorised according to their main aim, as follows:

- social benefit: advice
- social benefit: work with adults
- social benefit: work with children/young adults
- social benefit: provision of goods
- sport
- culture including performing arts and drama groups
- interest groups
- environment

This will allow the Council to allocate monies fairly across all main streams. However, each application will still be awarded according to its own merit. Thus a sole application in any one category is not guaranteed a grant; equally well an oversubscribed category could still allocate funds to all applicants that provide a service to the people of the area. Please ensure that you plan ahead and apply for your grant in plenty of time for your needs.

All grants must demonstrate that they will:

- enhance the quality of life of the people of the area
- improve the environment of the people of the area
- Promote the good name of the area through their achievement and participation

7. What information will I have to provide?

- Your aim and objectives.
- Your organisations constitution or set of rules and your annual report if applicable.
- The most recent copy of your approved accounts.
- Copies of any permission required for third party use. (e.g. licences or land rent).
- A copy of your current public liability cover (the Council reserves the right to request a further copy of your public liability cover during the period of the grant).
- An explanation of any reserves you hold and if these are earmarked for specific expenditure.
- Highlight if you are actively applying for additional funding or support in kind for your organisation from external sources other than the Town Council.
- Quantify project costings.

Applicants **may** be invited in person to present their applications and answer questions.

8. What happens if I get a grant?

Grants must only be used for the purpose applied for. The funds available in the form of grants are limited and a bid therefore might be successful but still only receive a percentage of the grant requested.

For all successful grant bids the applicant must comply with their commitment to keep Stocksbridge Town Council informed of their progress by letter or in person by the specified time. (See Section 1 General Principles). Non-compliance with this commitment may reflect negatively on future grant applications.

Stocksbridge Town Council reserves the right to pay large grants in stages or in one lump sum. This will depend on the grant amount and the timescale of the project. The Council may request any amount not used to be repaid, unless otherwise agreed. Recognition must be given to Stocksbridge Town Council for any contribution given; this might include listing on any advertising.

Failure to comply with any conditions attached to a grant may result in the grant being repaid or affect future grant assistance. In order to safeguard the best interests of its residents, the Council reserves the right to investigate any activity which they agree to support and if necessary take action to recover any money that has not been spent according to the application.

9. How to apply to Stocksbridge Town Council for a Grant

Application forms are available from Stocksbridge Town Council. Write to:

The Clerk, Stocksbridge Town Council
Town Hall, The ARC
Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 2DT
Telephone: 0114 2887895
Email: stocks.council@btconnect.com

Website: www.stocksbridge-council.co.uk

If you need any help or assistance with your application please contact the Clerk via the above address, telephone number or email address.

10. What is the time-scale for awards?

All grants will be considered by the Finance Committee and ratified at the next full Council meeting.

Applications may be submitted at any time. **Grants will not be considered until we have received a signed grant application form.** Following award of a grant, grants will be paid by cheque and representatives from your group will be invited to collect the cheque from a Town Council meeting. The cheque will be made payable to the organisation applying for the grant.

11. Conclusion

The grant system exists to benefit all local people. To this end this Policy and guidelines should help make the grant system fairer and more accessible to all eligible parties. Stocksbridge Town Council aims to raise the profile of its grant-giving powers in order to encourage competition and maximise value for money. To ensure continued optimal running of the 'grant applications', the Policy and guidelines are reviewed annually.

Stocksbridge Town Council and its residents working together can make a difference.