

Dursley Town Council Grants Policy

Dursley Town Council is funded by the residents of Dursley and therefore has only limited funds available to assist community organisations located and working in Dursley for the benefit of the community.

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

Dursley Town Council is a signatory of the Gloucestershire Compact, committed to following best practice in grant giving in order to provide sustainable funding and support to voluntary and community groups, whilst providing value for money for local taxpayers and ensuring that public money is spent in a responsible manner.

In order for this 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 Town 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 Dursley. 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 assistance given will benefit the people living in Dursley or will benefit the environment of Dursley.
- Any assistance given will be subject to ongoing monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the outcome of the grant.
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis.

The Aims of the Council's Grant Making Policy

Dursley Town Council provides grant funding to support the following aims:

- To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
- To help the Town's voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.
- To ensure the provision of services, needed by the Town's residents, via the voluntary sector.
- To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all Dursley Town residents to the services it provides and funds.
- To improve or enhance the local environment.
- To achieve value for money.

The Town Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee.

The Grants Process

To apply for a Town Council 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 in Dursley. All funding requests must use our application form and applicants should provide all information requested.

The amount of money available for small grants varies each year, depending on the overall council budget. In 2016/17 the small grants budget was £5,000 and the average grant award was £445. In 2016/17, £25,423 was awarded as revenue grants to support the running costs of organisations providing a significant community service to Dursley.

Dursley Town Council supports a wide variety of grants which have been used to fund both revenue and capital projects, core costs and specific project work. Dursley Town Council particularly welcomes applications from small or newly formed groups and those that have not applied to us before.

Dursley Town Council uses the following criteria to decide on grant applications:

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

Dursley Town Council will not fund the following:

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

Grant Types

Dursley Town Council provides 3 types of grant funding, so that it can provide the most sustainable support to a broad range of local voluntary and community groups.

Small grants

These grants are usually for less than £500 and are normally 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.

Revenue grants

These grants are available to community organisations which provide a significant service to the community. They are given to support the groups' normal running costs and can also be used to fund salaries or for match funding to other funding bodies. In principal revenue grant funding, can be awarded for up to 3 years. These grants are dependent on an annual review when the continuation of the grant will be considered in respect of any change in the circumstances of either the applicant or the Town Council.

Groups wishing to receive a revenue grant need to complete an application form and provide additional supporting information. A council representative may hold a meeting with the group to discuss its needs and the level of Town Council support requested. Groups in receipt of a revenue grant will need to complete an annual monitoring form and may be asked to attend a review meeting to ensure that funding continues to meet the Town Council's priorities. Groups receiving a revenue grant will be given 6 months notice of any change to their grant funding arrangements.

Urgent grants

In exceptional circumstances Dursley Town Council will consider applications for urgent funding. Groups wishing to apply must complete an application form which will be considered at the next available full council meeting. A covering letter should explain the reason for urgency.

The application process

Groups must apply for funding using the appropriate application form between 1st April and 31st August each year.

Grant application forms can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available from the office. The office 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 Policy & Finance committee for consideration in October of each year, and ratified at the November Council meeting.

All applicants will usually be notified of Council's decision before mid-December.

Payment timetable

Successful applicants for small grants will receive their award in the November / December of the year of application.

Applicants for revenue grants will receive funding in the financial year following their application, with payment being made in April/May.

Successful applicants for urgent grants will normally receive payment within 1 month of the grant decision.

In some circumstances the payment date(s) may differ and this will be set out in the grant award confirmation letter.

Grants will only be paid by BACS payment, made out to the bank account of the named organisation.

Monitoring and reporting requirements

It is a condition of the grant to fill in the evaluation form provided. Failure to do so will affect any future grant funding applications.

Groups are expected to provide Dursley Town Council with written evidence of what the money has been spent on and the benefit it has brought to the people of Dursley. 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 Town Meeting.

General grant conditions

- Small grants are awarded on an annual basis and an award made this year is not an indication that funding will be continued in other years.
- 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.
- Applications for projects where the work has already been completed will not be considered.
- We will not support grants for the repayment of loans or cost of services, equipment or provisions in anticipation of a grant.
- Small grants must be spent within 1 year of award. Any unspent monies left after this time must be returned.
- 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).
- 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.
- Acknowledgement of the financial support received from the Council is required on documentation and any promotional material, including websites.
- 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.
- Only one application per year will be accepted from any organisation.
- All successful applicants must complete an evaluation form within the stated time periods.

Additional grant conditions may also be attached to any funding from Dursley Town Council 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.

Dispute Resolution

Dursley Town Council is a signatory to the Gloucestershire Compact, an agreement between a range of local public sector agencies and the voluntary and community sector, underpinned by Codes of Practice.

The Council will refer to the Gloucestershire Compact Codes of Practice when dealing with disputes relating to the Council's Grants Policy.

Further information on the Gloucestershire Compact and Codes of Practice is available on request from:

Dursley Town Council, Jacob's House, Castle Street, Dursley, GL11 4BS.

Telephone: 01453 547758

E-mail: clerk@dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk