

Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Council Policy on Grants

What Grants may be used for

1. Any grant application must bring direct benefit to a significant proportion of Houghton residents. All applications must clearly demonstrate how this will be achieved.
2. Any grant must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded unless the written approval of the Parish Council has been obtained in advance for a change in use of the grant monies.
3. Grants can be applied for with the intention of obtaining matched funding for the same project from other organisations. This intention should be made clear in the application. In an application of this nature, the Council's decision will be in the form of a promissory note making it clear that a grant will be provided if and only if matched funding is obtained. The Parish Council will consider applications on their merits and affordability. Although an organisation might secure a match funding arrangement from a third party, the Parish Council cannot guarantee that this will be matched by the awarded grant.

Note: the statutory powers of the Parish Council are defined and it must justify every item of expenditure within current legislation.

Who can apply for a Parish Council Grant?

4. Any properly constituted Houghton based group or organisation which provides facilities and/or services to a significant proportion of Houghton residents may apply for a grant. Organisations, particularly charities, must show that their governance is robust and that all necessary reports to the Charities Commission are up to date; and that they are working within the framework of their constitution.

Who cannot apply for a PC Grant?

5. Applications will NOT be considered from:

- Organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party.
- Organisations that discriminate on grounds of disability, age, sex, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- Organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus.
- “Upward funders”, i.e. local groups whose fund raising is sent to their central headquarters for redistribution.
- National Charities.
- Organisations seeking grants retrospectively.

6. Applications will NOT normally be considered from:

- Organisations seeking help with day to day running costs, for example insurance, cleaning and utilities.
- Individual sports or social groups
- National organisations or local groups with access to funds from national “umbrella” or “parent” organisations.
- Schools, unless in the opinion of the Parish Council, their application will provide direct benefit to Houghton residents.

Process of Applying for a Parish Council Grant

7. Grant applications will be considered only upon completion of a Grant Aid application form which is available from the Clerk or from the Parish Council website (<http://www.houghtononthehillpc.org.uk/uploads/grant-aid-application-form.pdf>). All questions on the application form must be answered in full; and the latest set of accounts should accompany the application. The accounts must be fully audited, approved without reservation, based on complete records and signed by a suitably qualified, independent person - a person independent of the body submitting the application. Applicants may provide additional information in support of their claim if they wish.

8. The Parish Council reserves the right to:
 - Request any further information that it deems necessary.
 - Refuse any grant application which is considered to be inappropriate or against the objectives of the Parish Council.
9. In addition the Parish Council will take into account:
 - The amount and frequency of previous awards from the Parish Council.
 - The applicant's own fund-raising activities.

Timetable for submitting and approving Grant Applications

10. All Grant applications **MUST** be received by the Clerk no later than 1st October. Any grant application received after this date will **NOT** be considered by the Parish Council.
11. The Parish Council will:
 - At its meeting in November (and again in December if appropriate):
 - Consider all grant applications.
 - Agree in principle which applications to accept, which to reject and those upon which it requires further information.
 - At its meeting in January (or earlier if Harborough District Council's timetable permits):
 - Decide if the application is to be included in the budget for the following year.
 - Instruct the Clerk, as soon as practicable following this meeting, to provide written notification of the decision to the applicant.

Note: This does **NOT** guarantee the organisation a grant. That decision will be made as and when the Parish Council receives the organisation's request for the release of the grant, together with the supporting documentation, and providing the Parish Council does not need the money for anything else. A budget is simply that: a budget.

Payment of Grants

12. The Parish Council will pay successful applicants their grant into their registered bank account upon receipt of documentary evidence that the funds requested in the grant application have been spent, or will be spent on the purpose for which the grant was awarded. This could be a receipt for a payment that the organisation has made, or a copy of an invoice from a supplier that requires payment.
13. In the event that the Parish Council does not consider the documented evidence to show that the previous grant has been spent in accordance with the Parish Council's Policy on Grants, future grants will be denied until the organisation can show it has improved its procedures to a level judged satisfactory by the Parish Council. The final decision rests with the Parish Council.
14. Any part of the grant not spent on the project described in the application must be returned to the Parish Council at the end of the grant period.
15. Parish Council grants that have not been released by the end of the current financial year, i.e. 31st March, will not be paid other than in extenuating circumstances to be agreed by the Parish Council.
16. The Parish Council will not make ongoing commitments to award grants or subsidies in future years. A fresh application will be required each year.
17. The amount of any grant awarded is at the sole discretion of the Parish Council.
18. The Parish Council will make the award of any grant or subsidy subject to such additional conditions and requirements, as it considers appropriate.
19. Any grant which the Parish Council offers is made on the understanding that the applicant is responsible for obtaining any necessary legal permissions and the offer of a grant should not be taken as authorisation.
20. In any publicity given to the specific purpose for which the grant is requested, the organisation is required to acknowledge the contribution that has been made by Houghton on the Hill Parish Council.