



Barrowby Parish Council

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Grants Policy

Document control

- **Owner:** Full Council
- **Responsible officer:** Responsible Financial Officer
- **Reviewed by:** Finance Committee
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- **Review:** Annually or earlier legislation, guidance, Financial Regulations, budget arrangements, Council structure or grant practice changes
- **Next review due:** January–March 2027 by the Responsible Financial Officer and Finance Committee, with recommendation to Full Council for formal adoption at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May 2027.

1. Purpose

1.1 This Grants Policy sets out how Barrowby Parish Council will consider requests for financial assistance from local groups, organisations and projects.

1.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that grants are awarded lawfully, fairly, transparently and consistently, and that public money is used for the benefit of Barrowby Parish, or some or all of its residents.

1.3 The Council recognises that local voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations can make an important contribution to community life, wellbeing, inclusion, environment, heritage, recreation and local services.

1.4 The Council may award grants where it is satisfied that the proposed activity is lawful, affordable, properly evidenced, and in the interests of the parish or its residents.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to discretionary grants, donations or financial contributions made by Barrowby Parish Council to external organisations.

2.2 This policy does not apply to:

- a. contracts for goods, works or services purchased by the Council;
- b. payments to suppliers or contractors;
- c. expenditure directly incurred by the Council on its own services, assets or projects;
- d. staff salaries, expenses or allowances;
- e. refunds, compensation or legal settlements;
- f. funds held by the Council for a legally restricted purpose, such as grant funding received by the Council for a specific project; or
- g. payments made under a formal service level agreement or contract, unless the Council determines that this policy should apply.

2.3 The Council may apply this policy to one-off donations, annual community grants, contributions to community projects, or support for local organisations.

3. Legislative and governance framework

3.1 The Council may only award a grant where it has legal power to do so.

3.2 The Council does not currently hold the General Power of Competence. Therefore, before awarding a grant, the Council shall identify a specific statutory power where one is available.

3.3 Where no specific statutory power is available, the Council may consider using section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, provided the proposed expenditure meets the statutory requirements and remains within the annual section 137 expenditure limit.

3.4 Section 137 may only be used where the Council considers that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, the Council's area or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants, and that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure.

3.5 The section 137 limit for parish and town councils in England for 2026/27 is £11.60 per elector. This limit may change annually and should be checked during the budget process and before significant grants are awarded.

3.6 The Council's Financial Regulations require the legal power for new or infrequent expenditure to be identified where this is not already clear. They also provide that expenditure must be authorised within budget, in accordance with delegated authority and with an auditable evidence trail.

3.7 The Scheme of Delegation provides that officers must act in accordance with legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, approved budgets, policies, procedures and Council resolutions, and that matters which are sensitive, contentious, unusual, financially significant or have wider policy implications may be referred to Full Council.

3.8 The Finance Committee may review financial policies and make recommendations to Full Council, but grant awards shall remain a matter for Full Council unless expressly delegated by Full Council, the Financial Regulations or a specific Council resolution.

4. Principles

4.1 Grants shall be considered on their individual merits.

4.2 The Council shall seek to ensure that grant funding:

- a. supports the parish or its residents;
- b. represents value for money;
- c. is lawful and within budget;
- d. is transparent and accountable;
- e. does not create an ongoing financial commitment unless expressly agreed by Full Council;
- f. does not replace funding that should reasonably be provided by another public body, commercial organisation or private individual;
- g. supports community benefit rather than private profit; and
- h. is awarded in a fair and consistent way.

4.3 The Council shall not normally fund an organisation simply because it has received funding in previous years.

4.4 The Council may refuse, reduce or defer any grant application even where the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.

4.5 The Council shall not award grants retrospectively for expenditure already incurred unless there are exceptional circumstances and Full Council considers it lawful and appropriate.

5. Who may apply

5.1 Applications may be considered from:

- a. local voluntary groups;
- b. community groups;
- c. charities;
- d. not-for-profit organisations;
- e. clubs or societies serving the parish;
- f. organisations delivering services or activities for Barrowby residents;
- g. community-led projects; and
- h. other public bodies or voluntary organisations where a contribution is lawful and appropriate.

5.2 Applicants do not have to be based within Barrowby Parish, but the Council must be satisfied that the grant will benefit Barrowby Parish or its residents.

5.3 The Council will not normally award grants to:

- a. individuals, except in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear legal power and community benefit;
- b. commercial businesses for private profit;
- c. political parties or political campaigns;
- d. religious organisations for the promotion of religious doctrine or worship;
- e. organisations with no clear community benefit to Barrowby Parish;
- f. organisations with excessive unrestricted reserves and no clear need for support;
- g. projects that discriminate unlawfully;
- h. activities that are unlawful, unsafe or contrary to Council policy; or
- i. organisations that have failed to account for a previous Council grant.

5.4 Grants to faith-based organisations may be considered where the project is open to the wider community and is not for the promotion of religious doctrine or worship.

6. What may be funded

6.1 Grants may be awarded for purposes including, but not limited to:

- a. community events and activities;
- b. projects supporting health, wellbeing, inclusion or social connection;
- c. recreation, sport or leisure activities;
- d. environmental, biodiversity or green space projects;
- e. heritage, arts or cultural projects;
- f. youth, older people or family activities;
- g. community safety initiatives;
- h. equipment for local community groups;
- i. publication, communication or information projects serving the parish;
- j. venue hire or running costs for community activities;
- k. start-up costs for new local community groups;
- l. match-funding for grant-funded community projects; and
- m. other projects that benefit Barrowby Parish or its residents.

6.2 The Council may fund either all or part of a project.

6.3 The Council may award a grant subject to conditions.

7. What will not normally be funded

7.1 The Council will not normally fund:

- a. expenditure already incurred before the application is considered;
- b. private benefit or private commercial activity;
- c. activities outside the parish with no clear benefit to Barrowby residents;
- d. party-political activity;
- e. religious worship, instruction or proselytising;
- f. projects that are primarily the responsibility of another statutory body;
- g. ongoing salary costs, unless there is a clear community benefit and Full Council considers it appropriate;
- h. loan repayments or debt repayment;
- i. alcohol;
- j. hospitality that is not clearly incidental to a community activity;
- k. VAT that the applicant can recover;
- l. activities that have already received sufficient funding from other sources; or
- m. anything unlawful or contrary to Council policies.

8. Application process

8.1 Applications should be made in writing using the Council's grant application form, or by providing equivalent information.

8.2 Applications should normally include:

- a. name and contact details of the organisation;
- b. organisation type and purpose;
- c. details of the project or activity;
- d. the amount requested;
- e. total project cost;
- f. how the project will benefit Barrowby Parish or its residents;
- g. when the money will be spent;
- h. whether other funding has been applied for or secured;
- i. a copy of the organisation's constitution or governing document, where available;
- j. recent accounts or bank statement, where appropriate;
- k. safeguarding policy, where the project involves children or vulnerable adults;
- l. insurance details, where relevant;
- m. equality, access or risk information, where relevant; and
- n. confirmation of any previous grants received from the Council.

8.3 The Clerk or RFO may request further information before an application is placed before Council.

8.4 Incomplete applications may be deferred.

9. Timing of applications

9.1 The Council may consider grant applications during the financial year, subject to budget availability.

9.2 Where possible, applications for larger or recurring grants should be submitted before or during the annual budget-setting process so the Council can consider them alongside other financial commitments.

9.3 The Council may set an annual deadline or funding round if it considers this necessary for fair and effective budget management.

9.4 Applications received after the grant budget has been allocated may be deferred to the following financial year unless Full Council resolves otherwise.

10. Assessment criteria

10.1 In considering an application, the Council may take account of:

- a. whether the grant is lawful;
- b. whether a specific statutory power exists;
- c. whether section 137 is required and available;
- d. the benefit to Barrowby Parish or its residents;
- e. whether the benefit is proportionate to the amount requested;
- f. the number of residents likely to benefit;
- g. whether the project supports community wellbeing, inclusion, environment, recreation, heritage, safety or local services;
- h. the applicant's financial need;
- i. the applicant's own reserves and fundraising efforts;
- j. whether match funding or other funding has been sought;
- k. whether the project is realistic and deliverable;
- l. whether the applicant has appropriate governance, insurance and safeguarding arrangements;
- m. whether the applicant has previously received Council funding and accounted for it properly;
- n. the Council's available budget;
- o. competing demands on Council funds; and
- p. whether funding would create an ongoing expectation or financial dependency.

10.2 The Council may give priority to applications that directly benefit Barrowby Parish residents, support local voluntary effort, improve community resilience, or help deliver services or activities that would otherwise be unavailable.

11. Decision-making

11.1 Grant applications shall normally be considered by Full Council.

11.2 The Finance Committee may review grant budgets, grant policy and grant-related financial information and make recommendations to Full Council.

11.3 No grant shall be awarded unless the Council has identified a lawful power for the expenditure.

11.4 The Council shall consider the application at a properly convened meeting, unless a specific delegation has been made.

11.5 Decisions shall be recorded in the minutes and shall include, where appropriate:

- a. the applicant;
- b. the amount awarded;
- c. the purpose of the grant;
- d. the legal power relied upon;
- e. any conditions attached; and
- f. whether the grant is to be funded from a specific budget or reserve.

11.6 The Council may award the full amount requested, a lower amount, a conditional amount, or refuse the application.

11.7 The Council's decision is final. There is no right of appeal, but an unsuccessful applicant may submit a new application if circumstances change or further information becomes available.

12. Conflicts of interest

12.1 Councillors shall declare interests in grant applications in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.

12.2 A councillor who is a member, trustee, officer, volunteer, employee or close associate of an applicant organisation should consider whether they have an interest to declare.

12.3 Where required by the Code of Conduct, a councillor shall withdraw from discussion and voting unless a dispensation has been granted.

12.4 Officers shall declare any conflict of interest in relation to a grant application and shall not assess or advise on an application where their involvement would create an actual or perceived conflict, unless the Council determines suitable arrangements.

13. Payment of grants

13.1 Grants shall be paid in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and banking arrangements.

13.2 Payment shall normally be made by bank transfer to an account held in the name of the applicant organisation.

13.3 Payments to personal bank accounts shall not normally be made.

13.4 The Council may require evidence of expenditure, invoices, receipts or project progress before releasing payment.

13.5 The Council may pay a grant in instalments where this is proportionate or where the project is delivered in stages.

14. Conditions of grant

14.1 The Council may attach conditions to any grant.

14.2 Standard conditions shall normally include:

- a. the grant must be used only for the purpose approved;
- b. the grant must be spent within the timescale agreed by Council;
- c. unused grant funding must be returned unless the Council agrees otherwise;
- d. the applicant must keep appropriate financial records;
- e. the applicant must provide evidence of expenditure if requested;
- f. the applicant must acknowledge Council support where appropriate;
- g. the applicant must obtain all necessary permissions, licences, consents, insurance and safeguarding arrangements;
- h. the applicant must not use the grant for unlawful, discriminatory or unsafe activity; and
- i. the Council may require repayment if the grant is misused or conditions are breached.

14.3 A grant award does not imply that the Council will provide future funding.

14.4 A grant award does not make the Council responsible for managing the applicant's project, staff, volunteers, contractors, insurance, safeguarding, health and safety, permissions or legal compliance.

15. Monitoring and reporting

15.1 Grant recipients may be asked to provide a short report explaining how the grant was used and what benefit was achieved.

15.2 The Council may require receipts, invoices, photographs, attendance numbers, publicity, accounts or other evidence appropriate to the size and nature of the grant.

15.3 The level of monitoring shall be proportionate to the amount awarded and the risk involved.

15.4 Organisations that do not provide requested monitoring information may be refused future grant funding.

15.5 The RFO shall keep a record of grants awarded, amounts paid, legal powers used and any section 137 expenditure.

16. Section 137 records

16.1 Where a grant is made under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the RFO shall record the expenditure as section 137 expenditure.

16.2 The Council shall monitor total section 137 expenditure against the annual statutory limit.

16.3 The Council shall not exceed the annual section 137 limit.

16.4 The annual section 137 limit shall be checked during the budget process and before awarding any significant section 137 grant.

17. Publicity and transparency

17.1 The Council may publish details of grants awarded, including the recipient, amount, purpose and legal power used.

17.2 Grant information shall be published in accordance with legal requirements, proper practices, transparency obligations, data protection requirements and the Council's publication scheme.

17.3 Applicants should be aware that grant applications and supporting documents may be included in public agenda papers unless they contain confidential or exempt information.

17.4 Personal data shall be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the Council's privacy notices.

Review of policy

18.1 This policy shall be reviewed annually.

18.2 It shall be reviewed earlier if required by:

- a. changes in legislation;
- b. changes in proper practices;
- c. changes in section 137 limits;
- d. changes in Financial Regulations;
- e. audit recommendations;
- f. significant changes in grant practice;
- g. budget pressures; or
- h. Council resolution.