

Buckden Parish Council

GRANTSⁱ AND DONATIONSⁱⁱ POLICY

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PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Parish Council regularly receives requests for grants and donations. This document is designed to support applicants and help Parish Councillors ensure equitable treatment of applications.

Note: The cost of any grants or donations awarded by the Parish Council is drawn from the Precept i.e. funds collected from the Buckden and Diddington residents' council tax bills.

Whilst the majority of funding available is for grants for specific purposes the Council will also, where possible, include a sum in its Budget to provide a fund for smaller donations that may be applied for during the year. Details of how to apply for such donations are set out later in this document.

Our Parish yearly budgeting process is completed in November/December and offers of grants or donations for the following financial year cannot be made until council approves the budget plan. Applications for grants must therefore normally be made no later than 30th September each year, for consideration as part of setting the Council's following year budget and therefore its Precept.

Agreed grants therefore cannot normally be paid before 1st April in the following financial year. If the sum agreed depends upon the receipt by the Parish of the second instalment of the Precept the award may be split into payments in April and October.

Grants and donations will be limited to those organisations which demonstrate a need for assistance, who provide equality of access and opportunity, and who provide adequate information to enable the Parish Council to make an informed decision.

This document has been prepared to provide transparency and support for potential applicants, council tax payers and Parish Councillors. Its contents has been developed by reference to grant and donations policies and procedures in many other Parish Councils.

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PRINCIPLES WE FOLLOW WHEN WE AWARD GRANTS OR DONATIONS

Our awards are open to established voluntary or community groups, as well as new or informal groups of parish residents who are, or intend by the date of application, to become formally constituted.

Anyone wishing to make an application for a donation or grant, whatever size, should read this document carefully. If they are eligible to apply for assistance, they should complete the application form and return it to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The parish council's aim is to ensure that all our award-making activity is fair, legally compliant and supports organisations which benefit the residents of our parish.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

To be eligible for the award of a grant or donation from the Parish Council an organisation must:

- be established for charitable, benevolent, social, cultural, recreational or philanthropic purposes
- have a constitution, or set of rules, which define its aims, objectives and operational procedures
- be able to provide a copy of its latest annual accounts and/or most recent bank statement. Accounts are to be checked and signed by a person independent of the group
- have a bank account operated by a minimum of at least two joint signatories

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED?

Only activities where the purpose of the funding is within the powers of a Parish Council

- the project should be something that makes the local community a better place in which to live, work or visit
- it should substantially benefit a significant number of people who live in the parish
- there must be clear evidence that local people support the project and are involved in carrying it out
- applications do not have to be from groups that already exist
- each group may normally only make one application per financial year
- applications will be considered for day-to-day running costs and individual projects.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ELIGIBLE

- support for individuals or private business projects
- projects that are the prime statutory responsibility of other government bodies
- projects that improve or benefit privately owned land or property (other than that owned by registered charities), or organisations not registered as charities or not considered not-for-profit (not profit-taking)
- projects that have already been completed or will have been by the time the grant or donation is made
- religious or political groups or activities
- national organisations, except where it can be demonstrated that the donation or grant will substantially benefit residents of the Parish

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CONDITIONS OF SUPPORT

The Council may make the award of any grant or donation subject to all or some of the following conditions. Required conditions will be at the discretion of the Council and shall take into account each organisation's individual circumstances.

- In order to fully understand your project or activity the parish councillors may wish to visit your project or activity, prior to the project or activity commencing. They may also wish to conduct a site visit once your funded project is underway.
- **As a minimum, you will write to confirm receipt of the grant or donation payment for audit purposes, or as the payment is handed over you will sign a form or receipt at the same time.**
- Funding must only be used for the purpose agreed with the parish council and if the monies are not spent on the items agreed, the balance must be returned, except where the Council's prior written consent has been given for the funds to be used for another purpose.
- **Funding is expected to be spent within the financial year awarded and cannot be added wholly or partly to your reserves.**
- If your project costs are more than you anticipated on your application, any shortfall must be met by you. Buckden Parish Council will not be in a position to make up any shortfall.
- The need to provide evidence of expenditure (receipted invoices) to the Clerk to the Council on completion of your project will be at the discretion of the Council – based on the amount given and the purposes given. This evidence of expenditure should be equal to, or more than, the total of the amount of the grant detailed on your application.
- **Any unused funds at the end of the financial year in which any grant is paid out must be declared to Buckden Parish Council which may ask for its return.**
- **You must acknowledge Buckden Parish Council's support in all publications, publicity and annual reports.**
- **You should show the funding awarded separately in your published financial accounts and Buckden Parish Council should have access to your financial records, on request, where appropriate.**
- **A representative of your organisation may be asked to give a report at the Annual Parish Meeting (held on an evening between March and May each year) on how you spent the money and, if appropriate, how your project went.**

WHEN TO APPLY

Buckden Parish Council prepares its annual budget during November and December each year. Organisations should therefore apply for grants no later than the end of September in time to be considered for the main bids for inclusion in the Parish Council budget. Any award granted would then become available for payment after April the following year.

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Each application for a grant will be determined on its merits and the Parish Council will expect a high quality in each application.

If an organisation has had a grant previously, they are not guaranteed to receive financial support again but are not excluded from applying again. A fresh application will be required each time.

Whilst ad-hoc requests can be made at any time, there is no guarantee that any funds will remain available.

HOW WILL DECISIONS ON GRANT APPLICATIONS BE MADE?

All applications (in-year applications) will be judged after the September annual closing date, providing all information required has been supplied.

The total sum available for all grants and donations varies year upon year. Information on budgets for grants/donations is available from clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk

If there are repeat applications for grants from the same organisation year-on-year then such grants will not exceed three consecutive years unless the applicant can demonstrate that other attempts at funding have been made during that time for the same purpose as that for which the grant is requested.

The decisions will be made by Buckden Parish Council. The Council's decision is final and there is no right of appeal. The Council reserves the right to decline any application without giving reasons for its decision. The Council will not commit to any ongoing expenditure.

Where a request for a grant is agreed, the Council shall determine the amount, using the figure requested by the applicant as a guide only. The Council will normally only consider one grant or donation application per organisation per financial year. Due account will be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or own fund-raising activities.

Unfortunately, we may not be able to fund all projects as there may be more applications than there is money available, however all applications will be considered carefully.

In-year monitoring of the use of Parish Council grants & donations may take place.

GRANT SPEND

A recipient of a grant over £500 must provide evidence of how the grant was spent, in the form of a written report, supported by financial evidence e.g. invoices, where available.

The written report must be received by the Clerk within 12 months of receipt of the grant.

The report will become a document available to public inspection under the provisions of Section 228 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Failure to comply with this requirement may affect future consideration of grant applications.

Buckden Parish Council reserves the right to recover the grant and/or moveable equipment purchased with grant monies if the organisation ceases to exist, if the grant is not used for the purposes specified, or if the conditions of the grant are not complied with.

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DONATIONS APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications for donations i.e. sums where the purpose of the funding is not specified in detail through the Donations route the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer for BPC, may exercise discretion as to the level of detail required to be presented to support each application for consideration by Council. Organisations applying for donations may be asked by the Clerk to complete such parts of the BPC application form as are relevant.

Applications will normally only be considered from non-profit organisations whose work benefits Buckden Parish and its residents.

Applications from individuals cannot be considered.

Donations which would benefit an individual resident of Buckden may, under exceptional circumstances, be considered for example, where a charity has been formed to raise funds for specialist equipment or treatment. Any such charity must apply for the donation and must satisfy the Council that it has already sought and received funding from other sources.

The Council will only consider a single donation to an organisation. If an organisation seeks funding for a similar project in the future it must apply for a grant i.e. specify the purpose in detail, not a donation.

Where a request for a donation is agreed, the Council shall determine the amount, using the figure requested by the applicant as a guide only.

The total donation fund will be set by the Parish Council as part of its annual Budget-setting process. Donations will not normally exceed £500

Payment for an approved donation application will be authorised as soon as is possible within the Council's procedures for approval of payments.

Evidence may be requested in the form of invoices, or receipts, to demonstrate that the donation was used for a purpose which benefitted residents represented by BPC.

GRANTS POLICY DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE

The Clerk will retain the master copy of the policy.

Copies of this policy will be distributed to all Buckden Parish Councillors.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all grant/donation applicants

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Finance Advisory Group and at least once during the first year of each 4-year term of the Parish Council unless there are relevant changes to legislation in the intervening periods.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be made in writing. Please apply to the Clerk for the application form – see overleaf.

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APPLICATION FOR GRANT/DONATION

This Application form is available as a Word document to be used if you wish to prepare the submission on a computer. Contact clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk

The boxes on the Word version of this form will expand as you type.

Name of organisation	
Name of person making application and Position in the organisation	
Is your organisation a registered charity? If yes, please provide charity registration number	
Contact Address	
Contact telephone no.	
Email address	
Describe the overall aim of your organisation and the activities or services it provides	
Explain the direct benefit to Buckden of your organisation's activities, including, if available, the number of Buckden residents who have benefitted in the past or may benefit in the future	
Details of the project or activities, including anticipated commencement date and total expected duration	
Overall cost of the project or activities, including VAT Detail the cost of each item covered by your funding request (please use a separate sheet if needed)	If your organisation is VAT registered please provide VAT number
Amount sought from Buckden PC	
Details of any other own or external funding. Information on efforts to generate income from other sources must be submitted.	

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Demonstrate clearly how the grant/donation will provide direct benefit	
Detail how many people of Buckden will benefit	
Have you applied to Buckden Parish Council in the last 5 years? If so give brief details.	
Any additional information that supports the application	

To support your application, if it is for a sum over £500 please supply the following:

- A copy of your constitution and, if appropriate, membership rules.
- A copy of your organisation's audited accounts or accounts that have been examined by a suitably qualified person (or in the case of a newly formed organisation, a detailed budget and business plan). *These will be reviewed to ensure there is a genuine need for a grant/donation and that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage and account for expenditure against any grant awarded by BPC.*
- Copies of written estimates or catalogue pages if grant for equipment or capital costs
- A copy of your Safeguarding Policy (if your organisation has contact with Children or Vulnerable Adults).

[See attached sheet for signatures of the submitting organisation.](#)

When completed, please make a copy of this application and send the signed original, with all supporting papers, to the Buckden Parish Council office (address overleaf)

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Signature by or on behalf of the applicant(s)

We confirm the information given in this application is accurate and that the organisation undertakes to inform Buckden Parish Council of any changes in the organisation's circumstances that would affect this application.

We confirm that any grant awarded by the Council will be spent only on the purpose for which it was given.

Signed.....

Dated

Position in Organisation.....

Signed.....

Dated

Position in Organisation.....

Please return the completed form to:

Ms Ramune Mimiene (Clerk)

Buckden Parish Council, Buckden Village Hall, Burberry Road, Buckden, St Neots, PE19 5UY

Please address any queries on this policy, procedure or applications to

clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk

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For Council use only

Record of Decision and actions - to be completed by Parish Clerk

Organisation/Group:

Does this application clearly come within the Powers and Duties of Parish Councils? If so, which?	
Grant or Donation?	
Date application discussed at full Parish Council and Minute number	
Council Decision – Approve/Reject	
Amount of Grant or Donation agreed by Council	
Date organisation/group notified of decision	
Date payment made to organisation/group	
Date receipt for payment returned to the Buckden Parish Clerk	
Date Report Due (if a grant)	
Date of reminder set by Clerk to prompt timely delivery of report	
Date Report Received (if a grant)	
Any balance to be repaid (if grant)?	
Any issues arising to be brought to Council?	

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REVIEW The policy will be reviewed no later than June every other year or when relevant legislation is enacted if sooner and, if changes are proposed, they shall be taken to full Council for discussion and adoption before implementation.

VERSION CONTROL Date amended	Reason for version change	Amended by
30 April 2019	Draft 1.0 new policy and application form circulated to Compliance Advisory Group members for comment	Cllr Ashwell, Chairman Finance Advisory Group Cllr Underwood, Chairman Compliance Advisory Group
11 June 2019	DRAFT 1.1 presented to Council for discussion of principles, procedure and indicative financial limits.	Cllr Ashwell
30 June 2019	Final version 1.0 Updated after the Parish Council meeting to reflect discussion.	Cllr Ashwell & Cllr Underwood
September 2020	Final version 1.1 Parish Clerk's email address amended	Cllr Ashwell
April 2022	Reviewed to ensure requirements clear re need to remain within Powers of BPC and highlight obligations of recipients; no change	Cllr Ashwell & Finance AG
July 2023	Version 2.0 Review of information included e.g. relating to the legislative basis for BPC provision of funds to other organisations	Cllr Clark, Cllr Ashwell & Finance AG

References:

- NALC The Good Councillors Guide
- Local Government Act 1972 Section 133
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 Section 19
- Grant and donation policies, procedures and application forms accessed from other Parish Councils, locally and nationally

WORKING DEFINITIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ⁱ A GRANT is money which may be given by the Parish Council to an organisation for a pre-specified purpose. Larger sums of money (over the specified donations threshold in the policy) would normally be given as a grant, to secure its application for a defined purpose with the safeguards for the receiving organisation and council tax payers which are set out in this document.

BPC may require any grant money not spent on the specified purpose(s) to be returned by the receiving organisation at the end of the financial year (31st March).

ⁱⁱ A DONATION is money which may be given by the Parish Council for use at the discretion of the receiving organisation, not necessarily for a pre-specified purpose.

Donations are limited as set out in this document. As they are lower value they should and generally will be managed with few requirements for reporting and without a requirement to repay any balance at year-end.

Note - similar conditions are applied to grants and donations received by Buckden Parish Council.