



## SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL

### GRANT AID AWARDING POLICY – S137 GRANTS

#### Introduction

Speen Parish Council operates a Section 137 grant aid policy. Local Councils are empowered under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 which gives council's the power 'to incur expenditure for purposes not otherwise authorised.' S137 was amended in s36 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The amendment stipulates that expenditure and benefit must be balanced.

The Council has the power to incur restricted expenditure which in the Council's opinion is considered to be in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its residents. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

This policy aims to:

- Help voluntary groups, charitable organisations and community groups within Speen Parish to improve their effectiveness
- help to ensure the provision of services needed by Speen Parish residents via the voluntary sector
- support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties, and
- ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all Speen Parish residents to the services and funds it provides.

The Council defines voluntary groups, charitable organisations and community groups as not-for-profit organisations set up and run by a management committee. This policy sets out the Council's funding principles and details its expectations of all groups in receipt of grant aid.

#### Application Process

The Council's Finance and HR Committee will consider applications for grants from organisations four times a year. The timetable is as follows:

<b>Deadline for submission of application</b>	<b>Payment date subject to approval</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> January	30 <sup>th</sup> April
30 <sup>th</sup> April	31 <sup>st</sup> July
31 <sup>st</sup> July	31 <sup>st</sup> October
31 <sup>st</sup> October	31 <sup>st</sup> January

As a general outline the Finance and HR Committee will allocate  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the S137 Grant Budget per quarter. If there is any residual sum in one quarter this will roll over to the next quarter.

To qualify for an award the applicant must be able to demonstrate that any funding from the Council will benefit the Parish and/or residents of the Parish.



In determining the validity of an application the Finance and HR Committee will refer to the following guidelines:

Applications will be considered for the following purposes:

- purchasing equipment either in part or in full
- the funding of transport that will enable group members to partake in a group trip or outing regardless of their income
- training activities or to purchase the expertise of an outside trainer/ instructor/facilitator
- activities that raise the profile of the area
- running costs of a group/project subject to the organisation being able to demonstrate their lack of funds and the adverse effect on the parish and its residents if the organisation is unable to continue or is hampered by a lack of funds
- hosting special events or celebrations
- the provision of recreational facilities

Once the S137 Grants budget is exhausted the Finance and HR Committee will only consider emergency requests for assistance and generally only from organisations with which it has close links.

An emergency grant request once received in writing will be considered at the next meeting of the Finance and HR Committee.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits.

### **Conditions**

- The award must be used for the purpose for which the application was made.
- The applicant must agree to present back to the council within one year of receiving the funds to evidence the work that has been done with the grant either by presenting this to the council at a parish meeting or by allowing a representative from the council to visit the organisation to witness the work/project that the funds have been used for taking place.
- If the group is unable to use the award for the stated purpose all monies must be returned to the Council.
- All awards must be properly accounted for and evidence of expenditure should be supplied if requested. If the Council is not satisfied with the arrangements it reserves the right to request a refund of monies awarded.

### **Eligibility**

Grants are restricted to applications made by groups only and that demonstrate benefit to the Parish and/or its residents. Applicants must set out how the community in Speen Parish will benefit directly from the work funded by any grant. This is particularly important where an application is made by an organisation working regionally or nationally.

S137 awards are open to established voluntary or community groups as well as new or informal groups of Parishioners who are by the date of application to become formally constituted. To be eligible for the award of a grant under Section 137 an organisation **ideally** should satisfy all of the following.

- 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 including Balance Sheet showing cash at bank and reserves. 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.

It is however recognised that smaller organisations within the parish community may not be compliant with the above e.g. a local parent-led toddler group. In that instance awarding of a grant and waiving the above requirements will be subject to the Council's Finance and HR Committee considering and agreeing the demonstrable benefits to the residents of Speen Parish.

Grants will not be made under any circumstances to:

- private individuals
- commercial organisations
- projects or activities that the Council considers to be the responsibility of a Statutory Authority or other government body
- political groups or activities promoting political beliefs
- religious groups or activities where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs
- retrospective applications for costs incurred prior to the application being received and/or considered e.g. equipment already purchased
- grants for the repayment of loans or cost of services, equipment or provisions in anticipation of a grant
- projects that primarily improve or benefit privately owned land or property
- local groups where fund-raising is sent to a central HQ for redistribution

All applicants are required to complete the Council's S137 Grant Application form to be submitted to the Clerk together with the following documents:

- Annual Accounts including Balance Sheet and/or
- Constitution and/or
- Set of Rules and
- Any further information supporting the application

A group will only receive one S137 Grant payment per annum.

Repeat grant applications year on year will only be granted for projects that the Finance and HR Committee considers of specific value to the Speen Parish community.

The Council reserves the right to refuse any grant application.

This policy has been approved by Speen Parish Council as follows:

Policy Adopted by Council:	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023
Last review Date:	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Next Review Date:	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2027