



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Bentham Town Council Grant Award Policy

1. Purpose

Bentham Town Council invites local organisations to apply for grants as part of its annual precept-setting process.

This policy sets out:

- The eligibility criteria for applicants;
- The application process and timescales;
- The assessment and decision-making procedure;
- The terms and conditions attached to any grant awarded.

The Council aims to support projects and activities that demonstrably benefit the residents of the Parish of Bentham.

2. Eligibility

1. Applications are invited from organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis, including registered charities and community groups.
2. Limited companies and profit-distributing organisations are not eligible for funding.
3. Applications do not have to be made by parishioners; however, the beneficiaries must be residents of the Parish of Bentham.

3. Application Process

1. The application window opens upon publication of the application forms. Forms will be:
 - Sent to previous recipients
 - Published by the Council no later than the beginning of September each year.
 - Advertised on social media, website and Bentham News.
2. Applications must be received by the Town Clerk by the stated deadline (normally the end of October).
3. Applications received after the closing date:
 - Will normally be returned until the next application window.
 - May, at the Council's discretion, be considered for a maximum grant of £50.
4. Applications must:
 - Be submitted on the official application form.
 - Include any supporting documentation required.
 - Conform fully to the criteria set out below.
5. Applications will be considered at the Annual Precept Meeting in November.

6. Grants are normally distributed at the Annual Parish Meeting in April, approved and authorised in May.
7. Grants over £500 will normally be paid in two instalments (May and October).

4. Application Requirements

All applications must:

- Detail the specific project(s) or item(s) requiring funding.
- State:
 - Total project cost;
 - Amount requested from the Council;
 - Source of matched funding (where applicable).
- Provide details of:
 - Cash reserves;
 - Annual income and expenditure.
- Include a copy of the previous year's accounts.
- Provide evidence that the grant will benefit residents of the Parish of Bentham.
- Provide full contact details of the organisation.
- **Council prioritises project funding over ongoing operational costs and does not generally fund salaries or wages.**

Applications that do not meet these requirements will be dismissed.

5. Matched Funding

The Council expects organisations to contribute to the funding of their project.

- For projects over £500, the Council may require up to 50% matched funding.
- The Council reserves the right to request evidence of secured matched funding before releasing payment.

6. Rules of Engagement

1. The Council is not obliged to award any grant.
2. The Council is not obliged to honour any previously awarded or indicative grant.
3. Applications must be submitted each year; awards do not carry forward automatically.
4. Applications must relate to the current financial year only.
5. Decisions are based solely on:
 - Information provided in the application form;
 - Supporting documentation;
 - Any representation made at the Precept Meeting.
6. Decisions are made by majority vote of Councillors.
7. Questions from Councillors must be directed to the Clerk in advance or raised during the Public Participation section of the meeting.
8. Organisations are expected to collect their grant in person at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.
9. Failure to send a representative or submit a written report with apologies may result in forfeiture of the grant.
10. The Council's decision is final in all matters.
11. The Council is bound by the Freedom of Information Act and may publish grant information on its website or in the media.

7. Terms and Conditions of Grant Award

By accepting a grant from Bentham Town Council, the recipient organisation agrees to the following conditions:

7.1 Use of Funds

- The grant must be used solely for the purpose stated in the application.
- Funds must not be diverted to other projects without prior written approval from the Council.
- The Council reserves the right to reclaim funds not used for the agreed purpose.

7.2 Monitoring and Reporting

- The organisation must provide a brief written report detailing how the funds were used and the benefit delivered to residents.
- Evidence of expenditure (receipts or invoices) may be requested.
- Failure to provide a report may affect future funding applications.

7.3 Payment Conditions

- Grants over £500 may be paid in instalments.
- All grants will normally be paid in arrears upon production of appropriate invoices, receipts or written quotations relating to the approved expenditure.
- The Council may require evidence that goods or services have been ordered or completed before payment is released.
- The second instalment of any staged payment may be withheld if satisfactory progress or reporting is not demonstrated.
- The Council reserves the right to withhold payment where circumstances have materially changed.

These additions make it clear that:

- grants are for projects rather than ongoing operational support; and
- payments are reimbursement-based rather than advance funding.

7.4 Publicity and Acknowledgement

- Recipients are encouraged to acknowledge the Council's support in publicity materials where appropriate.
- The Council may publicise details of grants awarded.

7.5 Non-Compliance

- If the organisation:
 - Ceases to operate,
 - Becomes insolvent,
 - Uses funds for unauthorised purposes, or
 - Provides misleading information,

The Council reserves the right to require repayment of the grant.

7.6 Freedom of Information and Transparency

- Information supplied in grant applications may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
- Details of awarded grants may be published by the Council.

8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council to ensure it remains fit for purpose and compliant with relevant legislation and governance standards.