

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL POLICY ON GRANTS UNDER S137 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, this Policy sets out the Parish Council's position and procedure in awarding S137 grants to ensure openness, transparency and fairness in the Council's efforts to support local organisations.

1. What is S137?

- a) S137 enables a Parish Council to spend a restricted amount of money on projects which will be of direct benefit to its community, either as a whole or in part, when there is no other legislation allowing it, provided there is clear evidence that local people support the project and are involved in carrying it out.
- b) S137 is not a replacement for existing statutory powers. If powers exist to spend money under other legislation, the council must use that legislation and cannot use Section 137.
- c) If the council is specifically prevented by legislation from spending money on an item or service, it cannot use S137 to circumvent the restriction.

2. How much can the Parish Council spend under S137?

- a) The maximum amount which a Parish Council can spend under S137 in the financial year 2023/24 is **£9.93** per elector. This limit increases each year in line with the Retail Price Index. (Update annually with current figure)
- b) S137 does not award the Council any additional funds. It merely grants a limited freedom to spend part of the Council's annual budget or reserves on items for which no other statutory power exists. The annual spend restriction cannot be exceeded, no matter what the council's resources might be.

3. Who can apply

- a) To be eligible for the award of a grant under S137 an organisation must: -
 - i) be established for charities or bodies providing a public service on a non-profit making basis within the UK.
 - ii) have a constitution, or set of rules, which define its aims, objectives, and operational processes.
 - iii) be able to provide a copy of its latest annual accounts and be able to demonstrate that the accounts are checked and signed by a person independent of the group.
 - iv) have a bank account operated by a minimum of at least two joint signatories.

4. What's not eligible for a S137 grant

- a) support for individuals or private business projects
- b) the running costs of any organisation

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- c) projects which are the prime statutory responsibility of other government bodies
- d) projects which improve or benefit privately owned land or property
- e) projects which have already been completed or will have been completed by the time the grant is made

5. When and how to apply?

- a) Any time, and your application will be considered at a Parish Council Meeting at the earliest opportunity or by an appropriate method agreed by councillors
- b) Awards will not exceed the agreed annual budget unless the Parish Council agrees to make an award under exceptional circumstances.
- c) All groups will be treated equally
- d) If an organisation has been successful following an application for S137 funding, they are not guaranteed to receive further financial support in that same financial year but are not precluded from applying again. However, a fresh application will be required each time.

6. How will decisions be made?

- All applications will be judged at an appropriate date.
- Decisions will be made by Biddenden Parish Council whose decision is final.
- In the event there are more applications than the funds available, the Parish Council may not be able to fund them all. All applications, however, will be considered carefully. Due account will be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources, or the applicant's own fund-raising activities.
- Emergency applications can be considered as necessary.

7. Condition of support

The Parish Council may make the award of any grant subject to some or all of the following conditions: -

- a) Required conditions will be at the discretion of the Parish Council and consider an organisation's individual circumstances.
- b) To fully understand your project or activity, Parish Councillors may wish to visit your project or activity, prior to it commencing. They may also wish to conduct a site visit once your funded project is underway.
- c) As a minimum, you will write to confirm receipt of the cheque for audit purposes.
- d) Funding must only be used for the purpose agreed with the Parish Council and if the monies are not spent on the items agreed, funds must be returned.
- e) Funding must be spent within the financial year awarded and cannot be added wholly or partly to your reserves.
- f) If your project costs are more than you anticipated on your application, any shortfall must be met by you or another source of funding.
- g) The Parish Council would ask that you acknowledge its support in your publications, publicity and annual reports.