

North Lodge Parish Council

Donations Guidance under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

This guidance sets out the Parish Council's position and procedure with regard to the award of s137 donations

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 section 137, North Lodge Parish Council sets aside a sum of money each year which can be applied for by local organisations for projects which will be of benefit to residents within North Lodge Parish.

Section 137 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 is a statutory power. It gives councils the power 'to incur expenditure for purposes not otherwise authorised.' It is only used when there is no other specific power available; it is a 'power of last resort', it must benefit some or all residents, not an individual, nor can it be made retrospectively.

S137 was amended in s36 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The amendment stipulates that expenditure and benefit must be balanced.

This document sets out the Parish Council's policy and procedure for donations under Section 137 of the above Act with its aim of ensuring that all of its award-making activity is open, transparent, fair and supports local organisations.

The Parish Council's awards are open to established voluntary or community groups, as well as new or informal groups of parishioners who are or intend by the date of application to become formally constituted.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

To be eligible for the award of a donation under Section 137 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 be able to demonstrate that the accounts are 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?

- the project should be something which makes the local community a better place in which to live, work or visit;
- it should benefit people who live in the parish;
- there must be clear evidence that local people support the project and are involved in carrying it out;
- each group may only make one application per financial year.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT NORMALLY ELIGIBLE

- support for individuals or private business projects;
- national organisations not based locally;
- projects which include overseas travel;
- projects which are the prime statutory responsibility of other government bodies;
- projects which improve or benefit privately owned land or property;
- projects which have already been completed or will have been completed by the time the donation is made.

CONDITIONS OF SUPPORT

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

- In order 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.
- Funding must only be used for the purpose outlined in the application and if the monies are not spent on the items agreed, they must be returned.
- Funding cannot be added wholly or partly to your reserves.
- A lower award may be offered if there are insufficient funds to meet the whole funding application.
- If your project costs are more than you anticipated on your application, any shortfall must be met by you.
- The Parish Council would ask that you acknowledge its support in your publications, publicity and annual reports.

WHEN TO APPLY

The Parish Council usually considers applications annually in January. However, applications can be submitted throughout the year, and the Council will consider them if the Applicant demonstrates that there is a reasoned justification for the Application to be determined at that time.

All applications should be delivered to the Clerk at least 14 days in advance of the meeting which takes place on the third Tuesday of the month (except August and December when there are no meetings). Only application forms received by this date will be considered at the meeting.

Awards will not exceed the agreed annual budget of the Parish Council unless the Parish Council agrees to make an award under exceptional circumstances.

All groups will be treated equally. If an organisation has had a donation previously, they are not guaranteed to receive financial support again, but are not excluded from applying again in a different financial year. A fresh application will be required each time.

HOW WILL DECISIONS BE MADE?

All applications will be considered after the closing date. Decisions will be made by North Lodge Parish Council with its decision being final. Unfortunately, the Parish Council 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. 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 and of year end balances. Funding decisions will also be based on the number of direct North Lodge beneficiaries.

HOW TO APPLY

Application forms are available by contacting the Clerk at clerk@northlodgeparishcouncil.gov.uk or by telephone 0191 3892516.