**Stantonbury Parish Council Grant Policy**

**Background to Policy**

This policy has been adopted to give guidance as to how the SPC should make judgements on grant applications fairly, in the best interest of our Parishioners and also to ensure that grants made are properly used and accounted for.

Underpinning this policy is the fact that all grant money allocated has come from public funds and the Council has a legal obligation for the proper administration of these monies.

Grants will be available to ‘Not for Profit’ businesses and community organisations that benefit the lives of people living within Stantonbury Parish.

1. **The Policy**

Grant applications are divided into two categories:

* 1. Category 1 - Parish-Based Grants

These are for groups and organisations based in the Parish.

Category 1 applications can be submitted at any time and will be allocated to an individual Councillor at the first available meeting of the full Council. It is for that Councillor to liaise with the applicant, to gather such additional information as may be necessary, and to make a recommendation to the full Council so that a final decision can be taken.

* 1. Category 2 - Non-Parish Based Grants

These are for groups and organisations that are based outside of the Parish, but whose wider-ranging activities may benefit the Parish and/or particular Parish residents, groups and organisations.

Category 2 applications can be submitted at any time and will be allocated to a Councillor in the same manner as those under Category 1 above. However, Category 2 applications will only be brought to Council for a decision at the end of March or September. Funds for these grants will be allocated from any remaining half year budget. For example, if the Council have an annual budget of £20,000 for grants, this would be divided into £10,000 for each 6-month period. If the Council have awarded £8,000 to Category 1 applicants, that would leave a maximum of £2,000 to be divided between any Category 2 that might be approved.

It is at the discretion of the full Council whether a grant is awarded.

If the grant is below £250, the Councillor can make a recommendation to the full Council so that a final decision can be taken.

For grants over £250 to a maximum of £1,000, the applicant will be invited to attend a full Council meeting and provide a supporting verbal statement for the grant. After the meeting the Council will make a decision and will inform the applicant.

1. Applications

Applications can be submitted at any time and will be allocated to an individual Councillor at the first available meeting of the full Council, subject to the restrictions set out in section 1.

1. The application must come from a properly constituted body; that is; it shall have a formal constitution or terms of reference, responsible directors, trustees or an elected committee and will have up-to-date accounts. The only exceptions to these requirements will be:
* Religious organisations, for whom a constitution will not be required.
* Newly constituted organisations and groups for which accounts will not yet exist.
* Informal groups that gather for a common social purpose or other activity, having clear aims and objectives and whose members act collectively. Some form of documentation /identification of members must be produced.
* Schools of Milton Keynes Council-supported organisations are not required to submit full accounts. Project accounts will suffice.
* Very small clubs or societies (i.e. less than 15 members) that have a basic book keeping system or monies in and expenditure.
* Proposed advertising for the event for which funding is sought must be provided at least 28 days prior to the event. (The Parish Council will support advertising in the Parish Newsletter providing sufficient notice is provided).
1. Where funding is being sought to meet costs arising from a community event, the application must be supported by an events licence, where needed, and written confirmation that agreement has been granted for the use of any land or buildings to be used as a venue.
2. The group or organisation’s objectives shall be of benefit or potential benefit to residents of Stantonbury Parish. Evidence for this will be sought.
3. The application shall be made with respect to a clearly specified purpose. This may include start-up costs for a newly constituted group or organisation, shall exclude applications seeking running costs by established groups.
4. The timeframe for expenditure of the grant shall be set down in the application.
5. The sum total of grants made to any one group or organisation within a single financial year (April – 31 March) shall not exceed £1,000. The amount of grants for food will not exceed £250 for each application and may accrue to the total of £1,000 at the decision of the Council on the merit of each application.
6. Grants for capital equipment and contracted goods and services will only be made against three written quotations, where possible.
7. Payment will be made by cheque or bank transfer only payable to the group or organisation concerned. Under no circumstances will cheques be made payable to individuals (**or third-party representatives).** Exceptionally, cheques may be made payable to the vendor of the goods or service for which the grant was made.
8. Where small or newly formed groups apply for a grant and the group replies on behalf of a larger organisation to manage the grant monies, the Council will consider transferring the grant monies to the larger organisation providing the following criteria are met.

**a)** The larger organisation can show in its accounts the funds of the smaller organisation are ring-fenced.
**b)** The larger organisation is known to the Parish Council and has received a grant from the Parish Council in its own name.
9. Cheques will not be released by the Council earlier than 28 days in advance of the project delivery date, except where an advance deposit is a condition of the contract. In such cases – and whenever an activity is to span an extended period of time - payment of a grant shall be made in instalments in accordance with an agreement to be made between the applicant and the Council. The balance of any grant outstanding shall be ring-fenced until the activity has been completed or otherwise terminated.
10. Where the full amount of a grant has not been spent for the purpose for which it was given, the surplus is to be returned to the Council within 14 days of all expenses having been paid. Surpluses may not be used by the applicant for purposes other than those for which the grant was approved. Should there be a need to change the (terms) specification of a project after a grant has been awarded, the details must be referred to the Council for their consideration before any money is spent.
11. No further applications for any remaining funds from a grant will be considered for any group or organisation and can only be spent on items quoted.
12. The applicant shall be required to submit an account, copies of any invoices and a short report upon completion of any activity benefitting from a parish grant. This shall be delivered to the Council within 28 days of completion using the standard report form provided by the Council. In the case of on-going projects, a report will be required at 3-monthly intervals.
13. The Councillor allocated to the grant will make a follow-up appointment within the 3 months, in order to ensure the terms of the grant have been adhered to. This will include photographs, a report for our website and Newsletter. If the terms have not been met, a full refund of the grant will be expected. A formal follow-up report must be filed.
14. All documentation relating to a grant application and the accounting thereof shall be held on file at the Council office for a period of 6 years.
15. Retrospective claims will not be processed.
16. The Council reserves the rights to refuse any grant that they feel that does not meet the criteria or is not beneficial to the wider community. Similarly, the Parish Council reserves the right to seek return of the full value of any grant where the monies have not been spent as per the details set out in the grant application. The Parish Council will take action against any outstanding monies not used as part of the allocated grant. If the Parish Council suspect a fraud has taken place, a report will be made to Thames Valley Policy.

In cases of doubt with respect to the interpretation of the above conditions, the applicant must seek the advice and guidance of the Parish Clerk.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Dated\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairman