BRANDON
TOWN COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY GRANT POLICY

1. Introduction

Brandon Town Council ("the Council") provides community grants to support projects, activities and services that contribute to the wellbeing and quality of life of residents of Brandon.

The grant scheme is intended to provide additional support for community activity, rather than to replace the statutory responsibilities of other public bodies or to fund activities that are primarily for the benefit of non-residents outside Brandon.

The amount of money available is set annually in the Council's budget.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the grant scheme is to support community groups, voluntary organisations and local initiatives that:

- provide a clear and identifiable benefit to residents of Brandon;
- respond to an identified local need or community priority;
- encourage community participation, inclusion and engagement;
- support the wellbeing, development or quality of life of local residents;
- provide opportunities for residents to participate in sport, recreation, culture, education or other community activities;
- help bring people together and strengthen community connections;
- support activities or services that might otherwise be difficult to provide from other sources; or
- represent good value for money in relation to the benefit delivered to the Brandon community.

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3. Eligibility

Applications must:

- be submitted by recognised not-for-profit community groups or organisations;
- not be accepted from individuals;
- relate to activities that provide benefit to the Brandon community;
- generally be for small-scale capital expenditure, such as the purchase of equipment, or for community activity where appropriate.

Only one grant will normally be awarded to an organisation in any one year, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Council will give priority to applications where the primary beneficiaries are residents of Brandon and where there is clear evidence of the need for, and likely benefit from, the proposed activity.

The Council may decline an application where:

- the principal beneficiaries are not residents of Brandon;
- the proposed activity does not demonstrate a clear community benefit;
- the activity is primarily commercial or undertaken for private benefit;
- the expenditure is considered unreasonable or does not represent good value for money;
- the applicant has sufficient alternative funding available;
- the activity duplicates existing provision without demonstrating additional benefit; or
- the application does not meet the objectives or eligibility requirements of the scheme.

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4. Procedure

At the January meeting each year, the Town Council will publish its intention to make available a sum of money in the next financial year for the benefit of community organisations.

Grant applications will only be accepted and processed in year, within the financial year to which the grant budget relates.

Applications for grants should be made to the Council using the application form available from the Clerk.

All applications must be addressed to the Clerk at the official Council address. Applications sent directly to members of the Council will not be considered.

The closing date for applications is the first Monday of every month.

The Clerk will acknowledge all applications in writing within 14 days of receipt.

The Council will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants in writing.

5. Submitting Applications

Applications must be submitted on the Council's application form. Any other format will not be accepted.

The applicant must state clearly the purpose for which the grant is to be used. Successful applicants may use the grant only for the purpose stated on the application form.

All applications must be accompanied by:

- an up-to-date set of accounts; and
- the organisation's current Constitution or Rules.

A copy of the organisation's latest bank statement may be requested.

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The Council may request the applicant, or applicants, to make a presentation outlining the project proposed and the benefits to the community prior to the award of the grant.

6. Assessment and Decision-Making

Each application will be assessed against the criteria set by the Council.

Applications will be scored based on the information provided, rather than the personal merits of the organisation or the strength of any presentation made to Council.

Officers will consider the overall benefit to the Brandon community when assessing applications. Being a charitable, voluntary or community organisation does not, in itself, mean that an application will qualify for funding.

Consideration will also be given to:

- the amount of remaining funding available in the current grant budget;
- whether the applicant has previously received Council funding;
- whether the proposed expenditure is eligible under the scheme;
- whether the application duplicates existing provision;
- whether the project provides a reasonable level of benefit in relation to the amount requested.

Councillors should declare any relevant interests and take no part in determining an application where an appropriate declaration of interest applies.

7. Application Assessment Scoring

The scoring system is intended to support consistent and transparent decision-making, rather than automatically determine the outcome.

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Assessment criteria:

CRITERION	MAXIMUM POINTS	GUIDANCE
Benefit to Brandon residents	30	**How directly and significantly will the proposed activity benefit residents of Brandon?** · 25–30: Clear and substantial benefit to Brandon residents; the majority of beneficiaries are Brandon residents. · 18–24: Good benefit to Brandon residents, although some benefits extend beyond Brandon. · 10–17: Some identifiable benefit to Brandon residents, but the principal beneficiaries are wider than Brandon. · 1–9: Limited or indirect benefit to Brandon residents. · 0: No identifiable benefit to Brandon residents.
Community need	20	**How well does the application demonstrate a genuine need or demand for the proposed activity?** · 16–20: Strong evidence of a clear and significant local need.

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CRITERION	MAXIMUM POINTS	GUIDANCE
		· 11–15: Good evidence of local need. · 6–10: Some evidence of need, but limited or unclear. · 1–5: Little evidence of local need. · 0: No demonstrated need.
Community impact	15	**What difference will the project make to the local community? Consider participation, inclusion, wellbeing, community connection, opportunities for residents and longer-term benefit.** · 13–15: Significant and demonstrable community impact. · 9–12: Good community impact. · 5–8: Some positive impact. · 1–4: Limited impact. · 0: No meaningful community impact identified.

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CRITERION	MAXIMUM POINTS	GUIDANCE
Value for money	15	**Does the proposed expenditure represent good value for the Council and local taxpayers? Consider the number of Brandon residents benefiting, the amount requested, other funding or contributions, and whether the costs are reasonable.** · 13–15: Excellent value for money. · 9–12: Good value for money. · 5–8: Reasonable value for money. · 1–4: Poor value for money or insufficient information. · 0: No evidence that the expenditure represents reasonable value.
Deliverability	10	**How realistic and achievable is the proposed project? Consider whether the organisation has the experience, resources, permissions and capacity to deliver what is proposed.** · 9–10: Very strong evidence that the project can be successfully delivered. · 6–8: Good evidence of deliverability.

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CRITERION	MAXIMUM POINTS	GUIDANCE
		· 3–5: Some concerns or insufficient information. · 1–2: Significant concerns about delivery. · 0: Project is not considered deliverable.
Additional funding / sustainability	10	Has the applicant demonstrated that it is making reasonable efforts to secure other funding or contributions, and that the project is sustainable where appropriate? · 9–10: Strong evidence of other funding, volunteer contribution, fundraising or sustainable plans. · 6–8: Good evidence of additional support or funding. · 3–5: Some contribution or fundraising, but limited. · 1–2: Little evidence of additional support. · 0: Entirely dependent on Council funding with no evidence of wider support.
Total	100	

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Score interpretation:

SCORE	ASSESSMENT
80–100	Very strong application
65–79	Strong application
50–64	Potentially suitable; consider alongside available funds
35–49	Weak application
0–34	Unlikely to meet the scheme's objectives

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8. After Receipt of Grant

Organisations awarded grants for specific capital expenditure must produce proof of expenditure within 12 months of receiving the grant. Any grant not spent within 12 months must be returned.

Non-capital expenditure, for example for an event or forming a new community group, must be returned if the event is not held or the group is not formed.

Evidence of the benefit to the community from the grant must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of expenditure.

The Town Council must be acknowledged in any publicity material.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Council as required.

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