



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Grants Committee Terms of Reference

Background

Haslemere Town Council awards grants to groups and organisations that are supporting and encouraging activities within the area which are beneficial to the community as a whole and not to an individual or small number of residents.

There are three different types of Grant applications that the Council awards:

1. Small Grants;
2. Green Grants; and
3. Annual Revenue Grants

The Grants Committee exists to consider small grant or green grant applications made by external bodies. Revenue Grant applications are considered at Full Council.

The committee meets six [6] times a year approximately 2 weeks before Full Council.

The Committee holds full delegated powers to award small grants and green grants so long as the requisite process set out in this document is followed.

The Town Clerk or other officer as from time to time agreed by the Staffing Committee shall be responsible for the day to day management of Grants Committee matters.

General rules:

Grants cannot awarded to schools or other organisations which are funded by other levels of government. Organisations connected with such an organisation, such as a PTA, can apply but not to fund items which are provided by the relevant authority.

Grants cannot contribute to a surplus for charitable distribution or to increase an organisation's reserves

Successful applicants must acknowledge HTC's contribution in their marketing / promotional material and where appropriate participate in promotional photo calls with either the Mayor or relevant councillor(s) as appropriate.

Applications will not be considered from organisations which have received a grant from Haslemere Town Council in the previous financial year.

Applications

All Grant Applications must be on Haslemere Town Council's application form and, where available, accompanied by financial / other information as requested.

The Grants application form contains a checklist for applicants to certify that they meet the criteria for the award of grant before making their application.

Criteria

The application **must**:

1. give clear details of the organisation's project, its costs, and the intended use of the grant
2. have a bank account in the name of the organisation or group applying
3. be accompanied by either the latest financial report [income & expenditure account and balance sheet] or, where this does not exist, a forecast budget of income and expenditure relating to the grant application

The application **must not**:

1. not represent 100% of the total project cost and demonstrate that other funding sources have been sought

2. be retrospective

Consideration / approval

1. All applications for small or green grants must be received at least 10 working days before the next Grants Committee meeting.
2. Before the Grants Agenda is finalised, the Clerk and Chair of the Committee will meet to review the grant applications. Using an agreed checklist, they will assess whether the applications meet the criteria for the award of a small or green grant.
3. Those applications which meet the criteria will be placed on the Agenda. Those which do not will be returned to the applicant stating why their application has been returned and inviting them to resubmit, should their circumstances change to meet the criteria.
4. Those applicants whose applications are accepted for the Agenda will be invited to speak at the meeting where their application is considered. Each applicant may speak for a maximum of four minutes.
5. No less than 3 clear days before the next meeting, the Clerk will circulate the Grants Agenda, with appendices, to the Grants committee and all other councillors for information.
6. Any Member of Council, whether on the Grants Committee or not, may 'call in' an application in advance of the Grants committee meeting, in writing, to the Clerk. In this instance the application will not be considered by the Grants Committee and will instead be placed on the Full Council agenda for consideration.
7. All other applications will be considered by the Grants committee who will make decisions at to the level of award, so long as the set small grants budget is not exceeded.
8. When considering a small or green grant application, the Committee will consider the following:
 - Whether the applicant endeavoured to raise funds from other funding authorities or organisation or by running fund raising events
 - Community benefits, including the number of residents benefiting from the grant
 - Viability of the scheme
 - Applicant's financial status
 - Previously awarded grant funds

Notification

The Clerk will notify the applicant of the Committee's decision in a timely manner, and at least within 7 working days of the meeting. The letter will explain the process and documentation required for claiming the funds and the expiry date for the awarded grant.

Payment of grants will only be made against production of an original invoice or invoices made out to the recipient organisation, for goods or services provided in connection with the specified grant application. In some circumstances the amount claimed may be less than the awarded grant if costs come in below the anticipated figures. Payments of sums above the grant award are not permitted.

Grant Validity

The Grant will automatically lapse if not taken up within six [6] months of the date of the committee meeting at which the application was approved. If not drawn down within the six month period, the grant funds are no longer available and the applicant organisation would be required to submit a further grant application for consideration by the Grants Committee. If the applicant organisation believes there to be exceptional circumstances preventing the funds being drawn within the six month period, the Clerk has delegated authority to extend this period.

As a courtesy, a reminder letter/email will be sent to the applicant organisation one [1] month prior to the expiry of the grant award as a reminder that the funds have not yet been claimed.

Small Grants

Small grants are generally applications from local organisations and groups for community-based activities and projects and cannot be awarded on an annual recurring basis unless approved by Full Council.

Small grants are awarded for capital projects and cannot be used for revenue purposes.

Green Grants

Following the declaration of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in September 2019 Haslemere Town Council made a commitment to establish a ring-fenced green grants fund, to encourage and enable the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promote climate emergency mitigation schemes within Beacon Hill, Grayswood, Haslemere and Hindhead.

The primary aims of the Green Grants fund are:

- To help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in and around Haslemere, and
- To help promote biodiversity in and around Haslemere.

The fund may achieve these aims by supporting a diverse range of projects, activities and initiatives, including but not limited to: practical emission reduction activities, feasibility studies and research projects, and Climate Emergency-related awareness-raising or training.

Project “themes”

The Council anticipates that projects which fit into one or more of the following “themes” are most likely to be eligible for funding from the Green Grants Fund:

- sustainable methods and systems of transport
- reductions in energy use in homes, shops, businesses and elsewhere
- development and use of renewable energy sources
- production, sale and consumption of locally sourced and organic food
- reduction in consumption of animal products, including from livestock
- adoption of wildlife-friendly land and water management practices
- actively stopping biodiversity loss; encouraging biodiversity gain and protecting habitats
- education within our local community, to inform and encourage positive action

Innovative schemes which further the aims of this grant fund but do not necessarily fit into one or more of these themes are also welcome to apply.

Primary criteria

The fund has two alternative primary application criteria:

1. CO² savings per pound spent
 - A **reasonable explanation** should be provided of how the supported project is expected to either reduce CO² emissions (e.g. by encouraging cycling instead of driving) or increase CO² uptake (e.g. by planting trees), or both.
 - A convincing **numerical calculation** (quantitative estimate) of the estimated CO² savings* is **not** necessary, but will be considered favourably.
 - Innovative applications which aim to reduce local emissions of greenhouse gases other than CO² (such as methane) are encouraged and will equally be considered.
2. Biodiversity net gain
 - A **reasonable explanation** should be provided of how the supported project is expected to either reduce biodiversity loss (e.g. by protecting wildlife habitats) or encourage biodiversity gain (e.g. by making our lawns pollinator-friendly), or both.
 - A convincing **numerical calculation** (quantitative estimate) of the estimated biodiversity net gain** is **not** necessary but will be considered favourably.

Secondary criteria

In addition to meeting at least one of the primary criteria, applications will be at an advantage if the project fulfils one or more of the following criteria:

- Meets not just one, but **both** of the primary criteria
- Is **innovative** in its approach to CO2 savings or biodiversity net gain
- **Leverages income** from additional sources, such as fund-raising
- Promotes and develops a stronger and more **sustainable community**
- Encourages **community engagement** around environmental sustainability
- Offers **long-term** benefits, beyond the duration of the project, for example by raising awareness in a future generation
- Offers **sustainable** benefits, for example by securing a site as a biodiversity asset in perpetuity
- Where the project is likely to be long-term or open-ended, includes a **clear plan** for how it will be funded after any grant awarded by the Town Council is spent

Helpful references

*A wide range of carbon calculators, tailored to a variety of uses, are available online. A good place to start is the Carbon Trust's "Carbon foot printing guide": <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/carbon-footprinting-guide>

**Biodiversity net gain calculations are often quite complex, and few free calculators are available online. One of the most widely used is available from Environment Bank: <https://www.environmentbank.com/biodiversity-impact-calculator/>

Revenue Grants

Annual Revenue Grants, as their name indicates, are for revenue purposes and are generally awarded only to organisations that provide a significant service to the community.

Examples of organisations currently receiving Revenue Grants are:

- Citizens' Advice Bureau [in support of running costs of the Haslemere CAB]
- HOPPA bus service [community transport service]

Application

Annual Revenue Grants must be applied for annually and relate to organisations that Haslemere Town Council is keen to support and whose contribution to the community is widely recognised. Applications supported by the necessary financial documents must be submitted by 31st August for a grant to be considered for inclusion in the following financial year's budget at September Council.

The exception to the annual application process is the Citizens' Advice Bureau [CAB] which applies every three [3] years.

Consideration/Approval

Consideration of the revenue budget is made by Full Council during the budget process which commences in September and is finalised in January for the next financial year [April-Mar].

Notification of Grant Award

Once Annual Revenue grants have been considered and approved by Council and included in the budget, as soon as the new financial year commences, the Town Council communicates by writing/email to the recipient organisation that they have been awarded a grant, the process and documentation required for claiming the funds and the expiry date for the awarded grant.

Payment

Annual Revenue Grant recipients are entitled to claim the full amount of the awarded grant at any time during the financial year for which the grant is awarded, subject to supplying a copy of their latest audited accounts or accounts approved by an independent accountant.

Grant Validity

An Annual Revenue Grant will automatically lapse if not taken up within the financial year for which the grant was budgeted/awarded. If the applicant organisation believes there to be exceptional circumstances preventing the funds being drawn within the six month period, the Clerk has delegated authority to extend this period.

As a courtesy, a reminder letter/email will be sent to the applicant organisation one [1] month before the expiry of the grant as a reminder that the grant has not yet been claimed.