

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 1 MARCH 2018

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Correspondence sent since 1 February 2018

- 1) Letter to Aston & Cote Community Trust, containing grant cheque
- 2) Letter to Aston Youth Football, containing grant cheque

Review of the Parish Council's Small Grants Scheme

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Parish Council introduced a Small Grants Scheme for local organisations as part of the 2017/18 budget process and approved the terms and conditions of the scheme at the meeting on 1 July 2017.
- 1.2 This has been the first year of the scheme's operation and there have been three applications to the scheme, all of which were awarded grant funding, and the total funds made available for the scheme in the budget have now been fully allocated.
- 1.3 Experience of the operation of the scheme has identified certain amendments to the terms and conditions which the Parish Council may like to consider.
- 1.4 Many grant schemes, including those operated by West Oxfordshire District Council, require projects to be completed prior to the payment of grant funding, and this gives the grant-giving body the opportunity to ensure that the funds provided restricted to those required.
- 1.5 The Parish Council is seeking to ensure that micro-organisations operating locally will have the opportunity to access funding for projects which they would be unlikely to finance via retrospective grant receipts, and so on many occasions the Parish Council will pay grants in advance of the project taking place.
- 1.6 The fact that the Parish Council pays grants in advance of expenditure raises issues relating to ensuring that the funds have been properly spent on the project applied for, and were needed in their entirety.
- 1.7 It would therefore seem sensible to consider introducing some terms and conditions which seek to ensure that the funds are only used for the project applied for, and which address the potential for the project costing less than the funds provided.
- 1.8 Most grant schemes also prohibit retrospective applications; ie., organisations seeking funding for projects/expenditure that they have already purchased/committed to, as the grant giver seeks to ensure that the funds are genuinely required and that the project is dependent on their provision.

2.0 Proposed revised Terms and Conditions of Small Grant Scheme

- 2.1 The proposed revised terms and conditions are attached, with the proposed new terms and conditions highlighted by shading.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Parish Council reviews the proposed amendments to the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme, proposing any amendments and approving the revised document as appropriate.

Prepared by: Helen Sandhu, Clerk and RFO
23 February 2018

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

SMALL GRANT SCHEME

GUIDELINES

Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council is keen to support local causes and amenities and will do all it can to support fundraising for specific projects or charitable causes.

Any expenditure has to be within the constraints of the legal powers limited to Parish Councils and within the bounds of “Best Practice” as ultimately the funds come from the pockets of council tax payers in the Parish. In addition, the Council is subjected to internal and external audits that examine the grants that are awarded, so the Council must demonstrate that it is aware of the issues involved and has taken care in its funding award criteria.

This application document outlines the background to the grants scheme. Application forms should be completed as far as is possible and practicable – do not worry if there is some information that your organisation can't supply, just fill in what you can. The more information there is, the better, but please be assured that you will not be turned down simply because more information is required before a decision is made.

Please bear in mind the following guidelines when completing your application:

- All grant applications must be submitted on the official grant funding application form, with supporting documentary evidence.
- In general, the Parish Council will try to support organisations promoting the following initiatives:
 - Promoting local recreational facilities
 - Combating rural isolation
 - Promoting sports, health & fitness
 - Promoting the village or rural affairs
 - Supporting the local economy
 - Providing opportunities to promote educational advancement
 - Projects for children and young people
 - Projects specifically aimed towards senior citizens
- Grant applications will be assessed on the following criteria, which are in no priority order –
 - The benefit to all or part of the parish of Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney
 - The benefit to all or some of the residents of Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney
 - What proportion of the residents will benefit from the grant
 - The assessment of the viability and robustness of the application
 - The availability of Parish Council funds for grants

- The Council is limited in how much it can grant and to whom grants can be made. Generally speaking, the more tangible the project or scheme and the greater number of people in the Parish that it benefits, the stronger the case
- Grants for assistance in the running (revenue) costs of an organisation will be considered but in a way as to encourage self-sustainable funding.
- The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse applications or to provide a lower grant than that requested.
- Awards will not be made to:
 - Commercial enterprises set up to generate profit
 - Those supporting party political issues / parties
 - Projects with campaigning objectives
 - Individuals
 - Health, education or welfare organisations whose services should be provided by statutory funding.
- Awards will not normally be made:
 - To bodies that could be funded by their national or umbrella body (unless for a specific project or exceptional reason)
 - For buildings that are uninsured.
 - For buildings or property not owned by the applicant
- Applications from religious groups will be considered where a clear benefit to the wider community can be demonstrated, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Compliance with this requirement will need to be demonstrated.
- The organisation must have clearly stated aims and objectives.
- The organisation must provide a written constitution that has been formally adopted by the membership, or in the event of a less formal organisation a similar written document.
- Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council reserves the right to reclaim the grant in the event of it not being used for the purpose specified on the application form.
- Grants will not be given for expenditure which has already been occurred or committed via a purchase order and applicants will be required to confirm that their application meets this condition in their application.
- The grant shall be used for the purposes given on the application form and will be subject to any conditions sent in writing when notifying the applicant of their award. If the project for which Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council offers funding is altered, curtailed, postponed or cancelled in whole or in part the recipients shall notify West Oxfordshire District Council immediately in writing and the grant may be reconsidered, reduced or recalled at West Oxfordshire District Council's discretion.
- If expenditure on the event, project or activity for which Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council provides funding is ultimately less than the funding provided, the recipients shall notify Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council immediately in writing and the excess funding returned by cheque payable to Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council within 30 days.

- Projects must commence within 12 months of notification of the funds being provided. If this cannot be achieved applicants can apply in writing for a six month extension clearly stating the reasons for the delay and giving a new start date. Should the project fail to meet a revised deadline or the extension not be granted the offer of grant funding will be withdrawn and the recipients will be required to return the funding by cheque payable to Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council within 30 days.
- All organisations which are successful in their grant applications must provide in writing further information once the application has been completed, to include the date the project was completed, the total final cost of the project, and the total of the Parish Council grant funding applied to the project. A copy of the paid invoices verifying the expenditure must be supplied at the same time.
- Organisations that receive a grant are required to acknowledge the contribution from Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council on publicity and printed material.
- Please be advised that representatives of the Council may visit the site or project in pursuance of their decision making process or after award of funding
- Grants must be formally applied for using the Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council Grant Application Form together with all supporting documentation as requested in that form.
- Payment will be made to an organisation, not an individual – only applications from organisations with a bank account in the organisation's name can be considered.
- An organisation can only apply for one grant during each Council financial year (1 April to 31 March).
- The timing of the application and consideration thereof will be in accordance with the timetable below, provided always that in case of exceptional urgency grants may be submitted and considered at any other time during the year.

Timetable

Opening date for grant applications:	1 st September
Final submission date for applications:	23 rd December
Month in which the application will be considered (check with the Parish Clerk for the precise date of the meeting):	January
Date by which grant decision letters will be circulated	31 st March

Grant applicants if they wish can address the meeting at which their grant is considered. For further details please contact the Parish Council Clerk

This process is designed to be fair and open to all parties. The Council will as far as it is able treat all applications equally and will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, ethical beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation.

If there are any points that are unclear or you would like any assistance with completing your form, please contact the Clerk on astonpc@live.co.uk. You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your completed form for your records.

**ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
SMALL GRANT SCHEME
APPLICATION FORM - 2017/18**

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION:		
Name		
Address		
Email address:		
Website:		
Contact Details:	First Contact	Second Contact
Name:		
Position:		
Address:		
Phone Number:		
Mobile Number:		
Email Address:		

DETAILS OF ORGANISATION STRUCTURE :

Constitution	Do you have a constitution?: Please indicate: YES (Please attach) NO			
Status: Are you one of the following? (If not, it does not prevent you from applying for a grant)				
Please indicate:	A registered charity?	A company limited by guarantee?	Applying for charitable status?	Other: Please state:
When did your group/organisation start?				
What does your organisation do?				
Who does your group /organisation serve mainly?	<i>e.g. children, young people, senior citizens, rurally isolated people etc</i>			

DETAILS OF ORGANISATION FINANCES : Please attach a copy of your most recent accounts

Total income in the last financial year including date of year end:		
Total amount spent in the last financial year:		
Current unrestricted reserve or savings as at date of application:		
Current restricted reserve or savings as at date of application.		
From what sources does your organisation raise its income?	Income Source	Amount £

DETAILS OF MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE :

How many people are there on your management committee?	
How many staff do you employ?	
How many volunteers do you have?	

PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION :

Please give more details about the project for which you are applying for this grant:

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Please justify the need for this project?

--

How will you monitor the progress of the project?

--

How do you plan to judge the success of the project?

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TIMESCALE :

Start Date	
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Finish Date	
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Please confirm that the expenditure has not yet been occurred nor the order placed by ticking in this box:	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Ongoing, give details	
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FINANCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT :

Please provide a break down of the total cost of this project including VAT (please provide details on a separate sheet if necessary)

How much funding is your organisation requesting from Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council via this form?	
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Please detail other sources of funding obtained for this project, including funds being provided from the organisation's reserves	
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Clerk's Briefing Notes – Meeting on 1 March 2018

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DECLARATION:

I am authorised to make this application on behalf of the above organisation and the information contained in this application is correct. If the information changes in any way I will inform Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council at the earliest opportunity. I give permission for Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council to record the information on this form electronically.

Signed:

Dated:

Please include the following:

- Up to date accounts/financial statements & latest report (if available)
- Constitution or a set of rules, if available
- Copies of written estimates or catalogue pages if grant for equipment or capital costs

Please post the signed application together with all supporting papers to: Helen Sandhu, Clerk, Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council. 1 Manor Road, Aston, Bampton, OX18 2DD.

Financial Matters**1. Cash Balances**

	£
<i>SANTANDER CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 31 January 2018	NIL
Transactions in month	NIL
Balance at 28 February 2018	<u>NIL</u>
 <i>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 31 January 2018	18,693.63
February payments	(1,036.35)
Balance at 28 February 2018	<u>17,657.28</u>
 <i>NATIONWIDE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 31 January 2018	39,106.79
Transactions in month	NIL
Balance at 28 February 2018	<u>£39,106.79</u>
 <i>SANTANDER BUSINESS DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 31 January 2018	535.45
Transactions in month: interest received	0.14
Balance at 28 February 2018	<u>£535.59</u>
 TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 28 FEBRUARY 2018	 <u>£57,299.66</u>

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

4.0 Overview

4.1 The Parish Council is required to confirm in its Annual Return to the External Auditor that it has “maintained an adequate system of internal control... and reviewed its effectiveness.”

4.2 The Parish Council has two documents covering the management of its financial affairs – a set of Financial Regulations and a Statement of Internal Control. The Parish Council's Financial Regulations were comprehensively reviewed and updated in October 2015.

4.3 The Parish Council now needs to review the system of internal control again so that it can properly sign the Annual Return for 2017/18 when it is due.

5.0 Financial Regulations

5.1 The Financial Regulations document which was adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting on 1 October 2015 was circulated in that month's papers. It can be recirculated to Councillors if requested.

6.0 Statement of Internal Control

6.1 This statement, originally prepared by the Clerk in 2009 and last circulated to Councillors in March 2017, follows this report.

6.2 The Clerk has reviewed the statement and confirms that it continues to reflect actual practice. No amendments have been made to the Statement since it was last circulated in March 2017.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 That the Parish Council reviews the Statement of Internal Control to consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

Prepared by: Helen Sandhu, Clerk and RFO
23 February 2018

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Prepared by H. Sandhu, RFO

Last reviewed and reapproved at a meeting of the Parish Council on 2 March 2017

<p>Cash Book/Bank reconciliations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cash book is kept up to date from original documents (paying-in books, invoices, cheque stubs, BACS transactions) • The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement on a quarterly basis • The bank reconciliation is reviewed and approved by a member of the Parish Council (usually the Chairman), with reference to the underlying records (cash book and bank statements) • The bank reconciliation is reported to the full Parish Council and minuted as such • The latest financial position and movements on the Parish Council's cash balances are reported at each council meeting and can be traced back to the expenditure approved in the previous meeting via the minutes
<p>Financial Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document listing the Parish Council's financial regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC is maintained. The regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Parish Council
<p>Order/Tender controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work. • Official orders/letters are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature
<p>Legal Powers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proper legal power is identified in advance of any expenditure. The legal power for expenditure is shown on the agenda and minutes for payments made
<p>Payment controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the nature of the supply, the RFO signs the purchase invoice to indicate that the supply has been received, that the supply has not previously been paid and that the invoice calculations are correct. • Purchase orders/letters ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable • All invoices for payment are listed on the meeting agenda where the cheques are to be signed/BACS payments approved • Payments made are listed in the minutes of the meeting • Original invoices are provided to the Councillors signing the cheques/authorising the BACS payments • Invoices paid are numbered and the same number entered on the cheque counterfoil and in the cashbook for cross reference purposes • The cheque number used to settle an invoice and the date it was signed are entered on the invoice for cross reference

	<p>purposes. For BACS payments, the BACS payment date is entered on the invoice for cross reference purposes.</p>
s137	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate s137 account is maintained • The RFO calculates the maximum amount of s137 expenditure able to be made each year and ensures that it is not exceeded – confirmed to the Parish Council when expenditure is considered either by reference to a specific budget for that payment or to the amount of unspent s137 money available • Where requests for expenditure from s137 are made this is made clear on the meeting agendas where the payment is to be approved • The proper minute authorising expenditure from s137 is prepared on each occasion
VAT repayment claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council. • RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable • RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year
Income controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFO ensures that amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the District Council • RFO ensures that the precept instalments are received when due • RFO ensures that other receipts (deposit interest, grass cutting grant) are received when due and correctly calculated • Income is banked promptly
Financial reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A receipts & payments account, comparing actual expenditure to the budget and the prior year is prepared on a quarterly basis, presented to the Parish Council and minuted as such
Budgetary controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council, as evidenced by reports and minutes in advance of the start of the year • The precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the District Council
Payroll controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk is paid under PAYE as an employee • The Clerk's salary is set by the Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salary • The salary is paid by BACS, with the BACS payment authorised by two Councillors • The RFO ensures that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and retains evidence that this has been done

Asset Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RFO maintains a full asset register• The existence and condition of assets is checked on a six monthly basis by a member of the Parish Council• The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal
Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A suitably experienced independent internal auditor is appointed by the Parish Council• An internal audit of the Council's accounting records and financial and other procedures is carried out once a year• The internal auditor prepares a report addressed to the Parish Council which is considered at the next meeting• The Parish Council ensures that it is satisfied that the internal audit is effective before making arrangements for the new annual internal audit