CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

Community Development Fund Policy and Procedures

Adopted by Full Town Council March 2021

Chard Town Council

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Chard Town Council is committed to encouraging Community Development in our town. Subject to funding being available, the Council will award small grants (up to £1,000) to support community and voluntary organisations to help them develop and flourish in Chard as well as to deliver projects that benefit the local residents.

Grants awarded by Chard Town Council are public money, collected as part of the town precept and we are accountable to all local people for its expenditure. Therefore we apply very stringent criteria to each application to ensure that grants awarded under this scheme make a difference to the quality of life of people living in Chard.

The attached notes will help you establish whether your organisation is eligible to be considered for a grant, and if so, how to apply. They also explain what additional information you need to provide with your application and how financial assistance given will be paid.

Please read these notes before you complete the enclosed application form and make sure all necessary information is submitted along with your application.

Please print clearly on the application form to make sure it can be easily read.

Alternatively, you may request an electronic version by contacting Chard Town Council reception.

All applications will be acknowledged in writing within seven days of receipt. If you do not receive written confirmation within this time, please contact Chard Town Council reception.

Best wishes,

Liz Johnson-Idan

Community Liaison Officer

Chard Town Council

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GUIDANCE NOTES ON HOW TO APPLY FOR A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT FROM CHARD TOWN COUNCIL

The Aims of the Council's Grant making Policy

Through the Community Development Fund, Chard Town Council aims to support and strengthen community participation, activities and events and to help develop a sustainable, welcoming community.

Our Objectives

To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities

To develop the provision of community services and facilities crucial to the town, via the voluntary sector

To help the Town's voluntary groups to improve effectiveness

To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all Chard residents to the services it provides and funds.

To maintain a Community Development Fund that supports and encourages community activities

To encourage partnership working between community groups and voluntary organisations, including with public and private sectors to explore new and innovative ways of delivering effective responses to the issues faced by our local community

Additional information about the Scheme

Chard Town Council will not award a grant to any organisation or group that discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Funding will normally only be awarded up to a maximum value of £1,000 per applicant, depending on the Council's budget allocation and may be subject to constraint. Under normal circumstances only one application will be considered within the financial year. Any organisation that is currently financially supported by Chard Town Council from another source of funding is not eligible to apply to the Community Development Fund.

Chard Town Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee.

All grants can be for project, capital or core costs where related to COVID 19 loss of income or support.

Recipients of an award will be invited to attend a presentation evening the following year to give a report of their project and outline the achievements and benefits that were delivered to local residents as a result of the funding received.

General Principles

1. Funding will be awarded on a need basis, merit of the project and overall benefit to the local community

2. Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit the people living in Chard or the environment of Chard

3. Organisations are required to provide a report on how previous monies awarded by the Town Council have been spent before they can be considered for a further grant

4. Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis. If the number of eligible grant requests in any particular year outweighs the amount of funds available then preference may be given to organisations that have not had an award in previous years

5. A second application is not allowed for the same project/purpose within three years of the organisation having previously received financial assistance from the Town Council other than in exceptional circumstances

6. Projects receiving assistance will be expected to be realistic and achievable and therefore completed within the financial year that the award is made, unless a reason for not achieving this is clearly stated in your application form

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT?

The Council welcomes applications from groups who:

· are voluntary or community groups based in Chard or who can clearly demonstrate that they are working for the residents of Chard

· have a constitution or a set of rules or equivalent

· have a bank or building society account requiring two signatories

· have independently approved accounts

· directly benefit the well-being of Chard residents or the environment of Chard

The Council will **NOT** accept applications from:

· individuals

· organisations involved in party political activities or other self interest groups

· companies who aim to make a profit

· statutory bodies

· religious groups

· bodies who pass funding onto others

General Conditions

1. Grant applications will only be considered where the project or activity directly benefits the residents within the parish boundaries of Chard

2. There is no general funding for projects or groups – grants will only be awarded for specific costs and funding will only be paid on receipt of an official invoice

3. The not-for-profit organisation must have clearly stated aims and objectives

4. Grants cannot be retrospective and no funding is available for costs that have already been incurred

5. No funding is available to contribute to a surplus for charitable distribution or to increase an organisations reserve

6. Grants will not be awarded for organisations to pass money onto others

7. Applicants must be prepared to supply all supporting documents as required on the application form with their application

8. If the Council becomes aware of evidence of dishonesty or negligence which could bring the reputation of Chard Town Council into disrepute, action will be taken and the grant terminated

Match Funding Requirement

Applications will only be considered for up to 75% of the total amount of the project/scheme. You may use the grant to match other funders' contributions.

Professional Fundraisers

The Council will not enter into negotiations with, nor discuss applications with professional fundraisers acting on an applicant's behalf. The fees of professional fundraisers will not be accepted as eligible costs for the purpose of grant support from the Council.

Financial Health and Reserves

The Council will not make grants to organisations which it believes are not in good financial health (with the exception of organisations whose income has been directly reduced as a result of COVID 19 lockdown rules but were financially viable prior to the pandemic and have realistic expectations that they will return to this state following a resumption to normal fundraising/activities) or whose accounts are not in good order.

The Council may consider not awarding a grant to organisations that already hold surplus funds which are not being used for the general operation of the organisation or delivery of the project and are not earmarked reserves

What the Council will NOT fund

Other than in exceptional circumstances the Council will not fund:

- General running costs of an organisation except where normal income has been directly affected by COVID 19 pandemic lockdown
- Any element of VAT that is recoverable by the organisation
- Projects which are properly the subject of statutory funding

The Council will not award a grant which:

- Directly replaces statutory funding
- Might lead to a statutory body withdrawing funding in the future
- Subsidise the costs of a service which is provided or paid for by a statutory body
- Supports any organisation already in receipt of funding from another Chard Town Council Budget

Payment Requirements

- Grants should be spent for the purposes on the application only
- Chard Town Council reserves the right to recall any grant given to an organisation which ceases to operate during the financial year for which the grant has been given
- The Council reserves the right to request a copy of invoices/receipts as evidence that expenditure has been incurred and under spends may need to be returned

Publicity Requirements

- Chard Town Council expects its logo to appear on published information about the funded project
- For our own publicity material the Council may require photos with agreement from the participants and may use the name of the organisation and the project

What happens after I apply to Chard Town Council for a grant?

Your application will be checked by Officers along with the enclosed documents to see if it is complete. If your application is not complete you will be asked for the missing information or you may be contacted for additional information.

Incomplete forms or failure to produce additional information will result in your application not being considered for grant allocation.

Once the applications have been checked the Grants Evaluations Working Group, a panel of Members appointed by the Town Council and advised by the Community Liaison Officer will meet to examine and consider the applications.

The panel will then make recommendations to Chard Town Council approve expenditure for grant funding within the agreed criteria of this scheme.

Grants will be assessed using the following criteria:

· A completed application form and supporting documents
· How your group is set up and managed
· Your finances and the financial need for funding
· What need/demand there is for your project/scheme
· Support and involvement from the wider community
· Efforts to secure other sources of funding
· If you have ever received a grant before
· If your project provides value for money for the residents of Chard

What information will I need to provide?

· Your aims and objectives
· Your organisations constitution or set of rules and your annual report if applicable
· The most recent copy of your approved accounts
· Copies of any permissions required for third party use (e.g. licences or land rent)
· An explanation of any reserves you hold and if these are earmarked for specific expenditure
· Demonstrate that you are actively applying for additional funding or support in kind for your organisation from external sources other than the Town Council
· Thorough and accurate project costings, any quotes supplied must be on the companies headed paper

What happens if I get a grant?

If you have been successful you will receive a grant offer letter specifying the terms and conditions which you must sign and return to us within 3 weeks.
Grants will not be paid until we have received a signed grant offer letter and will only be paid on receipt of an official invoice.

Following the receipt of the signed grant offer letter and acceptance of the terms and conditions, grants will be paid by cheque.