

## **Rackheath Community Council**

### **Grant Awarding Policy and Procedure**

**Adopted by the Community Council at the meeting of 20 July 2015**

**Last Reviewed December 2020**

**Readopted October 2024**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Rackheath Community Council annually sets a grant aid budget to provide financial assistance to a range of organisations, projects and activities which provide services for residents. Requests are received from voluntary and community organisations and sometimes individuals. Applications for funding must meet the main eligibility criteria set out in this document if they are to be considered for grant aid. It is at the discretion of the Community Council as to what extent such requests must meet the supplementary criteria also set out in this document.
- 1.2 The grant aid budget is discretionary funding and as such is separate from any other services which the Community Council may fund under contract to fulfil statutory obligations or the delegated works of its Committees.
- 1.3 In the event of the Community Council receiving more requests for funding, in any one financial year, than there are budgeted resources available, it will fund only those to which it assigns the highest priority.

#### **2. CATEGORIES OF GRANT OR DONATION**

- 2.1 Grants or donations may be categorised into four main types or headings, namely, those requested by:
  - national organisations and charities
  - locally based organisations and charities, which in turn subdivide into:
    - those based in Rackheath parish;
    - those based in the immediate locality but outside Rackheath parish;
  - individual persons, which subdivide into:
    - those living within Rackheath parish;
    - those living outside Rackheath parish;
  - one-off gifts to individuals, where the giving of the gift is initiated by the Community Council.

#### **3. POLICY OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

- 3.1 Before considering whether to make grants or donations to any organisation, project, or individual, the policy requires three main checks to be made against the following criteria:
  - The organisation or project is properly constituted, structured and administered in relation to its financial management and controls. Evidence needs to be provided that appropriate management mechanisms are in place and that accountability is provided through formally elected or delegated members/managers/leaders. Depending upon whether the organisation or project is based in the village, or elsewhere, this may require the production of the most recent set of audited

accounts or annual income and expenditure information. The provision of a copy of the latest set of accounts would not normally be necessary for well-known national or local organisations or charities based within Rackheath parish and predominately serving local residents.

- The organisation, project or individual needs to show evidence of efforts made to raise their own funding requirements. Again, with national and local organisations or charities such information should generally be readily available to the Community Council.
- It is important that the Community Council knows whether other bodies are being asked to award or have already approved awards. Reference should be made to the fact that other granting bodies have been asked for or have made grants or donations to an organisation, project or individual but this does not exclude Rackheath Community Council from awarding. Each case should be determined on its own merits, after appraisal of the information provided.

3.2 In addition to the three main checks above, the Community Council may wish to seek evidence against all or some of the following supplementary criteria:

- there is clear evidence of local need or demand for the proposed project or activity
- the grant will help provide a facility or service that will be of real and direct benefit to residents
- residents will lose, or have significantly diminished, a service if a grant is not awarded
- the applicant does not clearly fall within the remit of some other agency or company, e.g. hospital, private school
- the applicant is not seeking funding for significant capital e.g. equipment, buildings
- the project or activity has a starting date within nine months of the date of request for grant aid
- the project or activity is properly thought through, is viable, of good quality and will ensure proper use of public funds, providing best value and value for money
- the organisation or project can demonstrate that it has the experience and competence to undertake what is proposed
- the project or activity has defined aims, outputs, beneficiaries and outcomes, e.g. the impact
- mechanisms are in place for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the project or activity
- the organisation or project demonstrates clear knowledge and commitment to equal opportunities and Health & Safety

#### **4. APPRAISAL PROCESS**

4.1 Having made the three main checks and assessed against the supplementary criteria as is deemed appropriate; the policy of the Community Council is:

- Not to make grants and donations to organisations that make, or attempt to make, profit for the benefit of members or owners over and above revenue expenditure, e.g. running costs, staff costs, premises maintenance and general overheads.
- So far as organisations and charities are concerned, only to make grants and donations to those which are overwhelmingly run by volunteers.

- Not to make grants and donations to national organisations or charities unless the request comes from a local branch. In this case there should be clear evidence of the grant used by that local branch and that there accrues a specific and direct benefit to residents according to need. Examples of local branches of national organisations or charities, which might fall within this definition, are Relate, Samaritans, CAB etc. The definition would not include such national charities as, for example, Cancer Research, British Heart Foundation etc.
- To focus the bulk of the grant or donation expenditure, primarily, upon organisations or projects located within Rackheath parish, and recognised as being Rackheath based and predominately serving the local community of Rackheath.
- Not to make grants or donations to locally based organisational or charities in the immediate vicinity of Rackheath, but outside Rackheath parish, unless they meet the criteria for locally based branches of national organisations or charities.
- Not to make grants or donations to individuals who live outside Rackheath Urban Community.
- To be prepared to make grants or donations to individuals who live within Rackheath Parish, provided that they are in full time education and the nature of the activity for which they request a grant or donation is judged by the Community Council to be appropriate and of significant benefit to that individual's social development, and, in particular, that there is clear evidence that the individual is personally making a substantial effort to raise funding for that particular project or activity.
- To be prepared to make a grant or donation to an individual where they are making the request for a grant or donation towards their work on behalf of an organisation or project and the Community Council would consider making a grant to that particular organisation or project if it had made the request for a grant or donation towards activities. This would include being prepared to consider contributing, say, to the expenses for the main co-ordinator of Neighbourhood Watch, where that individual made the request on behalf of that organisation.
- Where the Community Council initiates the provision of a gift for an individual, that individual must have provided an exceptional service to either the Community Council or to Rackheath
- The maximum award of any grant or donation to any organisation or project or individual should not exceed £50 in any one financial year (this figure to be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and any change to be approved by the Community Council Finance Committee. Where consideration is to be given, exceptionally, to making a grant or donation which exceeds this agreed maximum figure, the Community Council will be provided with a written paper from a delegated member setting out a case against the relevant criteria in this document.

## **5. BUDGET FOR GRANTS OR DONATIONS**

- 5.1 In previous financial years the annual budget for grants or donations was set at £100.
- 5.2 The Finance Committee should recommend to the Community Council each year an appropriate annual budget for expenditure on grants or donations. In addition, it would be for the Finance Committee to recommend to the Community Council whether there should be any transfer (virement) of the grants or donations budget to other budget heads during the financial year if it becomes clear that the grants or donations budget is likely to be under or overspent.

- 5.3 It is important that when the Community Clerk knows there is an application for grant aid on the agenda of a meeting of the Finance Committee that the amount remaining uncommitted in that financial year be made at the meeting for member's information

## **6. COMMUNITY COUNCIL CONTROL OF THE TIMING OF MAKING GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council requires organisations, projects or individuals requiring grants or donations to give any expression of interest for a grant application exceeding £50 by 30<sup>th</sup> September of the financial year, prior to the funds being required in order that budget provision can be considered. Submission of bids or applications are required by 30<sup>th</sup> November of the financial year, prior to the funds being required.
- 6.2 The Community Council needs to ensure that grants or donations do not, or would be unlikely to, exceed the overall annual budget for such expenditure.
- 6.3 Bids from organisations, projects or individual at other times of the year will be considered if the budget allows.

## **7. CLAWBACK OR SUSPENSION OF GRANT AID**

- 7.1 The Community Council reserves the right to claw back grant awarded or suspend grant in the process of being awarded. Such circumstances would arise, for example, where a grant had been used for purposes other than those for which it was awarded.
- 7.2 Should the Community Council become aware of any financial mismanagement, or had other serious concerns regarding the operation, management or running of an organisation or project by the recipient of a grant, or any of the resultant services or activities, it reserves the right to suspend grant aid payments, or in extreme circumstances demand clawback. Should such circumstances arise the Community Council will, in the first instance, seek explanation and try to assist in the resolution of such problems or difficulties.

## **8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- 8.1 The development of monitoring and evaluation systems, particularly in respect of outcomes, is an area of good management practice all voluntary sector organisations should be prioritising. The Community Council would welcome the provision of findings from grant aided organisations or projects. Such information will assist other applicants in the overall management and development of activities or projects. The Community Council would not seek to penalise grant requests from organisations or projects which have identified areas of weakness through the process of monitoring and evaluation that they are planning to address and change with a view to continuous improvement.