



## SHENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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# Community Grants Applications/Adjudication Policy and Procedure

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to detail the process and criteria Shenstone Parish Council (SPC) will use to:

- Publicise the availability of community grants.
- Support applicants, with an effective guidance and application process.
- Adjudicate all community grant submission.

The process is designed to ensure:

- **Compliance to Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972** (“s.137 LGA 1972”) Which is a critical statutory provision affecting community-level funding by parish and town councils in England and Wales.
- **NALC’s Legal Topic Note 31 (LTN 31)** forms the basis of local council grant-making policies and the key points from this **sector guidance** include the following
  - **Applicant Eligibility:** Grants are generally only given to non-profit, community, or voluntary bodies—not to individuals or profit-driven organisations.
  - **Requirement for Measurable Community Benefit:** Applications must detail how the wider parish will benefit, with a focus on inclusivity, accessibility, and community involvement.
  - **Application Process:** Robust governance processes require signed applications, documentation of financial need, project costings, and supporting information. In some cases, applicants must outline how their project is accessible to the public. All applications must be treated fair and equitably.
  - **Adjudication process** is clear and transparent.

## 2. Confirming the availability of Grant Funding.

It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to confirm each financial year:

- The Parish has sufficient funds to offer community grants
- Each financial year the Finance Committee will determine and then recommended to Full Council the following financial criteria for community grants:
  - The % at which grant awards are capped. For example, 75% of the total requested funding.
  - The award limit, this **may** be increased exceptional circumstances.
  - The maximum budget allocation, collectively for all grants awarded by SPC in any one fiscal year
- Full Council will then be required to approve the Finance Committee’s recommendations and supporting criteria.

## 3. Publicising the Grant Application Process is Open.

- Grant applications are considered at the Finance, Legal Health & Safety Committee meeting in January or February with recommendations put before the next meeting of Full Council. Applications and any

supporting documentation should be received by the end of the first week in January to allow the Clerk to check that the Council’s grants criteria have been met.

- To ensure the above timeline is achieved the Parish Clerk in good time will:
  - Publish in all appropriate media that, the Community Grant Application Process is now.
  - Make readily available the Grant Application Form and Supporting Eligibility/Guidance Notes.
  - Post the Video Guide to Completing Your Community Grant Application.
  - Ensure there is clarity on the closing date for applications.
- On receipt of each application the Parish Clerk will complete an initial validation to ensure all appropriate fields have been completed and either:
  - Register the application if fully completed or
  - Partially register incomplete applications detailing the reason for return and the expected return date.
  - Return the incomplete application with supporting rationale, requesting a re-submission by a ‘reasonable’ return date.
- After the closing date for applications has lapsed, the Parish Clerk will distribute the Register of Applications and a copy of each application to members of the Finance Committee/Adjudication Panel

#### 4. The Adjudication Panel

The adjudication panel will be the SPC Finance Committee.

Each panel member will:

- Declare to the Parish Clerk any potential conflicts before scoring begins.
- Exclude themselves from scoring, if they are closely affiliated with any applicant.
- Receive all completed applications and independently (to prevent group bias) review and score each application following the guidance below.

#### 5. Scoring Applications.

The following key factors should be considered when scoring:

- **Clarity:** Is the application well written and easy to understand?
- **Evidence:** Does the applicant provide enough evidence, such as community feedback or data?
- **Need:** Is the need for the project clearly explained and locally relevant?
- **Sustainability:** Can the project continue beyond initial funding or has it secured additional support?
- **Inclusiveness:** Does the project involve underrepresented or vulnerable groups?
- **Concerns:** Highlight any concerns if criteria seem unmet (e.g., safeguarding policies for youth activities)
- **Missing Detail:** Note any detail you believe is missing and/or additional questions you have before you can commence scoring. Where possible this should be sent to the Parish Clerk in advance of the adjudication panel. It should be in a format that can be forwarded directly to the applicant.

Scoring should be made using the matrix below

Assessment Criteria	Definition	Weighting	Your Score	Weighted Score
<b>Community Impact Section 2</b>	Extent to which the project benefits residents, addresses local needs, and promotes cohesion.	30%		
<b>Project Feasibility Section 2</b>	Evidence of planning, capacity to deliver, and realistic timelines.	15%		
<b>Inclusivity &amp;</b>	Ability of the project to involve diverse groups and	15%		

<b>Accessibility Section 2</b>	reduce barriers to participation.			
<b>Financial Sustainability Section 3</b>	Whether the budget is reasonable, funding sources are clear, and the project can be maintained.	20%		
<b>Alignment with Parish Priorities All Sections</b>	How well the proposal reflects council values such as inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability.	20%		
Application Total Score				

The scoring range is 0 to 5 and each assessment criteria should be scored using the following guidance

- **5** – Outstanding: Exceptional evidence and alignment with criteria
- **4** – Strong: Clear, convincing information with minor gaps
- **3** – Acceptable: Meets basic expectations but with noticeable weaknesses
- **2** – Weak: Limited detail or relevance
- **1** – Poor: Minimal relevance or insufficient information
- **0** – Not addressed

Total score out of 25, then apply weightings to determine final score (e.g., Community Impact score = You Score × 0.3).

## 6. The Adjudication Panel

The Parish Clerk will convene the SPC Finance Committee who act as the adjudication panel.

Each application will be reviewed in turn using the following protocol:

- Panel members should declare and conflicts of interest concerning the application under discussion.
- Anyone who was unable to score the application or has a score in the lower quartile will be asked to explain their rationale to the group.
- Anyone who scored the application in the upper quartile will be asked to explain their rationale.
- All panel members will then contribute with the aim of reaching a consensus through discussion, especially for borderline applications. The panel will reach a decision as follows:
  - The application is successful and should be considered for funding. A final consensus score should be agreed for all successful applications.
  - The application does not meet the criteria and hence unsuccessful
  - There is insufficient information to adjudicate. The Clerk will receive a clear directive on the information required. The applicant will be contacted and asked to provide the additional information within a 15 working day window.
- In the event there are more successful applications than funding available. The consensus score for each successful application may be used to guide how the funds are distributed. This may result in some applications only being partly funded.

## 7. Full Council Vote and Payment of Funds.

At the next appropriate full council meeting the Chair if the Finance Committee will briefly present the output from the adjudication panel.

For each successful application, it will be proposed and seconded that a community grant is awarded. Full Council will then vote and the result of the vote will be recorded. Grants will be awarded to those applications which receive a majority vote in their favour.

After the review of applications at Full Council the Parish Clerk will provide each applicant with the result of their application.:

- Feedback and supporting rationale should be provided for unsuccessful application.
- Successful applicants will be advised of the amount of funding they have secured and subsequently the Parish Clerk will arrange payment of funds.

The decision of the adjudication panel will be final and there is no applicant right of appeal.

End

#### *Document History*

Version	Summary	Date
Draft A	Initial draft for review by the Policy Review Board – Accountability with the Finance Committee	31 Jul 25.
Draft B	Updated to reflect comments from initial Finance Committee Review.	06 Aug 25.
Issue: 1	Approved by Full Council.	14 Oct 25.

