

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda. Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LCI4OCJSr6t35GfmsBGYg

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

4. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and approve the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes meeting held on **Tuesday 15th June 2021**.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on **Tuesday 15th June 2021**.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Grants & Sponsorship Policy Update

For Members to receive and consider a draft of the proposed Grant & Sponsorship Policy and to approve criteria for eligibility.

b. Grants 2021/2022

For Members to consider the following grant applications:

- i. Biggleswade Sports Meeting;
- ii. Trinity Methodist Church Defibrillator Project;
- iii. Bedfordshire Police Partnership.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Review

- i. For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive on the action items from the Finance Review.
- ii. For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive on the status of the Revenue and Income Optimisation (RIO) work.

b. Orchard Centre

For Members to receive an oral report from the Assistant Town Clerk on the scope of, and progress with, the forthcoming Orchard Centre report.

c. Asset Register

For Members to receive an oral status update from the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships on the Asset Register.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

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Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

9. **EXEMPT ITEM**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

None

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MEETING TUESDAY 15TH JUNE 2021 AT THE OFFICES OF
BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE COMMENCING AT 7:00PM



PRESENT:

Cllr R Pullinger (Chair)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M Knight
Cllr D Strachan

Cllr F Foster (Non-Committee Member)

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs A Dennis – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council
Miss Helen Calvert – Deputy Administration & HR Manager

Members of Public - 1

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that Members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

The Chairman reminded the non-Committee Member in attendance at this meeting that he is not able to submit proposals or vote on any matters, nor will he be able to comment without being invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with meeting governance rules.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr M North, Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M Russell.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

Cllr I Bond.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a. **Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

None.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

Item 11b - Cllr Albone.

Item 11b - Cllr G Fage.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised Members that, in agreement with the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and to align with the 3-month cadence of Committee meetings agreed at the Annual Statutory Meeting, the future dates of this Committee will be:

- 7th September 2021
- 7th December 2021
- 15th March 2022

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The Chairman advised members of the public wishing to speak to use the "raise hand" function on screen.

None.

5. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Meeting held on **Tuesday 19th January 2021**.

6. MATTERS ARISING

From the Minutes of Tuesday 19th January 2021

Page 72 Item 6a, Members requested an update on the Asset Register. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed that it is 95% complete and will be circulated shortly.

Page 3 Item 6d, Members requested an update on the Grants and Sponsorship policy. The Assistant Town Clerk advised it would be presented in July with a progress report. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive wants it ready for the meeting in September so that there is time to submit applications for grants. The deadline for applications is 31st December 2021.

Page 4, Members requested an update on the Allotment Association's grant application. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive has had discussions with the Allotment Association and will update Members at the next meeting.

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Credit and Debit Report

The Assistant Town Clerk gave a report on the proposed rules for the use of Credit and Debit Cards.

Members asked who the point of contact would be if the Town Clerk & Chief Executive is unavailable and a card is lost or stolen. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive would be the person to notify plus a second tier appointed person in management.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the adoption of the proposed rules with the following amendments:

Paragraph 2.6 - Individual transaction limits and overall credit limits will be set by the F&GP Committee in accordance with the financial regulations, on advice from The Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

Paragraph 2.9 - When using an internet purchasing site, the user must not store the credit card details on completion of every transaction.

Paragraph 2.12 - If a card is lost or stolen, the card holder must contact the bank as soon as possible to notify them of the loss or theft. They must also notify the Town Clerk & Chief Executive as soon as possible and in any event within 2 days of contacting the bank.

It was **RESOLVED** to propose a change in Financial Regulation 6.18 at the next review to delete the reference to "prepaid debit cards" and to permit the issue of credit cards only to staff and to make the consequential amendments to Financial Regulation 6.19. Only the Town Clerk & Chief Executive will be permitted to be issued with a Debit Card.

b. **Financial Request - Biggleswade Community News**

Members were asked to consider the financial request from Biggleswade Community News.

Members were concerned about awarding this grant without more information, including the amount being requested. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised that the grants policy should be the point of reference, and enough foresight given to make a decision outside of the parameters. There was an underspend on the grant budget for this current financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** to refer this request to Council for further consideration.

c. **Website Update**

The Deputy Administration & HR Manager introduced the Website Support package. The support package would provide six months' design work, which will include the creation of calendars and online payment options.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive informed the meeting that he had received positive feedback about the new look website.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Website Support Package for 6 months at a cost of £558 per month.

8. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Grants 2021/22**

Members received a thank you letter from Carers in Bedfordshire for the grant awarded for 2021/22.

This was **NOTED**.

b. **Asset Register**

Members received an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive who thanked staff in creating this and assured Members that the asset register will be ready shortly. The asset register is a record of every piece of equipment that is owned and managed by the Town Council and all these items have been barcoded.

c. **Contracts Database**

Members received an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive who explained that at present there is no Approved Suppliers register but that a standard contract will be offered to existing and new suppliers.

d. **Financial Risk Assessment**

Members received an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive. The revised templates are still to be considered.

Cllr Fage said there had been fundamental changes in financial procedures and was in favour of deferring the review of the current template and Cllr Pullinger also stated the context has changed.

Members were of the opinion that the review of the process of financial risk assessment should be deferred.

e. **Grants and Sponsorship**

Members received an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

9. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Committee, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

None.

10. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

(11a. Utilities Contract)
(11b. Finance Review)
(11c. Staffing Matter)

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

11. EXEMPT ITEMS

a. Utilities Contract

Mr John Pitts, independent utilities broker from UtiliTrack, was invited to join the meeting to present to Members a series of options for prices for electricity when existing contracts will be due for renewal. He advised that the usage figures given were based on full meter readings.

It was **RESOLVED** to enter into a 24-month contract for supply of electricity with Opus Energy when current contracts expire.

b. Finance Review

Members considered the Finance Review report and the recommendations contained therein. It was **RESOLVED** to accept all the recommendations in the Action Plan appended to the report with the exception of R16, wherein the reference to elimination of use of cash should be deleted, and that these recommendations be attached as an appendix to the minutes.

c. Staffing Matter

The Chairman introduced an additional item relating to Public Realm staffing.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the recruitment of two additional Public Realm positions can proceed.

APPENDIX A - ACTION PLAN

STAGE A – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN NEXT 3 MONTHS

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	<u>Management Accounting Arrangements</u>	
R1	The Council should proceed with recruiting staff to roles with finance responsibility. These officers will have a key role in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing recommendations set out in this report; - Improving ownership of financial systems and reporting at BTC. 	
R2	The Council needs to make the RBS accounting system more accessible to BTC staff. BTC have recently purchased additional licences for the accounting application. Training should be purchased for staff with finance duties to ensure they have the knowledge to use the accounting system.	Book a training programme for all staff using the RBS Omega Accounting system, ensuring they receive training appropriate for their role. Training mandatory before system access is granted.
	<u>Financial Accounting</u>	
R6	The Council is permitted to produce simple income and expenditure accounts. BTC should therefore assess whether it wants to continue producing full Code of Practice accounts at the end of each financial year. This assessment should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are these accounting statements used for? - Do Members and Officers understand these more complicated financial statements? - How much do these statements cost to produce? 	Decision needed in early part of 2021-22 financial year to allow Council to implement changes for start of 22-23.
	<u>Council Reserves and Loans</u>	
R9	The Council must undertake an urgent review of all reserves balances in order to assess whether reserves are being held at an appropriate level. There are a number of steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review current earmarked reserve balances and determine why these are being held. BTC will need the assistance of its (Accounting Partners) for this work; - Carry out an assessment of what reserves the Council needs to meet known liabilities. This must include an assessment of monies required to maintain the Council's asset base; - Identify any monies that need to be set aside for regulatory or funding reasons (e.g. CIL or deferred grants); - Identify reserves required to fund projects identified in strategic planning; - Establish minimum level of general reserves to be held by the Council. 	This must be completed in good time to inform the 22-23 budget setting process.
	<u>Debt and Income Policy</u>	
R12	The Council should develop an income and debt collection policy, which should be published on the Council website, and referenced in all booking forms issued by the Council.	Policy needs to be in place to underwrite other improvements to income and debt collection systems.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	<u>Car Park Income Pay and Display</u>	
R16	The Council should look to move cash collection to an external contractor as a matter of urgency. The contract should be no longer than 12 months, to link up with plans to reduce cash income. BTC will need to assess how often each parking machine will need to be emptied, the cost of each visit by the cash collection company risk assessed against the amount of cash likely to be held in each machine. Again, initial scoping meetings have been held with CBC.	More efficient system for cash collection needed urgently – aim to reduce or eliminate use of cash in medium term.
	<u>Orchard Centre</u>	
R19	BTC to consider purchasing the Facilities Booking Management Module from RBS, to be used for Orchard Centre / Market Stalls / Pitch Booking. The Council should examine the following functions before purchasing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Room booking; - Invoice integration with accounting system; - Exception reports available (e.g. cancelled bookings / unpaid invoices); - Performance reports; - Caretaker Instructions; - Email confirmations from system; - Potential for storage and issue of hire agreements to customers. Training programme for all system users will also need to be purchased.	Assessment of potential of this module to inform operations review under way at Orchard Centre.
	<u>Purchase Orders</u>	
R29	BTC should consider purchasing and implementing the purchase order module of the Omega accounting system from RBS. Should the decision be taken to take up this option, the Council should ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All staff who raised and manage purchase orders are given proper training in the new process; - Staff with accounting and financial duties are trained in running reports available on the purchase order system. 	Potential for saving of staff time and improvement in accounting information if implementation can be brought forward.
R30	Purchase orders should be issued to all suppliers. These should be issued following a standard template stored in the Council's purchase order system. This should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payment terms and condition; - Requirement to email invoices to accounts payable email address; - Hyperlink to council terms of trade on website. Signatures should not be included.	Communication of terms and conditions to suppliers.
	<u>Payment of Suppliers</u>	
R31	The Council should move to making payments to suppliers by BACS. This decision should be considered, and approval sought from Full Council prior to implementation.	Decision required before any changes can be implemented.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	Payroll	
R34	The monthly payroll process is not documented. The monthly payroll routine should be documented, and additional staff trained in what needs to be done each month. Documentation should include supervisory checks (e.g. Town Clerk's review of payroll file before submission to George Hay) and records that should be kept on the monthly payroll file.	Council needs to ensure adequate back up in knowledge of payroll process.
R35	The Council should assess whether it needs non office staff to continue to complete and submit weekly hard copy timesheets. Consideration should be given to moving to an overtime claim system. Claim forms should be submitted for all preauthorised overtime worked by staff. These should be authorised for payment by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.	Relatively simple administrative change.
	Bank Account	
R37	The Council should continue with plans to allocate read access for relevant staff to the Council's main bank account. All requests for access to be signed off by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive & Chief Executive.	Urgent - staff need read access to check income from customers has cleared bank.
R38	The Council to finalise arrangements for installation of a card payment machine at the main office. In due course, consideration should be given to installing a second portable machine to be used to collect payments for markets and events, as well as acting as a backup machine in busy times.	Urgent – Council needs to be able to collect income via card payments (over phone or in person).
	Internal Audit	
R40	Internal Audit reports should be made publicly available on the Council website once they have been reviewed at a council meeting.	Compliance with NALC Practitioner Guide best practice.

STAGE B – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN MONTHS 3-6

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	<u>Management Accounting Arrangements</u>	
R3	A consultation exercise should be carried out with Members, in order to ascertain what finance reports they wish to see and when they want to see them. Once this has been determined, The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should set up a budget monitoring timetable to be followed each month and quarter to ensure budget monitoring becomes part of Council routine. Financial regulations may need to be amended.	New management accounts reporting structure to be put in place before new financial year.
R4	The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should establish a budget virement process. Officers and Members can then seek Council approval for changes to the agreed budget as circumstances change in the year. Once approved, virements to be posted to the accounting system, cross-referenced to the relevant minute, using the virement function.	To be put in place before new financial year.
R5	The Town Clerk & Chief Executive should, in discussion with Members, assess whether the Council wishes to continue the process of recharging admin and staff costs to services. This assessment should consider how the information is used and is it worth the cost of production. The complexity the recharge process adds to the accounts should also be considered.	To be determined before new financial year.
	<u>Financial Accounting</u>	
R7	BTC will need to consider accounting implications of any decision to change format of accounts, should this be the route chosen. Accountancy support from its Professional Accounting Partner will be essential. A number of issues will need to be considered. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amendments to chart of accounts. - Write-off of capital and fixed asset balances from balance sheets. - Possible prior year amendments to AGAR financial statements. Changes to accounting policies cannot be implemented mid-year. Any changes could not be implemented until the accounting period commencing 01.04.2022.	Work must start in this area in good time for start of 21-22 financial year – professional accounting support essential.
R8	An alternative approach to year end accounting and reporting will need to be developed. The AGAR provides a basic set of accounts, but more information is needed to provide proper financial information to members and residents. I have provided an example of another Town Council which produces accounts following smaller council accounting regulations but provides comprehensive accounting information.	Work must start in this area in good time for start of 21-22 financial year – professional accounting support essential.
	<u>Council Reserves and Loans</u>	
R11	The Council should adopt a formal reserves policy and ensure that reserves are reviewed against this policy on at least an annual basis. This should form future budget and precept	Needs to be approved in good time for start of 21-22 financial year.

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	setting. Decisions on transfers to and from reserves should be reported to and approved by F&GP Committee as part of this review process.	
	<u>Debt and Income Policy</u>	
R13	<p>The Council must be systematic in the way it collects debt. Whilst recommendations above should reduce the number of transactions that are collected in arrears, some income will still be collected after an invoice is issued.</p> <p>The Council should work with the accountancy system provider RBS, to identify whether debt reminder letters can be produced automatically by the system 14 and 28 days after debts fall due.</p> <p>The sales ledgers should also be reviewed by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive every month, with decisions about follow up action on debts determined as part of the review. The aim of this review should be to ensure that debts are collected or reasons for late payment understood and documented.</p>	BTC needs to put process in place to ensure debts are pursued promptly.
	<u>Payment of Suppliers</u>	
R32	<p>The Council should set up a documented payment run process. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checks to be carried out before invoices are presented for payment. This includes matching to purchase orders, confirmation that services have been delivered and confirmation of correct charge by supplier. These checks should cross reference to financial regulations. - Documentation to be sent to authorised signatories to support the payment run. Ideally this should be made available electronically. - a clear timetable for closing date for receipt of invoices, and prebooked diary slots for external Accountant / FTC finance Staff / Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Councillors. 	Documentation of existing process and preparation for move to BACS payments.
R33	Supplier payment information will need to be obtained from all suppliers prior to making a payment. New supplier information, and any changes to supplier payment records must be checked by phone to a known contact number prior to input into the accounting system.	Essential anti-fraud control.
	<u>Internal Audit</u>	
R41	The Council should carry out an annual review of internal audit arrangements following guidance in the Practitioners' Guide. This review should be added as a standing task to be completed in January of each financial year by F&GP Committee.	NALC Practitioners' Guide requirement.

STAGE C – RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY 01.04.22

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
	<u>Council Reserves and Loans</u>	
R10	The Council should set up new reserve accounts on the accounting system. Separate reserve accounts should be set up for each earmarked reserve identified at recommendation 9 above, and accounting entries posted to the reserves as reserves are spent / replenished.	To be in place for 01.04.22.
	<u>Car Park Income Pay and Display</u>	
R14	The Council should aim to move to cash free parking in the next 12 months, with customers moving to card / phone payment.	A decision to move to a cash free payment system will need Council approval and a communications drive to ensure car park users have sufficient notice of the change.
R15	Work to add payment by phone as an option for car park users should continue. Care should be taken to select an option that works with systems used by the enforcement team. The Place Shaping Manager has commenced scoping work with the enforcement team at CBC.	
	<u>Car Park Income – Permits</u>	
R17	The Council should work with the enforcement team to assess whether it would be possible to move to a virtual parking permit system.	Work with CBC Enforcement Team.
R18	BTC should formalise enforcement arrangements, and a contract or service level agreement established with CBC.	
	<u>Allotment and Sports Pitch Income</u>	
R21	The Council should aim to move as many allotment tenants as possible on to direct debit at next renewal date.	Communication before billing date.
R22	BTC to consider moving allotment records to the RBS Allotment Module and seeking to maximise integration with the Council's Finance system.	
R23	The Council should move football pitch hire on to termly billing arrangements. Overall pitch requirements should be agreed with football clubs before the start of each football season, and a contract signed with the treasurer of each football club. Invoices should then be issued for three payment dates (for example 1 September / 1 January / 1 March) and followed up by BTC staff. This ensures payments are made in advance of use. There should be no refunds for unused hires, although the Council may have discretion to award credit notes in periods of very poor weather.	
R24	Ad-hoc pitch hires outside of the main contract must be paid for in advance of the date of the hire.	

REFERENCE	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COMMENT
R25	The Council should ensure that it understands VAT rules in area of sports pitches– No VAT is chargeable when a club is a regular hirer (a series of more than 10 sessions).	
R26	The Council should aim to move sports club lease payments on to direct debit at next renewal date. The clubs will need to be informed in advance of next rental payment.	
	<u>Cemeteries</u>	
R27	Terms and Conditions on the fees and charges notice for cemeteries should be amended to require payment by bank transfer. This should be implemented immediately for all accounts managed by funeral directors.	Accounts no longer settled by cheque.
R28	The Council should contact RBS to assess whether cemetery receipts can be issued from the accounting system.	Replace manual process.
	<u>Payroll</u>	
R36	The Council may wish to obtain quotes from alternative payroll providers in the next year to 18 months to ensure that prices charged by George Hay are in line with market rates.	Long standing contract.
	<u>Internal Audit</u>	
R39	The Council should change internal auditor for the 22-23 financial year. Competitive quotes should be sought from internal auditors operating in the Bedfordshire area.	Auditor has not been changed for many years.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

**Report to Finance & General Purposes Committee
7th September 2021**

Grants and Sponsorship Policy Update

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: None

Finance: Within agreed budget

Equality: Applications open to all

Environment: None

Community Safety: None

Background

This report has been created to inform organisations that submit applications to Biggleswade Town Council for financial assistance by way of a grant. Also, to act as a template for Members to make decisions on these applications.

Introduction

The proposed policy covers eligibility criteria for grant applications and the process that applicants need to follow when submitting these, to include a calendar of important dates.

Summary

It is proposed that grant applications will be invited twice yearly via the Council Website and Social Media Channels. Community groups and organisations that applied for grants during the previous municipal year will also be notified by email that the grant application period is open.

Recommendations

Members to adopt the proposed Grants Policy, to include the calendar of important dates for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

Members are further invited to consider a proposal for review of the cycle of dates at an appropriate time in the future.

**Philip Truppin
Assistant Town Clerk**

September 2021



Biggleswade Town Council

GRANTS POLICY

Grants to Local Charities, Community Groups and Organisations

Biggleswade Town Council (BTC) acknowledges the significant contribution that community clubs, charities and other organisations make to enrich and improve the quality of life of so many residents in Biggleswade. BTC has funds available to support the operation and development of these highly valued services.

Grant applications will be invited twice yearly via the Council Website and Social Media Channels. Community groups and organisations that applied for grants during the previous municipal year will also be notified by email that the grant application period is open.

Powers to award grants are given under General Powers of Competence or by virtue of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or specifically authorised under other legislation (e.g. for community transport schemes).

Application Process

Applicants need to be aware that the Council receives a high volume of requests, and will not award grants in excess of the annual budget for this purpose.

Grants will only be made to cover activities that benefit all or some residents of Biggleswade. The Council will not normally award grants;

- for costs that could reasonably be expected to be funded from other sources, including from membership subscriptions.
- to contribute towards the costs of advertising charities or national charity appeals or activities. Local branches of national charities may apply for support for specific projects which benefit the residents of Biggleswade.
- to political parties
- to commercial organisations.

Particular consideration will be given to applications for extraordinary expenditure such as a capital project.

To apply, an application form is to be completed and submitted by the deadline specifies in 'Important Dates' below. Applicants will be required to explain, and provide evidence if available, as follows:

- the number of Biggleswade residents who would benefit from the grant.
- a copy of the group or organisation's most recent set of accounts and
- to undertake to keep an accurate record of the way in which the grant is spent.

The Town Council will inform each applicant of the outcome of their application as soon as practical. Unsuccessful applicants will be given the reason(s) for not being awarded a grant. Payment of grants will be made by bank transfer to an account in the organisation's name. Payment to personal bank accounts will not be permitted.

Important dates

Applications are to be considered on a twice yearly basis by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. each January, in accord with the following calendar:

First cycle

September – Applications invited in the local press, the council’s website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

September to December - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 December.

January – Consideration of Grant Applications by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Committee can approve grants to a maximum of £2,000 and recommend to Council for grants above £2,000.

February - Applicants informed of the outcomes.

April - Grants are then awarded to the successful applicants.

Second cycle

June – Applications invited in the local press, the council’s website and other appropriate media (e.g. Facebook). Previous recipients of a grant will also be contacted directly.

June to August - Submission of grant applications to be made to the Town Council.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 August.

September – Consideration of Grant Applications by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Committee can approve grants to a maximum of £2,000 and recommend to Council for grants above £2,000.

October - Applicants informed of the outcomes and grants are then awarded to the successful applicants.

The forgoing cycle is proposed initially for the financial year 2022/23. Further review of critical dates for future years should be programmed for consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the appropriate time.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

September 2021