

Estates Committee Village/Community Hall Grants Procedure/Policy

In order to work prudently, obtain 'best value' and to be a responsible grant provider Boxley Parish Council's Estates Committee is setting a standard for considering and awarding grants to Village/Community Halls. Whilst the Parish Council wishes to continue to actively support the Village/Community Halls within the Parish it feels that it is essential to require applicants to meet a minimum standard covering project planning and supply of information. By undertaking this work the Parish Council can plan with Village/Community Halls adequate funding in advance of the project being committed to.

Policy

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Council to an organisation for a specific purpose. The law requires that Section 137 grants must be "in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it" and "the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure." Similar considerations will apply when considering applications for other grants.

Boxley Parish Council policy is that

- Grants for maintenance will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as it considers that the day to day maintenance of the hall should be covered by the hire fees or fund raising.
- Village/Community Hall Management Committees will be required to show, for large scale projects costing over £3,000 that it is applying for funding from other sources; has undertaken fund raising events or has been saving towards the project. The Parish Council will be happy to assist the Committee to identify other funding sources.
- The Parish Council will consider each application on its own merit.
- For projects costing £3,000 - £10,000 the Parish Council would require the Management Committee to obtain 3 written quotations and for projects costing over £10,000, 5 written quotations should be obtained. The Parish Council reserves the right to request proof of the tender process.
- VH Management Committees will be required to liaise closely with the Parish Office so where possible the Parish Council can order the work and gift it to the Village Hall which will enable VAT to be reclaimed. This will increase the value of the grant given to the hall by the rate of VAT.
- Unless a schedule of payments has been agreed in advance by the Parish Council funds will only be released on completion of the work
- It would be advantageous to notify the Council if the VH Committee has undertaken any other projects in the recent past where funding has not been received from BPC.

The Parish Council recognises that most halls are run by volunteers and will be happy to assist/advise VHMCs on how to meet these standards.

At the Estates Committee meeting in October or December the Committee will consider individual grant requests from Village/Community Hall Management Committees for specific projects in the following financial year so that provision can be made in the budget recommendation to the Parish Council.

An additional budget will also be identified from which other grant requests may be met in the current financial year. A maximum award of £500 for such unplanned applications will be considered. Once the additional budget is exhausted only emergency requests for assistance, and generally only from organisations where the Parish Council has Custodial Trustee status, will be considered.

All organisations requesting assistance will be required to complete an application form which will include notification of the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. Village/Community Hall Management Committees will have to sign that it agrees with the policy or submit details of their own policy. Management Committees should also agree to representatives of the Council being given the right to inspect the work on completion.

Application Procedure

Organisations requesting financial assistance will be requested to submit:

- A completed application form.
- Copies of their last year end accounts.
- Copy of current hire fees with an explanation of any unusual agreements where a group pays less than normal.
- Details of any restrictions placed on who can hire the hall.
- Has the applicant made a similar application in the last 24-36 months?

A grant request, once received in writing, will be considered at the next meeting of the Estates Committee.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, to ensure as fair a distribution as possible of available funds, the Council will take into account the amount and frequency of any previous awards. Due account may also be taken of the extent to which funding has been sought or secured from other sources or fund raising activities.

Successful Applications

Organisations receiving grants are required to advise their users/members that the grant or equipment had been received from Boxley Parish Council.

Where equipment is gifted to an organisation, the parish council requires that it be insured and maintained at the expense of the user.