

Baldons Parish Council

Grants and Donations Policy

Baldons Parish Council is not a Charitable Fund Giving Organisation. This policy is designed to ensure that The Baldons Parish Council exercises its power of charitable giving in a fair, responsible, and transparent manner, directly benefitting the community of Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon, and the wider parish area.

1. Introduction and Powers

- **Policy Aim:** To encourage and support activities and projects which will benefit the Parish of The Baldons and its inhabitants, ensuring all award-making activity is open, transparent, fair, and competitive.
- **Legal Basis:** The Council awards grants and donations under **Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972**.
- **Funding Limit:** The total amount set aside for grants and donations each financial year shall be agreed upon annually during the budget setting process.
- **Definition of Grant vs. Donation:**
 - **Grant:** Awarded for a specific, defined purpose (e.g., funding a specific piece of equipment or event). Usage must be reported on.
 - **Donation:** Awarded for the general running costs or purposes of an organisation.

2. Specific Eligibility Criteria for The Baldons Area

Organisations must meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

1. **Local Focus:** The project or activity must primarily benefit residents of the Parish of The Baldons (Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon). Funding for organisations operating outside the Parish must clearly show how Baldons residents are active participants or direct beneficiaries.
2. **Status:** Must be a local voluntary, non-profit-making organisation, club, society, or registered charity.
3. **Constitution:** Have a written governing document (e.g., a constitution, trust deed, or set of rules) defining its aims, objectives, and operational procedures.
4. **Finance:** Be non-profit making and be able to provide a copy of its **latest annual accounts or a detailed financial statement/budget** to prove financial stability and need.
5. **Bank Account:** Have a bank account in the name of the organisation, requiring a minimum of **two unrelated signatories** for withdrawals.
6. **Limit:** Organisations are limited to **one application per financial year** (April 1st to March 31st).

3. Exclusions (What Will Not Be Funded)

The Baldons Parish Council will **not** normally provide funding for:

- **Individuals:** Grants or donations to private individuals.
- **Commercial Organisations:** Support for private businesses or for-profit activities.

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- **Statutory Responsibility:** Activities or projects that are the prime statutory responsibility of a higher tier of government (e.g., Oxfordshire County Council or South Oxfordshire District Council).
- **Retrospective Funding:** Projects or costs that have already been completed or incurred before the grant decision.
- **Political/Religious Activities:** Funding for organisations whose primary purpose is party political or purely religious evangelism.
- **Overseas Activities:** Contributions to charities operating outside the UK unless the benefit to the Parish or its residents is direct and demonstrable.
- **Private Land:** Projects that improve or benefit privately owned land or property.

4. Application and Reporting Requirements

1. **Application Process:** All applications must be made in writing to the Clerk using the official **The Baldons Parish Council Grant Application Form**.
2. **Timing:** Applications must be received by the Clerk at least **14 days before a scheduled Council Meeting** to be included on the agenda for consideration.
3. **Declaration of Interest:** Any Parish Councillor who is a member of the applicant organisation must **declare an interest** in the matter and will not be permitted to vote on the application.
4. **Use of Funds:** The grant/donation **must be used only for the stated purpose** detailed in the application.
5. **Accountability:** Recipients are responsible for the administration and accounting of the grant. The Council may request a follow-up **written report and receipts** within six months of the payment, confirming how the money was spent and the benefit achieved.
6. **Repayment:** The Council reserves the right to request repayment of the funds if the conditions are not met, the project is not completed, or the monies are not spent on the purpose agreed.
7. **Acknowledgement:** Recipients may be required to acknowledge the support of The Baldons Parish Council in local publicity materials.