



Sturminster Newton Town Council Grants Policy

Introduction

Each year the Town Council sets a budget for grants to voluntary organisations, registered charities and community groups that benefit Sturminster Newton residents.

Grants are subject to this policy and available funds.

If demand exceeds the budget, priority will be given to applications that best meet the Council's aims and demonstrate clear community benefit.

Aims and objectives

The Council's grants scheme supports local organisations to deliver projects and services that meet local needs and contribute to the Council's priorities. The objectives are to:

- support community wellbeing and improve quality of life for residents;
- help sustain and develop local voluntary and community sector provision;
- enable inclusive access to activities, support and opportunities, particularly for people facing disadvantage;
- strengthen community cohesion, volunteering and civic participation;
- support small-scale projects which deliver clear, measurable benefits for Sturminster Newton.

Legal powers

The Town Council will only award grants where it has lawful authority to do so. The relevant statutory power will be identified for each award where necessary. Where no specific power applies, the Council may rely on section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, provided the expenditure benefits the area or its inhabitants, is proportionate and remains within the statutory spending limit.

Outcomes and benefits

Applicants should show clear outcomes and benefits for Sturminster Newton. This may include:

- increased participation in community activities and services;
- improved health, wellbeing, safety or resilience for residents;
- reduced isolation and stronger community connections;
- enhanced local facilities, activities or community infrastructure;
- increased volunteering, skills development or local capacity;
- demonstrable value for money and (where relevant) match funding or in-kind support.

Application Assessment

Applications will only be considered from voluntary organisations, registered charities or community groups based in Sturminster Newton, or able to show clear benefit to Sturminster Newton residents.

Applications must be for a specific project, service or running cost.

Applications will be considered by the Finance & Policy Committee, which will make a recommendation to Full Council for approval.

The maximum grant award is **£750** per application, unless the Town Council resolves otherwise in exceptional circumstances.

Applicants must provide enough information to assess the application, normally including a constitution or governing document where applicable, evidence of a bank account in the organisation's name, a breakdown of costs and any quotes or estimates requested.

The Town Council will not normally make grants to individuals, political organisations, commercial or profit-making bodies, retrospective applications, activities with no clear local benefit, or activities whose main purpose is worship or promoting religious belief.

Where activities involve children or vulnerable adults, applicants must have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. The Council may request a copy of the applicant's safeguarding policy and confirmation of any relevant checks, including DBS checks where required.

Further Information

Applications must be submitted on the Council's grant application form and accompanied by the organisation's most recent accounts. New organisations should provide a recent bank statement.

Grant applications will not be accepted retrospectively, except in exceptional circumstances.

The giving of a grant in one year does not set a precedent for another year.

The grants process normally opens in **mid-November** and closes in **mid-January**. Exact dates will be confirmed each year.

Grant funding must be used only for the purpose approved. The Council may require any unspent or misused grant funding to be returned.

Any change to the agreed purpose of the grant must be approved in writing by the Town Council before the funds are used.

Grant funds must be spent within **12 months** of receipt, unless an extension is agreed in writing by the Town Council.

At the end of the financial year, grant recipients must report in person at, or in writing to, the Annual Town Public Meeting, explaining how the grant was spent.

The Council may request supporting evidence such as invoices, receipts or accounts.

Failure to provide this report may be taken into account when considering future applications.

The Council may seek recovery of unspent or misused funds where appropriate.

Sturminster Newton Town Council Commitment

The Town Council will publicise the availability of grants on its noticeboards, website and social media.

The Town Council will review the grant budget annually as part of the overall budget process.

Grant recipients may be asked to acknowledge the Council's support in publicity and communications, where reasonable and proportionate.

This policy will be reviewed at least every **two years**, or sooner if required.

Approved on: July 2026

Review due: July 2028