

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL



Grant Awarding Policy and Procedure

Date Ratified:	14 February 2023
Meeting:	Finance and General Purpose Committee
Next review date:	February 2026 (<i>3 yearly review</i>)
Supersedes:	Grant Aims and Terms and Conditions 21-22

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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Thornbury Town Council offers grant funding streams (Community Development Grant Aid and Small Grants) which eligible groups and organisations can apply for.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all grant funding awarded by the Town Council.

Thornbury Town Council awards grants to projects which will provide direct benefit to the local community. Grants will not be awarded to offset normal, ongoing running/revenue costs, but will be awarded for developments, projects, or capital/equipment investments.

Grants will be assessed, and scored according to how well the proposal delivers the values and priorities in the Town Council strategy. Full details of the Town Council's current Strategy can be found on the Town Council's website.

Additionally, grant funding will be prioritised for projects which:

- Give consideration to the challenges of climate change or work to conserve nature and biodiversity
- Deliver something new, or serve a sector of the population not previously supported

Grant funding will only awarded to groups, organisations and projects where there is a direct, proportionate benefit to the residents of Thornbury.

Below, examples are given of types of organisations to which grants may be given:

- Charitable Organisations with a local base
- Youth/Senior Citizen Groups
- Amateur Sports Clubs and Arts groups where there is a community or charitable element
- Advice Organisations
- Organisations assisting the Disabled
- Friends of Thornbury Town Council Facilities Groups
- Community groups

Please see section 5 full terms and conditions, including information on eligibility and exclusions.

Grant awarding may be awarded for existing organisations, or to provide start-up funding for new organisations, which may include revenue funding for a defined, limited period.

3. GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES

3.3 Community Development Grant Aid (maximum £3,000)

The upper limit of Community Development grant aid available for any applicant seeking funding for project-based activities is a maximum of £3,000 per project. Project means the programme of activities, capital investment/equipment or time-limited developmental running costs for which you are seeking grant aid.

Applications for Community Development Grant Aid are invited once a year, around April/May. The availability of grant funding will be widely publicised using the usual Town Council communications channels.

Any organisation applying for Community Development grant funding may be required to attend a meeting to give a five minute presentation (maximum time allowed) and answer any subsequent questions from the members present on the project for which grant funding is requested. Advance notice of the time and date of the meeting will be given.

Only one Community Development Grant will be considered per organisation in a rolling three-year period.

3.4 Small Grants (maximum £750)

Small Grants funding is available for any applicant seeking funding for project-based activities up to a maximum of **£750 per Organisation per Financial Year in one application.**

Project means the a programme of activities, capital investment/equipment, or time-limited development costs for which you are seeking grant aid.

4. TIMINGS

Exact dates will be confirmed on a year-by-year basis, based on confirmed meeting dates.

ACTIVITY	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS	SMALL GRANTS	
Open to applications	April/May	April/May	October/November
Working Group review	End of May/beginning of June	End of May/beginning of June	End of November/beginning of December
Finance & General Purpose Committee decision	July	July	December
Payment of grant funding	Beginning of August	Beginning of August	Beginning of January
Evaluation form and evidence of grant funding expenditure	By the end of March ¹ (following year). Six-monthly written progress report to be provided	By the end of March (following year)	By the end of March (following year)

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.3 Eligibility and exclusions:

- Grant funding is only available to groups and organisations and cannot be paid to, or benefit, individuals or commercial businesses.

¹ Extension may be sought subject to project completion timescales

- No grant funding can be awarded for expenditure on the fabric of any church owned properties. For the purposes of fairness this policy will extend to the building of any religion or denomination.
- Grant funding will not be awarded to organisations/for items which are the statutory responsibility of another public body, in order to avoid 'double taxation'. For example, grant funding is not available to schools, the police, NHS bodies. Funding may be sought by school PTAs, for non-core items.
- Grant funding will not be made to organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party, or to discriminate on the grounds of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Grant funding will not be awarded for general appeals (e.g. national/international disasters, fundraisers, or for national/regional charities or 'upwards funders' that do not provide specific benefit to residents)
- Grant funding will not be awarded for retrospective projects, or where costs have already been incurred.
- Where the conditions of a previous grant award have not been complied with (including evaluation feedback requirements), the application may be rejected, or any agreed funding partial, or subject to remedy of non-compliance.
- Grant funding will not be awarded to projects which exclude certain members of society on the basis of religion. Events which are run by a religious organisation, but are open to the public as a whole, however, will be considered.
- Organisations must be properly constituted and will be required to provide a formally adopted written constitution clearly defining its purpose.
- The organisation is required to submit a statement in support of its request and audited accounts or accounts that have been independently examined by a suitably qualified person, for the previous year or, in the case of a newly formed organisation, an outline budget and business plan
- **Revenue costs:** Thornbury Town Council will not award funding to cover revenue costs/normal running costs of an organisation. This will include, but is not limited to, items such as core staffing, utility bills or rent. It is a reasonable expectation that organisations should be operationally viable in their own right. Organisations who wish to request long-term revenue funding from the Town Council should see section 8.3.
- **Grant dependency:** Thornbury Town Council grants are awarded for one-off projects or events. Successful grant award in one year does not mean that grant funding will be awarded in future years. There is no 'entitlement' to grant funding, and no organisation is considered a priority over another. All grant applications are taken on a case-by-case basis, judged on the annual application alone.
- **Staffing:** Applications for funding of staff costs are not normally approved. An application towards the cost of a member of staff if it represents a specific fixed-term post to deliver a specific short-term project may be considered. In this instance, applicants must accept that funding will only be awarded on an annual basis; and as such posts should be recruited on a one-year fixed term basis, or the organisation must clearly set out the plans for funding the

post beyond the first year. Thornbury Town Council will bear no responsibility for the ongoing employment costs or arrangements beyond one year.

- Organisations must have a dedicated bank account in the organisation's name. For startup funding for new organisations, the grant funding will not be paid until a dedicated bank account has been set up. Grant funding will only be paid by BACS.
- Where start-up funding is applied for, information must be provided on how the organisation plans to become self-sufficient on an ongoing basis.
- Grant funding must be spent for the purpose for which it was awarded (reasonable variation between individual item costs originally estimated is acceptable).

5.4 Deadline for project/event:

Grant funding should be spent within 12 months of funding approval, unless alternative project timescales have been made clear in the application.

If there is a delay to the project, a formal request must be made to the Town Council to extend this period. If the expenditure for the project has not been incurred within 12 months, and no approach has been made to request an extension, the grant approval will be withdrawn and the funds must be returned to the Town Council for reallocation. Town Council debt procedures will be enacted in this instance.

5.5 Publicity

Grant recipients undertake to clearly credit the Town Council for its funding contribution. This should include the featuring of the Town Council logo on promotional material, and credit on press releases, websites and social media. The Town Council logo will be provided for this specific purpose alone and permission is not given for its use for any other purpose. Evidence of Town Council credit in publicity will be required as part of the evaluation form.

Grant funding must be spent for the purpose for which it was granted. Any funding which is unspent within a year (or at project completion where an extension is agreed in line with 5.4) must be repaid in full to the Town Council.

Grant recipients undertake to assist the Town Council with its own publicity in relation to the grant funding, for example photo opportunities.

5.6 Evaluation and evidence of expenditure:

A condition of receiving all types of grant funding from Thornbury Town Council is the completion and return of an evaluation form on the completion of the project, which must include evidence of grant expenditure in line with the purpose for which it was granted. This evaluation form can be found on the Town Council website, or requested by emailing info@thornburytowncouncil.gov.uk.

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to return this evaluation form. Failure to return an evaluation form will 1) be taken into account (negatively) when considering any future applications and 2) may result in the drawdown of any future grant funding being delayed/withheld until the evaluation form is received.

Additionally, for **Community Development Grant Aid**, a written update report is required every six months in order that council can see the progress of the project throughout the year. The Town

Council would expect the report to reflect on the content of the original application/project proposals.

Town Council meeting papers are public documents so care should be taken not to include any personal sensitive, or commercially sensitive information in any reports provided.

5.7 Evidence/audit

Grant recipients will be required to provide evidence of grant award expenditure, by way of receipts or an appropriate statement of accounts. This evidence will be required at the same time as the evaluation form.

The Town Council reserves the right to request further evidence/information as required for audit and assurance purposes.

6. REQUIREMENTS/GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS:

It is recognised that there are many voluntary organisations in Thornbury which provide valuable benefit in all different ways to residents of the parish. The Town Council funds available for grants are limited, and not all organisations can be supported. Therefore, applications will be prioritised on the basis set out above.

When completing the application form it is critical that effort is put into evidencing how the project/event aligns with the aims and objectives of the Town Council, and other priorities (see 2 SCOPE). A full and well explained grant application will provide assurance when the Council assess the completed grant applications. To this end, the following guidance is provided to assist in the completion of the application form:

Evidence in support of project costs: Grant applications must fully detail the costs of the project. It is not acceptable to simply request '£750 for X project'. There should be a full breakdown provided to explain the funding requirement. Evidence should be provided (quotes, screenshot of web prices etc) to justify the significant cost elements.

Quantified reach and impact/benefit: To be successful, grant applications must show how they represent a direct benefit to the residents of Thornbury. It is important to include clear evidence of reach on the application form including the number of service users/Thornbury parish residents who will benefit from the grant funding. If some beneficiaries may be outside of the parish boundary, this should be noted and quantified. Some benefit outside of the parish does not preclude grant award, but will give context and help the Council assess the benefit to residents.

The claimed impact/benefit should be set out in quantifiable SMART terms (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

The parish boundary map for the town of Thornbury is included at Appendix A.

Financial reserves explanation: Applicants are asked to provide details of financial reserves held. This should be accompanied by a full explanation of the requirement for reserves, and purposes, as it is recognised that high levels of reserves does not always mean readily accessible funds for projects. For example, an organisation may have a requirement to maintain X months of revenue expenditure as general reserves, or may have earmarked reserves for a particular project or purpose. Where reserves are not adequately explained, it will lead the council to assume that the applicant has sufficient funds to cover the expenditure from their own resources and that Town Council support is not necessary.

Checklist: A checklist is provided at Appendix B to assist with drafting the grant application form.

Other funding sources: Applicants are required to give details of efforts that have been made by the organisation in seeking funding from other sources (including for this project or other purposes). This helps to reassure the council of the organisation’s prudent financial management and to ensure value for money for the precept paying residents where grant funding is agreed.

7. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Thornbury Town Council reserve the right to award a proportion of the amount requested. All grant aid is awarded strictly on a case-by-case merit basis.

Applications will be scored according to:

AREA	WEIGHTING
• Alignment to Town Council Strategy	20%
• Proportionate benefit against project cost	20%
• Consideration of climate change, nature conservation and biodiversity	35%
• Delivery of something new or widening participation	20%
• Evidence that organisations have made efforts to seek funding from a wide range of sources	5%

Thornbury Town Council reserve the right to award whatever sum is felt appropriate by the Members discussing the individual application. All grant aid is awarded strictly on a merit basis.

8. OTHER FUNDING ROUTES

8.3 Service Level Agreements

Thornbury Town Council currently fund Service Level Agreements with local groups and organisations. These operate within a separate, fixed budget, which is not part of the grant awarding process.

If your organisation wishes to discuss recurrent, or long-term SLA funding or support for a service, contact should be made separately outside of the grant awarding procedure. There is no budget routinely earmarked for new SLA funding, so any such funding would be subject to negotiation with the Town Council for potential inclusion in future year budgets. Such SLAs are funded through the precept, which is levied on residents through their council tax. The approval threshold is therefore high to ensure prudent use of taxpayer funds.

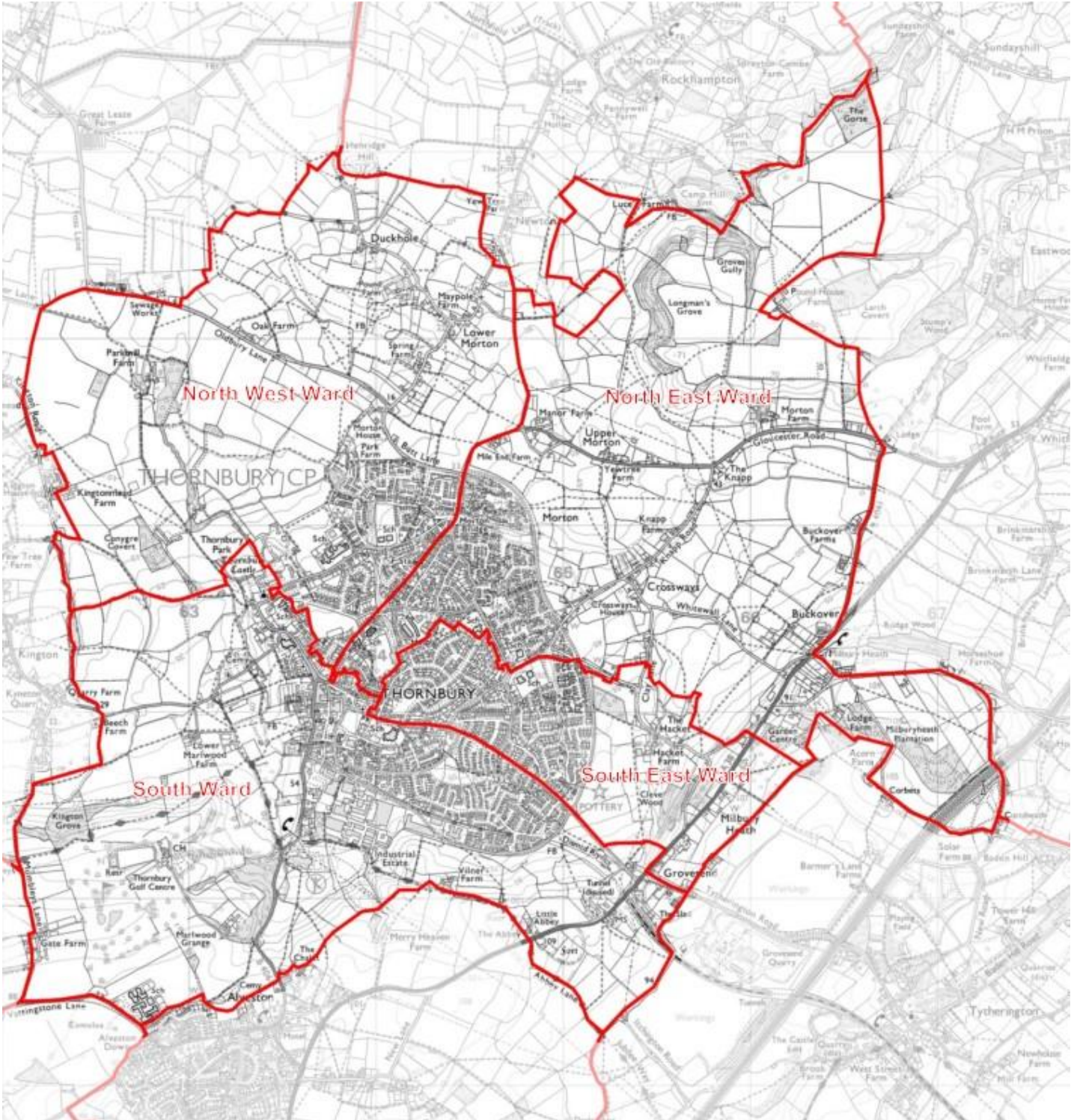
Please see the Service Level Agreement Funding Request Guidance available at Appendix C.

9. POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (for council use only)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
Strategic	Grant awarding scope and assessment explicitly refers to Town Council strategic aims and objectives
Equalities	The adoption of a clear policy and procedure will allow the Council to award grant funding in a transparent, objective and equitable way. Application assessment methodology includes 'widening participation'. Terms and conditions exclude projects which would exclude people on the basis of religion. High weighting in the scoring of applications against 'widening participation'.
Environmental/Sustainability	Application assessment methodology includes 'Contribution to tackling the challenges of climate change or to conserve nature and biodiversity'. High weighting in the scoring of applications against Consideration of climate change, nature conservation and biodiversity
Crime and Disorder	No impact
Financial	No impact other than grants budget allocation.
Resource	No impact
Risk management	No impact

- END OF POLICY

APPENDIX A: Parish boundary map



APPENDIX B: Checklist

- Have you provided contact details?
- Have explained the benefit to residents of your proposed project/initiative?
- Have you explained the proportion of residents to benefit?
- Have you adequately explained your other funding sources and fundraising efforts?
- Have you provided your most recent accounts and balance sheet?
- Have you provided a copy of your constitution?
- Have you provided quotes and evidence of costs?
- Do you accept the terms and conditions as set out in this policy?
- Have you provided your equality and diversity policy?



APPENDIX C: SLA Guidance

Thornbury Town Council

Service Level Agreement Funding Request Guidance

INTRODUCTION

The Thornbury Town Council Grant Awarding Policy and Procedure (February 2023) sets out in section 8 the potential for local groups and organisations to request funding from the Town Council in the format of a Service Level Agreement..

This facility is intended for use where the Town Council wishes to provide medium to long term support for a valued community service within the Town. Due to the longer-term funding commitment associated with Service Level Agreements, the applicant will need to demonstrate that the service provides a significant community benefit over a continuing period of time. Service level agreements are typically awarded for a period of three years.

TIMESCALES

New Service Level Agreement funding needs to be agreed in advance of budget setting for the following financial year. This means that proposals would have to be received for consideration by Full Council by the end of October at the latest for inclusion in budget development for following financial year (commencing 1 April).

Larger bids will ultimately mean greater scrutiny by councillors and additional information may be required. Therefore, it is always worth getting in applications for funding earlier rather than later, as requirement for additional research, or potentially public engagement activities may prolong the timetable. Please do not leave it to the last minute!

HOW TO APPLY/INFORMATION REQUIRED

Please contact the Town Clerk as soon as possible, in order that guidance and advice can be provided in terms of the information that will be required for consideration of the bid.

Those seeking funding under a Service Level Agreement will need to make a robust case for funding. This should not be on a grant application form, but the guidance provided in the Grant Awarding Policy and Procedure, and the grant application form, is likely to provide a helpful steer as to the kind of information that would be required to allow Full Council to adequately assess the application.

In particular the following areas should be covered:

- What is the service provision?
- How does the service provision meet the values and priorities of the Town Council Strategy (available on the Town Council's website)?
- What is the benefit to the community, including what demographic and proportion of the community would benefit?
- The total cost of the service, how much is sought from the Town Council, and details of other funding sources and fundraising efforts that have been made.
- Information on support for the service amongst the Town (user data, surveys, feedback etc).

Applications should be made in writing, preferably in electronic format emailed to:
info@thornburytowncouncil.gov.uk.

Value for money

It is worth bearing in mind that council funds do not represent 'free money'; they are raised through the precept charged alongside the council tax, so any funds are funded directly by residents. As such, council must be robust in reviewing applications and ensuring that the application provides proportionate benefit to residents for the investment.

SLAs, as for the majority of council activities, are funded through the precept, which is levied on residents through their council tax. The approval threshold is therefore high to ensure prudent use of taxpayer funds.

If an application is for a large amount, the Town Council may feel it necessary to carry out a small engagement exercise with residents to gauge if there is adequate support to justify the commitment of public funds. This may extend the approval timetable.

THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

If you are successful in securing a Service Level Agreement, the agreement would be provided by the Town Council and both organisations would be required to sign it. The agreement would set out the service level to be provided in return for the funding, and may include other conditions such as reporting and publicity.

SUPPORT

If you have any questions or require guidance, please contact info@thornburytowncouncil.gov.uk, marking the email 'FAO: The Town Clerk', or phone: 01454 412103.

You may find it helpful to engage Town Councillors/a Town Councillor who may wish to support you in your application.