

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE GROUP

meeting date: TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2015
title: RIBBLE VALLEY PARISHES GRANT
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT - CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: REGENERATION PROJECTS OFFICER - MELISSA THORPE

1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report invites committee to consider and agree a formal administrative procedure for allocating grants totalling £114,000 to Parish and Town Councils throughout Ribble Valley who annually precept.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Corporate Priorities – To maintain critical financial management and controls and to ensure the authority provides council tax payers with value for money

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members have previously considered the use of performance reward grant to support a range of project initiatives proposed by the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership. One of the principle projects was the delivery of grant schemes that would give local communities and parishes the opportunity to bid for funding to support community or parish projects.

2.2 The scheme proposed has been designed to make available a total pot of £114,000 between parish and town councils that precept. It is anticipated that there will be a strong demand for grant assistance and as members have previously recognised it is important to have a clear protocol and application process in place.

2.3 The proposals contained in this report seek to put these in place, mirroring previous, similar schemes operated by the Council and the Strategic Partnership.

3 ISSUES

3.1 These procedures are derived from the considerations given when the Council administered a similar Parishes Grant Scheme in 2007.

General Matters

- An application form, appraisal form and offer letter will need to be used in the administration of the grant scheme.
- The proposed forms are attached as appendices to this report.(Appendix 1, 2 & 3).
- A firm deadline date for the submission of applications should be established. If the process is agreed it is anticipated to launch the fund by the end of September, in which case a deadline of 30th September 2016 would be likely to apply.

- A panel of officers will consider all applications and be responsible for approving grant offers and member approval will sought where any issues arise.
- All applications submitted by Parish or Town Councils must first meet with the approval of the ward councillor before being considered for funding by the Borough Council.

Financial Matters

- The funds should be used for one-off schemes: and pump priming (which could include capital/revenue) however this would only be acceptable if a plan was submitted of how the scheme would be self sustaining in the future.
- Funding prior to expenditure may be possible in some cases.
- There would be no maximum or minimum grant for individual projects and funding will be administered throughout the year until the full amount of funding given to the parish council has been allocated or the deadline of 30th September 2016 arrives, whichever is sooner. There would be no set percentage or match funding requirements.
- There is a need to make sure that RVBC was not responsible for the financial accountability of individual schemes if they went wrong and were funded from RVBC monies.
- Grants would be paid on receipt of original signed invoices but there would be flexibility if schemes were being done in stages and it would be possible to pay in instalments provided that evidence of completion of that stage was submitted.
- Care should be taken with bigger applications eg speed indicator device that is later sold on - the money should come back to RVBC to be re-circulated. The offer letter and grant agreement terms would set out such circumstances where re-payment is expected.

Publicity

- A letter would be sent to all Parish Councils once the terms of the scheme were agreed and a report take to Parish Council Liaison Committee.
- A press release would be prepared and distributed. This would contain the firm deadline for receipt of grant application forms.

Council Support

- The Regeneration Projects Officer and Partnership Officer would administer the process and be responsible for project monitoring.

Selection of Schemes

- Schemes will be judged on their own merits but examples of possible schemes could be offered to parishes which reflect this Council's own corporate objectives.
- An explanation of how the project would improve or benefit the community should be submitted with the application.

Conditions

- The grant conditions are incorporated into the forms attached as appendices.
- Applicants should give an indication of the project completion date.
- A work plan should be submitted.
- A link between the projects objectives and how they will be achieved should be made clear.
- Schemes where a third party is involved (for example Lancashire County Council) should provide evidence of a start/end date.
- Applications should ideally show how the project relates to the community strategy and corporate strategy objectives.

Feedback

- Successful applicants will be encouraged to give feedback to the Borough Council on the process and will be required to submit project monitoring reports and impact report following completion of the project.
- Applicants are expected to mention the Borough Councils contribution in any publicity that they organise or take part in and are expected to take part in any publicity organised by the Borough Council.

4 OTHER GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 There are several general matters to draw to members' attention for discussion and agreement:

- Where a Parish council is submitting several applications there should be a clear indication of the priority of each. Whilst there would not be an intention to limit parishes to one project, it is important that parishes prioritise for themselves their requirements.
- There should be a point when funds allocated to projects that have stalled are reallocated. This is likely to need specific consideration on an ad hoc basis dependent on the nature of the project and would be brought to members to agree but this should not be assumed by applicants. The committee though should be willing to consider a latest start date as a revised condition of any grant award if appropriate, in view of possible delays. Any offer of funding not claimed by the 30 September 2016 would be deemed to of lapsed.
- Details should be given of any revenue expenditure implications of the project and how these are to be covered.
- Details of partner organisations and input from them should be clearly set out.
- In considering projects regard will be given to any previous grants made.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The budget provision for the grants is allocated. There will be a substantial amount of officer time demanded to administer the scheme.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implications identified.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – Whilst the recipients of grants will no doubt consider the Council's reputation to be enhanced there is always danger in schemes such as this. If the pots of money are over subscribed there may well be concerns raised by unsuccessful applicants. The system outlined above will however allow transparency and protect the Council from criticism should difficult decisions have needed to be made in grant allocation.
- Equality and Diversity – No implications identified.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Endorse the conditions, procedures and timescales for the allocation of the grants as specified in Section 3 above and included on the attached forms and ask the Chief Executive to publish the invitation to bid and to put in place the grant panel to consider and approve the bids.
- 6.2 Ask the Chief Executive to keep this committee informed of progress.

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MELISSA THORPE
REGENERATION PROJECTS OFFICER

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Parishes Grant Application Form
- 2 Parishes Grant Appraisal form
- 3 Parishes Grant offer letter

For further information please ask for Melissa Thorpe, extension 4424.

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Council Offices
 Church Walk, Clitheroe
 Lancashire BB7 2RA

Telephone: 01200 425111
 www.ribblevalley.gov.uk



Application for a Parishes Grant

Thank you for applying for a parishes grant. Once completed and returned your application will be considered by a team of Council Officers who will liaise with Councillors where necessary.

Before completing the application form please read the criteria information and ensure that, if necessary, all supporting information is attached. We would also welcome any other information you think would help us understand the project and the need for it, such as photographs etc. **Please note:** All projects submitted must be endorsed by the ward councillor on the form attached to this application. This form must be returned at the same time as the application form or unfortunately the application cannot be considered for funding.

Should you wish to discuss your application please do not hesitate to contact

Melissa Thorpe on 01200 414549 Melissa.thorpe@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dilys Day on 01200 414549 dilys.day@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Name of Parish Council:	
Name of Project:	
Charity number (if applicable)	
If you are not a registered charity please enclose a copy of your constitution	
VAT Is your organisation VAT registered YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> If YES please give your VAT number	
Contact name (this should be the name of the person managing the project)	
Contact address	Daytime telephone number
	E-mail address

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

Purpose for which the grant is requested. What are its main objectives?

Who in particular will benefit from the project?

Why do you believe there's a need for this project? Is there any evidence of that need?

How will the project be managed?

Estimated Cost? If the purpose of your application is for financial support to undertake a specific project or purchase one-off items £

When do you expect the project to be completed?

What financial contribution will your Parish Council be making?

£

When do you expect the project to be completed?

Financial Support

If the purpose of your application is to pump prime a scheme that is intended to run into the future what are your annual estimated costs what are your annual estimated costs?

£ [] And how will these be funded in future?

Please supply details of any other applications for grant aid that have been made to any other organisation for this project

Organisation	Amount requested	Approved	Refused	Pending
	£ []	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	£ []	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	£ []	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What level of financial support are you requesting from this Council?

£ []

Please provide a full copy of your most recent audited accounts if you are requesting a grant of over £1,000 (a financial statement is required for grants below £1,000) and complete the pro-forma below.

Turnover for last financial year	£ []
Total income	£ []
Total expenditure	£ []
Surplus/Deficit	£ []
Reserves	£ []
General cash balances	£ []
Earmarked funds (please detail)	£ []
	£ []
Total	£ []

Note: No application for financial assistance will be considered unless a copy of your accounts is attached.

What other partners will be involved in the project?

<u>Partner</u>	<u>Role</u>

What provision have you made for the revenue costs or maintenance of this project?

I/we agree that I/we will repay to the Council any grant awarded if the project for which the grant was awarded for does not take place. I confirm that the information given above is correct.

Signature of applicant

Name (please print)

Date

Parishes Grant Criteria

1 The Overall Aim

Through the awarding of a parishes grant Ribble Valley Borough Council wishes to encourage the Parish/town Council to invite applications for funding that meet the following aims and objectives.

- (i) Protect and enhance the quality of life in Ribble Valley villages and towns.
- (ii) Make people's lives safer and healthier.
- (iii) Improve access to services.

2 General

- (i) Applications for funding being made to the parish/town council must have the support of the ward councillor before these are submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council for final approval.
- (ii) Applications must clearly demonstrate that the purpose of the grant that is sought is to provide services or facilities that will meet the needs of the parish or communities in the Ribble Valley or directly benefit residents of the Ribble Valley.
- (iii) (ii) Applications will only be accepted from parish/town councils who have received support from their ward councillor.
- (iii) Applicants should demonstrate that their organisation is financially sound and well managed and that any project or proposed project is properly planned and organised. Applicants must demonstrate value for money and evidence of their own fundraising activity and ability to attract funds from other sources. Applicants should demonstrate that they have planned for the longer-term financial sustainability of their organisation as a whole and for any specific activity or project that they are applying for, ie they should have a business plan.
- (iv) Applications will only be considered if they include a statement showing how much an organisation has in all its bank accounts. If the organisation has significant balances and/or generates significant surpluses then a full justification for the amount of grant being sought will be required. Applicants seeking grants of over £100 will be required to submit their most recent set of accounts. Applicants seeking grants of over £1,000 will be required to submit audited accounts and to enter into, if required, a service level agreement with the Council.
- (v) Applicants may be required to enter into a service level agreement with the Council for grants over £1000 and in appropriate circumstances.
- (vi) The Council's grants scheme will not normally fund the following:
 - ❖ Capital projects on which work has already started or in aid of expenditure already committed or paid.
 - ❖ Annual revenue expenditure.
 - ❖ Schemes that can be funded by the Council's other grant aid schemes.
- (vii) Applications should not contravene the policies and principles of this Council. Councils receiving grant support will have to provide details as to how they will publicise the Council's support.
- (viii) Applicants who have received funding from the Council should provide a year-end or end of project report to the Council showing how the grant has been used.
- (ix) All grants must normally be claimed within twelve months of the offer being made.

- (x) Parishes submitting more than one project should clearly indicate the relative priorities they attach to each.

3 Capital Grants

Note: Capital grants refer to buildings infrastructure or equipment with a life expectancy of not less than two years and have a purchase value of not less than £1,000.

- (i) (ii) Premises, land or equipment in respect of which a grant is given must either be in the ownership of the applicant or secured by a long-term lease (not less than 10 years)
- (iii) Applicants must demonstrate that all licences and consents have either been obtained or there is a plan to achieve them, including planning and building control approvals, and that the balance of funding is in place (or soon will be). Some grant awards may be conditional on the receipt of such consents or licenses.
- (iv) Applicants must demonstrate that provision has been made for ongoing running and maintenance costs once the project has been completed.
- (v) Three written estimates of building and/or purchase should be sought and if possible supplied with the application.
- (vi) Grants will be paid in arrears, either in full or part, following the submission of completed claim forms and receipts or invoices relating to the equipment purchased or services provided. There may be provision for phased payments where appropriate.

4 Revenue Grants/Pump Priming

- (i) Revenue grants will be available for one-off items of expenditure providing the applicant demonstrates that any such scheme is sustainable following the initial grant award.
- (ii) Where possible, applicants should display evidence of partnership with the local community and, where appropriate, with relevant sections of the Council and other agencies demonstrating links to other relevant initiatives.

Example Projects previously funded through similar grants schemes

- Purchase and installation of speed indicator devices
- Improvements and installation of village signs
- Playground refurbishments
- Improvements to village halls
- Wildlife and landscaping projects
- Improvements to war memorials

For further information please contact:

Economic Development Officer Ribble Valley Borough Council Council Offices Church Walk Clitheroe	Partnership Officer Ribble Valley Borough Council Council Offices Church Walk Clitheroe
Telephone: 01200 414549	Telephone: 01200 414549

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PARISHES GRANT SCHEME

Appraisal Form for Project Support

Name of parish council.....

Name of Project.....

Date of appraisal.....

	Funding	
1	Grant amount requested	
2	Estimated total cost of the project	
3	Financial contribution being made by the organisation	
4	Details and source of any match funding secured/unsecured	

	Criteria	Tick if met or comment if relevant
5	Does the application have the support of the ward councillor?	
6	Does the application include a valid constitution or memorandum or articles of association?	
7	Is the purpose of the grant to provide services or facilities that will meet the needs of parishes in the Ribble Valley or directly benefit residents of the Ribble Valley as whole?	
9	<p>Will the project support any of the councils ambitions and priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help make people's lives safer and healthier • To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area • To match the supply of homes in our area with the identified housing need • To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley • To be a well managed council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs. 	

11	Does the applicant demonstrate that they are financially sound and well managed?	
12	Is it clear that the proposed project has/will be properly planned and organised?	
13	Does the application demonstrate value for money	
14	Has the organisation submitted a statement or audited accounts showing how much the organisation has in all its bank accounts?	
15	Does the application in any way contravene the policies and principles of this council?	

16	Does the application clearly demonstrate that provision has been made for ongoing running and maintenance costs once the project has been completed?	
17	Have quotations been included with the application?	
18	Is a financial contribution being made by the organisation or is the application for 100% funding	

Considerations

Has the project met all the essential criteria of the grant?	
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Are there any areas of concern or any further information needed?	
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Recommendation of Officer Panel...

Approved/ Refused

Recommended financial contribution

Summary of reasons for decision:

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Telephone:

Fax:

Ask For:

My Ref:

Date:

Your Ref:

Name and Address

Dear ,

**APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL PARISHES GRANT**

1. I am pleased to write to you, with reference to your application seeking financial assistance under the above grant scheme towards the cost of the (*brief description of the project*).

GRANT PAYABLE

2. On the basis of the details provided in your application and subject to the terms and conditions set out in this Offer Letter. Based on your stated eligible expenditure of **XXXXXX** I am pleased to advise you that the Council is to offer you a grant of **£XXX**.
3. The eligible costs exclude any expenditure that does not qualify for financial assistance under the terms and conditions set out by the Council.
4. In the event of the total eligible expenditure being less than that which would enable you to claim the full grant, the Council reserves the right to reduce the final amount of grant paid, or seek repayment of any grant already paid.

THE INVESTMENT

5. The investment should be carried out, as far as possible, in accordance with the quotations and/or plans submitted with your application. You must obtain the Council's prior written approval for any proposed changes. Should you incur any additional expenditure, not detailed in your application, no additional grant will be payable.
6. The Council does not accept any liability for the acts or omissions of any of your contractors or suppliers. Approval of the grant application, or payment of grant, does not imply any warranty by the Council as to the quality of the goods or works that are the subject of this application, nor of the competence of any of the contractors or suppliers named in your application.
7. All building works must be completed in accordance with the relevant Town & Country Planning Acts and Building Regulations approvals. This offer of grant assistance does not form any approval under the Town & Country Planning Acts, the Building Regulations or any lease of covenant where the Council's consent is required. Any approvals required under these provisions, or under any other Regulations, must be obtained separately by you before any work commences.

PAYMENT OF GRANT

8. The investment (as amended and agreed where appropriate) must be completed to the satisfaction of the Council.



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9. Grant will not be released until you have demonstrated that you have paid your contractors and/or suppliers. **Copies of detailed (broadly item costed) receipted invoices should therefore accompany all claims for payment.** The Council reserves the right to seek any further information that it may deem necessary to satisfy itself that the amounts have been paid.
10. Exceptions may be made under **exceptional circumstances** and funding used to 'front-fund' or 'pump-prime' projects. If this is deemed necessary the applicant must make a written request to the Council stating why the funding is needed before expenditure has been incurred.
11. Under the terms of the grant programme retrospective assistance is not permissible. Only expenditure incurred after your formal acceptance of this grant offer will be accepted as evidence of spend.
12. The VAT element of the cost must be shown separately. Grant will only be paid on the VAT elements of the work if the Applicant is not registered for VAT.
13. The Council can accept no liability in respect of loss attributable to any delay in the payment of claims or to any suspension, reduction or cancellation of grant.

MONITORING

14. If you are not able to claim the funding available within 6 months of this letter, a monitoring form will be sent to you. The 'Monitoring Form' records information on the progress being made towards the achievement of the project detailed in the application form. This **MUST** be completed in order for your project to retain its eligibility for grant funding. If the forms are not returned, the Council reserves the right to withdraw any offer of grant. This is so that the Council can reallocate available, or unspent funds, to other projects.
15. You will also be sent a "Capital Asset Register" form where you will be required to provide details of all 'capital assets' acquired and/or improved with the benefit of grant assistance. To ensure the accuracy of the register, details of any 'capital assets' that are subsequently sold must also be notified to the Council, so they can be removed from the register. This is because the Council, as a funder of the asset, retains an interest in its development and use and ensures that the Council is aware of any future changes to its purpose. A 'capital asset' is defined as:
 - (i) *Land and buildings (including any interest in land); and*
 - (ii) *Items of equipment and other movable and immovable assets costing £2,500 or more; which on the date of purchase had a useful life of more than one year.*
16. Representatives of Ribble Valley Borough Council shall have the right to inspect the project and you must permit such inspections on the receipt of reasonable notice. You must also provide copies of any documents they require and agree to provide any appropriate written or oral explanations they request.
17. If match funding was included within the application, evidence of this match funding must be presented in writing to the Council.
18. Failure to comply with any of the above monitoring regulations may result in the offer of grant being withdrawn.

PUBLICITY

19. Any publicity regarding the project should ensure that assistance from Ribble Valley Borough Council is fully acknowledged. You are required to co-operate in any publicity arranged by the Council.

WITHOLDING PAYMENT OR REQUESTS FOR REPAYMENT OF GRANT

20. The Council reserves the right to withhold any or all of the grant or to require part or all of the grant to be repaid if:
- (a) There is a substantial or material change in the nature, scale, costs or timing of the project without prior agreement.
 - (b) There is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the project or the future of the project is in jeopardy.
 - (c) In respect of premises, for which financial assistance has been awarded, where they cease to be occupied by the Applicant or are in whole or in part sold, leased or demolished.
 - (d) A 'capital asset' acquired with financial assistance is sold or leased to another party; **unless**, with the prior approval of the Council, it is used as part payment against equipment that will upgrade the applicants operations.
 - (e) Any of the information provided on the application form, in supporting documentation or subsequent correspondence is found to be substantially incorrect or incomplete.
 - (f) The Applicant fails to comply with any condition in this offer letter.
21. Any over-payment of grant must be repaid forthwith to the Council on its first demand, or upon the Applicant becoming aware that grant has been over-paid, whichever first occurs.
- 22. If the funding has not been spent within one year of this offer letter, the Council reserves the right to withdraw this offer of funding.**

AMENDMENTS TO THIS LETTER

23. No amendment or variation to the terms of this letter will be effective unless agreed in writing by the Council.
24. The Council reserves the right to withdraw this offer of funding at any time.

ACCEPTANCE

25. This offer can only be accepted by an authorised signatory signing the enclosed copy letter and returning it to Melissa Thorpe or Dilys Day by 31 December 2015. If the acceptance is not received by this date the offer will be deemed to have lapsed.
26. No payments will be made under this offer until the Council has received this written acceptance.



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I accept the offer of grant assistance upon the terms and conditions stipulated in this offer letter:

Name:
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Position:
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Authorised signatory on behalf of:
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date:

Signature: