

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern  
on Tuesday 25 July 2023 at 6.00 pm**

**Councillors**

I Dawson  
C Fletcher  
N Houghton  
L Lowton

**Also in attendance**

Linda Blake - Town Clerk  
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk  
Cllr Clive Hooper

**Absent**

M Jones (apologies)

**12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from Cllr Mel Jones were **NOTED**.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- Cllr Iain Dawson declared an interest - he is secretary for the 1st Malvern Scout Group who have applied to the grants scheme in the past.
- Cllr Nick Houghton declared an interest – Malvern Pride have applied to the grants scheme in the past.

**14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings, and these were signed by the Chairman:

- Policy and Resources Committee meeting 14 June 2023.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**15. REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF INSURANCE COVER**

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that five insurance companies had been contacted to provide a quotation for insurance cover renewal, but despite best efforts, nothing had been received in time for the meeting. Indications from the current insurer were that the increase in premium was likely to be around 15%, far lower than had been budgeted for, and within the committee's delegations to accept quotations up to £25,000.

The committee therefore had two options:

- 1) To give delegations to a group including the Town Clerk, Chair and Vice-chair of Policy and Resources Committee to select the preferred company once quotations had been received or
- 2) To defer the decision to the Full Council meeting in August and take out temporary cover in the meantime.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, Chair and Vice-chair of Policy and Resources Committee to review quotations when received and to select the preferred company.

16. **REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS SCHEME**

Report PR02/23 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk informed members that the report was the same as had been presented at the previous meeting of Policy and Resources Committee, but with one extra point for consideration.

Members agreed that it was important to try and increase the number of grant applications being submitted. It was suggested that this should be done by having the grant scheme and annual timetable on the Council's website all year round, and by targeting community spaces to ask them to advertise the scheme to their user groups.

Members then discussed the following points in detail:

1) Timing of the scheme

The scheme is run bi-annually in August/September and February/March.

*Discussion point – are these timings working and how does council deal with any applications in-between?*

Although running the scheme up to four times a year could encourage more applications, it was recognised that this would entail far more administrative work for officers.

**It was RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the timing of the grants scheme.**

2) Emergency grants

The Special Grants scheme has been removed and replaced with Emergency Grants for Exceptional Circumstances.

*Discussion point – is this system working as there have been no emergency grants claimed during the last year?*

It was felt that this part of the scheme was working well.

**It was RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the emergency grants.**

3) Amounts of awards

Small grants up to and including £500

Large grants – advisory limit of between £501 and £2,500 unless there is a specific reason to exceed this

*Discussion point – are these limits are suitable?*

Members agreed that the limits seemed to be adequate, noting that the upper limit of the large grants scheme was advisory, and therefore a higher amount could be applied for.

**It was RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the amounts of the awards.**

4) Frequency of applications

The current scheme allows an organisation to apply each year with every application to be considered on its merits and therefore the frequency is only relevant if there are pressures on the budgeted funds available.

*Discussion point – do any additional rules need to be added or are the current rules manageable?*

Members did not think that a change to how often an organisation could apply to the scheme was necessary, as each application would be judged on its merits, and if a group had applied in previous years, then this could be taken into consideration when determining the outcome.

**It was RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the frequency of applications.**

5) Nature of organisation

At present, no organisation is barred from submitting an application, as long as it is not-for-profit, and it does not break any grant rules but a number of councillors have raised the issue of funding for schools.

*Discussion point – do councillors wish to see any further rules introduced on which organisations can qualify for a grant and if there are any further exclusions?*

Members discussed whether schools should be allowed to apply to the scheme as they are government funded. Members felt that barring schools from applying to the scheme was unnecessary, as each application is judged on its merits, and if a group had applied in previous years, then this could be taken into consideration when determining the outcome.

**It was RECOMMENDED that no changes be made to the nature of organisations that could apply to the grants scheme.**

6) Bank Accounts

Some smaller organisations do not have their own bank accounts and either run through an individual's account or that of a larger organisation. This precludes them from applying for a grant.

*Discussion point – should special circumstances be included to allow applications without a specific bank account or does this cause a risk in the security of funds?*

**It was RECOMMENDED that applicants must have a bank account to ensure transparency and accountability.**

7) Application forms

The layout of the applications forms had been simplified in 2020 and improved from the previous formats.

*Discussion point – the application forms have been simplified and put into a clearer format, but are there any suggestions for additions or amendments?*

**It was RECOMMENDED that some of the boxes within the forms should be made larger to enable more detail to be given by applicants, and that officers should take steps to make the forms fillable offline rather than having to be printed off and filled in by hand.**

8) Support of running costs

The eligibility criteria are clearly set out within the grant scheme rules, but one of the issues raised by groups is the lack of support for running costs. The historical reasoning behind the exclusion of running costs is so that an organisation does not become dependent on Town Council funding for its core activities, but it does seem apparent that this is one reason why groups do not apply.

*Discussion point – should consideration be given to the inclusion of running costs or should they remain excluded?*

**It was RECOMMENDED to allow applications of up to £500 for support of running costs for one year, when special circumstances are demonstrated.**

9) Any other points

Members of Policy and Resources Committee are delegated to decide on whether to award grants.

*Discussion point - are there any other improvements which would make the assessment of grants easier? Do councillors feel they are given enough relevant information?*

**No further points were raised.**

17. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that the meeting scheduled for 2 August would be cancelled, and potential dates for a meeting in late August/early September be circulated.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm.

.....(Chairman)