



March Town Council

Annual/Specific Grants Policy & Procedure

Approved by Full Council: **4 August 2025**

Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

Purpose

To ensure transparency, accountability, and best value in the allocation of annual/specific grants and donations by March Town Council under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Scope

This policy applies to;

- All organisations receiving annual/specific grants from March Town Council
- Any grants issued under Section 137, including internal March Town Council activities
- Organisations proposed by councillors

Annual Grant Application Procedure

1. Information Request to Applicants/Beneficiaries

All existing and proposed beneficiaries of annual/specific grants will be asked to provide the following documentation;

- Organisation Details Structure; (CIO, CIC, Community Group, etc.), including relevant registration/reference numbers.
- Review of Previous Year's Grant; a summary of how last year's grant was spent, services delivered in March for local residents, number of beneficiaries, impact made, and any match-funding progress.
- Organisational Reporting;
Provide one of the following;
 - Most recent annual report/return
 - Minutes from most recent meeting
 - Specific report to March Town Council on activities
- Financial Documents; most recent accounts and confirmation of bank account details.

- Forward-Looking Statement; outline proposed services to be delivered to March residents in the coming year.

Note: All requested documents should be readily available to the organisation and require no additional work.

2. Inclusion of New Organisations

Councillors recommending new organisations for grant consideration must supply relevant contact details.

These organisations will be asked to provide all items listed above (with the exception of the review of previous year's grant).

3. Eligibility & Exclusion Criteria

Organisations that are unable to provide the required documentation or fail to meet the eligibility criteria will be excluded from the Annual Budget for the relevant financial year.

4. Review Process

November - March Town Council Main Meeting

All submitted information will be compiled and circulated to councillors together with the agenda pack.

An agenda item titled "Review of Section 137 including Annual/Specific Grants and Donations" will be included for discussion.

Councillors may raise queries or comments and agree the list of recipients/beneficiaries.

December - March Town Council Main Meeting

Presentation of the Annual Budget to councillors, including Section 137 grants and donations, for approval. If Annual Budget is not agreed it will be referred to the December Planning Meeting for discussion/approval.

January - March Town Council Main Meeting

Ratification of Annual Budget

Transparency & Promotion

A summary of successful grants and the impact on local services will be published on the March Town Council website to inform residents of community support initiatives.

Understanding Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

Section 137 provides local councils with the discretionary power to spend public money on initiatives that benefit their community when no other specific legal authority applies. It serves as a vital mechanism for enabling support for local charities, community organisations, and public-spirited activities.

Legal Framework & Limitations

Feature	Description
Eligible Use	Activities or grants that offer a direct, tangible benefit to the community
Limitations	Cannot be used where another statutory power exists, or for individuals
Financial Cap	£11.10 per elector for the 2025/26 financial year (this sum is set annually by government)
Accountability	Spending must be resolved by Council and properly recorded.

Councils must ensure that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure made.

Practical Applications

Under Section 137, March Town Council may support;

- Local charities and non-profit organisations
- Community events and festivals
- Initiatives like public defibrillators, volunteer services, and cultural programmes

Section 137 also covers internal Council activities benefiting the town, such as the Christmas Lights switch-on event.

Governance Requirements

- All grants/donations must be approved by resolution
- The Council must maintain records of Section 137 spending
- For grants exceeding £2,000 written confirmation of how funds were used is required within 12 months

This Policy shall be reviewed biennially.

Next review 4 August 2027 (or sooner in the event of legislative changes)