****

**GRANT MAKING POLICY**

# Background

The purpose of the Stevenage Community Trust is to promote charitable activity for the benefit of the Community in the Borough of Stevenage and the surrounding area. This is done by raising funds to support groups working to raise the quality of community life and tackle disadvantage and, more directly, by making grants for individuals to relieve poverty or enhance the quality of their lives.

In advertising its grant making activities, in soliciting applications and in making awards the Trust will endeavour not to discriminate against any individual or group, but the Trust will not make grants for religious or political purposes or for any purposes other than the charitable purposes listed below. Commitment to equal opportunities underpins the grant-making process and is built into considerations about accessibility of information and equality of treatment. The Trust strives to ensure that, within its published guidelines, every applicant and potential applicant is given a fair and equal opportunity to apply for Trust funding. All grant applications are considered against the same, objective criteria.

The Trust sometimes makes grants on behalf of other organisations or distributes monies given to the Trust for particular purposes. Grants made in this way may have different or more restrictive conditions attached, than those made from the Trust’s own funds. In acting for other organisations, or accepting monies with particular conditions the Trust will be mindful of the limitations of its own charitable objects and of its commitment to equal opportunities in grant giving.

# Basic policy criteria

The Trust will only support individuals, community groups, charities and voluntary organisations resident within or operating within its immediate area which is Stevenage, and the surrounding villages of Aston, Benington, Cromer, Datchworth, Graveley, Knebworth, Little Wymondley, Old Knebworth, Walkern, Watton-at-Stone, Weston, and Woolmer Green.

Applications must be for charitable purposes and fall within one of the following categories:

* the prevention or relief of poverty;
* the advancement of health or the saving of lives;
* the advancement of citizenship or community development;
* the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science;
* the advancement of amateur sport;
* the advancement of environmental protection or improvement;
* the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage; and
* other purposes which do not fall neatly into the above categories but are recognised as charitable by the Trust, are consistent with the spirit of the Trust’s charitable objectives and are not subject to the exclusions and preferences indicated below.

## **Organisations**

Groups do not have to be registered charities but do have to show evidence of some formal structure and sound governance.

All grant applicants must supply a copy of their most recent financial accounts or in the case of new organisations a copy of a recent bank statement.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, organisations must allow a minimum of 12 months between applications.

## **Individuals**

The Trust is also able to assist individuals in need but these requests must come through a recognised third party agency. Although the Trust will decide methods of payment on a case by case basis, payments will not be made to an individual but items of equipment or a service will be purchased on their behalf.

Funding will be withdrawn after 3 months following approval unless a satisfactory reason is provided for non-spend.

All information received will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Where appropriate, equipment will be provided by a supplier nominated by the Trust which can include the Stevenage Furniture Recycling Scheme.

**Sports grants**

Applications to assist with funding for elite athletes must be submitted by a recognised official.

## **All grant applicants**

Application for a grant to purchase equipment must enclose a quote from the supplier, and also show evidence of being able to make full use of the equipment, and state how the subsequent running and maintenance costs will be met.

**Child protection**

It is a requirement that any grant seeking organisation that works with children or young people has a child protection policy. Similarly, any organisation working with vulnerable people should have an appropriate policy. No grants are to be made to any such organisation without confirmation that they have this policy or written confirmation that they have adopted and accepted this policy as their child and vulnerable adult protection policy, with the necessary grammatical changes to reflect their organisational status.  The Trust will work with groups to help them make such grammatical changes.

# Exclusions

We will not support applications for the purpose of:

* pursuing political objectives
* religious evangelism
* pursuing trade union objectives save for the welfare functions of trade unions
* animal welfare
* any other purpose inconsistent with the Trust’s charitable objects
* retrospective grants

(Some of these exclusions are preferences, some are against charity law)

Given that our resources cannot meet every need, the Trust prefers not to fund the following:

* replacement of statutory funding
* general appeals
* large national charities
* educational projects that should be covered within the national curriculum
* the costs of medical treatment
* general running costs

These preferences may be revised from time to time by the Trustees.

### Publicity strategy

The Trust will endeavour to publicise its grant giving activities, to all sections of the community. Such activities are written in to the Manager’s job description and are allowed for in the expenditure budget. Publicity strategies include issuing a press release to the local press and media contacts, publishing articles on the website, including information in the Annual Report.

### The Grants Committee

Core members are delegated trustees with other people co-opted to the committee because of their specific knowledge and skills at the discretion of the trustee members of the committee. Non trustee members of the Grants Committee are potentially subject to approval and affirmation by the main board of trustees. The trustee members of the Grants Committee appoint the chair.

**Grant making procedure**

Grant meetings are held approximately every three months and these dates are published on the website [www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org](http://www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org)

A quorum for the Grants Committee shall be three trustees. Persons co-opted onto the Grants Committee do not form part of the quorum.

The Manager will collate all grant requests, chase up any outstanding queries, where considered appropriate,and circulate a summary to all the committee prior to the meeting. The Manager will then bring to the meeting all the relevant paperwork appertaining to the grants.

Where applicants are individuals the Trust will ask (if possible) for the application to be supported by a doctor, social worker, CAB, or some other authoritative source.

Where the applicant is an organisation they will be asked to provide their latest set of accounts or in the case of new organisations a copy of their bank statement. Organisations do not have to be registered as charities to be eligible but the Trust must assure itself that their objectives are charitable. The Trust may seek further evidence of good governance.

Whether from an individual or an organisation, an application for the cost of equipment or installation must be accompanied by estimates of the costs provided by the prospective supplier or contractor.

Prior to the consideration of an application, or afterwards at the request of the committee the Manager may make further enquiries of or about an applicant; to assist the committee in reaching a decision.

Where there are doubts about the eligibility of an application, the application may, nonetheless, be presented to the Grants Committee for its decision about eligibility.

All applications eligible for grants will be presented to a quorate meeting of the Grants Committee, and each will be considered and a decision reached in each case unless further information is required from the applicant, or unless the views of Trustees need to be sought. In these latter cases the Manager may be mandated to act conditional upon further information received or upon the Trustees’ decision or the application will be reconsidered at a further Grants Committee meeting or dealt with using the urgent requests procedure (below).

The success of the application will depend upon:

1. *the amount of money available (there is a limited amount of money available. The total annual amount available is determined each year by the Board of Trustees. The maximum grant that can be allocated by the Grants Committee is £5000 but the majority of grants are for smaller amounts).*
2. *whether the application meets the Trust’s criteria.*
3. *the priority given to the application relative to other applications received.*
4. *whether the application needs to be taken to a full Board Meeting for consideration. Applications in excess of £5,000 will be considered by the Trustees as a whole.*

The limit of £5,000 may be revised by the Trustees at a later date.

In the event of an urgent request (usually for case of dire need, or for an application which has taken a long time to process) the Manager will cascade the information by email to the Grant Committee and upon receipt of three approvals the grant will be released. In the event of applications for sums under £300 at the discretion of the Manager grants can be made without emailing the Grant Committee.

The minutes of the meeting are distributed with a list of recent grants given. The grants given are added to the rolling database. The Board of Trustees receives an update of monies spent at each meeting.

The Grants Committee may make awards as follows:

* Direct cash grant
* Purchase of equipment
* An interest free loan
* Loan of purchased equipment – e.g. a special chair that will remain the property of the Trust.
* A combination of a loan and grant
* Facilitation of services – e.g. arranging a supply of office furniture
* A combination of any of the above at the discretion of the Grants Committee

The Trust will decide in each case whether money is paid direct to an applicant organisation, to a supplier of goods and services or to a trustworthy third party.

# Grant Presentation and other publicity opportunities

Excluding third party referrals, each successful applicant will be invited to attend a grant presentation and this event may be used for publicity purposes. However, the Trust will always preserve individuals’ confidentiality and will not reveal any information without an individual’s consent. Successful applicants will be encouraged to provide materials that might be used to promote public knowledge about the Trust’s activities. Where printed materials are produced as a result of a grant or sporting equipment purchased the Trust may ask for its logo to be displayed. If organisations or groups wish their application to be treated as confidential they must expressly state this on the application form and it will be honoured.

# Monitoring

Every applicant, excluding third party referrals, will be required to complete a monitoring form which must be submitted within three months. It may prejudice a future grant if this form is not completed and returned in a timely manner. Any unspent funds must be notified to the Trust who will decide whether the money should be returned or used for alternative means.

Any photographs arising from an event would be welcomed for use in the Annual Report.

**Unsuccessful Applicants**

The Trust reserves the right to refuse grant applications without giving reasons to the applicant or enter into communication about the refusal. A grant refused on one occasion does not mean that the Trust will refuse another, and unsuccessful, but eligible applicants are encouraged to re-apply at a later date. The Trust, where it can, will assist and advise all applicants on the criteria for a fundable and successful application.

*This information is a general guide to assist applicants for grants, and trustees in an endeavour to make our decision making process transparent. It is subject to all legal requirements, the terms of the memorandum articles and constitution of the Trust and the discretion of the trustees.*