

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

AGENDA ITEM No. 7

MEETING: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 9TH SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT BY: TOWN CLERK

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to highlight the current position on the Council's various Grants and Donations Budgets for the 2026/27 financial year and to set out for the consideration of Members any requests for grants and donations received since the previous meeting.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Council currently has the following grants and donations budgets in place for the 2026/27 financial year:-

Fund	Budget	Remaining Funds
Grants and Donations Budget	£12,180	£6,867
Community Benefit Fund	£9,758	£9,758
Community Events Grants Budget	£4,000	£4,000

- 2.2 A schedule showing the current position on the various grants and donations funds is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Please note the Community Benefit Fund relates to monies paid to the Council each year in relation to the solar panels site off School Aycliffe Lane and must be used for environment related initiatives.
- 2.4 In considering any grant and donation requests this year, Members will need to take into consideration the limited grants funds available and the need to ensure that the available funds stretch as widely as possible across the full financial year.

3.0 Grant and Donation Requests

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, one donation request has been received, as detailed below: -

Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway

Summary of the Donation Request

A request has been received from the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, requesting a donation of £1,000 from the Council towards the costs of a community fun day at Heighington Station. This event will be the centrepiece of a month-long festival celebrating the Stockton and Darlington Railway anniversary and highlighting the refurbishment of the historic Heighington Station building, the oldest railway station in the world.

This free community fun day will bring people together through live steam engines, miniature railway rides, live music, children's activities, food stalls and other attractions. Visitors will also be able to see traditional blacksmithing and heritage craft demonstrations, take guided tours of the historic station building, and view and comment on plans for its restoration and future use. Information stalls from S&DR, partners and venues will help visitors understand the significance of the railway that got the world on track.

The enclosed event budget breakdown shows a total expected cost of £5,144. The Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway have already secured £2,012 in donations and have requested if the Town Council could consider contributing £1,000 towards the remaining cost.

The donation letter and event costs breakdown is attached at Appendix 2 along with a copy of the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway's governing documents and accounts.

Officer Comments

The application meets the criteria set out in the Council's Grants and Donations Policy as it is from a local charitable organisation providing services directly to the local community and the planned event is something that all the Great Aycliffe residents will be able to attend and enjoy.

The Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway are an official outside body of the Town Council.

Financial support has been provided to the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway previously, with the last grant having been paid in June 2024.

Members may wish to take the above guidance into account when considering this grant request.

4.0 Letters of Thanks / Post Grant Questionnaires

- 4.1 A letter of thanks and post grant questionnaire has been received from Lifeline Community Action relating to the grant awarded for the Move Your Way Superhero Walk event.
- 4.2 Members will note that there was an underspend on the event of £245.67 and consideration needs to be given as to whether the Council wishes to request that this is returned (bearing in mind the event was funded from various other funding sources and therefore only a proportion of this underspend would be due to be repaid).

5.0 Policy Implications

- 5.1 The operation of the grants and donations fund helps the Council conform to the following Strategic Aims:-

Aim 1 "To provide good quality governance and management of the Council"

Aim 2 "To manage the Council's finances and assets in a responsible manner"

6.0 Staffing Implications

- 6.1 None.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 As highlighted earlier, the following balances are available in the Council's various grants and donations funds:-

Fund	Available Funds
Small Grants and Donations Budget	£6,867
Community Benefit Fund	£9,758
Community Events Grants Budget	£4,000

8.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 9.1 Applications for grants and donations will be considered on an equal and consistent basis in line with the requirements of the Council's Grants and Donations Policy.

10.0 Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 The Community Benefit Fund is available to fund to environmental projects and grant and donation requests.

11.0 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 It is not considered that the matters contained in this report pose a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

12.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- 12.1 Is any personal or sensitive data required for this proposal which may have any implications for GDPR? **NO**
- 12.2 A privacy impact assessment has been appended to this report which has considered the relevant impact on privacy matters and how these will be dealt with.
- 12.3 The forms will be stored securely and shredded after 12 months.

13.0 Recommendations

- 13.1 It is recommended that Members:
- (i) Receive the report.
 - (ii) Consider the donation request from the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.
 - (iii) Receive the post grant questionnaire from Lifeline Community Action relating to the grant awarded for the Move Your Way Superhero Walk event and consider whether to request a refund of part of the grant awarded in light of the underspend on the cost of running the event.