

St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council

Report #03.2

Revised Grant Policy

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To invite the council to consider a minor amendment to the council's grant policy.

2. Background

- 2.1. The council's present Grant Policy does not allow the council to make grants to religious organisations because it was judged that there was a conflict of interpretation between the Local Government Act of 1894 and the 1972 Act.
- 2.2. In 2023, as part of the Lords' Report Stage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the government made an amendment to the Local Government Act 1894 with the aim of clarifying that there is nothing to prevent local councils from funding churches and other places of worship.
- 2.3. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) has also reiterated that there was nothing in the 1894 Act prohibiting parish councils from funding the maintenance and upkeep of churches and other religious buildings should they wish to do so.
- 2.4. Given the information in the previous paragraphs it is now proposed to remove the words '**nor to religious organisations**' from bullet point 6 of the council's Grant Policy, thus allowing the council to consider such grant applications in the future from religious organisations.

3. Options

- 3.1. To consider retaining the existing wording
- 3.2. To consider amending the council's Grant Policy as proposed in paragraph 2.4

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1. Any grant approved would need to be in line with the council's budget allocation.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. The council is invited to support option 3.2.

Cllr David Briggs
Chair Finance Committee
17th March 2025