HARROGATE
TOWN COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT FROM EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

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1. Our Commitment

1.1 Harrogate Town Council is keen to support organisations and projects that make a positive contribution to our town and its residents.

1.2 We recognise that community groups, charities and partner organisations often require different forms of support when developing projects or submitting funding applications. This protocol sets out how the Council approaches such requests in a transparent, fair and proportionate way.

1.3 The Council's approach is guided by its Vision & Values, including our ambition for Harrogate to be a thriving, inclusive and forward-looking town — one that is proud of its past, vibrant in the present and confident in its future.

2. Types of Support

There are three main types of support that organisations may seek from the Town Council:

2.1 Financial Support – A grant, contribution or financial partnership.

2.2 Partnership Support – An active role for the Council in the project.

2.3 Expression or Letter of Support – A written endorsement of a project or funding bid.

3. Financial Support

3.1 Requests for financial assistance are dealt with separately through the Council's established grant and partnership funding processes, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and grant criteria.

3.2 All financial support is subject to budget availability and must comply with the Council's adopted Financial Regulations and annual budget approved by Full Council.

3.3 Organisations may also be signposted to other sources of financial assistance, for example Section 106/Commuted Sums funding from North Yorkshire Council or information available from our local community anchor organisation – Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA)[1].

4. Partnership Support

4.1 Where organisations seek partnership support, they are encouraged to be clear and specific about what they are requesting from the Council.

4.2 Support might include a councillor representative on a board, officer input, use of facilities, joint branding or in-kind support.

[1] https://hadca.org.uk/Support/search-funding

4.3 Clarity helps members understand the level of commitment involved, whether the Council has the capacity to provide support and whether the request aligns with Council priorities.

4.4 The Council reserves the right to decline partnership involvement where officer capacity, financial implications or strategic alignment do not justify participation.

5. Expression or Letter of Support

Organisations seeking a letter or formal expression of support are encouraged to provide a summary of the project, the location and intended beneficiaries, how the project is being funded and how the proposal aligns with the Council's Vision & Values.

6. Authority to Issue Expressions of Support

6.1 The Council will only provide support where it is satisfied that it has the necessary statutory power to do so, including but not limited to the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011, s.1) or Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 where applicable.

6.2 For clarity, individual councillors do not have the authority to give expressions of support, endorsements or letters of support on behalf of Harrogate Town Council.

6.3 Any formal expression of support that refers to the Town Council must be agreed by resolution of the appropriate committee or the Full Council and issued by the Town Clerk or another properly authorised officer.

6.4 Councillors may express their personal views but must make it clear that they are acting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of Harrogate Town Council.

7. Notice Period

7.1 Organisations are encouraged to contact the Council at least six weeks before any relevant funding, or other, deadline.

7.2 Requests will normally be considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee which usually meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

8. Transparency

8.1 All decisions will be recorded in the minutes of the relevant committee meeting.

8.2 Members must declare any disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in accordance with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

9 Discretion

9.1 Harrogate Town Council retains absolute discretion in determining whether or not to provide any form of support.

9.2 The Council is under no obligation to approve a request and may decline to provide support where it considers that:
a. the proposal does not align with Council priorities;
b. sufficient information has not been provided;
c. there are capacity or financial constraints;
d. there are reputational, legal or governance concerns; or
e. the proposal is otherwise not considered appropriate.

9.3 Harrogate Town Council is a non-political and secular local authority. In exercising its functions, the Council must act for the benefit of the whole community and in accordance with its statutory powers.

9.4 The Council will not normally provide support for:
a. party-political activities or campaigns;
b. projects whose primary purpose is the promotion or opposition of a political party or candidate;
c. projects whose primary purpose is the advancement of, or opposition to, a particular religious doctrine or proselytising activity.

9.5 The Council may consider supporting projects delivered by faith-based organisations where the primary purpose is inclusive community benefit and where services are provided without discrimination.

9.6 Support does not create any financial or legal liability unless expressly resolved.