

WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL - 19 OCTOBER 2026 GRANT APPLICATION – CHRIST CHURCH, WHARTON

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider a grant application from the **Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church, Wharton** for funding towards the expansion of the Associate Minister post to support community outreach, school chaplaincy and youth provision within Wharton and wider Winsford.

The application seeks a grant of **£2,500**. The applicant states this represents approximately **9% of the overall project cost**.

The Council's Grants Policy permits applications up to a maximum value of £2,500 and prioritises projects that promote community participation, social connection, wellbeing and partnership working for the benefit of Winsford residents.

BACKGROUND

Christ Church, Wharton is an established charitable organisation serving the Wharton area of Winsford. In addition to religious services, the church undertakes a range of community-focused activities including:

- Pastoral support for those who are sick, bereaved, isolated or vulnerable;
- Provision of a weekly Welcome Social coffee morning;
- Partnership working with a local foodbank;
- Community activities for families, children and older residents;
- Support for schools and educational activities.

The application relates to the proposed expansion of the current Associate Minister role. The applicant advises that the church is seeking to increase the post from part-time to full-time for a two-year period from March 2027, thereby significantly increasing capacity to deliver community services.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The additional hours would primarily support three areas of work:

School Chaplaincy

The church proposes that the Associate Minister undertake one day per week as Chaplain at Wharton CofE Primary School. The school currently has approximately **244 pupils** together with around **30 staff members**. The applicant advises that many pupils come from backgrounds affected by deprivation and social exclusion and that enhanced chaplaincy provision would strengthen wellbeing support and pastoral care.

Youth Provision

The church intends to establish a new outreach youth group providing a safe and welcoming environment for young people from Wharton and across Winsford.

The applicant estimates attendance of **15 to 20 young people** by the end of the first year as an indicator of success.

Community Support

The additional staffing capacity would also support wider community outreach activities, including participation in the weekly Welcome Social and increased signposting of vulnerable residents to support services. The Welcome Social currently attracts between **20 and 30 attendees each week**, many of whom experience loneliness, bereavement, poverty, disability, mental ill-health or social isolation.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The applicant identifies the following anticipated outcomes:

- Enhanced wellbeing support for children and families through school chaplaincy provision.
- Increased opportunities and positive engagement for young people.
- Reduced isolation through expanded community outreach activities.
- Improved partnership working between Christ Church, Wharton CofE Primary School and other community organisations.
- Greater support for vulnerable residents.
- Improved signposting to local services and support networks.
- Increased social connection and community resilience.

The project is focused principally on residents of Wharton but would also be accessible to residents from across Winsford.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The application demonstrates partnership working with:

- Wharton CofE Primary School;
- Local foodbank providers;
- New Images youth provision;
- Potential future partnership opportunities with Willow Wood Primary School.

The Council's Grants Policy identifies partnership working and projects creating shared community benefit as priority areas for support.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Grant Requested: £2,500

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he applicant advises that the grant would represent approximately **9% of the total project cost**, with the remaining funding being provided through church resources and fundraising.

The amount requested is within the Council's maximum grant limit of £2,500.

Members should note that the Grants Policy requires applicants to demonstrate how the remaining project costs will be funded and that grant support should not normally be relied upon as an ongoing funding stream.

The applicant previously received Town Council grant support towards community kitchen equipment.

SAFEGUARDING

The applicant confirms that:

- A safeguarding policy is in place;
- Appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed;
- Relevant DBS checks are undertaken for staff and volunteers involved with children and vulnerable adults.

These arrangements are consistent with the safeguarding expectations contained within the Council's Grants Policy.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST GRANTS POLICY

The application appears to meet a number of the Council's grant priorities including:

- Encouraging community participation and social connection.
- Supporting health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Partnership working within the community.
- Delivering demonstrable benefits to Winsford residents.
- Providing activities that address isolation and social exclusion.

The application relates to community benefit rather than the promotion of religious worship and the proposed activities are intended to be available to the wider community. Members may nevertheless wish to consider whether public funding towards staffing costs represents the most appropriate use of the grants budget and whether sufficient evidence has been provided regarding the long-term sustainability of the project once the grant funding has been expended.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk	Mitigation
Reduced delivery if wider funding is not secured	Applicant advises wider project funding is being provided through church resources and fundraising
Demand for youth activities lower than anticipated	Existing links with schools and community networks may support engagement
Ongoing staffing costs beyond grant period	Grant represents a limited contribution towards a wider two-year funding package
Safeguarding risks associated with youth work	DBS checks and safeguarding policies confirmed by applicant

CONCLUSION

The application seeks support for a project aimed at strengthening youth engagement, school wellbeing provision and community outreach within Wharton and wider Winsford. The proposal appears consistent with several objectives contained within the Council's Grants Policy, particularly those relating to wellbeing, social inclusion, partnership working and community participation. Members are

invited to determine whether the application represents an appropriate use of the Council's grant funding budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is requested to consider one of the following options:

Option A – Approve in Full

Approve a grant of **£2,500** to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church, Wharton, subject to the Council's standard grant conditions.

Option B – Approve in Principle Subject to Further Information

Approve a grant of up to **£2,500**, subject to receipt of:

- A detailed project budget;
- Latest annual accounts;
- Evidence of match funding;
- Safeguarding documentation.

Option C – Decline the Application

Decline the application on the grounds that Council does not consider the proposal to be an appropriate use of grant funding.