

Officer's Report: Community Grant Application — Tithebarn Titans FC

Meeting:	Full Council 13 April 2026	Agenda:	Item 26/047vi
Report prepared by:	Angie Hurren, Clerk and RFO	Date:	April 2026
Applicant:	Tithebarn Titans FC	Type:	Large Grant
Amount requested:	£2,000	Policy:	Community Grants Policy (rev. Dec25 & Mar26)
Application date:	04 March 2026	Round:	2025/26 (see section 3)

1. Purpose of this Report

This report presents the Officer's assessment of a Large Grant application received from Tithebarn Titans FC. It explains the background to the application, assesses its merits against the Community Grants Policy, sets out why an award cannot be made from the 2025/26 budget, and recommends a clear and committed pathway to an award from the 2026/27 budget.

2. About the Applicant

Tithebarn Titans FC is a Devon FA affiliated grassroots football club based in Tithebarn, a settlement within Broadclyst Parish. The club currently fields one Under-10 team of 14 registered players, with a waiting list of four further children. It is run entirely by volunteers and is committed to providing inclusive and affordable football for young people within the Parish.

The club is a new organisation. Its financial accounts, covering March 2025 to February 2026, show that it began incurring costs from April 2025 in advance of recruiting its first paying members, which is consistent with the pattern of a club investing in facilities, affiliation, equipment, and kit before it was able to generate subscription income. The accounts are well-presented and provide a clear and transparent picture of the club's finances.

The club has not previously received a grant from this Council.

3. Background to the Application and the Role of the Council

Members should be aware of the background to this application, which is set out below for transparency and in the event of any future request for information.

On 4 March 2026, the Clerk received an initial application from Tithebarn Titans FC for a small grant of £500. The Clerk considered that £500 was unlikely to be sufficient to meet the club's needs and, on the same day, consulted the Chairman of the Finance & Governance Committee (Cllr Karl Straw) as to whether the club should be encouraged to apply for a larger grant.

In that exchange, the Clerk set out the current 2025/26 budget position and offered two options: processing a small grant in 2025/26 and working with the club on a larger application in 2026/27, or directing the remaining 2025/26 budget to the Broadclyst Fund and bringing the Titans application — for the appropriate amount — from the 2026/27 budget. Cllr Straw confirmed the latter approach, noting that it was cleaner and, importantly, that it would preserve the club's full entitlement to apply under the two-consecutive-grant rule introduced from 1 April 2026. Had a small grant been awarded in 2025/26, that would have counted as the first of the club's two permitted consecutive applications for the same purpose.

Following that exchange, the Clerk wrote to the applicant on 4 March 2026 inviting an application for a large grant of up to £2,000 and directing the applicant to complete the large grant application form. The Clerk's letter

did not specify that the intended award would be made from the 2026/27 budget rather than the current year's budget. The applicant duly submitted a completed large grant application form, dated 4 March 2026, on the basis of that invitation.

Officers acknowledge that the absence of clarity in communication, specifically, the failure to make explicit that the grant would be a 2026/27 award, will have created a reasonable expectation on the part of the applicant that a grant was forthcoming, without necessarily signalling the financial year in which it would be paid. Council should be aware of this context when determining the application and communicating its decision to the applicant.

4. Eligibility and Documentation Assessment

4.1 Fundamental Eligibility

Eligibility Criterion	Met?	Notes
Applicant is a voluntary/community group providing a service or activity for the benefit of residents of Broadclyst Parish	YES	Club is based in Tithebarn, within Broadclyst Parish
Application made in name of the organisation	YES	Tithebarn Titans FC
Applicant is not an individual, business, commercial organisation, religious group or political party	YES	Grassroots football club, volunteer-run
Project is not the statutory responsibility of another authority	YES	Not a statutory function
Applicant does not have an outstanding loan with or financial debt to the Council	YES	No known debt
Grant does not involve purchase of alcohol	YES	Equipment, kit and pitch hire
Only one application submitted this year	YES	Single application received
Grant is not for costs already incurred (policy rule 1.13)	NOTE	As submitted, the application relates to 2025/26 running costs already incurred; the intended award is from the 2026/27 budget, where this concern does not apply — see section 5

4.2 Documentation Requirements — Large Grant (Policy s.2.3)

Required Document	Received?	Notes
Written statement of how the grant is to be used	PARTIAL	General description provided; no itemised 2026/27 breakdown yet. To be submitted with updated application
Constitution or governing document (current and properly authorised)	YES	Received
Bank account details in name of organisation (min. two signatories)	YES	Redacted

Accounts for one financial year prior to application OR income and expenditure plan (new groups)	YES	Year-to-date I&E accounts (Mar 2025–Feb 2026) submitted; appropriate for a new group
Equality and/or Equal Opportunities policy	YES	Received
Public Liability Insurance (minimum £1 million)	YES	Received and retained on file
Safeguarding policy (children/vulnerable adults)	YES	Received; Club Welfare Officer referenced; FA compliance noted
Details of how effectiveness will be evaluated (Section D)	YES	Comprehensive Section D completed

The documentation position is strong. For a newly established club, the year-to-date accounts submitted satisfy the policy requirement at s.2.3(e). The only material gap (an itemised prospective budget for 2026/27) is a natural consequence of the application having been submitted against 2025/26 costs, and is readily addressed when the application is updated for the new round.

5. Financial Overview

The year-to-date accounts (March 2025 – February 2026) show the following position:

Item	Amount	Notes
Total membership subscription income	£1,518.00	First subs received August 2025
Total expenditure	£4,174.09	See breakdown below
Net deficit to 28 February 2026	£2,656.09	Met by Chairman personally to date

The principal expenditure categories are as follows, drawn from the submitted accounts:

Expenditure Category	Total	Notes
Pitch hire (training and matches)	£2,004.50	Largest single cost; recurring
Kit and shirt printing	£649.05	One-off capital purchase
Equipment (goals, first aid, bibs etc.)	£625.79	Broadly one-off; some replacement likely
Training facilities	£215.00	Recurring
Affiliation, registration and league fees	£208.00	Annual; recurring
Tournament fees	£160.00	Variable
DBS checks, bank charges and fines	£51.75	Miscellaneous

Officers note that kit and equipment together account for approximately £1,275 of total expenditure, a figure that is broadly consistent with the level of capital grant the Council might reasonably consider for 2026/27. Pitch hire

is the largest ongoing revenue cost and, whilst it is a legitimate cost of operation, the Council will wish to satisfy itself that the club has a credible plan for meeting this on a sustainable basis before committing grant support towards it in future years.

6. Why a 2025/26 Award Is Not Possible

There are two independent and conclusive reasons why no award can be made from the 2025/26 budget.

First, as noted in section 3 above, the Finance Chairman's direction on 4 March 2026 was explicitly that the Titans application should be funded from the 2026/27 budget. The remaining 2025/26 grants budget was accordingly directed to the Broadclyst Fund. This was a deliberate and considered decision, made in part to protect the club's position under the two-consecutive-grant rule.

Second, and in any event, the 2025/26 grants budget has now been fully committed. The draft accounts for 2025/26 have been submitted to the external auditor. It is not possible to make a further award within the current financial year without reopening the draft accounts and adjusting general reserves, which would be inappropriate at this stage of the audit process.

The application as submitted also relates to expenditure already incurred during the 2025/26 season, which would ordinarily engage policy rule 1.13. However, since the intended award was always 2026/27, and a 2026/27 application will be prospective in nature, this concern does not apply to the award that will actually be made.

7. Scoring Assessment (Policy s.4.1)

For completeness, Officers have scored the application as submitted against the policy criteria. Where a criterion is partially met or will be fully met once the application is updated for 2026/27, this is noted.

Scoring Criterion	Score	Max	Notes
a. Applicants have met the documentation requirements	1*	1	*All key docs received; prospective budget to follow for 2026/27
b. Applicants have specified how the grant will be used	1*	1	*General description provided; itemised 2026/27 budget to follow
c. Who will benefit from the grant within the community	1	1	14 players plus waiting list; Tithebarn residents
d. The applicant is a voluntary or community group	1	1	Devon FA affiliated; entirely volunteer-run
e. Benefits to the requesting organisation	1	1	Clear benefit to club stability and growth
f. Value for money	1*	1	*Accounts demonstrate actual costs;

			itemised quotes to accompany 2026/27 application
g. Existing Parish Council priorities	1	1	Youth activity and community wellbeing align with Council priorities
h. The grant promoting Broadclyst Parish	1	1	Devon FA affiliated; promotes active Parish community
i. The grant contributing to something not previously funded by this Council	1	1	No prior grant history with this Council
TOTAL	9 / 9	9	Subject to * items being addressed for 2026/27

The application scores 9 out of 9 on the policy criteria, with three criteria marked as conditionally met pending the submission of a prospective budget and itemised quotations for the 2026/27 application. These are straightforward to address and do not reflect any substantive deficiency in the applicant's proposal.

8. Pathway to a 2026/27 Award

Officers propose the following practical steps to move the application smoothly into the 2026/27 round with the minimum of burden on the applicant.

8.1 Retention of Existing Documentation

With the applicant's agreement, all supporting documentation already received (constitution, insurance, safeguarding policy, equality policy, bank details, accounts, and monitoring framework) will be retained on file and carried forward. The applicant will not be required to resubmit documents that remain current and valid. This acknowledges the quality of the documentation already provided and avoids unnecessary duplication.

8.2 Updated Application for 2026/27

The Clerk will work with the applicant to prepare an updated application covering the following:

- A prospective income and expenditure plan for the 2026/27 season, setting out projected subscription income against anticipated running costs and demonstrating how the club intends to meet ongoing costs sustainably;
- An itemised breakdown of the proposed use of the grant, with particular emphasis on capital items; and
- Supplier quotations to support any capital elements of the application.

Officers will assist the applicant in understanding what is required and will signpost other potential sources of funding, including Devon FA grants, the Football Foundation, and Sport England's community sport fund.

8.3 Capital Application for Kit

Officers specifically recommend that the 2026/27 application includes a capital grant request towards the purchase of playing kit for the new season. The accounts confirm that kit and shirt printing cost £649.05 in 2025/26, a one-off capital outlay that will recur at reduced frequency as kit is replaced over time.

A grant directed at kit for the 2026/27 season would be straightforward to evidence, easy to assess for value for money, and would make a tangible difference to players and families. Officers will ask the applicant to obtain a quotation for a full kit set as part of the 2026/27 application.

8.4 Preserving the Club's Grant Entitlement

As noted in section 3, one reason the Finance Chairman directed that the award be made from the 2026/27 budget was to preserve the club's entitlement under the two-consecutive-grant rule introduced from 1 April 2026. By treating the 2026/27 application as the club's first application for this purpose, the club retains the ability to apply again in 2027/28 if needed. This protects the club's long-term access to the grant fund during a critical period of development.

8.5 Timing

The Clerk will contact the applicant promptly following Council's decision to explain the position, convey the Council's apology for the lack of clarity in the original invitation, and confirm the pathway set out above. Officers will aim to have the updated application ready for consideration at the first available meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee in the new municipal year, with a view to payment being made as early in 2026/27 as possible.

9. Recommendation

Council is recommended to:

- Note that, whilst the Tithebarn Titans FC application scores strongly against the policy criteria and the club is warmly supported by the Council, no award can be made from the 2025/26 budget, as the budget has been fully committed and the draft accounts are with the external auditor;
- Acknowledge that the Council's invitation to the applicant to submit a large grant application did not make sufficiently clear that the intended award would be from the 2026/27 budget, and that an apology should be conveyed to the applicant accordingly;
- Authorise the Clerk to write to the applicant at the earliest opportunity to explain the position, apologise for the lack of clarity in the original communication, convey the Council's positive regard for the club and its work, and confirm that the Council is committed to considering a 2026/27 award;
- Authorise the Clerk to retain all supporting documentation already submitted by the applicant, with the applicant's agreement, for use as the basis of a 2026/27 application; and
- Authorise the Clerk to provide such practical assistance as is reasonable in supporting the applicant to prepare a prospective budget and itemised application for the 2026/27 round, including guidance on a capital application for kit and signposting to other external funding sources.

This concludes my report.

Angie Hurren

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Broadclyst Parish Council

13 April 2026