**FUNDING POLICY**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 This purpose of this policy is to set out the principles, criteria and processes that govern how the Dean Forest Railway Society awards funding.

1.2 Funding is defined as a financial award the Society makes from its funds to support charitable activities to groups associated with the Dean Forest Railway, a heritage railway currently operating between Lydney and Parkend in Gloucestershire.

**2. Introduction**

2.1 The Dean Forest Railway Society is a registered charity (number 1183538) benefiting the heritage railway currently running between Lydney Junction and Parkend known as the Dean Forest Railway, and any or all groups associated therewith. It is governed by a board of Trustees (also referred to as the Executive Committee).

2.2 The Trustees ensure proper governance of the Society’s funding allocation in three ways.

• Through funding principles which ensure that, even where there is donor or funding partner involvement, decisions are ultimately made by the Society’s Trustees. These principles clarify that funds given are the Dean Forest Railway Society’s asset, albeit with degrees of restriction on their use, and that, where they are involved, donors are recommending grants, not awarding them.

• Through published funding criteria which set out the activities the Trustees wish to support in furtherance of the Society’s charitable objectives. The criteria also include activities which the Trustees do not wish to support because they do not consider them to be in line with the Society’s purpose. The Trustees accept that they will on some occasions make grants outside published criteria but that in all such cases the activity supported will be charitable in law.

• Through funding processes which set out how decisions are reached for awarding funding.

**3. Funding principles**

3.1 The principles which underpin the Trustees’ governance of the Society’s funding take into account the scale and range of its funding allocations and strike a balance between proper oversight of decision-making and responsive customer service for both applicants and donors.

3.2 The principles are as follows.

• The Board of Trustees has ultimate collective responsibility for all funding decisions in line with the Society’s charitable purposes and any restrictions agreed with donors and funding partners.

• Trustees reserve the right to apply conditions to any grant.

• Trustees also reserve the right not to approve any recommendation or nomination if they (or those acting with their delegated authority) determine that the resulting funding would not be charitable, or would conflict with the Society’s stated policies or damage its reputation.

**4. Funding criteria**

4.1 The Society’s published guidance on criteria for applications from individuals and groups is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy. The goal is to provide funding for projects which are specifically focused on improving and developing the Dean Forest Railway. Trustees are particularly keen to help voluntary groups where funding and provision of materials or expertise can often prove a hindrance.

4.2 As a registered charity, the Society can only fund activities which are charitable in law. Funding to other types of organisation other than charities will always be restricted for a specific charitable purpose.

4.3 Trustees expect that funding will normally support one or more of the following outcomes:

• Improvement of processes that provide a benefit to the Dean Forest Railway, volunteers, and customers

• Restoration of heritage assets (i.e. rolling stock, buildings, etc.) that improve the Dean Forest Railway

• Any demonstrable development of the Dean Forest Railway, including but not restricted to any extension work from Parkend or Lydney Junction

4.5 Applications can only be made by members of groups associated with the Dean Forest Railway in writing to the Society Chairman (see Appendix 1).

4.6 Funding requests which the Trustees will not normally support are:

• Regular maintenance and upkeep, unless declining the request presents the possibility of significant operational or reputational problems to the Railway

• Training for individuals which does not directly benefit the operation or maintenance of the Railway

• Projects where the benefit to the Railway is unclear

• Requests from individuals who cannot prove a valid relationship with the Railway prior to application

4.7 To ensure the Society’s resources are used solely to further its charitable objectives, and that it can report on the impact of funding, Trustees normally expect that all funding allocations will have one to three measurable objectives agreed as part of the funding offer.

4.8 There are no defined minimum or maximum funding limits – if the Society is unable to allocate sufficient funds for an application, the application will be declined (see 5.1).

**5. Funding processes**

5.1 Trustees aim for the Society’s funding processes to be transparent and to address the interests of applicants and the wishes of donors and funding partners. To this end, all funding requests go through a two-stage process as follows:

• Allocation to available funds according to their availability and criteria. Requests that cannot be allocated to live funds are rejected

• Review of the assessment by the Executive Committee at a monthly meeting

**6. Variations to this policy**

6.1 The Board of Trustees may vary the terms of this policy from time to time.

*Version 2.0 approved by the Trustees March 2020*

**APPENDIX 1: FUNDING CRITERIA**

**Funding for groups**

**How do I apply?**

Initial applications should be made using the Dean Forest Railway Society’s on-line application form. This is available on our website at [www.dfrsociety.org.uk/apply-for-funding](http://www.dfrsociety.org.uk/apply-for-funding) . Alternatively, you can apply in writing to society@deanforestrailway.co.uk, or by letter to the shop at Norchard. Letters should be addressed to the Society Chairman.

**Who can apply?**

We provide funding to any and all groups associated with the Dean Forest Railway. We are particularly keen to help develop and improve the Railway in sustainable ways which will make a positive difference. We particularly favour supporting Members of the Society, but this is not a prerequisite.

**What sort of support is available?**

Through providing funding to groups, we are interested in supporting:

• Improvement of processes that provide a benefit to the Dean Forest Railway, volunteers, and customers

• Restoration of heritage assets (i.e. rolling stock, buildings, etc.) that improve the Dean Forest Railway

• Any demonstrable development of the Dean Forest Railway, including but not restricted to any extension work from Parkend or Lydney Junction

There are no lower or upper limits to funding allocations, but funding can only be awarded where the Society has sufficient funds to allow it. If the acceptance of funding would cause financial difficulty for the regular operations of the Society, the application will be declined. However, we would be willing to look at part-funding if appropriate, and will advise fund availability.

We will not fund requests to support:

• Regular maintenance and upkeep, unless declining the request presents the possibility of significant operational or reputational problems to the Railway

• Training for individuals which does not benefit the operation or maintenance of the Railway

• Projects where the benefit to the Railway is unclear

• Requests from individuals who cannot prove a valid relationship with the Railway prior to application

As volunteers on the Dean Forest Railway, we may also be able to offer project management support where relevant. Please indicate on your application whether you would like assistance aside from funding, and some further details to assist our decision.

**When will I get a decision?**

Funding application decisions will be made by the Executive Committee of Trustees. Meetings are held monthly, so decisions are usually made within 4 weeks. The Chairman and Treasurer of the Society reserve the right to give an initial indication as to whether an application will be successful or not, although this is not binding until the decision is officially ratified at an Executive Committee meeting.

Funding may include a number of conditions, for example reasonable timeframes that the work should be completed within. Usually we will ask for updates to ensure that the work is progressing as expected.

**Grants for Individuals**

**Who can apply?**

Anyone with a current connection with, and interest in, the Dean Forest Railway. We are keen to support volunteers who are Members of the Dean Forest Railway Society by way of funding training opportunities, which will benefit the individual but also the Railway. If you wish to make a relevant application, please ensure that you are able to demonstrate how the training will lead to an improvement in the way the Railway operates. As an example, we have previously funded chainsaw training to enable more members of the Lineside department to use this equipment, leading to a more effective team.