

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SCHEMES FOR**

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**AVAILABLE TO PARISH AREAS**

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# **1. WHAT IS A CONCURRENT FUNCTION?**

A concurrent function is a function or service that can be carried out by two or more local authorities. The provision of resources for such services is contained in Section 136 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The list on the next page details the services/functions covered by your concurrent function agreement. Maidstone Borough Council is always willing to consider additional services to those already included on the programme.

When requests are made for additional services, careful consideration is given to the matter and every endeavour is made to include any valid suggestion. However this is not always possible because:-

1. Some services have been specifically excluded from the scheme:-  
eg. Planning.
2. Some services are not concurrent because they can only be provided by the Borough Council OR the Parish Council but not both: - ie. Closed Churchyards.
3. Some services are not concurrent because the Parish Council does not itself have the power to perform them but acts as the agent of the Borough Council: - ie. Street sweeping.

# **CONCURRENT FUNCTION SERVICES**

Acquisition of land for the purpose of a concurrent service

Allotments

Boating Pools

Burial Ground, Cemeteries & Crematoria (not closed churchyards)

Bus Shelters

CCTV (installation and maintenance)

Charities (must operate within parish boundary and contribution must cover one of the concurrent functions listed)

Commons, common pastures & open spaces

Conferences

Cost incurred in administering concurrent services (up to 20% of grant)

Entertainment & the arts

Footway lighting

Grants to Bus Operators

Information about transport

Off street car parking

Play schemes

Provision of litter bins

Public Clocks

Public conveniences

Recreation grounds

Subsidies for uneconomic post or telecommunication services

Taxi fare concessions

Tourism encouragement

Traffic calming & Safety Issues

Village greens

Village halls & community centres

War memorials

Notice Boards

## **2. THE CONCURRENT FUNCTION AGREEMENT**

This document sets out the Borough Councils obligations and the Parish Councils obligations within the terms of the agreement:-

The Borough Council will :-

1. Inform the Parish Council of the level of grant due prior to the beginning of the financial year.
2. Pay the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grant instalments on 31<sup>st</sup> May & 31<sup>st</sup> October.
3. Withhold grant payments until an end of year certificate has been provided by the Parish Council.
4. Reduce the amount of the current year's grant by the amount of any previous years underspend.

The Parish Council will :-

1. Provide concurrent services in an efficient and economic manner.
2. Submit an end of year certificate within three months of the end of the financial year.
3. Effect adequate public & employee liability insurance in respect of the provision of concurrent function services.
4. Provide accounts relating to the provision of concurrent function services upon reasonable request.
5. Return any grant payment to the Borough Council which has not been spent on the provision of concurrent services.

### **3. THE CONCURRENT FUNCTION**

#### **TIMETABLE**

DECEMBER	Notification letter to Parishes of grant allocation for forthcoming year based on final draft of register of electors.
JANUARY	Precept requirements can be assessed with the knowledge of the proposed level on concurrent function resources. Precept requests should be back by 31 January if possible, as this facilitates the efficient administration of the tax arrangements.
FEBRUARY	Precept must be set by the end of the month.
MARCH	End of year certificate for Concurrent Function expenditure despatched to Parishes.
MAY	End of year certificate should be returned to the Borough Council by the end of the month in order that the first grant instalment may be paid on 31 May.  End of year certificate to be returned by the end of the month at the latest.
JULY & SEPTEMBER	Reminders sent to those Parishes that have still not submitted the end of year certificate.
OCTOBER	2 <sup>nd</sup> grant instalment paid.

## **4. THE GENERAL SCHEME**

### **4.1 The Allocation Method**

The current method of general allocation is twofold. Firstly every Parish receives a lump sum with the remaining resources being allocated to Parishes on a per capita basis. This method of allocation ensures that every Parish will have a basic minimum grant allocation regardless of the size of its population and the larger Parishes receive a larger grant allocation.

### **4.2 What can the Grant be spent on?**

Parishes are able to allocate their funds to any Concurrent Function Service which is listed, as clearly Parish Councils are best placed to assess the priorities and needs of their own Parish.

The responsible Cabinet Member will always be willing to consider the addition of further services to the approved list.

Any underspend of funding will be accounted for in the following financial year. The method of payment is explained in greater detail in the following section (4.3).

### **4.3 The End of Year Certificate**

This is a simple statement giving details of how the Concurrent Function grant has been spent.

The certificate is sent to each Parish Council during March and should be completed by the end of May, but at the very latest, the end of June.

There are two sections to be completed giving details of:-

- 1) Basic Grant Expenditure
- 2) Sums set aside for large projects

## **1) Basic Grant Expenditure**

On this part of the form all Concurrent Function services will be listed. The net expenditure incurred in respect of any service must be entered on the form. Any funds allocated during the year towards a large project should also be included.

The amount of grant allocation for the year will be pre-printed on the form. Any overspend must be funded by the Parish Council, however an underspend will be deducted from the grant allocation in the following year.

Up to 20% of the total grant allocation may be attributed to the costs of administration. This may be anything from reimbursement to the Parish Clerk, to stationary, postage etc.

## **2) Large Projects**

This section is intended to keep a record of the Parishes saving towards the project and to provide a reconciliation when the project is completed.

Any monies set aside during the current financial year will be shown under Basic Grant expenditure (see 1 above).

When the project is carried out the total cost can be entered on this part of the form. If the sum set aside amounts to more than the total cost of the project the balance must be repaid to the Borough Council.



## **5. THE CARRY FORWARD OF CONCURRENT FUNCTION RESOURCES FROM ONE FINANCIAL YEAR TO THE NEXT**

Since June 1994 the Cabinet Member has had access in the following financial year to Parish Council underspends arising from the general scheme.

### **General Grant Underspends**

These must be repaid to the Borough Council, in practice any underspend is deducted from the following year's grant.

These sums are then available to the Cabinet Member for distribution as current demands for funds dictates.

### **Large projects**

Parishes may carry forward sums from their general grant allocation from one financial year to another if the following criteria are met.

- i) The funds are being put towards a large project which could not be funded by the parish from one year's resources.
- ii) What is considered to be a large project will vary according to the size of the parish and the level of its committed expenditure.
- iii) The intention to allocate funds towards a large project must be minuted prior to the end of the financial year in which funds are first allocated.
- iv) Continuity in the allocation of funds must be demonstrated from year to year.
- v) This method of carrying forward funds is not a means of utilising a one-off underspend occurring in a particular financial year.

## **6. CLOSED CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE GRANTS**

This is paid to Parochial Church Councils and is intended to cover 50% of the net cost of maintaining the closed churchyard up to a predetermined maximum.

Parochial Church Councils are required to complete a certificate at the beginning of each financial year, giving details of the actual closed churchyard income and expenditure for the preceding year and applying for grant aid in the current financial year.

Further details are available from John Owen on 01622 602039.