

Other Support for local community and Voluntary organisations

As well as direct grant funding, Spelthorne Council supports the third sector in a number of other ways.

Some examples are detailed below.

1.1 Discretionary Business Rate Relief to charities and organisations

Business rates relief is available for a number of voluntary groups and charities. Many organisations are entitled to mandatory relief of 80% but the Council has the authority to offer additional discretionary rate relief of up to 20%. To apply this, Committee approval is required for organisations receiving a “top up” of over £2,000 per annum. Officers may approve a “top up” of up to £2,000.

Examples of organisations who receive relief include

Business rate relief categories	Examples of organisations
Top up on mandatory over £2,000	Leisure Centres / Art Galleries
Top up on mandatory under £2,000	Scout Huts
Discretionary over £2,000	Sailing clubs / Sports clubs
Discretionary under £2,000	Village Halls / Sports clubs.

In the year 2022/23 a total of **£154,428** of discretionary rate relief was awarded by Spelthorne to qualifying organisations in the Borough. This figure remains unchanged from last year because the business rates multiplier was frozen due to the pandemic.

1.2 Free Accommodation – Knowle Green

Three voluntary organisations currently receive rent free accommodation in Knowle Green. These organisations include One to One, Crest Cancer Support and Rentstart. In terms of the estimated rental value for the office space in Knowle Green a cost of £19.00 per sq ft has been estimated by the Assets team, based upon comparable lettings completed in the last 12 months in other Surrey towns.

The breakdown of the estimated 2022/23 rental costs is detailed below.

Organisation	Feet square	Estimate Rental cost/ sq/ft (£)	Rental cost (£)	Additional costs
One to One	84	£19.00	£1,596	Additional benefits include use of building facilities, rate relief, car parking spaces, utility costs, cleaning, common services and wi-fi.
Crest	97	£19.00	£1,843	
Rentstart	207	£19.00	£3,933	
Rental Rates	824		£7,372	

The projected total open market rental value of the office space provided to voluntary/charitable organisations within Knowle Green for 2022/23 is **£7,372**.

1.3 **Other municipal facilities with no rental income.**

There are a few facilities which the Council leases to organisations at no cost. Most of these are small organisations using small halls or rooms such as Staines Brass Band, Civic Pride and The Allotment Society receive the occasional use of meeting rooms, storage and/or office time free of charge to help to deliver projects. The main facility in this category is Spelthorne Museum and their archive store.

1.4 **Income from municipal assets leased to charitable or community organisations**

There are a total of 47 local community and voluntary groups located on Council land or buildings for which the Council receives no or a reduced rental income. These include scout huts and pavilions which are difficult to put an estimated rental value on as comparable evidence is not widely available. Whilst it may be possible to let these buildings to commercial occupiers the Council is unlikely to go down this route especially with the Community Letting Policy in place. Income for 2022/23 was in the region of £121,859.

In November 2022 the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee also agreed to extend the lease and space occupied by two voluntary organisations Dramatise and Stanwell Events.

Dramatize is a registered charity (registration number 1095576). They provide meaningful life-based skills, work experience, therapies and fun for their students with learning disabilities in Spelthorne. Their aim is to support their students to ensure they reach their personal goals and full potential.

Dramatise have been granted exclusive use of the changing room facilities at Ashford Recreation Ground providing much-needed space and allowing Dramatize to accommodate those currently on the waiting list.

Stanwell Events is a registered charity (charity number 1187357). They use the premises to operate the Stanwell Foodbank together with other community initiatives. During the pandemic they delivered over 450,000 meal equivalents to local residents, they continue to use the premises to provide meals to those in need (during the school holidays in conjunction with Surrey County Council they provided meals for children) and run cookery classes with families. They have partnered with Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne (CARS) and the police and have intentions to expand links with local voluntary and public sector services.

Stanwell Events have recently been granted a long lease of the building at Long Lane Recreation Ground, this will enable the organisation to secure funding from Surrey County Council to realise their plans for a much larger community facility at the site which will provide much needed support.

In both cases this will enable the organisations to expand the services that they offer.

1.5 Better Neighbourhood Grants (BNG)

Councillors are normally allocated £1,000 per annum to award to local groups or organisations to make their neighbourhood better. This year members were allocated an additional £500 to help commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The revised total for Better Neighbourhood Grants for 2022-23 was £58,500, £39,00 for general use and £19,500 for Platinum Jubilee initiatives. At the time of writing £32,825 remains unspent from the main allocation and £4,666 from the Jubilee allowance.

1.6 Covid, Energy and Cost of Living Crisis related support

Since the start of the pandemic, the Council have provided additional financial support to our community organisations. Examples of this include business support grants to bodies such as Shopmobility and Staines Bowls club, donations to our foodbanks to allow them to step up to demand, funding to Citizens Advice to provide an advisor in two of our foodbanks, a hardship fund administered by VSNS (Voluntary Support North Surrey) and through various rounds of the Household Support Fund scheme to assist households who are in food or fuel poverty. In addition, in October 2022 the Council established the Spelthorne Hardship Fund, a pot of £200,000 to support those in crisis and to support local community groups in direct contact with our communities.

1.7 Rentstart

Rentstart provide accommodation to single people and childless couples on the privately rented market. They also assist with rents in advance and deposit payments, as well as white goods and tenancy support. The council provides funding of £50,000 per annum to Rentstart through the Housing budget. They are due to receive the same amount in 2023/24 subject to confirmation of Council budget setting. The figure is not due to increase with inflation. Their performance is regularly monitored against set KPI. Due to high demand for housing, the shortage of social housing, and pressures on the availability of supply of emergency accommodation, there is a high demand for this service. There were 194 referrals from the Council's Housing Options team (plus 33 further referrals, and 55 direct approaches in 2021-22).