

Community Grants

Aim

The Community Grants scheme awards discretionary grants to support a range of voluntary and community organisations to carry out projects and provide activities to benefit local people. The grant should be for something that supports the Council's own priorities and objectives in our Corporate Plan, see <https://newforest.gov.uk/corporateplan>, by being of direct benefit to the people of the New Forest

Who do we fund?

- Community, voluntary and registered charitable organisations
- Not-for-profit groups that are properly constituted, with a signed set of group rules

What won't be funded?

- Individuals or an item or project that mainly benefits an individual
- Projects from private companies, profit-making or trading organisations, or business enterprises
- Party political activities.
- Religious worship or observance; or works to buildings or grounds that are used solely by a religious organisation.
- Any activity or project that takes place or is started before the grant has been confirmed by the Council
- Any costs incurred when putting together the application or before confirmation of grant.
- Construction projects where the necessary ownership or leasing arrangements are not already in place
- Any project where any necessary formal consents, including any planning permissions, have not been obtained.
- Projects that take place solely outside of New Forest District Council area – the project must be of direct benefit to people living in the District.

The Council will not fund an organisation that is in poor financial health as it must be satisfied that the project can be delivered.

Organisations delivering projects aimed at children, young people or vulnerable adults will need to demonstrate to the Council that they have suitable safeguarding policies and appropriate checks in place.

Each organisation can only apply for one grant each year.

What do we fund?

There are 2 main types of grants:

- Capital grants are one-off payments for projects such as the construction of a new play area or renovating a community hall
- Revenue grants are for things like the cost of providing a charitable or community service.

Capital Grants

The Council will pay up to 50% of the total cost of the project and the maximum grant that the Council will pay for a capital project is £100,000. Applicants should already have secured 50% of the funding for any project.

All buildings, land and equipment that are subject to a grant must be fully insured on the basis of full replacement cost. Evidence will need to be provided that suitable policies of insurance are in place before any payment is made.

No part of the balance of the cost of construction projects can be raised by means of a mortgage secured on the facility without the previous written consent of the Council having been obtained.

Revenue Grants

Requests for a grant of £600 or less should be made to individual ward councillors under the Councillors' Community Engagement grant scheme., while the maximum revenue grant is £35,000.

The Council may consider entering into a formal Service Level Agreement for revenue costs above £35,000 where the service provided is meeting a need that the Council thinks is important; or where the Council has asked the organisation to provide the service on the Council's behalf, but this is under a separate process.

The Process

Applications will be on-line and any received after the deadline will not be considered.

The information provided in the application must be up-to-date and complete at the time of submission. Where the financial context of the application changes, for example by a decision on a grant for the same project from another organisation, the Council must be told as soon as possible. The Council will not however accept any other material changes once an application form has been submitted.

Once the application deadline has passed the Council's officers will assess each application to make sure that it meets the eligibility criteria and will provide positive benefits to local people. Only those applications which pass this initial assessment will progress to the next stage.

The next stage is that applicants are invited to attend a meeting of the Community Grants Task and Finish Group to give a short presentation, up to 15 minutes, about their application and to allow the group to ask questions about the application. These interviews take place in the autumn. If any organisation does not attend this interview process their application will not be considered further and will be declined.

When all presentations have been made the Task and Finish Group will consider the applications and present their recommendations to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel advises the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs on their recommendations on grant awards. The Portfolio Holder presents the recommendations to the Cabinet, who will determine final awards at their meeting in February. Applicants will be notified of the decision on their grant following this meeting. Any award will be available from 1 April, subject to satisfying the criteria.

After the grant has been awarded

All successful applicants are required to sign a formal agreement for the delivery of the project or service, as described in their application form. The project must not be started until this agreement has been completed.

Applicants must:

- only use the grant for that purpose, and for no other purpose whatsoever
- acknowledge New Forest District Council as a funding partner in any marketing or promotional materials for the project.
- notify the council of the date on which the project will commence and the estimated completion date.
- notify the Council of any delay which may result in the project being completed later than that given date.
- Allow the council to inspect any project, with notice

Successful applicants will need to prove that the grant is being used for the purpose that has been agreed and evidence, such as invoices and receipts, will need to be provided.

For some projects applicants will be requested to submit monitoring reports, giving updates on progress against key milestones, during the scheme.

After the completion of capital grant projects

After completing the project the applicant will send the Council an appraisal of whether the key objectives have been met.

The applicant will inform the Council of the completion, ensure that they are referenced in any promotional materials and that Council Officials are invited any celebratory event.

If the grant is not used for the specified purpose, for whatever reason, it must be returned to the Council within 2 years of the decision to award the grant. If the project has been delayed as a result of matters outside of the applicant's control, they may apply again under the Community Grants process.

Applicants must not sell or otherwise dispose of the facility, equipment or items purchased through the grant within 3 years of the date on which the grant is paid other than at full market value. In the event of such disposal an appropriate proportion of the proceeds, equal to the proportion of the original cost met by the Council's grant, must be surrendered to the Council. The equipment or items shall not be returned to the Council for disposal.

For further information please contact

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