

Community Grants

Aim

The Community Grants programme allows the Council to award discretionary grants to support a range of voluntary and community organisations to carry out projects and provide activities to benefit local people.

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
- But please note that the Council is unlikely to fund an organisation that is in poor financial health as it must be satisfied that the project can be delivered.
- 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.
- Requests for a grant of £600 or less should be made to individual ward councillors under the Councillors' Community Engagement grant scheme. The contact details for each ward councillor can be found on the Council's website at: nfdc.gov.uk/article/5189/Grants-and-Funding
- The Council will pay up to 50% of the total cost of the project.
- The maximum grant that the Council will pay for a capital project is £100,000, 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 grant should be for something that supports the Council's own priorities and objectives by being of direct benefit to the people of the New Forest

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 Process

- Applications must be in writing, using the grants application form which can be found on the Council's website at nfdc.gov.uk/article/5189/Grants-and-Funding or by contacting Customer Services on 023 8028 5000 This form is designed to help applicants provide the Council with all the information that it will need to assess the application.
- Applications must be submitted to the Council between 1 July and 30 September each year. Applications that are received outside this period will not be considered.
- The information provided on the form 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 is eligible and will provide demonstrable benefits to local people. Only those applications which pass this initial assessment will progress to the next stage.
- The next stage is that the applicants are invited to attend a meeting of the Community Grants Task and Finish Group to give a short presentation, up to 15 minutes long, and to allow the Panel to interview them further 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 present their recommendations to the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel in due course.
- The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel advises the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs on their recommendations on grant allocations. The Portfolio Holder presents them 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.

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 the application form.
- The project must not be started until this agreement has been completed.
- Applicants can only use the money for that purpose, and for no other purpose whatsoever.
- New Forest District Council must be acknowledged as a funding partner in any marketing and promotional materials for the project.
- The Council must be notified of the date on which the project will commence and the estimated completion date. The Council must be informed of any delay which may result in the project being completed later than that given date.
- 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 every project the provider will need to send the Council an appraisal of whether the key objectives have been met.
- If the money 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.
- The Council shall have the right to inspect the project at any reasonable time.
- Applicants must not sell or otherwise dispose of the facility, equipment or items purchased through grant money 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.
- 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.
- 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.

For further information please contact

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