



# North Devon Council

## Community Councillor Grants Policy

### 2023 – 2027

#### **Introduction**

This document explains:

1. What the Council hope to achieve through Community Councillor Grants
2. What is needed to be considered for a grant
3. When grants cannot be given
4. What other similar support we can provide to applicants
5. How To Apply
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#### **What The Council hope to achieve through Community Councillor Grants**

The Council recognises the value that Voluntary and Community Groups add to the lives of residents of North Devon, and Community Councillor Grants offer a way for Councillors to help support these groups and the local Community. Voluntary and Community Groups are often at the heart of our communities and can be essential to improving the delivery of public services and improving community cohesion.

Community Councillor Grants from North Devon Council can also be used as match-funding for organisations to attract other funding from external sources.

The Council's vision in providing grant aid is to:

- Support the economic, environmental, cultural and social welfare of local communities
- Value the contribution made by unpaid workers, and
- Encourage a vibrant voluntary sector
- Grants may be offered to support the running costs of a local organisation providing services to the Community (excluding salary or wages), toward a new or



re-furnished facility, toward the costs of an event, toward environmental or open space community projects.

### **What is needed to be considered for a grant**

The fund is available to community groups, clubs, charities, CIC or voluntary groups operating on a not for profit basis. All organisations and projects supported by grants must benefit the community, the local economy or the residents of the District and should be able to show evidence of need and local support when making an application. Organisations applying for a Community Councillor Grant must:

- Have a recognised legal status such as a formal constitution, standing orders or deed of trust
- Have a clear democratic management structure, e.g. a committee consisting of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer etc.
- Be legally able to carry out the activities, which should be primarily for the benefit of residents of North Devon
- Where appropriate, have and monitor policies and practices that safeguard children and vulnerable adults
- Be financially viable, have clear financial controls, and provide annual accounts
- Provide evidence of project costs, in the form of quotes or similar (as applicable)

### **When grants cannot be given**

- To organisations involved in Party Politics or promoting political views
- For activities that promote religious beliefs or pay towards any maintenance or works to a religious building. However, religious organisations can receive grants for the community and social aspects of their activity which do not promote religious beliefs
- Retrospectively (ie, for expense incurred or purchases made before a grant has been formally offered) or to meet debts or liabilities
- To organisations that have not complied with the conditions of grants given in the past by North Devon Council
- For donations, to individuals, or to profit making organisations
- For projects that should ordinarily be the statutory responsibility of another organisation
- To Schools or Academies (though PTA groups can apply for funding for extra-curricular activities)
- If the organisation already holds substantial resources (any organisation that holds



unrestricted reserves over £100,000 will be expected to explain why they need a Community Councillor Grant)

- For a grant on the behalf of another community group, organisation, club, charity, CIC or voluntary group who has responsibility for delivering the project
- For the payment of salaries or wages.
- For projects or activities outside North Devon District area
- To projects already in receipt of statutory or strategic funding from North Devon Council

If a Councillor has any doubts on whether the points above apply in individual cases it should be raised with the Grants Office. If necessary the case will then be referred to the Head of Governance for guidance.

In some cases, Councillors will wish to offer grant assistance to an organisation that they are involved with, for example, to a Community Group where the Councillor is a trustee or committee member. In this instance, to avoid any possible appearance of impropriety the Councillor must inform a Grants Officer when offering grant support who will note and keep a record.

### **Other support can we provide to applicants:**

The Corporate and Community Services Team can:

- Offer guidance in completing the Community Councillor Grant Application Form
- Offer advice on other funding that may be available in the form of subscription to a free weekly grants and community news bulletin
- Offer advice on how to make searches for other funding sources
- Sign-post to other organisations that provide training or support
- Offer advice and sign-posting to sources of information on community consultation or participation procedures
- Occasionally help in kind might be offered, subject to available resources, in the form of specialist advice relating to a project or services that is closely aligned with the Council's Corporate Objectives

### **How to Apply**

The first step for the grant seeker is to contact their Councillor to discuss their project or service. Some wards have two or more Councillors and the grant seeker should contact all of them for their support. If the project or service benefits people from more



than one ward, the grant seeker should also contact the relevant Councillors for those wards.

The grant seeker is not required to wait for a response from their Councillor(s) prior to the submission of the application. The application form is available to for completion online on our website [northdevon.gov.uk](http://northdevon.gov.uk) or by emailing [grants@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:grants@northdevon.gov.uk)

The application form will ask for:

- Contact details for the applicant
- Details of the Organisation's overall aims
- Financial information including Bank Account details
- Details of the project or service that requires funding
- Details of the project costs, and how much grant funding you are seeking
- If you are working in partnership with another organisation or group on the project
- Your agreement for your data to be used for the Council to engage or consult with in relation to any future projects or changes in its services which are relevant to your group or organisation

The applicant will also be expected to provide:

- A quote or similar evidence of the cost of the project
- The organisation's latest set of annual accounts
- The organisation's Constitution, Standing Orders or similar
- The organisation's Safeguarding Policy if the project or service involves children or vulnerable adults

The application must be submitted, with the required information/documentation to the Corporate and Community Services team online or by email at [grants@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:grants@northdevon.gov.uk)

## **Processing**

A Grants Officer will acknowledge receipt of the application and confirm whether the organisation/project is eligible for funding, and whether the application is complete. If any clarification or additional information is needed, opportunity will be given to provide it.

The Grants Officer will summarise the information given in the application against the key questions asked and seek funding approval from the relevant Councillors.



If an application does not meet the criteria it may be refused at this stage by a Grant Officer. It would not then be presented to the Councillors for their consideration. Applicants will be notified by email within a month of receipt of the application.

The relevant Councillors will then be given two weeks to confirm to the Grants Officer whether they wish to contribute, and how much, if applicable. Once the two week period has passed, and the 'offer window' has closed, no late contributions may be made by the Councillors.

Applications will then be submitted by the Grants Officer to the Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer for approval.

Regular updates will be given to Councillors in relation to successful applications and outstanding CCG Balances.

If there is a By-Election during the 4 year period of this Policy, following the election of a new Councillor any remaining balance from their predecessor's CCG allowance, if there is one, will be re-allocated to the newly elected Councillor.

### **Decision Making Process**

Successful applicants will be notified by email within a month of receipt of the application. The Grant Offer will include:

- The names of Councillors who are supporting the project
- The amount of grant offered
- A Funding Agreement. (As part of the agreement, the Council reserves the right to promote its support of projects and organisations receiving grants and to use photographs and information about projects or organisations on its website and in other publications).
  - To be signed and returned within 2 weeks of the offer date to secure the funding. This outlines the terms and conditions under which the grant is offered by North Devon Council, and accepted by the applicant
- Payment Claim Form
  - Grants are usually paid on completion of a project. The Payment Claim form should be completed and returned along with evidence of expenditure, ie an invoice or receipt. Payment will be made by BACS transfer. The Council understands that in some instances groups may have an immediate need for funds therefore up to 80% of the grant may be paid in advance, provided that the applicant supplies proof of need e.g. in the form of a cash-flow forecast. The remaining 20% will be paid when the project has been completed and the final payment claim and invoice received as above. Any



grant offers which have not been claimed by the end of the following financial year may be reviewed or withdrawn.

## **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The grant process and its financial trail must be transparent for audit purposes and democratic accountability. The information gathered as part of the grant process is used to promote value for money, fairness in decision making, and inform the Council's future approach to the Voluntary and Community Sector. The total grant budget for each year must be fully allocated within that Financial Year and unallocated funds will not be rolled-over.

## **KEY DATES**

### Previous financial year

February Budget setting for the following financial year, which is from April to March

### Current financial year

April Fund opens to applications (except in an Election Year, in which case as soon as reasonably practicable)

31 January Fund closes to applications

Mid March Last date to claim funding (If the applicant is unable to claim funding by this deadline, the applicant must contact the Grants Officer to agree a time extension (if appropriate)).

Any queries should be referred to the Grants Officer by emailing [grants@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:grants@northdevon.gov.uk) or telephoning (01271) 388253.