

Cultural Grant Aid Programme 2026-27
CATEGORY: Cultural Grant Aid Programme
Information for Applicants

Cultural Grant Aid Programme Guidance Notes 2026-27

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1.0 Introduction

The aim of the Cultural Grant Aid and Bursaries programme is to provide support to constituted groups and individuals based in the Borough to participate in, develop and promote Cultural activities and projects.

These conditions should be read in conjunction with the [Grant Funding Policy](#).

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme/Overview of Fund

Funding will be available for projects that develop artistic talent and knowledge, showcase the arts and promote participation and inclusion, celebrate shared heritage, and contribute to the understanding of minority languages and cultural diversity.

What constitutes Culture?

The definition of Arts, Heritage and Minority Languages as used in this guidance document can be summarised as:

- **Arts:** Literature, Language Arts, Traditional Arts, Circus & Carnival Arts, Intercultural Arts, Dance, Drama, Music & Opera, Comedy, Architecture, Craft, Film & TV, Digital, Public Art and Visual Arts
- **Heritage:** the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations, including tangible culture such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art and artefacts, as well as intangible culture such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge. It also extends to natural heritage, including culturally significant landscapes and biodiversity.
- **Minority Languages:** languages other than English which have or have had a significant influence on the culture of Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Northern Ireland more generally. Consideration will also be granted for cultural awareness programmes for minority communities originating from outside the UK and Ireland.

Irish and Ulster-Scots Language:

Please note that the Council operates a separate grant scheme specifically for Irish and Ulster-Scots language development. Therefore, applications relating to Irish or Ulster-Scots language development will not be considered under this scheme.

Funding categories and thresholds

Funding will be available in two basic categories as outlined below:

Category	Key notes/Purpose of Application	Maximum award
Cultural Groups	Eligible costs involved in running a cultural event (infrastructure costs, facilitation costs, room/venue hire, equipment hire, marketing and promotion)	£1,000
	The production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition	£500
	Course fees for group members to attend an event or course or undertake training (may include, transport and travel costs, entrance/attendance fees)	£500
Individual Bursaries	The production of a cultural product e.g. a publication or an exhibition	£500
	Contribution to costs associated with the attendance at cultural events, specialist training courses or study programmes relating to Arts or Heritage	£500
	Minority Languages	£250

General Requirements

Further to the conditions already listed in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Grant Funding Policy the following conditions will apply to Cultural Grant applications.

- Retrospective applications will not be considered
- A minimum lead-in period of at least three months from the date of application must be allowed for Council to consider applications and appeals
- Events and activities must be open and inclusive to all sections of the Community
- Events and activities must take place within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area
- A group or individual receiving an award or bursary will be ineligible to reapply until 2 years have elapsed since the date of their award and those in receipt of other Council funding including festivals, arts or leisure grants will be deemed ineligible
- Post activity/event, the applicant will be required to complete the Council's monitoring and evaluation form, in order to demonstrate how the group met the criteria detailed in the application form.
- Individuals in receipt of a bursary will also be expected to provide an appraisal from someone connected with delivering the course/activity detailing the attainment achieved.

1.2 General Principles

The fundamental principles of this grant guidance document are:

Funding Award is based on evidenced need

The aim of grant funding is to provide financial support for projects and activities that add benefit to the Borough and contribute to improving the lives of local people and places. The following requirements **MUST** be met to be considered for funding:

- Have a clear purpose to the activity based on clearly evidenced need
- Be able to demonstrate how their project meets relevant funding criteria
- Can deliver high quality desired outcomes in a cost-effective manner
- The Applicant organisation can demonstrate that it is well run with the capacity to deliver the project as stated
- Reflect the statutory remit of the Council, aligned to the Corporate Plan and Community Plan
- Council reserves the right to request further information or clarification on any request for support and to share information on support with other funders.
- To be eligible for funding you must have a child protection policy in place if your project involves, or may involve, children or young people under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult's policy if your project involves, or may involve vulnerable adults
- Groups seeking support from Council for a cultural event must have an appropriate level of insurance in place for the event

Accessibility

Information on all grant funding programmes will be publicly available through the Council's website and proactively promoted across Mailing Lists, Social Media channels and Borough Life. This will include:

- Guidance on completion of relevant grant application
- Grant Management System embedded into Council public facing platform with digital accessibility options available
- Centralised Grant Funding information on Council webpage
- Guidance notes for all individual grant streams
- Point of contact clearly communicated for relevant queries
- Annual Grant Funding calendar made available

We will strive to ensure the process is user friendly, transparent, and fully inclusive.

Accountability

The Council will always adhere to the Grant Funding policy and guidance criteria outlined within each grant funding programme.

- A clear decision-making process will be utilised, with clear rationale and demonstrable evidence to support funding decisions
- Decision making process will be robust and transparent

- Funding decisions will be approved through Committee and Full Council with details made publicly available
- Unsuccessful applicants will be entitled to receive feedback on their application
- An accessible Appeals process will be communicated as part of each grant's call

1.3 Who can apply?

Any Individuals or groups resident in the Borough.

Individuals

A portion of the Cultural Grant fund will be ring fenced for bursaries available to individuals to attend cultural activity.

Individuals in receipt of a bursary will also be expected to provide an appraisal from someone connected with delivering the course/activity detailing the attainment achieved.

Groups

A group must;

- Be democratically accountable through regular public meetings.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Be properly constituted and include a decision making process, and aims and activities that are acceptable to the Council (a copy must be submitted with the application).
- Be managed by a publicly elected committee; the office bearing positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer must be held as a minimum.
- Demonstrate a fair and equitable ethos through their established aims and objectives in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Demonstrate that proposed activities are not a duplication of other activities.
- Produce an annual statement of independently verified or certified accounts, or a bank statement for new groups only.
- Agree to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures if required.

1.4 What can be funded?

Title	Grants for Cultural Groups
Eligible Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room/venue hire • Facilitation costs/Coaching/Training/Tutor costs • Materials and equipment required for exhibitions, publications etc

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Marketing and promotion • Transport hire • Hire of Equipment • Trips/entrance fees • Travel relating specifically to project/festival/programme • Access NI checks • Public and employer's liability insurance • Cost associated with cultural awareness programmes for minority communities originating from outside the UK and Ireland
Title	Individual Bursaries
Eligible Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and accommodation costs • Course or event fees • Relevant textbooks and other appropriate study aids • Marketing and promotion • Materials and equipment required for exhibitions, publications etc

NB: this list is not exhaustive.

1.5 What cannot be funded?

Title	Grants for Cultural Groups
Ineligible Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with the organisations of cultural events taking place outside of the Borough. • Applications for specific projects which are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation. • Applications received after the date of the activity or event for which funding is being sought. • Retrospective expenditure. • Salary costs. • Unrelated professional fees. • Bank charges, loans, deficits or fines. • For profit enterprises. • Costs that are already covered by other sources of funding. • Organisations that are able to share out profits to individuals, members or shareholders. • Charity, fundraising events and donations. • Costs that are not clearly linked to the project. • Projects that provide no significant benefit to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area. • Projects that duplicate what already exists. • Projects that are not in line with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council policies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals involved in the delivery of the project, that is, staff, volunteers or board members of the applicant organisation, cannot benefit personally from the award of this grant. This means that they cannot be paid for the provision of goods or services from the grant. • It is unlikely that you will receive funding if you have previously received a grant from us that was not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer. • The purchase of flags and bunting without prior approval • Alcohol
Title	Individual Bursaries
Ineligible Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications received after the date of the activity or event for which funding is being sought. • Retrospective expenditure. • Costs that are already covered by other sources of funding. • Costs that are not clearly linked to the project.

NB: this list is not exhaustive.

2.0 How to answer questions?

Information about your organisation

This section of the application form gathers information about your organisation, including contact details and insight on the purpose and work of your organisation, which will enable the assessment process to check eligibility.

All questions must be completed as fully and concisely as possible. Please see below for information on the criteria and help in completing your application:

Q1 – Please give a clear and concise description of your project and include the following:

- Detailed programme/activities including timescales.
- Clear demonstration of the need for the project
- Who will benefit
- What are your key objectives?

Additionally for groups:

- Number of participants involved
- Who will manage the project to ensure its successful delivery
- Who will facilitate the event/project (if applicable)? i.e. who are the practitioners/trainers or where will you source suitably qualified people to deliver aspects of your project?

Additionally for Bursaries:

- Outline expected personal development giving present level of skill or knowledge and how attendance will further progress this level

Please note applicants must clearly demonstrate why both the activity and the funding are needed, and this should reflect the statutory remit of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council aligning with Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan

Q2 - How will your project contribute to, or help to achieve, one or more of the Corporate Themes outlined in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan as set out below?

- To improve the attractiveness of the Borough
- To ensure the Borough is inclusive, addressing the economic and social needs of the residents
- To strive for growth and development towards the creation of an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable place
- To support economic prosperity and attract investment

To access the **Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan** please use link: [https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/events/2024/june/cpip-may-2024-final-\(2\).aspx/](https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/events/2024/june/cpip-may-2024-final-(2).aspx/)

Please note it is not necessary to meet all the aims. It is more important to have a good quality project that meets one of them.

Q3 – Please provide a full breakdown of all costs for your project.

This must include all expenditure and income associated with the project. Please itemise all costs and include quotations for expenditure items where appropriate. Refer to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Grant Funding Policy to check that all costs included are eligible.

All applications should be accompanied by the relevant supporting documents as follows:

- Bank Account Statement
- Constitution
- List of Office Bearers
- Accounts
- Public and Employer's Liability Insurance
- For an event, additional items required include;
- Relevant risk assessments
- An event management plan

Interested applicants should book a place at one of the in person/online Grant Information Sessions where we will take groups through the funding and assessment criteria as well as the new application forms and online process.

3.0 How we assess and score your application

A panel will evaluate eligible applications against the category criteria. Applicants will be notified via email detailing the outcome of the application.

Each application will be considered on its own merits. To deliver the programme's aim and general principles, Applicants will need to demonstrate how their project meets the appropriate criteria. It is important to remember that the application will be assessed ONLY on the information provided in the application form and specifically in the box relating to the question asked. Any information that you do not include or that is contained in other parts of the application form will not be considered. Therefore, you MUST demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria as set out in these guidelines in the application.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

Applications received by Council will be logged and undergo eligibility checks. If eligibility information is missing at this point, you will be contacted and given 10 days to submit the missing information. Failure to provide all necessary eligibility information and complete forms as required will mean your application will not go forward for assessment in the current funding call.

If you are not sure whether your organisation and project meet the eligibility criteria, or you need more guidance on the application form, please contact the Community Development team. You can find contact details at the end of these guidance notes.

3.2 Assessment and scoring

All applications will be assessed using the pass/fail method. Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria will be recommended for funding providing the proposal develops and promotes cultural development.

3.3 What happens if an application is successful?

- 3.3.1 In the event of a successful application a Letter of Offer will be issued together with procurement guidance and details of the claim process.
- 3.3.2 The Letter of Offer must be signed and returned within 10 days with the Grant recipient to provide details of a designated bank account for all transactions relevant to the funding.
- 3.3.3 The Grant shall be used only for the purposes of the Project as defined by the Applicant in the application form or variations, which the Council has agreed to fund.
- 3.3.4 The Council reserves the right to withhold any or all of the payments and/or require the Grant Recipient to repay part or all of the Grant if Council deems there to be a substantial or material change in the nature, scale or timing of the Project, or if the Grant is used for purposes other than those specified in the application or agreed variations.
- 3.3.5 Grant payments of £1,000 or above will be made paid 50% up front and 50% following submission and approval of completed Project Grant Claims. Claim forms must be supported by original receipts and supporting bank statements

Payment will be dependent upon fully acceptable documentation being in place to support the claim. Grants payments of less than £1,000 will be made in full up front.

- 3.3.6 Council will release funds after verification of satisfactory receipts and evidence of payment (i.e. bank statements) (invoices will not be accepted). Claims must be for the items specified in the Letter of Offer. Items paid for in cash will not be reimbursed.
- 3.3.7 Payment will only be released to a group bank account and that account is the same as the details on the application and supporting documentation.
- 3.3.8 The Council reserves the right to terminate or suspend authorisation of Grant Payments and/or to withhold any or all the financial assistance should the Project not be delivered in line with this offer of Grant Aid.
- 3.3.9 To meet Council's audit requirements, when making a claim, applicants should retain copies of receipts and evidence of payments made in the form of Bank statements/credit cards.

3.4 Monitoring and reporting

If your project receives grant support, you will be in receipt of public funding, and this must be accountable. Monitoring and reporting are an essential requirement for you in delivering your project.

We will also ask all organisations for auditing purposes, to check how the grant was spent and that the terms and conditions of the funding were met. You will be contacted by your local Council Lead, and you will be asked to provide invoices and bank statements for all the items you are claiming through the grant.

If your project does not meet its targets and outcomes, we can review and reduce the amount of funding awarded.

If any information in the application, monitoring or supporting information is found to be untrue or misleading, we will withdraw any grant. If we have already paid part of a grant to your organisation, you must repay it. This will have implications for any future applications or requests for funding. We may also review grants made to your organisation in the past.

3.5 Marketing and promotion

The Grant Recipient shall acknowledge the contribution made by the Council in all relevant publicity materials including brochures, leaflets, newspaper articles etc. The Council shall be entitled to publish details of the assistance referred to in this letter at such times and in such manner as is necessary without further agreement from the Grant Recipient. It is important to note that logos should be of a reasonable size and retain their original perspective. All promotional materials should be approved **in advance** by the Council's Public Relations and Marketing team. Please email all

proofs to marketing@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk or media@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

If you have any queries, please contact the Council PR and Marketing team on Tel: 0300 1234 568

3.6 Breach of Letter of Offer and Claw-Back arrangements

If the Grant Purpose ceases to be carried out during the relevant Grant Period as a result of any act, omission or default on the part of the grant Applicant organisation, including any breach of the terms and conditions contained within the Letter of Offer, the Council will invoke clawback procedures to demand that the Applicant repays in part or full the Grant Funding awarded.

The Applicant will be considered in breach of their funding offer if the following apply – please note this list is not exhaustive: -

- They provide misleading or inaccurate information, by accident or deliberate during the application process
- Members of the organisation funded, including volunteers and staff at any time during the project act dishonestly or negligently causing directly or indirectly any detriment to the activity or bring into disrepute the reputation of the Council by association through funding award(s)
- The organisation funded is in receipt of duplicate funding from any other source for any element of the activity
- The organisation does not take positive steps to ensure equality of opportunity in its employment practices, delivery of and access to services
- The organisation by their own actions makes their facilities and/or activities less inviting to any sections of the community
- There is a change of purpose, benefit, ownership, or recipient, either during the project or within a reasonable period after its completion

Any reported or identified breaches or potential breaches that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Council will result in the grant award in part or in full being clawed back by the Council.

If funding is withdrawn or clawback procedures invoked the Applicant organisation will have no legal redress to have funding reinstated. The decision of Council in this case will be final.

Additionally

Organisations:

- Must send in the monitoring and evaluation forms within the agreed timescales.

- No aspect of the activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation; or likely to be perceived as discriminatory on grounds of religion, colour, race, gender, or disability.

3.7 What happens if an application is ineligible/unsuccessful?

If your application is ineligible/unsuccessful for funding, you will be notified via email. Feedback will be available on request.

3.8 Appeals procedure

An appeals procedure will be available to unsuccessful applicants. For further information please contact the officers detailed at the end of this document.

3.9 Fraud and Corruption

The Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud and the promotion of an anti-fraud culture.

The Council operates a zero-tolerance attitude to fraud and corruption, whether from internal or external sources. The Council requires staff and individuals/organisations that it deals with, to act with honesty and integrity, to safeguard the public resources and to report all suspicions of fraud and corruption.

Every case of alleged or suspected fraud will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and where appropriate, referred to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Council will also seek to recover any loss suffered because of fraud and if appropriate, will take civil, and/or disciplinary action.

The following relevant policies can be located on the Council website:

Anti- Bribery Policy - April 2023

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy - April 2023

Financial Regulations – April 2024

Fraud Response Plan - March 2023

Raising Concerns Policy – November 2023

The Council reserves the right to disallow any other current, pending or future grant applications and claims submitted by an organisation or an individual member of the organisation in respect of the financial year and to apply a moratorium on Council funding to any organisation or individual member of an organisation where fraudulent activity is identified within the current financial year and for at least 2 forthcoming financial years. This will also extend to individuals in receipt or applying for a bursary.

The Council will inform in writing the Chairperson of the organisation, or the individual in case of bursary, where fraud is suspected or has been identified. In the case of a

bursary where the recipient is under age of 18 years the parent/guardian will also be notified.

4.0 Application process

This is a rolling grant process open throughout the year from April 1.

Funding will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis until the grant budget is exhausted.

All applications must be submitted at least three months before funding is required.

The Application Process can take up to 12 weeks from date of submission.

Grant Information Sessions

Interested applicants should book a place at one the in person/online Grant Information Sessions where officers will take groups through the grant funding available as well as the new application forms and online process. For further information please visit Council's Grants and Funding webpage:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/grants-funding/>

Contact details:

For further information, please contact: culture@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

or The Funding Unit: E: fundingunit@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

T: 0300 123 4568

Appendix 1

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council are entitled to disclose your details to other government agencies and departments and bodies engaged in distributing funds (subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, known as General Data Protection Regulations GDPR from May 2018).

To process your grant application, applicants are advised that:

- Council use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- Council may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- Council may also share information with other departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- Council might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.