



**Community Development Grant Aid Programme
2026-28**

CATEGORY: Community Facilities, Programmes and Activities Grant

Information for Applicants

**Community Facilities, Programmes and
Activities Grant
Guidance Notes 2026 -2028**

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1.0 Introduction

This is a 2-year Community Development Grant Aid Programme 2026 – 2028 which will allow interested community/voluntary/charitable organisations to apply for grant aid for community facilities and programmes/activities to cover the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028.

A call will be made annually for single year applications, while two-year applications will open at the end of every two year cycle.

The aim of the Community Development Grant Aid Programme is to provide financial support for projects which have Community Development as a primary objective to improve the lives of local people. Projects must develop a strong, healthy, and vibrant community whilst encouraging maximum participation in community life by all residents.

Community development is a process where community members come together to find solutions to common problems and to take local actions (economic, social, environmental, or cultural) to support community well-being. Part of this process is the positive change that takes place in relation to the number of people volunteering, the increased use of community buildings and the number of educational programmes being offered. The process allows the community to engage with each other and become more involved in local projects which not only improve the quality of life but by working together can bring real change to local communities.

These conditions should be read in conjunction with the Grant Funding Policy.

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme/Overview of Fund

The Community Development Grant Aid programme is available to organisations who have community development as a primary objective of their application. A 'project' is a series of activities with a common theme delivered within a defined start and end date. There should be a clear purpose to the activity, and it should be based on sound community need. The activity should promote participation, involvement, progression and create a sense of community ownership and pride contributing in a positive way to the social wellbeing of the community

The total amount of funding available within each category is outlined below:

Category	Key notes / Purpose of application	Maximum award
Community Facilities & Programmes	2 year period to cover facilities/premises, community programmes and insurance	Up to £10,000 per year Up to £5,000 for Facilities and £5,000 for Programmes/Insurance
Community Programmes and Activities	2 year period to cover community programmes and insurance only	Up to £5,000 for annual programmes, summer programme and insurance

1.2 General Principles

The fundamental principles of this grant guidance document are:

Grant 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 good governance and sound financial management 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 should have a minimum of £2M Public Liability and £10M Employers' Liability in place or be willing to obtain this cover

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

Council 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?

Only properly constituted community, voluntary & charitable groups can apply to the grant aid scheme and must be able to meet the following conditions. The 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.
- Be managed by a publicly elected committee; the office bearing positions of Chair, 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.

Community Facilities Grant Criteria

- Groups who either own a facility outright or have a lease/rental agreement may apply for a community facilities & programmes grant if they can demonstrate that they are running a programme of community development activity. The ownership or lease/rental agreement must be demonstrated by way of appropriate documentation covering the period 2026 – 2028 or be willing to renew the agreement to cover this period. Evidence of renewal must be received before monies are released.
- In the instance where more than one group is eligible to apply under these criteria, for the same building, the maximum amount awarded to the building, will not exceed the maximum Community Facilities & Programmes grant of £5,000. Where an annual rent is paid for the facilities, the total rent paid by groups in the building will not exceed this amount.

- The exception to (b) above will be a scenario where more than one group operates from the same building, but each has a separate rental agreement and metering arrangements for electricity etc. In this case each group may apply for a Community Facilities & Programmes grant. As above where an annual rent is paid for the premises, the total rent paid by groups in the building will not exceed this amount.
- In the absence of ownership or lease/rental agreements groups will not be eligible to apply for a community facilities & programmes grant, however if using the facilities on a casual basis for the delivery of a programme the group could apply for the cost of room hire under the Community Programmes & Activities grant.

Projects **must** take place between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2028, any activity outside these timescales will not be eligible for funding.

Community Programmes & Activities Grant Criteria

Provided for groups that deliver a year long service/programme (or a project that is part of a yearlong programme) for the benefit of the community, engaging with those who might otherwise be isolated or detached from community life and introducing new or additional activity where there is a demonstrated need.

This grant can also include a **Summer Programme** for groups who want to provide five, or more days' activity over the summer period from June to September each year. Maximum amount available for a Summer Programme is £3,000, £2,000 for Summer Programme & up to £1,000 for **Insurance** (Public and Employer's Liability).

Buildings and Contents Insurance Costs are only eligible to groups running a facility – groups should provide information on support requested on the facilities finance section of the Community Facilities & Programmes grant application.

1.4 What can be funded?

Title	Community Facilities & Programmes – up to £10,000 per year over a 2-year period. Community Facilities up to £5,000 per year and Programmes up to £5,000 per year to include insurance up to £1,000
Eligible Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent • Utility bills to include Heating (gas/oil/electric), Rates/Water charges, Phone/Internet/Broadband/Website hosting • Cleaning materials • Stationery, postage, photocopying and promotional materials specifically relating to the premises

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & safety (e.g. Refuse collection costs/ Health/hygiene services from approved and regulated companies) • Maintenance max £1,000 • Licences (e.g. TV, entertainment etc.) • Insurance e.g. buildings and contents, public and employer's liability • Materials relevant to programmes • Essential small items of equipment up to a maximum of £500 per annum • Accountants' fees in relation to running premises up to a maximum of £500 • Volunteer expenses (up to a maximum of £10.00 per day: i.e. hospitality or travel to a meeting/conference/event). Proof of expenses will be required.
Title	Community Programmes & Activities – up to £5,000 per year over a 2-year period to include summer programmes and Insurance, Summer Programmes are limited to £3,000 - £2,000 for Programme & £1,000 for Insurance.
Eligible Expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room/venue hire (excluding internal hire costs) • Training / capacity buildings costs • Hospitality on a study visit or trip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £25 per person per day • Advertising/publicity/newsletters/website development, maintenance, and hosting (relating specifically to programme) • Transport hire • Volunteer expenses (up to a maximum of £10.00 per day: i.e. hospitality or travel to a meeting/conference/event). Proof of expenses will be required. • Materials related to programmes • Essential small items of equipment up to a maximum of £500 per annum • Hire of infrastructural items (PA/electronic equipment/staging) or equipment for summer programmes • Trips/entrance fees • Best practice visits • Access NI checks • Public and employer's liability insurance

1.5 What cannot be funded/ineligible expenditure?

- Salary costs including seasonal staff
- Unrelated professional fees (solicitors, etc.)

- Bank charges, loans, deficits, or fines and any other financial liabilities
- Refurbishments
- Purchase of Balloons & single-use plastics
- Purchase of flags and bunting without prior approval.
- Minibus insurance or rent or hire of group's own bus
- Rent or hire of group's own facility
- Alcohol

1.6 Exclusions

Council will not normally fund the following:

- Projects operating outside of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area
- Thematic activity such as Arts, Culture, Sport etc. unless the application meets the Community Development eligibility criteria and the programme is of a Community Development nature
- Applications for specific projects which are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation
- Retrospective expenditure
- Applications received after the closing date specified in the public advertisement
- Group members or volunteers cannot benefit financially from this award (except for volunteer expenses)
- Council cannot fund costs for groups using their own facilities or internal charges, for example, internal room hire, pitches, theatre spaces, etc. unless they are normally used for commercial activity (in other words, hired at a charge to outside groups). Council may then be able to consider support, but at a lower rate than the public charge
- For profit enterprises
- Groups who have a Small Grant Application for same period
- Groups who do not have Community Development as their primary objective
- Applications for specific projects that are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation
- Costs that are already covered by other sources of funding
- Charity or fundraising events
- Costs that are not clearly linked to the project
- Applications that provide no significant benefit to the Council area
- Applications for projects that duplicate what already exists
- Projects that are not in line with Council policies e.g. Corporate Plan, Community Plan.
- Individuals involved in the delivery of the project i.e. staff, volunteers, or board members of the Applicant organisation. This means they 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
- Organisations that have previously received a grant from Council that was not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer will not receive future funding.

- Organisations that are able to share out profits to individuals, members or shareholders
- Projects that provide no significant benefit to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area

2.0 How to answer questions?

2.1 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.

2.2 Project Proposal

This section of the application form gathers information about your project proposal what you want to do and why. This is the part of the form where you must clearly and sufficiently demonstrate how and why there is a need for your project, what beneficial outcomes will be created and how these meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan.

This section allows you to detail why you think this project approach will work for the proportionate impact you plan to make. The assessment process will focus on the quality, impact, and investment effectiveness of each proposal.

You might reference, for example, evidence of your approach working before, or how your proposal is an innovative way to reach more people or make a greater impact on a smaller number of participants.

2.3 Project Delivery

This section of the application form is where you detail how you are going to deliver the project. It includes timescales and your budget (how grant funding will be used and on what).

You will be asked to think about how you will manage any potential risks in delivery of the project, how this will be match funded and how you might capture the impact of your project.

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 you or your organisation and project meet the eligibility criteria, or you need more guidance on the application form, please contact the Community Development grants team. You can find contact details at the end of these guidance notes.

3.2 Assessment and scoring

If your application has met all the eligibility criteria the panel will use the following criteria to score your application: -

Community Programmes and Activities Grant (max. score 50 marks) the scoring is as follows:

Criteria	Mark
1. Identified Community Need - have you identified that there is a need for your proposed programme of activity/facility, and if so, how has this been identified, for example, we identified the need for a programme for young people through a young person's focus group. Who was involved in identifying the need, for example, 12 local young people who attended the focus group? How is your organisation responding to the identified need, what are they doing to meet the need, for example, we now run a summer programme for young people. 3.	Max score 20
2. Outputs and outcomes: Climate change, programming, promotion and inclusion, monitoring, and evaluation	Max score 28
3. Finance - you need to submit a secure financial proposal with a clear confirmation of "total" programme costs. Please note that you must complete all columns in the table for a two-year grant and that the maximum amount available per year is £5,000 for Community Programmes & Activities (to include insurance) and £5,000 max for Community Facilities	Max score 1

4. Sustainability - if your programmes will cost more than the maximum amount available from Council, please tell us how/where you will get the additional monies required, including from other funders.	Max score 1
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Community Facilities & Programmes Grant (max. score 50 marks) the scoring is as follows:

Criteria	Mark
1. Identified Community Need - have you identified that there is a need for your proposed programme of facility/activity, and if so how and when was this identified, for example, we identified the need for a community space to meet and organise programmes through a community public meeting held in 2018. Who was involved in identifying the need, for example, 37 people attended the meeting. How is your organisation responding to the identified need, what are they doing to meet the need, for example, we have recently refurbished an old local sports hall onto a community hall?	Max score 12
2. Facility Opening and Programmes – facility opening hours, facility proposed weekly programme for 2026-2028, additional community events or seasonal activity	Max score 10
3. Outputs and outcomes - Climate change, programming, promotion and inclusion, monitoring, and evaluation	Max score 27
4. Finance - you need to submit a secure financial proposal with a clear confirmation of "total" programme costs. Please note that you must complete all columns in the table for a two-year grant and that the maximum amount available per year is £5,000 for Community Facilities. Community Programmes & Activities (to include insurance) £5,000 and a maximum of £10,000 for both programmes combined	Max score 1

A pass threshold of 60% needs to be achieved to deem the application successful.

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 will be 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.
- 3.3.6 Council will release funds after verification of satisfactory receipts and evidence of payment i.e. bank statements. 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 Officer 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

1. 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

Call Number	Opens	Closes	Notification of Outcome
1	Wednesday 1 October 2025	Monday 1 st December 2025	March 2026
2	Monday 2 March 2026	Friday 10 April 2026	June 2026

Applicants should note that this is a competitive process, and awards are subject to the availability of funds and may be subject to change.

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: Community Planning Business Support: E: cpbs@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, 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.