# **Community Grant 2025-26**Guidance Notes

The Forest of Dean District Council offer not for profit voluntary and community groups - both constituted and non-constituted - the opportunity to apply for one off funding to help develop stronger and more cohesive communities. Small informal groups (a minimum of three people) can be considered.

This approach is aimed at building capacity of the community rather than directly delivering services. Projects should clearly be able to show that there is local value and leadership in them and demonstrate its importance to the community.

**A stronger community can link to climate adaptation which contributes to our district strategy. Appendix 2 in the guidance gives some information and examples but we appreciate that this may feel overwhelming. If you need to talk anything through we have listed some additional opportunities to get support between March and May.**

**If you have any queries, please ring 01594 812609 or email lena.maller@fdean.gov.uk (please put COMMUNITY GRANT in the title) or see our FAQ section on the Website.**

## Additional advice and support to complete your Community Grant Application form will be available from FVAF and GRCC at the following events:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8 MARCH 2025 | SEDBURY VILLAGE HALL & SEDBURY SPACE | **Drop-in** 10am - 11am or **bookable slots** 11am-12pm |
| 26 MARCH 2025 | FODDC OFFICES, COLEFORD | **Bookable slots** 1pm-3:30pm |
| 7 APRIL 2025 | SIXTEEN COMMUNITY CAFÉ, COLEFORD | **Drop-in** 11am-1pm |
| 10 APRIL 2025 | NEWENT MEMORIAL HALL  | **Bookable slots** 11am - 12pm or **drop-in** 12:30pm-1:30pm |
| 1 MAY 2025 | OW BIST - FOREST COMMUNITY SPACE, CINDERFORD  | **Bookable slots** 11am - 12pm or **drop-in** 12pm-1pm |

To Book email Volunteer@fvaf.org.uk or telephone 01594 822073

**Applicants need to identify:**

* Who is taking part in the project
* Clearly evidence that the project or activity does not duplicate with other local projects or how it supports those projects
* Whether they are connecting to other groups in the area & who they are – partnership working
* Evidence of need – is this what the community wants and needs?
* How the project helps to build community capacity and community resilience
* How the project aims to be sustainable after the funding has been spent

**Total level of funding available in 2025-26 is £19,800**

* **Constituted Groups**
One off, revenue\* grants up to £3,000 are available.
* **Non-Constituted Groups**
One off, revenue\* grants up to £500 are available.

Any projects applying over the maximum limits **will not** be reviewed.

## **Funding Priorities and Criteria for 2025-26:**

**PROIRTIES:**

* Projects which support, strengthen and empower communities to support each other and so that they become more resilient
* Projects developing/enabling “Borrow not Buy” or swap – e.g community DIY/Garden Tool Share schemes, Clothes swap schemes.
* Activities which encourage food sharing, community food growing, feasting and learning, projects reducing food waste and seed share schemes.
* Activities which help to reduce social isolation, improve people’s feelings of wellbeing and which support people to feel empowered and feel part of a community (all ages)
* Projects which enable and establish inclusive activities (this may also be funding to support an existing activity to become more inclusive)

Please identify which of the above priorities your project aligns to in section 3 Your project information on our application form (page 3) – minimum of one but the more priorities you address the stronger your application.

***CRITERIA:***

***All projects*** *need to address one of the above priorities* ***as well*** *as meet* ***ALL*** *of the criteria as set out below.* ***It is therefore very important that you demonstrate how you respond to all of the points listed below in Section 4 (Brief outline of the proposal) on your application form.***

* Volunteering – how the project engages and supports volunteering locally.
* Match funding in either volunteer time, financial or both (capture on page 5 of the application form – use Appendix 1 to help estimate).
* Partnership working - working with other community groups/organisations
* Activities that involve the skills and knowledge of the community, particularly of those members who are older, vulnerable, disadvantaged or (one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act?)
* Sustainable on-going projects which meet the criteria, will take priority.
* Is your project, or your groups activities, inclusive/accessible to serving armed forces personnel, veterans or their families, currently and/or could they be in the future.
* Reducing your carbon footprint and considering climate adaptation. That you have explained how your project, group, and /or its members are thinking about ways to adapt to a changing climate and reduce your carbon footprint, include CO2e (which covers greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and others) – See Appendix 2 for guidance.

## **Who may apply:**

All applicants must:

* 1a) Be a not for profit voluntary or registered charitable organisation with a Constitution or set of rules which lay out the aims of the organisation and how it operates and be able to demonstrate how they develop relationships and support networks with the people they are involved with *OR*
* 1b) Be a Community Interest Company *OR*
* 1c) Be a group of people (minimum of three people) who have come together for a specific project/activity and have a plan of action which clearly identifies what they intend to do, how the award would be spent (*Maximum claim of £500)* and what difference their project/activity will make to their community
* 2) Demonstrate how they involve others - how they understand the skills and knowledge of people they support and work with as well as work in partnership with other groups and organisations and how they enable each other
* 3) Be active in helping all citizens – irrespective of age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, race or creed – to be contributing members of society and to be fully inclusive
* 4a) Have a bank account in the name of the organisation and have at least two unrelated signatories to that account *OR*
* 4b) Have the support of a constituted organisation who has agreed to be the banker of your project
* 5) Be an organisation or a group of individuals living or with a local base in the Forest of Dean District and the project must be directly beneficial to the **residents of the Forest of Dean**
* 6) Be able to demonstrate the extent to which there is a need/demand for their proposed project
* 7) The Community Grant scheme is one of the mechanisms in which FODDC is able to support the Voluntary and Community Sector and helps to contribute to its strategic priorities for the district:
* **Thriving communities**: We want to support local communities and help them grow so that we can work together to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the climate and nature emergencies.
* **Decarbonisation and Nature Recovery:** Protect and enhance the natural environment and be on target to be Net Zero by 2030.
* **Sustainable Economy:** To improve the Forest of Dean economy while encouraging business to be environmentally sustainable and protecting the well-being of residents.
* 8) Demonstrate that the initiative does not duplicate any other existing effective arrangements or projects
* 9) Be able to provide match funding in either money or \* “in kind” time

*\* In kind time is the number of hours that your volunteers contribute to the development and delivery of your project – see application form for a calculator guide.*

* 10) VCS agreement holders (formally SLA) can apply for activities that are not connected or enhance or support VCS agreement activity.

If the applicant is a **constituted** organisation, demonstrate why District Council funding is needed. An organisation may have high levels of free reserves which are not adequately explained or have sufficient funding from other sources from which to deliver the work applied for. If you have free reserves of more than twelve months income we need to know the reason for this.

## **What are Reserves?**

Reserves describe that part of a charities income that is freely available for its general purposes and can be spent for any or all of the charities purpose once it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure.

## **Who may not apply:**

* Statutory bodies
* Parish and Town Councils
* Previous applicants of a FODDC Community Grant who have *not* returned satisfactory monitoring and evaluation
* Previous applicants or funded projects applying for the same project work or activity
* Village Halls and Community Centres looking for capital funding for building improvements
* Projects for the advancement of religion or political activities
* Individuals *(non–constituted group must be 3 or more active participants through the entire length of the project)*
* Organisations requiring deficit funding
* Organisations requiring ‘core’ funding unless there is clear explanation and evidence to show that future funding is secured for continued delivery - sustainable on-going projects which meet the criteria, will take priority
* Organisations which could reasonably be expected to fund their activities or needs from members’ subscriptions
* National organisations with no specific **local** brief or organisations whose principle activity is outside the district and whose aims and objectives are not specifically directed at the residents of the Forest of Dean
* Organisations with substantial free reserves, the annual turnover of the organisations will be material to the level of the free reserves
* Organisations currently in receipt of a VCS agreement (formally SLA) from the Forest of Dean District Council (unless they meet the criteria above).
* Lead Applicants under the age of 18 years old

## **What we will not fund:**

* Retrospective requests. We cannot support applications for activities or purchases that have taken place before a formal grant offer has been made
* On-going maintenance costs
* Loan payments or endowments
* Items that will only benefit individuals, for example scholarships or bursaries
* Trips and day trips
* Activities that are part of statutory obligations
* Capital costs – such as large items of equipment, building costs etc. *(The scheme will fund essential ‘start up’ materials for community projects)*

**Please ensure that you get an *acknowledgement of receipt* of your application once submitted. This will be *your* responsibility to do so. All applications submitted after the closing date and time, will *not* be reviewed.**

| **Application Timeline** |
| --- |
| **Friday 30th May 2025 (4pm)** | **Closing date for applications**(*Late submissions will not be accepted)* |
| **W/C 16th June 2025** | **Notification of result of application** |
| **Tuesday 24th June 2025 @ 10.30 am – 12.30** | **Celebration event @ FODDC office in Coleford** |

**What happens after applications have been completed?**

* Applications made will be assessed by a panel of Elected Members and Officers of the District Council’s Community Wellbeing Team.
* All applications will be assessed and scored against the same set of criteria, as identified in these guidance notes. Those applications with the highest points will be put forward for a successful award.
* Following assessment of the application, a decision will be made whether to contact the applicants for further information, invite applicants to conduct a presentation or whether to award none, some or all of the funds requested - the panel’s decision is final.
* Feedback will be given by the Community Delivery Lead to applicants who wish to request it.

**Other Information**

* Every project is expected to engage in follow up/evaluation so we can understand and celebrate achievements, the human impact of your project and the ripples following our funding.
* A visit to your project may be made in later years by the Council to follow up on the progress of your project
* Copies of invoices will be required as evidence of how the grant was spent appropriately and this **MUST** be as agreed in the award and as requested through the application form.
* Please can you also attach a scan or photo of a document from your bank that shows the account name, account number, and sort code. This will help issue payments more quickly if you are successful. Feel free to blank any non-relevant information.
* We will hold the applications on a secure server to reference in case of future applications unless we receive a request for the information to be destroyed.

**Please contact the Community Delivery Lead for any questions you have regarding this process on 01594 812609.**

# Appendices are designed to try and help you to include as much information as possible so that we can score your application.

#  Appendix 1 (In-kind time) – page 5 on the application form.

In some cases, calculating the value of in-kind contributions can be relatively simple, for example if

it’s the contribution of a piece of equipment. Other costs could be a little more difficult, for example, the value of volunteer time. Below is a table that indicates the standard rates, which should be used to calculate volunteer time.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of voluntary/in-kind contribution** | **Per hour** | **Per day** |
| General, unskilled labour (for example, supervised scrub clearance, ditch-digging, planting, basic administrative support) | £8.50 | £63.75 |
| Specialist, skilled, trained labour (for example, operations for which certificated training is a requirement, such as operating dangerous equipment, driving off-road vehicles, using chemicals) | £25.00 | £200.00 |
| Specialist services, (for example, supervising, training labour teams, surveys, printing, designing, photography) | £35.00 | £270.00 |
| Professional services (for example, consultants, lawyers, planners, engineers, accountants, auditors) | £50.00 | £375.00 |

# Appendix 2:

In Section 3, we are asking you to explain how your project /organisation is adopting climate action.

These are some things you might like to consider when replying:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aspect examples:** | **Examples:** |
| * Reducing Energy Consumption;
* Using Renewable Energy;
* Planning to cut emissions.
* *you may be applying for a specific project or activity, but you may own or operate out of a building you have responsibility for and could show how you already do these things or are looking into them.*
* *If your project reaches wider into the community or if your group has members you could highlight and encourage people to think about these things in their own homes.*
 | Looking to Switch saving accounts to one that invests sustainably and doesn’t support fossil fuels. |
| Show how you have done a Carbon footprint calculation. At an individual level the [WWF Footprint Calculator](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/) can be used. Or to look at the footprint of a geographic area, you can use the [Community Carbon Calculator](https://impact-tool.org.uk). - or that you plan to help you review your energy consumption so you understand what the biggest and smallest contributors are to then look at potential costs savings and efficiencies. This is something that individuals in your group may look at for their own household use, or something you look at as an organisation in your operations/building use. If you are applying to us for a contribution towards equipment try to choose A-rated appliances which cost more to buy but can have much lower running costs when choosing the things that - you use a lot; involve heat (dishwasher, tumble dryer), run 24/7 (fridge/freezer)Office equipment – computers, printers, and kitchen utilities can also be big energy users. Buying second hand or refurbished technology where you can.  |
| How you don’t leave electrical items on standby (they can use up to 85% of the energy they would use if fully switched on. Turn them off at the wall). How you communicate this to staff and volunteersReducing the size of your digital footprint by deleting duplicate or unnecessary files from cloud and computer storage. [More information on that here.](https://www.climateimpact.com/news-insights/insights/infographic-carbon-footprint-internet/)  |
| How you buy second hand items or those made from recycled materials as often as possible  |
| Buy less / share more – using waste hierarchy for making buying decisions, starting with reducing unnecessary purchases, particularly of single-use items. [WRAP resource to help with this](https://wrapcymru.org.uk/resources/guide/sustainable-procurement-hierarchy-guidance) (www.wrap.org.uk). |
| Replace high energy bulbs with low energy LED bulbs  |
| Review insulation options for your building and do what is possible, and seal up drafts to keep your heat |
| Minimising Waste | Reducing consumption/ re-using/ re-purposing (e.g. second hand office equipment, tool share etc)Purchasing longer lasting productsMinimising packagingAvoid single use plastics. |
| Conserving Water | Harvesting rainwater or are making arrangement to.. |
| Sequestering carbon *(Which is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide. It is one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change)* | Tree/ hedge plantingWetland protectionAvoiding use of peat products (*Peat releases huge amounts of stored carbon dioxide when it is harvested, which adds to greenhouse gas levels - it grows back at just 1 mm a year)* |
| Travel | Demonstrate how your members car share as much as possible – combining journey’s /trips to avoid ping-ponging back and forth |
| If appropriate, promote walking, cycling (install cycle parking) |
| Biodiversity loss and working to improve an area for nature. | (Re)-wildgreen space to nature, let lawn grow longer so that flowers have time to set seed |
| *A reduced use of chemical fertilisers (50%) or avoid completely.* |
| *Wildlife via a pond, any size - see pond in a pot concept - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeT52sDtYEU* |
| *A reduction in the use of petrol equipment in your green space* |
| Activities which contribute to increased resilience to food availability (impacted by the changing climate) | Land/space made available for growing |
| How you are or might encourage your group to increase their food crop and grow different things each year, and share/swap surplus crops with others |
| Show how you save your seeds and get involved in a local seed swap, or plan to. |

Other ideas to consider for climate action**:** **Mitigation** (***helping to prevent climate change*)**

* Community fridge or food sharing networks – with the opportunity of bringing people together to coordinate these.
* Biodiversity projects including bird boxes, hedgehog houses, community tree or wildflower planting.
* Create compost heap/opportunity for food waste recycling/waste separation for recycling in buildings.
* Starting/in the processing of create a climate action plan as an organisation. Involving local people/stakeholder in this process.
* Doing a basic energy survey of your building using [this resource from CSE](https://www.cse.org.uk/resource/energy-survey-for-community-buildings/).
* Looking to provide electric bikes and/or electric cars or minibus for staff/community use.
* Climate change awareness raising and education.
* Repair cafes

Other ideas to consider for Climate Action: **Adaptation *(helping to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change)***

* Signing up for flood warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>
* Increasing green spaces and areas for rainwater to drain naturally and create shade.
* Climate change awareness raising and education
* Tap water refill schemes
* Retrofitting buildings to deal with hotter summers.
* Non-native invasive species monitoring

**We appreciate that this may feel overwhelming if you are applying for a very small amount of funding from us. We hope that the information we have provided above makes this process easier.**

**If you need further information or support you can contact the Climate Team, Piers Cardiff and Katie Club, by emailing** **climate.action@fdean.gov.uk** **to arrange to talk online or via a phone call.**

**Should you prefer to speak to them in person they will be at the follow advice events:**

* **18th March at Sedbury Village Hall: 10-12am**
* **10th April, Newent Memorial Hall: 11am - 1.30pm**
* **1st May at Ow Bist Cinderford: 11am-1pm**

1 The Forest of Dean District Council declared a Climate Emergency in December 2018 and aim to make the district carbon neutral by 2030.