**New homes bonus community grants scheme**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel will meet on 19th July 2018 (and again on 31st July 2018 if required) to consider all eligible applications with a report then being considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 5th September 2018.

It should be noted that information provided may be made available to the public. If there is any confidential information within your application please highlight this at the application stage.



**1. Where Does the New Homes Bonus come from?**

The New Homes Bonus is paid annually by the government as an incentive to communities and councils to welcome new housing. Every year, for a period of four years following the year the house was built, the council receives a grant that is payable on those new homes plus any homes that were empty and have been brought into use.

The New Homes Bonus is announced alongside our annual financial settlement. In two tier areas, like Worcestershire, the bonus is shared between the District Council and the county council (80% / 20%). The District Council therefore receives 80% of the total New Homes Bonus.

The grant is not ring fenced and therefore the Council is free to decide how to use the grant. There has been encouragement from Central Government for the funding to be utilised within communities however this does not form any legislative requirement.

For the financial year 2018/19 the Council has decided to make part of the New Homes Bonus available for a New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme**.**

**The allocation available for the scheme is to be £79,000 (25% to be based of the District Council grant which will be received in 2018/19 which is attributable solely to the increase in funding from that received in 2017/18). No allocation will be made from New Homes Bonus that is being paid for previous years.**

**This Scheme will run for 12 months and be reviewed as part of the budget process for the financial year 2019/20.**

**2. Introduction**

**NHB Community Grants** are on offer to local voluntary groups and charitable organisations to:-

* support initiatives that improve services and facilities for the local community;
* encourage local action to improve quality of life;
* contribute towards the Council’s priorities, as set out in the Council’s Strategic Purposes which are set out in the Community Grants Scheme Explanatory Notes.

We particularly want to fund innovative, new projects that will make a lasting difference to the community and improve quality of life in Bromsgrove district.

So if you’ve got a good idea or are looking for some funding to help get a project off the ground a Community Grant could be just what you need. Read on to find out how we can help turn your great ideas into reality!

**3. Who can apply?**

Applications for a **NHB Community Grant** are welcomed from groups and organisations across the district. Applications must be:-

* for projects within the Bromsgrove District or for the benefit of Bromsgrove district residents;
* from non-profit making organisations;
* from organisations that are not politically affiliated or politically active;
* for a specific local project if the application is from a national organisation or local branch of a national organisation.

Applications from **religious organisations** must be for non-religious, community, leisure and recreational purposes only.

Applications from **Schools** must be for projects with a wider community benefit that run outside of school hours and during school holidays. We will not fund curricular activities.

Grants will **not** be awarded to:-

1. individuals;
2. organisations that are able to fund the project themselves;
3. Projects that will have taken place or started by the end of April 2018.

**Each organisation may only submit one application for a grant. So if you have more than one idea for a project you need to decide which is the most important.**

**4. Grant conditions**

The following conditions apply to all grant applications and grant awards made.

* 1. All prices given in the grant application **must** be the expected level of costs. No allowance for inflation will be made once the grant has been awarded.
  2. Applicants must demonstrate that any necessary consents can be obtained in order for their project to proceed (e.g. highway, planning, landlord, etc).
  3. In the event that land purchase is involved, there must be a willing vendor.
  4. Applicants will be expected to show other sources of funding towards the total cost of the project. This could be from local community (e.g. businesses, Parish Councils and fund raising), the organisations own funds or from other grant aid.

4.5 Applicants must note that applications for grant-aid are accepted on the understanding that in the event of the Council establishing that money is owing to the Council from an applicant any Grant that may have been approved will be withheld.

4.6 Payment of grants will be made directly to the organisation undertaking the project and not to a contractor. Grants will be paid in arrears after submission of appropriate receipted invoices. **Where the full amount of expenditure, as shown in the costing section of the Application Form, has not been met the amount of the grant will be reduced by a proportional amount** e.g. if a grant of £100 is given to a project that is estimated to cost £1,000 and the project turns out to only cost £900 i.e. 10% less, then 10% will be deducted from the £100 thus giving a grant of £90

* 1. VAT will **not** be paid to any organisations that are VAT registered.
  2. Grants must be taken up within 12 months of the offer. Extension of this period will only be made in **exceptional circumstances** by application to the relevant officers.
  3. Clear evidence that your community has been affected by growth must be provided and include the details of any relevant housing development.
  4. Applications are only valid for one financial year.
  5. Following an offer of a grant any modifications to the project must be notified to the Council in writing and approved **in advance of any work being done or equipment purchased**. If such modification is of a major nature and/or changes the nature of the application, then a fresh application may have to be submitted to the Council the following year.
  6. Loss in revenue from lettings or any additional costs incurred, e.g. the cost of using alternative premises while grant aided works are being carried out, are not eligible for compensation from the Council. Applicants should plan their projects accordingly to minimise such problems.
  7. Applicants must ensure that any revenue consequences of their project will be met from sources other than by the District Council.
  8. The offer of a grant from the Council does **not** convey approval of technical, legal, financial or other matters relating to the project, which will remain the responsibility of the applicant. The Council cannot accept liability for any misjudgements by applicants regarding the budgeting, design, technical standards or any other aspects.
  9. Where projects involve elements of construction, applicants should endeavour to utilise local labour and local crafts men and women.
  10. The Council will inform all applicants of the result of their application in writing within seven working days of the Council’s decision. Successful applicants will receive a letter detailing the level of grant awarded and any conditions thereon.
  11. The Council reserves the right to inspect the property or organisation under consideration before, during and after the project and will wish to be satisfied with the standard of works/materials before any grant is paid.

The Council also reserve the right to require the applicant to provide further information about the project at any time and to participate in joint promotional activities.

* 1. The Council may require repayment of all or part of the grant if the asset created is disposed of or undergoes a significant change of use within five years of completion of the project.
  2. Capital awards will be subject to a community use agreement, where appropriate.
  3. Where grants are offered for village hall projects, in return the Council reserves the right to use village halls for election purposes at an appropriate charge providing adequate notice is given.
  4. A monitoring process will be put in place and where appropriate a progress report will be expected including photographic evidence that the work has being undertaken.

**5. How to apply**

After assessing the impact that growth has had on your community and if you feel you are eligible to apply for a **NHB Community Grant** follow these five steps:-

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. choose your project** |  | **2. get local support** |  | **3. fill in the forms** |  | **4. gather supporting information** |  | **5. submit your application** |

1. **choose your project**

Decide on a project that you wish to submit a grant application for. The term ‘project’ can apply to a one-off scheme with a distinct start and finish, sponsorship of an event, or the purchase of equipment. When considering your project you should take the following points into account:-

* does it meet one of the Council’s strategic purposes?
* does your project have local support (e.g. from residents; businesses; local schools)?
* will it benefit the community?
* is it achievable and are the timescales realistic?
* have you got any necessary permissions (e.g. from the Council, Environment Agency) to carry out the project?
* Will this project be sustainable in the long term?

1. **get local support**

It is important that applications are received with appropriate information showing local support. This can include letters from your District, Parish and County Councillors (information on councillors can be found on our website at [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)).

You are also advised to get support from the local community (e.g. residents, local groups, schools, etc) in planning your project and gain their support for it.

***YOU MUST HAVE YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S SIGNATURE AND A STATEMENT FROM THEM SHOWING THEIR SUPPORT OF YOUR PROJECT.***

1. **fill in the application forms**

You will need to complete and submit the relevant grants form, dependant on the amount of grant you are applying for.

If you have any difficulties completing the forms or require a large print version, other languages or Braille please let us know.

1. **gather supporting information together**

Please collect the following documentation together to submit with your Application Forms:-

* evidence that your community has been affected by growth.
* evidence of local support for your project and how it meets community needs (e.g. letters from local organisations or residents; petition);
* audited, or independently verified, balance sheets and revenue accounts for the past two years. If these are not yet available please supply interim accounts or balance sheets (If your application is for over £5k).
* copy of the organisation’s Rules and Regulations and/or Constitution.
* copies of estimates relating to work for which a grant is sought;
* where appropriate, plans of proposed work.

If you are unable to provide some of the above documents you **must** state the reason why on the Application Form **as this will invalidate your application**. Please feel free to include any other relevant information in support of your application, for example photographs and diagrams.

Applicants will be invited (and encouraged) to attend the Grants Panel meeting in order to respond to questions or points of clarification from the Panel Members.

1. **send in your application**

Before you send in your application, do check that you have completed and included **all** of the Forms and supporting information required (see Sections 3 and 4 above).

Send your completed application to: **Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DA.** alternatively you can email your application to [NHBgrants@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:NHBgrants@bromsgrove.gov.uk)

The information in your application will provide the basis for determining whether you are awarded a grant. **It is important that all sections of the Application Forms are completed in full and that you do supply all the necessary documentation by the closing date. Failure to do so will result in rejection of your application.**

**We are again, providing a “verification” service for those applications which are received by 9.00 am on Tuesday 29th May 2018. If the application is in complete it will be returned to the Organisation via the Ward Councillor with an opportunity for it to be amended and resubmitted.**

**The** **closing date for all completed applications is 5.00 p.m. on Friday 15th June 2018.** No applications will be accepted after that date in **any** circumstances.

**6. How grant awards are made**

**ONLY FULLY COMPLETED AND DOCUMENTED APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE CLOSING DATE OF 5.00 pm on Friday 15th JUNE 2018. WE CANNOT CONSIDER APPLICATIONS WHERE ANY OF THE REQUIRED INFORMATION IS MISSING.**

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all completed Application Forms within 5 working days of receiving them. All the applications received will be processed to check the information provided, cost details, etc. They will then be dealt with by the relevant officers. They will go through your application in detail and provided it meets all the relevant criteria your application will be considered in accordance with the grant conditions.

Evidence of local support for projects and the level of Parish Council contributions towards any project will be significant factors in the decision process. Parish Councils are encouraged to levy precepts to support local projects. The following points will also be taken into consideration when assessing the applications:-

* demand for the project or service;
* benefits to Bromsgrove residents;
* how innovative and well planned the project is;
* total cost of the project;
* degree of self help e.g. own fundraising
* other grant assistance provided or outstanding applications made for financial assistance with the specified project.

**The award of a grant remains at the discretion of the Council regardless of whether or not an application meets the grant rules and conditions.**

We aim to notify all applicants of the Council’s decision with respect to their grant application within 7 working days of the decision being made.