

COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Community Grants Panel will meet online on 10th August 2021 (and again on 11th August 2021 if required) to consider all eligible applications with a report then being considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15th September 2021. It should be noted that these dates may be subject to change in light of the current Covid-19 emergency.

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 Community Grant funding come from?

In previous years the Council has allocated a percentage of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding it received to the NHB Community Grants Scheme. However, funding from Central Government for NHB has reduced for 2021/22 and there is no certainty around its provision in future years. Therefore, for 2021/22 the Council was left with £12,000 to distribute within the community. Due to the exceptional circumstances the District has found itself in and continues to face due to the pandemic, it was agreed that an additional £68,000 from Covid grant funding should be combined with this figure to create a community grants budget for 2021/22.

For the financial year 2021/22 the Council has allocated £80,000 for a Community Grant Scheme. The Community Grants Scheme will replace the NHB Community Grants Scheme but will follow the principles of that original scheme.

This Scheme will run for 12 months and be reviewed as part of the budget process for the financial year 2021/22.

2. Introduction

Community Grants, up to the sum of £5,000 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;
- Support those groups which have suffered a negative impact as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic;

- 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 **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:-

- individuals;
- organisations that are able to fund the project themselves;
- Projects that will have taken place or started by the end of April 2021.

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.

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Applicants must demonstrate that any necessary consents can be obtained in order for their project to proceed (e.g. highway, planning, landlord, etc).
- 4.3 In the event that land purchase is involved, there must be a willing vendor.
- 4.4 For larger projects, 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.
- 4.7 VAT will **not** be paid to any organisations that are VAT registered.
- 4.8 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, with the final decision being made by Members of the Community Grants Panel.
- 4.9 Applications are only valid for one financial year.
- 4.10 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.

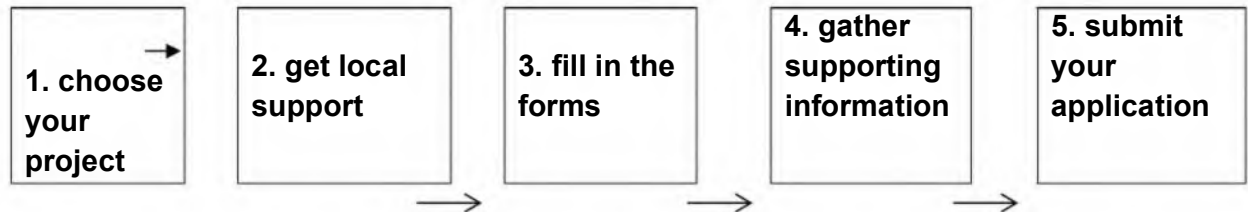
- 4.11 Loss in revenue from lettings or any additional costs incurred, e.g. the cost of using alternative premises while grant aided works are being carried out, are not eligible for compensation from the Council. Applicants should plan their projects accordingly to minimise such problems.
- 4.12 Applicants must ensure that any revenue consequences of their project will be met from sources other than by the District Council.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 Where projects involve elements of construction, applicants should endeavour to utilise local labour and local crafts men and women.
- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 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.

- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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.
- 4.19 A monitoring process will be put in place and where appropriate a progress report will be expected including photographic evidence that the work has been 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 **Community Grant** follow these five steps:-



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?

2. Get local support

It is important that applications are received with appropriate information showing local support. This can include letters from your Ward, Parish and County Councillors (information on councillors can be found on our website at 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.

3. Fill in the application forms

You will need to complete and submit an application form, which is available on the Council's website.

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

4. 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.
- 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. The Panel will meet online, using Microsoft Teams with the meetings accessible to the public through the Council's You Tube channel.

5. 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: **Head of Finance and Customer Service, Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DA.** alternatively you can email your application to 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 Form is 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 Friday 28th May 2021. 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.

Completed applications can be submitted between 9:00 am on Tuesday 4th May 2021 and 5:00 pm on Friday 18th June 2021 (applications received after these dates will not be considered).

6. How grant awards are made

ONLY FULLY COMPLETED AND DOCUMENTED APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BETWEEN 9:00 AM ON MONDAY 4TH MAY 2021 AND 5:00 PM ON FRIDAY 18TH JUNE 2021 WILL BE CONSIDERED. 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.