Winchester City Council	**WINCHESTER CITY COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS SCHEME 2026/2027 PRIORITIES AND CRITERIA**

Winchester City Community Small Grants – 2026/2027

This funding scheme is designed to provide small, one-off grants to local groups and organisations working in the city of Winchester, empowering them to make improvements to their local community or neighbourhood.

Grants are available for projects that help to bring communities together and provide activities that enrich local life for people living in the city, as defined by the **Winchester town wards**. See our ward map for eligible areas.

Further details of the type of activities we are looking to fund are given below. Organisations may apply for a **one-off grant of up to £3,000**, one grant per financial year.

For applications under £1,000 there is a short application to form to complete.

For applications between £1,000 and £3,000 you will be required to answer some additional questions and provide a minimum of 25% of the total project cost in match funding from other sources.

We update our criteria from time to time so please make sure you read the documentation carefully and let us know if you have any queries. The community grants team can help with any questions you have about the scheme and can support applicants to make an application. The team can be contacted by email to grants@winchester.gov.uk.

Key Dates:

Fund closes to applications: **31 January 2027** or sooner on full allocation of budget

We aim to support organisations throughout the year, so the fund is open on a rolling basis with panels held to review applications every couple of months. Please note this is a competitive fund and is likely to be over-subscribed.

Who can apply:

Local not-for-profit organisations that operate for the direct benefit of **residents of the Winchester town wards** (and immediate surrounding areas) **only**. Please see our Ward Map for more information. The following organisation types are eligible:

- Local not-for-profit groups

- Community organisations
- Registered charities
- Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee

If you have an idea for funding but are not part of a formal group, please contact the Funding and Development Officer for a discussion about how to access this fund - we would particularly like to encourage applications from new groups who haven't received funding from us before (email grants@winchester.gov.uk). Such applications will be prioritised for funding.

Please note:

- Organisations applying will need to demonstrate community benefit.
- Every group and organisation should have a constitution or documentation which includes a formal decision-making process and aims that are acceptable to Winchester City Council.
- In the case of registered charities, they must comply with the standards laid down by the Charity Commission.
- If you are a school/pre-school or an organisation working with one, your activity must benefit the wider community outside of the school/pre-school.

We are unable to fund applications from:

- Commercial organisations
- Community Interest Companies limited by shares
- Individuals
- Organisations whose main objective is to raise funds for other charitable organisations

What you can apply for:

You can apply for funding towards projects or activities which strengthen the local community by doing at least one of these five things:

1. Developing or improving spaces where people come together
For example: • grants for additional equipment to enable groups to use community spaces such as items needed for a new community café • funding to help adapt community halls so that they can accommodate new groups such as portable staging or cooking equipment
2. Developing or improving local outdoor spaces that matter to communities
For example: • funding to develop a community garden, a project to encourage playing out or put on an outdoor performance • training for volunteer groups to equip them with the skills they need
3. Increasing access to local activities and events and empowering communities to deliver them*
For example: • grants to bring the local community together through events, film clubs, exhibitions, celebrations or festivals.

• funding for cultural activities for people from all backgrounds, particularly where they are empowered to take the lead in delivering for themselves • training to upskill volunteers on how to run successful events
4. Helping more people to walk, cycle and wheel around their local neighbourhood
For example: • funding for walking groups, heritage/cycle trails • grants for health and safety or first aid training for volunteers
5. Increasing access to local goods and services
For example: • publicity materials for local groups to help share information within the community

*Grants for unique events can be used towards items which will enable the event to take place such as venue hire, signage or equipment hire/purchase. We are unable to fund entertainment and refreshment costs.

We are unable to fund:

• Local or national appeals	• Costs payable to WCC, for example planning fees, licensing fees, etc.
• Play areas (eg. large equipment for public playgrounds)	• School or preschool projects unless there is wider community benefit
• Activities which are of a political or religious nature, or organisations supporting political activism (we can fund religious organisations if their project benefits the wider community and doesn't include religious content).	• General running costs of an organisation. Staffing costs will only be considered if these are additional time limited costs incurred as a direct result of delivering your project. We can't support salaries for existing staff usually covered by other income.
• Replacement or ˝like for like˝ equipment/items	• Fundraising events/activities for your organisation or others
• Projects of a statutory nature	• Retrospective funding of activities or projects
• Activities/events that make a profit and have no financial need for our grant	• Repeat activities or projects
• Websites	• VAT you can reclaim
• Events or activities that charge an entrance fee or a fee to take part (unless these is a provision to include those who might otherwise be excluded due to affordability)	• Projects or activities that have received funding in previous years via this scheme or from other council funds
• Professional fees and licenses including feasibility studies, planning fees, permits and event licenses.	• School expeditions

If you're not sure, please contact us to find out what you can spend the grant on.

Application process:

This is a competitive fund, and each application will be assessed against the grant eligibility and criteria. At the time the application is submitted all sections must be completed with all the information you wish considered together with all the documents requested.

Applications should be made via the Flexigrant online system and submitted by the agreed deadline found on our website. **Follow this link to apply here now:** Flexigrant. If this is difficult for you, we can find an alternative way for you to apply – please contact the team by emailing grants@winchester.gov.uk or calling 01962 848269.

There is an annual budget for this scheme, and it may close early if the fund is fully allocated before the advertised deadline.

Should your application be eligible and suitable for funding we will invite you to a virtual panel meeting on MS Teams so we can have a brief discussion about your application. You will be advised within a couple of weeks of the meeting if your organisation will receive the funding requested. **Please allow approximately 10-12 weeks from submitting your application to receiving a decision.** If you require funding in a shorter timeframe, please contact us before starting an application to check whether a decision can be made before your work is likely to commence. We cannot fund activities which are already underway.

Funding decisions are delegated to Winchester City Council's Corporate Head of Economy and Community. The council's decisions with regards to funding are final and no appeals process is available.

Eligibility Criteria:

In order to be eligible for consideration, applicants must comply with all of the following criteria:

1. Organisations applying for funding must be able to demonstrate community benefit.

2. Organisations/groups applying for a grant must have a current bank account in the name of the organisation/group. Winchester City Council will not make grant payments to individuals, even if they are an official of the organisation.

3. Activities which have already received funding through this grant scheme will not be eligible for further funding **for the same activity** in subsequent years. Records are kept of all previous applications and awards.

4. Only one grant from this funding scheme will be given to an organisation in any one financial year.

5. Organisations working with children, young people or vulnerable adults must have a robust protection policy in place and ensure that all active staff and volunteers have undertaken a DBS check. If your organisation does not have the appropriate policies in place, support is available from Community First Help for groups - Community First (cfirst.org.uk).

6. Organisations/groups must be able to demonstrate that they have an open access/equal opportunities approach towards membership, use of their facilities and activities. Groups are required to take reasonable steps to ensure their activities can be made available for as broad a range of people as possible and that positive measures are put in place to remove any barriers to access.

7. Voluntary organisations that provide support to asylum seekers and to individuals subject to a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition will be considered for funding, provided activities are deemed to be lawful and reasonable in line with Immigration Rules.

8. Organisations/groups must have the appropriate public liability and employer's liability insurance for the activities they provide.

9. Organisations should have the relevant policies and permissions in place in order to provide their service.

Grant Terms:

1. Any spend by the organisation prior to formal notification from the council, will make the organisation/group ineligible for funding.

2. Winchester City Council reserves the right to fund less than the amount requested in the application form.

3. Organisations/groups must not change the use of the grant award and must spend the grant on the purpose for which it was approved unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Funding and Development Officer at Winchester City Council.

4. All grant recipients will be required to publicise the support of Winchester City Council including the use of the appropriate council logo on publicity material. Guidance on this will be sent to successful applicants.

5. **For grants of up to £1,000** payment will be made in advance of expenditure, following formal notification of the grant and receipt of the signed Funding Agreement. Funds will be released in one payment. All grant recipients will be required to explain how they used their grant within three months of spending the grant. The organisation must submit to the council a short project completion report, to confirm that the money was spent on the approved purpose, or the council may seek to reclaim its funding.

6. **For grants of between £1,000 and £3,000** payment of the grant will be made in two parts with 50% paid following formal notification of the grant and receipt of the signed Funding Agreement. The remaining 50% will be paid on receipt of satisfactory evidence of expenditure pertaining to the overall project in line with the grant award by **28 February 2027.** An end of grant report must also be submitted by this date.

7. If grant funding is used inappropriately, or the applicant fails to respect the conditions attached to the grant, the council may demand reimbursement of any funds already paid out or take other measures to recoup the funds.

8. Funding decisions are delegated to Corporate Head of Economy and Community. The council's decisions with regards to funding are discretionary and no appeals process is available.