Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Community Grants Programme

Community Development (Small Grants)

Grant Guidance 2027-28

Call 1 - Opens: 02 November 2026

Closes: 27 November 2026, 12 noon

Please read this grant guidance alongside the general Applicant Manual (Revenue Grants)

PLEASE NOTE FOR 2027/28

THERE WILL BE
2 OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY
TO THE
REVENUE GRANTS

Call 1: 2 November – 27 November 2026

Delivery Period: 1 April 2027 - 31 March 2028

Call 2: 1 March – 9 April 2027

Delivery Period: 1 July 2027 - 31 March 2028

Grant Programme: **Community Development (Small Grants)**		
Summary	Grants will focus primarily on annual core running costs and programme costs. Applications should demonstrate a clear community development focus	
Award	£1,001 - £2,000	
Grant Programme Eligibility	Groups/projects must: • Be a community or voluntary organisation (not for personal profit) • Not have exceeded the maximum number of grant awards in this year *(see Applicant Manual for details)* • Have 90% of beneficiaries in Council area • Have a clear community development focus •	
Grant Programme Objectives	Your project should deliver on three objectives from the list below: • Improving quality of life and wellbeing • Increasing community involvement and reducing isolation • Building skills and capacity • Participation in heritage, culture, arts or sport • Bringing people from different community backgrounds together • Protecting the environment and promoting sustainability.	
How will applications be assessed?		
Grant Programme Eligibility	Community based/not for personal profit	Y/N
	90% of beneficiaries in Council area	Y/N
	Clear community development focus to group/project	Y/N
	Group has not exceeded the maximum number of grant awards in this year	Y/N
Assessment Criteria (Small Grants)	Level of need demonstrated	0-5
	Ability of group to deliver	0-5
	Value for money (cost per significant beneficiary impact)	0-5
	Council funding % of total	0-5
	Fit with Council priorities	0-15
	Specific grant programme objectives	0-15

Grant Requirements

The purpose of this grant programme is to support groups based within the Council area who are working for the betterment of their community.

Applications to this grant programme should be for either:

a) Annual core running costs
b) Programme costs

Applications for an event should be made to one of the events grant programmes. Applications to this grant programme for an event will be ineligible.

Applying for annual core running costs

Where a group is eligible to apply for core running costs:

- Only one application is allowed per annum
- The group must be the owner or leaseholder and responsible for utility bills to claim these costs.

Eligible Groups

- Core running costs are only available for groups based within the Council area.
- Costs for premises outside the Council area are ineligible.
- Groups must be primarily community development focused. This means their core purpose(s) must be about working for the betterment of either:
    - a geographical community (e.g. community associations, resident associations, rural development associations, forums, or network support organisations), or
    - a community of interest (e.g. Section 75 groups).

Ineligible Groups

- Groups who are **not** eligible to apply for annual core running costs include, but are not restricted to:
    - those whose focus is arts or sports
    - groups where the statutory responsibility is with another body (e.g. youth clubs, playgroups and childcare)
    - counselling organisations, advice service providers.
    - historical/heritage groups (but can apply under Good Relations)

What costs can be claimed?

Groups can apply for the following costs only:

- Insurance
- Rent
- Heat and light (oil, electricity etc)
- Water rates (excluding sewage)
- Telephone/Broadband
- Cleaning materials
- Stationery
- Accountancy
- Equipment (up to £500)
- 1 x IT Licence fee (e.g. Zoom Licence) up to a maximum of £200
- Microsoft package (up to a maximum of £200)

Groups who run a community centre

Groups can apply for up to £3,000 running costs (usual limit £2,000) if they meet the following criteria:

- Group owns, leases (minimum 10-year lease) and runs a community centre; and
- Group lets space in that community centre to groups/businesses who employ at least 5 people.

Applying for programme costs

Groups can also apply under this grant programme for a time-bound programme of activity where there is a community development focus to the project, addressing an issue or improving skills. For example, a group could apply for costs associated with delivering a multi-session IT or First Aid class or bring in speakers for their regular meetings.

- The maximum programme duration per application will be 12 sessions. If you apply for more than 12 sessions, your award (if successful) will be restricted to 12 sessions.
- If applying to run a summer scheme, you should apply for this as a programme rather than annual core running costs. Summer schemes are not subject to the 12-session rule. Applications can be made under this grant for summer schemes longer than one week costing £1,000 - £2,000. However, the amount awarded is capped at £1,000 for one week and £250 for each additional week up to a maximum grant of £2,000.

What costs will we fund?

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
Venue hire – This must be a publicly recognised venue e.g. a Community Centre (not a domestic property)	Alcohol, refreshments, food
Equipment - Hire of equipment no cap, purchase of equipment up to £500, must be linked to the programme. (If you ONLY want to purchase equipment then please apply for a small capital grant.)	Flags, bunting, musical instruments, kits/uniforms Fireworks and beacons of any kind (to include lantern or balloon releases)
Printing costs - for advertising only linked to the programme and not exceeding £200	Projects or activities which are delivered outside the Council area
Materials – must be related to the Event	Gifts, donations, prizes
Insurance – Public Liability Insurance costs for an event	Bank/loan interest, legal fees.
Programme Facilitator –these claimed costs should not exceed £45 per hour and should be independent/external from organisation. (We will assume each session is for 1 person for 1 hour only unless advised otherwise in the application)	Salaries, wages, administration and private or unfunded pension costs Payments made to any members of the applicant organisation for goods or services All cash transactions of any kind

Toilets - Hire of a mobile accessible toilet or Portaloo toilet	Trips or transport of any kind Accommodation costs.
	Fundraising events and projects
	Costs incurred prior to a funding offer from Council (retrospective funding)
	Costs which are not clearly linked to the event or project
	Costs that are poor value for money, or that are purchased from outside of Council procurement guidelines
	Costs that are already covered by other funding, income sources, or can be recovered from elsewhere (e.g. VAT)
	Any costs or projects which are clearly another statutory agency's responsibility

How we will assess your application

Your application will be reviewed by Council officers using a standard process. It can be unsuccessful if it does not meet the rules or does not achieve the pass mark. The assessment process includes:

Stage 1 – Eligibility Checks

- To ensure your organisation is eligible.
- To check that your project fits the specific grant programme.
- To confirm all required documents are uploaded.

Stage 2 – Scoring & Awards

If your application passes the eligibility checks, it proceeds to scoring. Applications are scored based on criteria for that specific grant. Funding is awarded based on your score:

- Score 70% or above = Awarded get 100% of the eligible costs you applied for.
- Score 50% to 69% = Awarded get that percentage of the eligible costs (e.g., 60% score means 60% of your requested amount).
- Score below 50% = Application will be unsuccessful, and no funding will be awarded.

If there are more eligible applications than the budget can cover, all successful grants may be reduced by the same percentage to fit the budget.

Interested in applying?

Before applying, read the general **Applicant Manual (Revenue Grants)** for guidance on:

- Who can apply
- What projects we can fund
- Support for applicants
- Completing your application
- Assessment process and scoring
- Procurement rules when spending your grant.

The Community Grants Programme provided by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is delivered with financial support from:



