

# **South Oxfordshire District Council**

## **2020/21 Councillor Grant Scheme**

### **Guidance notes**

January 2021

#### **SUMMARY**

Every South Oxfordshire District Councillor has a budget of £5,000 to award to projects or services that will benefit communities in their ward. It is an opportunity for the council to listen to the needs of each local area and respond directly with support through this grant scheme. These guidelines will take you through the application process. Please read them carefully and contact the Community Enablement Team at [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk) if you have any questions. We are happy to help.

If your project is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, then please contact Community Enablement Team who will be able to direct you to the most appropriate funding scheme.

#### **1. WHO DO WE FUND?**

- Non-profit community organisations whose work benefits residents in South Oxfordshire, and specifically supports communities in the ward of the district councillor(s) you apply to
- Town and parish councils
- To be eligible for the scheme, the following documents must be available on request:
  - a governing document, such as a constitution, set of rules or memorandum and articles of association
  - a copy of the organisation's detailed financial accounts
- You must also:
  - provide a copy of a recent bank statement in the name of the organisation applying, and no more than two months old
  - confirm your organisation has named officers, members or trustees on a management committee/board

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and welcomes applications from organisations representing minority or vulnerable groups. We encourage all applicants to make their projects as inclusive and accessible to all as possible.

## 2. WHO WE CANNOT FUND

- Other local authorities or public sector bodies (for example, Oxfordshire County Council or NHS Trusts) Please note: Town/parish councils and parish meetings are eligible to apply
- Groups who raise funds on behalf of, or whose project will mainly benefit ineligible organisations (such as PTAs who directly support their school)
- Individuals, including payments made to individuals on behalf of community groups
- Profit-based businesses
- Political and lobbying groups
- Organisations who operate a grant scheme of their own, or who budget for giving grants/donations in their annual budget. Please note: Town/parish councils and parish meetings are eligible to apply
- Nationwide organisations (for locally constituted scouting groups and similar, please select 'not for profit organisation' status)

## 3. WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

- Projects with clear benefits to the people of South Oxfordshire and the communities within the councillor's ward
- Applicants can apply only once to the grant scheme for a project(s) they seek funding for.
- The size of grant that can be awarded by each councillor is between £250 and £5,000 (budget permitting), and up to 100% of total project costs
- Applicants can approach more than one councillor if their project supports residents across a larger area
- The scheme can fund revenue or capital costs (for assistance in identifying capital and revenue costs, please contact the community enablement team)
- Total project costs for capital projects must be £10,000 or less (revenue projects have no such maximum)
- All project activities must be complete within 12 months of the award decision

We are particularly keen to fund projects that support the council's corporate plan priorities (2020-2024) in particular; to protect and restore our natural world; action on the climate emergency and improved economic and community well-being

The type of projects we're able to fund includes (but not limited to):

- Replacement equipment or improvements to community centres/halls

- Initial design/creation of a community newsletter, walking routes/tourist trails, community website or digital archive (but not ongoing publishing, maintenance or hosting costs)
- Improvements to community facilities for older people and minority groups (for example accessibility improvements and hearing loops)
- Buying and installing community play and exercise equipment
- Buying equipment the community can use like anti-flooding equipment, marquees/gazebos, defibrillators, equipment banks or IT equipment. (All equipment must remain the property of the organisation funded)
- Community festivals and event costs, subject to government guidance regarding COVID-19 - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of community buildings, for example of a community centre/hall
- Volunteer training costs, or specialist equipment, that would enable more volunteers help or take on more responsibilities within an organisation
- One-off revenue costs, like feasibility studies, consultancy fees and seed funding for new organisations
- Energy audits
- Improvement of sporting facilities or activities to encourage healthy communities
- Sustainability projects to promote the Councils climate emergency declaration, such as tree planting projects (with the appropriate permissions in place) or improving biodiversity within your community
- Initiatives to reduce rural loneliness and isolation

Applicants must confirm they have investigated what licenses/permissions you may need before applying. If any are required, you may be asked to provide details of what these are and when they will be secured.

#### **4. WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND**

- Retrospective funding for work/projects that will complete before our decision is made (We will consider projects that have started; however, we will not be able to fund any retrospective costs.)
- Projects that do not demonstrate a clear benefit to the community in which they are taking place
- Statutory activities/requirements that either the council or another public-sector organisation is responsible for delivering, such as schools, public highways and road safety measures

- Recurring revenue costs, like salaries, rent, rates and maintenance (like boiler servicing)
- Ongoing or regular hire fees (for example, weekly hire of a cricket pitch roller or regular hire/lease of vehicles for a community transport scheme)
- Alcoholic refreshments
- Clothing, including uniforms, sports kit, and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Projects that specifically benefit private businesses
- Political activities, lobbying or campaigning
- Projects that don't align with the council's equalities objectives and/or the Equality Act 2010.

## 5. HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

We would strongly recommend that applicants contact their local councillor to enquire whether the project is something they would be interested in funding. You can find who your district councillor is by visiting the South Oxfordshire District Council [website](#).

Applications can only be received online, via the council's grants system, FlexiGrant (<https://southandvale.flexigrant.com/default.aspx>). You will be required to complete a data consent declaration to allow the Community Enablement team to contact you regarding your application and in the future.

When completing the application form, organisations can select all the councillors they wish to apply to.

If you have any problems with completing the online form, please contact the Community Enablement team. **The scheme closes noon 19 February 2021, or until all the budget is allocated.** We therefore recommend that you submit your application as soon as possible.

## 6. HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

When the Community Enablement team receives an application, officers will check the eligibility of an organisation and project against the criteria set out in these guidance notes.

The district councillor(s) will review the project, and if necessary, request additional information before making a decision. Key information we look out for in an application include:

- presenting clear benefits to the community
- evidence of local need for the project

- collaboration with other organisations
- new initiatives or innovative ideas with a clear plan.

The councillor(s) will usually make their decision within six weeks from the application submission date. Please note that some councillors may make their decisions after the final closing date. Therefore, if your need is urgent then please make sure you speak your District Councillor.

Decisions are final and aren't subject to appeal, but we are able to offer feedback or suggestions of other potential sources of funding if required.

## **7. TOP TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR APPLICATION STAND OUT**

Please consider these three points when making your application to help it stand out. Use this opportunity to show how valuable your project will be to South Oxfordshire communities and how South Oxfordshire District Council can best support the wellbeing and interests of the local community through your project.

### **7.1. WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR COMMUNITY?**

Why are you best placed to undertake your project? Who else gets involved in planning or in helping to make your project a reality? What about involvement from other local charities or groups? To make change happen in a community, we understand that it's often the result of people getting together to share skills, expertise and energy, so let us know who else is in your wider project team.

### **7.2. WHY DOES YOUR PROJECT MATTER TO YOUR COMMUNITY?**

How do you know there is a need for the project you're undertaking? Use as much evidence as you can to tell us about the problem you are hoping to solve and how you'll know whether you've found that solution once everything has been put in place.

### **7.3. BE PROUD OF YOUR PLANNING**

We would like you to give us confidence that you have a well thought through project plan that will be well executed. We also need to know you have the necessary insurance, permissions and licenses. Have you done a thorough risk assessment, with health & safety and safeguarding policies in place? Do you know what all your costs will be and how you will be funding them, both now and in future years (if appropriate)? We can't always fund as much as you might apply for, and as this is a competitive process, not every well-deserving application will receive a grant, so what is your contingency plan?

## **8. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

In order to release any grant, organisations will have to formally accept our offer in writing using the grant acceptance form which will be sent by email to the main contact identified on the application form. Please ensure we have the correct details and you keep your FlexiGrant record up-to-date with any staff changes.

Your signed offer letter commits you to the following conditions:

- You'll only use our funding towards the project it was awarded for, unless otherwise agreed with us in advance.
- You'll acknowledge our support in any publicity and promotional material about the project (please refer to the Monitoring section below).
- You'll return a proportionate amount of the grant to us if the project costs less than our grant value or you have received additional funding from elsewhere towards the project, unless we agree in writing you can use the surplus towards something else.
- You'll return our grant in full if the project has not been completed within 12 months of our decision date.
- The organisation will comply with all relevant statutes and regulations related to its status, objectives and delivery of its core activities
- The organisation must have appropriate policies in place to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, and comply with equalities, GDPR and any other relevant legislation
- The organisation must consult the community enablement team before making significant changes to the project/work covered by the grant and officers will confirm with the councillor(s) that they agree to these changes before responding to the applicant.
- The organisation will acknowledge the council's support in any press, publicity or promotion of the project.
- The organisation acknowledges the council accepts no responsibility or liability for this project or the facilities it provides now or in the future
- The organisation must complete a monitoring form within 30 days of project completion. Should the organisation apply to the Councillor Community Grant Scheme in the future, having not submitted a monitoring form, they will not be eligible

## **9. WHAT IF I'M NOT SUCCESSFUL?**

We also work with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), who support voluntary and community sector groups and organisations based in Oxfordshire and offer all kinds of advice, including sources of funding and guidance on applying. For more information, visit the [OCVA website](#)

## 10. KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER – APPLICATION CHECKLIST

	Item	Details	Check
1.	Have you got the following documents available on request?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a signed constitution (or similar governance document)</li> <li>• a fully itemised breakdown of the project</li> <li>• your organisation's financial accounts</li> <li>• Other supporting documents that may be required for your project</li> </ul>	
2.	Do you have this information ready to make the application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your previous month's bank statement in the name of the lead applicant organisation (no more than two months old)</li> <li>• confirmation that your organisation has named officers, members or trustees on a management committee/board</li> </ul>	
2.	Do you have all the necessary licenses/permissions?	It is your responsibility to arrange the necessary permissions before undertaking the project. This could be planning, listed building landlord permission etc.	
3.	Have you got all the appropriate policies, suitable insurance, health & safety procedures etc. in place to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults?	You must comply with equalities, GDPR and any other relevant legislation, and proof of these measures and insurance documents must be provided on request by the Community Enablement team.	
4.	Have you used the correct contact details on your online application form?	You must have the full permission of the lead organisation to make the application on its behalf. The email address and phone number that you register with will be used to contact you with the outcome of the award and for reporting purposes.	

## 11. CONTACT US

You can drop us an email at [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk) if you have any questions about the scheme and whether your project is eligible.

South Oxfordshire District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Milton  
OX14 4SB

**GOOD LUCK!**