



Lewes District Council

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Lewes District Council Community Grants Policy

Under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has power to make community grants to the voluntary sector.

The council recognises the immense contribution that voluntary organisations and community groups make to the district, and has set aside an annual budget to support such activities in line with council priorities, providing a local response to local need.

Every three years a fresh Community Grants Programme will be launched late spring with awards made the following April, at the start of the financial year. This tri-annual grants programme is designed to offer some security to services which complement the council's functions and priorities.

A Grants Working Group consisting of three councillors (reflecting political balance and chaired by the portfolio lead Cabinet member), will set the priorities and budget allocations for the grants programme. Priorities will be chosen to reflect the needs of local communities across the district.

Grants will be awarded in three-year cycles to charities or constituted groups that successfully demonstrate how they will deliver vital services which fulfil the application criteria. There are, however, some fundamental eligibility standards which will consistently apply across all priorities, these being:

- Projects or services must benefit residents of Lewes District, with funds awarded by LDC used for this purpose only.
- Sound Governance.
- Funded projects or services must be sustainable, remaining effective for three years at least (in line with the grants cycle) with sound financial plans in place.
- Applications must evidence a clear commitment to principles of equality and safeguarding.
- A commitment to Community Wealth Building.¹
- The use of secure data systems that are GDPR compliant.
- Funding will only be given where there is a demonstrable need, i.e. the service is unlikely to be delivered without a grant. Evidence around match funding or additional contributions to the project/ service should be included in the application.

¹ The principles of CWB are to use the combined power of institutions, businesses and communities in order to retain as much wealth as possible in the local economy; creating opportunity locally, creating new local jobs and new locally owned enterprises.

The Grants Working Group will consider eligible applications and make recommendations to Cabinet. Successful applicants will be notified individually, and a list of awards will be published on the council website.

Awardees must be prepared to engage regularly with the Community Services Officer and Community Services Lead throughout the life of the grant, signing annual acceptance award documents outlining expectations and outcomes, and providing updates across the year. Clear data relating to service levels and take up will be required (frequency to be established per grant), and officers will work with projects to support the success and sustainability of the grant where necessary. The council may also wish to nominate a councillor to act as a 'representative' for a specific project or group, who may attend meetings such as boards or AGMs occasionally.

The Community Grants budget is subject to the availability of funds. In the event that the total budget is not utilised, the council will use its discretion regarding any remaining funds. Where there is an underspend within the funded project, for example if the projects ceases prematurely or is not functioning in an appropriate way, funds must be returned to the council at the earliest opportunity.