

Community Grant 2026-27 Guidance Notes

The Forest of Dean District Council offer not for profit voluntary and community groups - both constituted and non-constituted - the opportunity to apply for one off funding to help develop stronger and more cohesive communities. Small informal groups (a minimum of three people) can be considered.

This approach is aimed at building capacity of the community rather than directly delivering services. Projects should clearly be able to show that there is local value and leadership in them and demonstrate its importance to the community and social cohesion.

A stronger community can link to climate adaptation which contributes to our district strategy. Appendix 2 in the guidance gives some information and examples but we appreciate that this may feel overwhelming. If you need to talk anything through we have listed some additional opportunities to get support between March and May.

If you have any queries, please ring 01594 812609 or email Community.Grants@fdean.gov.uk or see our **FAQ section on the **Website**.**

Additional advice and support to complete your Community Grant Application form will be -

Monday 20 th May	9-12 am	FODDC Council Chamber
Monday 20 th May	1.30-5pm	Belle Vue Centre, Cinderford
Tuesday 23 rd June	9-12 am	Lydney Community Centre
Tuesday 23 rd June	1.30-5pm	Rising Sun, Woodcroft
Tuesday 7 th July	9-12 am	The Ark, Newent
Tuesday 7 th July	1.30-5m	Newent Community Centre

Applicants need to identify:

- Who is taking part in the project
- Clearly evidence that the project or activity does not duplicate with other local projects or how it supports those projects
- Whether they are connecting to other groups in the area & who they are – partnership working
- Evidence of need – is this what the community wants and needs?
- How the project helps to build community capacity, community resilience and social cohesion.
- How the project aims to be sustainable after the funding has been spent

Total level of funding available in 2026-27 is (£52,500)

- **Constituted Groups**
One off, revenue* grants up to £3,000 are available.
- **Non-Constituted Groups**
One off, revenue* grants up to £500 are available.

NB: Project applying over the maximum limits **cannot** be reviewed.

- To make things clearer for communities, FODDC is striving to align its funding opportunities in the future. If unsuccessful for this application but you meet the priorities and criteria outlined, we will ask permission to hold your details over and contact you should additional funds become available.

Funding Priorities and Criteria for 2026-27:

PROIRTIES:

- Projects which support, strengthen and empower communities to support each other and so that they become more resilient
- Projects developing/enabling “Borrow not Buy” or swap – e.g community DIY/Garden Tool Share schemes, Clothes swap schemes.
- Activities which encourage food sharing, community food growing, feasting and learning, projects reducing food waste and seed share schemes.
- Activities which help to reduce social isolation, improve people’s feelings of wellbeing and which support people to feel empowered and feel part of a community (all ages)
- Projects which enable and establish inclusive activities (this may also be funding to support an existing activity to become more inclusive) and build social cohesion.
- Projects which reduce climate and nature impacts (e.g. reducing energy consumption or protecting nature) and / or help communities to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change (e.g. flood preparedness and response)

Please identify which of the above priorities your project aligns to in section 3 Your project information on our application form (page 3) – minimum of one but the more priorities you address the stronger your application.

CRITERIA:

All projects need to address one of the above priorities as well as meet ALL of the criteria as set out below. It is therefore very important that you demonstrate how you respond to all of the points listed below in Section 4 (Brief outline of the proposal) on your application form.

- Volunteering – how the project engages and supports volunteering locally.
- Match funding in either volunteer time, financial or both (capture on page 5 of the application form – use Appendix I to help estimate).
- Partnership working - working with other community groups/organisations
- Activities that involve the skills and knowledge of the community, particularly of those members who are older, vulnerable, disadvantaged or (one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act). FODDC is working with partners to develop an Inclusion Charter

for the district, which is currently out for consultation (<https://forestpathways.co.uk/fod-charter/>) - successful beneficiaries would be expected to sign up to work towards this.

- Sustainable on-going projects which meet the criteria, will take priority.
- Is your project, or your groups activities, inclusive/accessible to serving armed forces personnel, veterans or their families, currently and/or could they be in the future.
- Reducing your carbon footprint and considering climate adaptation. That you have explained how your project, group, and /or its members are thinking about ways to adapt to a changing climate and reduce your carbon footprint, include CO2e (which covers greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and others) – See Appendix 2 for guidance.

Who may apply:

All applicants must:

- 1a) Be a not for profit voluntary or registered charitable organisation with a Constitution or set of rules which lay out the aims of the organisation and how it operates and be able to demonstrate how they develop relationships and support networks with the people they are involved with *OR*
- 1b) Be a Community Interest Company *OR*
- 1c) Be a group of people (minimum of three people) who have come together for a specific project/activity and have a plan of action which clearly identifies what they intend to do, how the award would be spent (*Maximum claim of £500*) and what difference their project/activity will make to their community
- 2) Demonstrate how they involve others - how they understand the skills and knowledge of people they support and work with as well as work in partnership with other groups and organisations and how they enable each other
- 3) Be active in helping all citizens – irrespective of age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, race or creed – to be contributing members of society and to be fully inclusive
- 4a) Have a bank account in the name of the organisation and have at least two unrelated signatories to that account *OR*
- 4b) Have the support of a constituted organisation who has agreed to be the banker of your project
- 5) Be an organisation or a group of individuals living or with a local base in the Forest of Dean District and the project must be directly beneficial to the **residents of the Forest of Dean**
- 6) Be able to demonstrate the extent to which there is a need/demand for their proposed project
- 7) The Community Grant scheme is one of the mechanisms in which FODDC is able to support the Voluntary and Community Sector and helps to contribute to its strategic priorities for the district:
 - **Thriving communities:** We want to support local communities and help them grow so that we can work together to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the climate and nature emergencies.
 - **Decarbonisation and Nature Recovery:** Protect and enhance the natural environment and be on target to be Net Zero by 2030.

- **Sustainable Economy:** To improve the Forest of Dean economy while encouraging business to be environmentally sustainable and protecting the well-being of residents.
- 8) Demonstrate that the initiative does not duplicate any other existing effective arrangements or projects
- 9) Be able to provide match funding in either money or * “in kind” time
 - * *In kind time is the number of hours that your volunteers contribute to the development and delivery of your project – see application form for a calculator guide.*
- 10) VCS agreement holders (formally SLA) can apply for activities that are not connected or enhance or support VCS agreement activity.

If the applicant is a **constituted** organisation, demonstrate why District Council funding is needed. An organisation may have high levels of free reserves which are not adequately explained or have sufficient funding from other sources from which to deliver the work applied for. If you have free reserves of more than twelve months income we need to know the reason for this.

What are Reserves?

Reserves describe that part of a charities income that is freely available for its general purposes and can be spent for any or all of the charities purpose once it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure.

Who may not apply:

- Statutory bodies
- Parish and Town Councils
- Previous applicants of a FODDC Community Grant who have *not* returned satisfactory monitoring and evaluation
- Previous applicants or funded projects applying for the same project work or activity
- Village Halls and Community Centres looking for capital funding for building improvements
- Projects for the advancement of religion or political activities
- Individuals (*non-constituted group must be 3 or more active participants through the entire length of the project*)
- Organisations requiring deficit funding
- Organisations requiring ‘core’ funding unless there is clear explanation and evidence to show that future funding is secured for continued delivery - sustainable on-going projects which meet the criteria, will take priority
- Organisations which could reasonably be expected to fund their activities or needs from members’ subscriptions
- National organisations with no specific **local** brief or organisations whose principle activity is outside the district and whose aims and objectives are not specifically directed at the residents of the Forest of Dean
- Organisations with substantial free reserves, the annual turnover of the organisations will be material to the level of the free reserves
- Organisations currently in receipt of a VCS agreement (formally SLA) from the Forest of Dean District Council (unless they meet the criteria above).
- Lead Applicants under the age of 18 years old

What we will not fund:

- Retrospective requests. We cannot support applications for activities or purchases that have taken place before a formal grant offer has been made
- On-going maintenance costs
- Loan payments or endowments
- Items that will only benefit individuals, for example scholarships or bursaries
- Trips and day trips
- Activities that are part of statutory obligations
- Capital costs – such as large items of equipment, building costs etc. (*The scheme will fund essential 'start up' materials for community projects*)

Please ensure that you get an *acknowledgement of receipt* of your application once submitted. This will be *your responsibility* to do so. All applications submitted after the closing date and time, will *not* be reviewed.

Application Timeline	
Friday 10 July, 2026 by 4 pm.	Closing date for applications <i>(Late submissions will not be accepted)</i>
W/E 31 st July, 2026	Notification of result of application
Celebration Event Monday 3rd August, 2026	Celebration event @ FODDC office in Coleford

What happens after applications have been completed?

- Applications made will be assessed by a panel of Elected Members and Officers of the District Council's Community Wellbeing Team.
- All applications will be assessed and scored against the same set of criteria, as identified in these guidance notes. Those applications with the highest points will be put forward for a successful award.
- Following assessment of the application, a decision will be made whether to contact the applicants for further information, invite applicants to conduct a presentation or whether to award none, some or all of the funds requested - the panel's decision is final.
- Feedback will be given by the Community Partnerships Lead to applicants who wish to request it.

Other Information

- Every project is expected to engage in follow up/evaluation so we can understand and celebrate achievements, the human impact of your project and the ripples following our funding.

- A visit to your project may be made in later years by the Council to follow up on the progress of your project
- Copies of invoices will be required as evidence of how the grant was spent appropriately and this **MUST** be as agreed in the award and as requested through the application form.
- Please can you also attach a scan or photo of a document from your bank that shows the account name, account number, and sort code. This will help issue payments more quickly if you are successful. Feel free to blank any non-relevant information.
- We will hold the applications on a secure server to reference in case of future applications unless we receive a request for the information to be destroyed.

Please contact the Community Partnerships Lead for any questions you have regarding this process on 01594 812609.

Appendices are designed to try and help you to include as much information as possible so that we can score your application.

Appendix I (In-kind time) – page 5 on the application form.

In some cases, calculating the value of in-kind contributions can be relatively simple, for example if it's the contribution of a piece of equipment. Other costs could be a little more difficult, for example, the value of volunteer time. Below is a table that indicates the standard rates, which should be used to calculate volunteer time.

Type of voluntary/in-kind contribution	Per hour	Per day
General, unskilled labour (for example, supervised scrub clearance, ditch-digging, planting, basic administrative support)	£8.50	£63.75
Specialist, skilled, trained labour (for example, operations for which certificated training is a requirement, such as operating dangerous equipment, driving off-road vehicles, using chemicals)	£25.00	£200.00
Specialist services, (for example, supervising, training labour teams, surveys, printing, designing, photography)	£35.00	£270.00
Professional services (for example, consultants, lawyers, planners, engineers, accountants, auditors)	£50.00	£375.00

Appendix 2:

In Section 3, we are asking you to explain how your project /organisation is responding to the Nature and Climate Emergency.

What is the Nature and Climate Emergency?

The nature and climate emergency is a twin crisis where climate change (extreme weather, and warming) is causing severe biodiversity loss, with nearly half of UK species in decline. Air quality is deteriorating, the cost of energy is rising and global emissions are continuing to increase. This requires urgent action to reduce emissions and reverse nature loss.

Taking action on nature and climate will not only address this emergency, but will also result in wider shared benefits to our communities and places. We are targeting the following shared benefits of climate action.

- Building strong communities
- Protecting nature (via climate action)
- Creating jobs and skills in the future
- Easing cost of living pressures
- Improving physical and mental health
- Improving safety and comfort in homes
- Making travel easier
- Promoting a fairer society

Here are some of the things you might like to consider in your response to section 3 and list some of the associated shared benefits of climate action

Saving Energy and Reducing Emissions

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
Replace high-energy bulbs with LEDs Choose A-rated appliances (esp. heat users and equipment that is running 24/7) Switch off devices fully (no standby) Review insulation & seal drafts Reduce digital footprint (delete duplicates/unnecessary files)	✓ Reducing pollution ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Improving safety & comfort	Resources - energy efficiency at home – Severn Wye Resources: energy efficiency for businesses – Severn Wye Resources — Digital Cleanup Day How to reduce your digital carbon footprint World Economic Forum
Conduct a basic energy survey Switch savings accounts to sustainable providers (no fossil fuels) Calculate your carbon footprint Use renewable energy / green tariffs (e.g., solar)	✓ Promoting a fairer society ✓ Reducing pollution ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Building strong communities	Fuel poverty calculator - Centre for Sustainable Energy Eligibility Criteria - Community Energy GO

Resources, Waste and Water

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
<p>Buy second-hand/refurbished technology and items</p> <p>Choose products with recycled content</p> <p>Buy less / share more</p> <p>Purchase longer-lasting products; minimise packaging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Creating jobs & skills ✓ Reducing pollution ✓ Protecting nature ✓ Promoting a fairer society ✓ Building strong communities 	<p>Accelerate the circular economy WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme</p>
<p>Avoid single-use plastics</p> <p>Harvest rainwater / fit water-saving devices</p> <p>Create compost heaps / separate food waste for recycling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protecting nature ✓ Reducing pollution 	<p>The UK Plastics Pact WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme</p>
<p>Repair cafés and tool share</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building strong communities ✓ Creating jobs & skills ✓ Reducing pollution 	<p>Find a repair group - Community Repair Network</p>

Nature, Biodiversity and Green Spaces

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
<p>Tree and hedge planting</p> <p>Wetland protection</p> <p>(Re)-wild green space; let lawns grow for seed set</p> <p>Create wildlife ponds (incl. "pond-in-a-pot")</p> <p>Bird boxes, hedgehog houses, wildflower planting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protecting nature; ✓ Improving physical & mental health; ✓ Building strong communities ✓ Reducing pollution 	<p>Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p>
<p>Avoid peat-based products</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate chemical fertilisers</p> <p>Reduce petrol-powered equipment in green spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protecting nature ✓ Reducing pollution 	<p>Environmentally-friendly gardening tips - Woodland Trust</p>

Travel and Transport

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
<p>Car-share; combine journeys</p> <p>Promote walking & cycling; install cycle parking</p> <p>Provide e-bikes/electric cars or minibus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Making travel easier ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Reducing pollution ✓ Improving physical & mental health 	<p>Leafy</p> <p>Zapmap</p> <p>Carshare Gloucestershire community - part of the Liftshare network</p> <p>General 5 — FoDCAP</p> <p>Rent a Car in Forest Of Dean, UK Car Hire Forest Of Dean, UK Hiyacar</p> <p>The Walking and Cycling Index - Walk Wheel Cycle Trust</p>

Food Resilience and Sharing

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
Provide land/space for growing Encourage crop diversity; grow more; share/swap surplus Save seeds; join local seed swaps Community fridge / food-sharing networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building strong communities ✓ Promoting a fairer society ✓ Improving physical & mental health ✓ Creating jobs & skills ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Reducing pollution 	Forest of Dean Seed Swap – Bream Gardening Society Case studies WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme Forest of Dean Resilience Web Forest Food Forum – Forest Food Forum deanforestfoodhub.uk - Local food for the Forest of Dean

Awareness, Engagement and Planning

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
Climate change awareness raising & education Host a Climate Fresk Become Carbon Literate Create an organisational nature and climate action plan Follow the FoDCAP Events guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Building strong communities ✓ Creating jobs & skills ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Reducing pollution 	Climate Fresk (world) - Climate Fresk Reports & Guides - edie

Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Actions	Associated shared benefits	Useful Links
Sign up for flood warnings Increase green space; enable natural drainage; create shade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protecting nature ✓ Improving physical & mental health ✓ Building strong communities ✓ Reducing pollution 	Get flood warnings by text, phone or email - GOV.UK project-details GRCC
Tap-water refill schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Easing cost of living ✓ Reducing pollution ✓ Promoting a fairer society 	Home - Refill - find places to eat, drink and shop with less waste
Adapt buildings and facilities for hotter summers and wetter winters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improving safety & comfort ✓ Easing cost of living 	glos-crva-report_final.pdf

We appreciate that there is a lot to consider regarding nature and climate action. We hope that the information we have provided above makes this process easier.

If you need further information or support please contact the FoDDC Climate Team, by emailing climate.action@fdean.gov.uk who will be able to help.

The Climate Team will also be available in person they will be at the following advice events: