

Community Grants Scheme Guidance Notes 2023-24

Blaby District Council (BDC) Community Grants Scheme supports the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to develop and strengthen community facilities and activities for the benefit of Blaby District residents.

What does the scheme offer?

We offer a range of grants from £500 to £4000 that cover different types of project costs. A breakdown of the different grants available with examples of what can be funded is on page three of these guidance notes.

Who can apply?

Our grants scheme is open to applications from a range of VCS organisations:

- Community groups, youth clubs and sports clubs
- Registered Charities
- Social Enterprises (such as Community Interest Companies)
- Religious or faith-based organisations for non-religious projects open to all irrespective of faith
- Schools, Academies and PTA/fundraising groups for extra-curricular activities or projects of wider community benefit

Applicants are expected to provide copies of the following to support their application:

- A governing document (such as a constitution or Articles of Association)
- An equality policy/statement (if not included within the governing document)
- A child safeguarding policy and/or vulnerable adults policy (if applicable)
- Statements for all bank or savings accounts held by an organisation, showing the organisation's name, account details and balance, and dated within three months of the application. Bank accounts must require the signatures of at least two unrelated people.
- The organisation's most recent set of accounts
- Three quotes for any single items or works over the value of £1,000
- Evidence of any consents/permissions for the project to take place such as Planning Permission, Advertising Consent or Landowner Consent. These **must** be secured before the application is submitted
- Where the project involves alterations to land or buildings, the applicant must provide evidence of ownership or a written agreement/lease with at least five years remaining

Please note that organisations can only be awarded **one grant per financial year** (April-March). Organisations may only apply for **one grant at a time**. This means that an organisation that has previously received a BDC grant must complete their project (including submission of evidence of expenditure) before a further application to the scheme can be made.

What we do not fund:

- Projects that have already started or items that have already been purchased
- Projects with a total cost of more than £40,000 to deliver
- Projects/activities that support a specific political or religious view or that show bias or risk damaging the Council's reputation
- Professional fees that must be paid for prior to a project starting or stand-alone (for example, feasibility studies, planning application costs, legal fees)
- Activities/ projects that are deemed the statutory responsibility of an organisation or for which other funding is made available for example, costs covered by school/academy budgets.

- Day to day maintenance or repairs
- Applications from, or projects that only benefit, an individual

What we do fund

The Community Grants Scheme funds projects that contribute to at least one of the Council's three corporate priorities:

- **Live** - Strong, healthy, safe, sustainable communities where the most vulnerable are supported
- **Work** – A thriving, prosperous, innovative local economy with a skilled and healthy workforce contributing to the local community
- **Visit** - A strong leisure and tourist sector and well maintained and accessible attractions available in the local area encourage visitors to the district

Full details of our corporate priorities and strategic themes can be found in the [Blaby District Plan 2024 - 2028](#)

We have made a commitment to tackle climate change: our ambition is for Blaby District Council to be carbon neutral by 2030, and the whole district to be carbon neutral by 2050. Applications for **Green Grants** must contribute towards achieving at least one of the following key aims of [Blaby District Council's Climate Change Strategy](#):

- Reducing Carbon emissions and the impact of climate change
- Protecting the environment – creating space for nature and improved biodiversity
- Travel and Transport – increasing sustainable transport use and improving air quality
- Waste and Resources – moving to a circular economy 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle'
- Sustainable communities – increasing energy efficiency
- Behaviour Change and Education – delivering community initiatives

Applications for **Everyone Active** grants must contribute towards achieving at least one of the following health and wellbeing priorities:

- Access to physical activity so people of all ages and abilities can keep fit, healthy and are encouraged to be physically active
- Improving the health and wellbeing of local communities, including mental health
- Reduction of obesity
- Increasing participation in young adults
- Being inclusive and having a diverse programme

Applications are more likely to be successful if the project demonstrates the following:

- It closely meets the corporate and other relevant priorities as applicable
- There is evidence of a need for the project
- It will make a positive difference to residents and the wider community of Blaby district.
- The project and organisation will be sustainable and not reliant on BDC grants in the future
- The project and organisation are set up properly (good governance, sound planning)
- The project offers value for money
- The project takes positive account of its environmental impact (not just relating to green grants)

Type of grant	Maximum	Match Funding Requirement	What sort of projects/costs can be funded? This is not an exhaustive list.
Large Capital	£4000	50% match-funding for grants over £500 Volunteer time can be used as part of match-funding (see page 9 of guidance notes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of higher value items of equipment, including vehicles • Large scale alteration or refurbishment to a community building or space • Replacement of integral features such as heating or lighting • Installation of permanent outdoor features
Small Capital	£500	None required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of lower value items of equipment. • 1st year start-up costs • Website development
Revenue	£500	None required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue or transport hire • Marketing and promotion activities • Costs to run an event or special activity • Support with energy costs*
Everyone Active	£500	None required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to set up a new activity or group • Sports equipment • Costs to run a specific event or club • Specialist tutor/coach fees for a group
Green Capital Grant	£4000	20% match-funding for grants over £500 Volunteer time can be used as part of match-funding (see page 9 of guidance notes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low carbon heating and electricity adaptations • Energy efficiency improvements • Low carbon transport projects or Electric Vehicle infrastructure

Further clarification about capital and revenue costs can also be found in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Special Criteria

The pandemic, rising fuel and other energy costs and inflation have put a financial strain on many voluntary sector organisations and residents in the district. For this financial year we will:

- prioritise applications from VCS organisations that demonstrate either continued financial impact from the pandemic and/or significant high energy or fuel costs; or organisations that support residents most affected by the cost-of-living challenges
- offer flexibility with regard to costs that can be met through our Revenue Grants to include staffing, insurance, energy bills* and other running costs
- offer revenue grants up to £1000 in exceptional cases, for example:

- organisations that are disproportionately affected by high fuel costs such as community transport charities, those that run minibuses regularly to support vulnerable residents or pay volunteer fuel expenses on a regular basis
- organisations or projects that specifically support residents who are struggling as a result of the current cost of living challenges. For example, food banks, specialist advice or support services, activities for low income families/residents

It is entirely at the grants panel's discretion whether to award a £1000 grant. In all cases, applications must still relate to future costs (not paid for prior to award of the grant) and organisations will be expected to provide proof of expenditure in the usual way.

Your grant will be considered for all applicable grant types as long as it meets the criteria. The amount of grant funding that we have available is made up in part by proceeds from the Love Blaby Lottery. For more information visit the [Love Blaby Lottery website](#) . If you do not want your project to be part or fully funded from lottery proceeds, you should make the Funding and Awards Officer aware at the time of your application.

How to apply

Grant deadlines and decisions are made on a quarterly basis. The deadlines for 2023-24 are:

Application Deadline	Grant Panel Meet
31 May 2023 at 5pm	14 June 2023
30 August 2023 at 5pm	13 September 2023
29 November 2023 at 5pm	13 December 2023
28 February 2024 at 5pm	13 March 2024

Applications will not be accepted after the deadline. Please ensure that you provide all supporting documents and information required (see page one of this guidance) with your grant application before the deadline. Large Capital and Green Capital grant applications may require a site visit. We recommend that you arrange this at least one week prior to the application deadline.

The same application form is used for all of our grants and you can submit your application in one of three ways:

Apply online: at [Blaby District Council's Community Grants webpage](#)

If you apply online and you want to save your application as you go, you will need to log in using your My Account. We recommend that you save your work regularly when using the online application to avoid your session timing out. You will need to have all supporting documents ready to upload. For more information and to register for My Account visit the [My Account webpage](#) .

Apply by email: grants@blaby.gov.uk

Request an application form from the Funding and Awards Officer and submit your completed application form and supporting documents by email. Please note there is a size limit of 20MB for emails so you may need to email your supporting documents over a couple of separate emails to keep within the size limits or post these separately. Our IT systems are very secure and may block any unusual attachments. For this reason, please try to submit all supporting documents using Microsoft Office, pdf or jpeg files.

Apply by post:

Request an application form from the Funding and Awards Officer on 0116 272 7566 and send your completed application form and supporting documents to: Communities, Businesses, Work and Skills Team, Blaby District Council, Desford Road, Narborough LE19 2EP

In all cases, the Funding and Awards Officer will acknowledge your application within a few days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please make contact by telephone or email to ensure your application has been received.

How your application is assessed

All eligible applications for the Capital, Green, Revenue and Everyone Active Grants are assessed by our Community Grants Panel. The panel is made up of: the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Regulatory Services at Blaby District Council, an Elected Member from each of the other two main political parties, representatives from the Voluntary Sector, Active Together (formerly Leicestershire and Rutland Sport), and Everyone Active, as well as a member of Blaby District Council staff who resides in the district. The Council's Green Champion will also sit on the grants panel and act in a voting capacity for green grant applications. The panel will meet on the dates listed earlier.

In the event that the funding round is oversubscribed, assuming all other criteria are met, priority will be given to:

- Applicants meeting any special criteria in place during the grant round
- Community and voluntary sector groups over statutory organisations (Schools/Academies)
- Organisations that have not received a community grant previously
- Projects that most closely meet the corporate and other relevant priorities or meet more than one priority
- Projects that address a local need(s) and will make the biggest difference to residents and the wider community in Blaby district (strongest outcomes)
- Organisations that can demonstrate the future sustainability of the project but have limited recourse to other funds
- Projects that demonstrate best value for money
- Projects that take positive account of the environment and address any negative impacts

The following options are available to the grant panel when assessing applications:

- To approve
- To approve with conditions
- To defer – pending further information
- To reject – where projects are deemed not to sufficiently meet the criteria, carry risks or where the funding round is oversubscribed

You will be notified of the outcome of your application as soon as possible and within one week of the panel's decision.

What happens if your application is successful?

If your application is successful, we will send the lead contact for your application a notification letter or email. If there are any conditions attached to the grant, these will be specified in the letter. You will also be sent a grant agreement. An authorised member of your organisation will need to sign the grant agreement and return this to the Council before we will process your grant payment. All payments are made via BACS transfer direct to the organisation's bank account provided as part of your application and payments are usually made within two weeks.

Prior to the payment of any funding the group or organisation receiving funding through the Blaby District Council Community Grants scheme must agree to the following terms and conditions:

- Acknowledge the support of Blaby District Council in all promotional material about your project and provide evidence of this

- Ensure that your organisation is adequately insured to carry out its activities and that all staff/volunteers follow all relevant health and safety legislation and guidance when carrying out their duties
- Adhere to national and local guidance and legislation on equal opportunities, disability, access and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- Own or have secure tenure of any land involved in your project. If you are using someone else's land or buildings you must have written signed consent from the owner for your project
- Ensure that all statutory permissions, licenses and consents are in place, including advertising consent, planning permission and/or building regulations approval where appropriate
- In the case of a capital project, accept responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of any asset funded by the grant, including buildings, structures, equipment and grounds
- Ensure that the grant is not used in any way for any works/activities/items that have been undertaken or purchased before notification of the award
- Ensure that the grant is spent in strict accordance with the proposed works/activities/items as detailed on your application unless a change is agreed in advance and confirmed in writing with the Funding and Awards Officer of Blaby District Council
- Commence expenditure on your project within 6 months of the date of the grant being awarded and complete your project within 12 months of the date of the grant being awarded unless a different timescale is agreed in advance in writing with the Funding and Awards Officer of Blaby District Council
- Comply fully with Blaby District Council's monitoring process which includes periodic checks and visits by officers of Blaby District Council and the completion and return of monitoring forms, together with copies of invoices and/or receipts relating to expenditure on your project, evidence of the intended outcomes being achieved and acknowledgement of the grant
- Notify the Funding and Awards Officer immediately if there is any change that results in your organisation or group no longer or potentially no longer being eligible for the grant
- The Council will require repayment of funds which have not been spent in accordance with the criteria of the scheme and this grant agreement
- This grant may be subject to the UK's new subsidies system which replaces the EU State Aid rules. The Council offers this grant on the basis that the equivalent of the De Minimis exemption will apply. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that, in receiving this grant, that they have not received more than £340,000 in financial contributions or benefits from Government subsidy in the three years preceding the date of the award.

Privacy notice

Blaby District Council (BDC) is classed as a data controller which means that BDC decides what personal information we need from you. Information collected about you i.e. your contact address; telephone and/or email will enable us to maintain contact with you during the application process and for project monitoring purposes. We will only have access to personal data that you provide

to us. The legal basis for the collection and processing of your personal data is that you have given consent to be included.

Where necessary, we may share this information with, and obtain information about you, from other departments within Blaby District Council or other public bodies in order to prevent or detect crime. Your information will otherwise only be shared with panel members making a decision about your grant application. Please note that we do publish details of projects or organisations who are awarded grants on our website. We will contact you for permission for any other marketing we may do.

The information you provide will be stored on a secure database managed by Blaby District Council and is not directly accessible by other parties or the general public. We will only keep your information for as long as you consent for us to do so and up to a maximum of six years. You have a right to withdraw consent at any time and you can do this by contacting Information Governance Team at GDPR@blaby.gov.uk or by calling 0116 275 0555.

This information may be shared with third parties as described above but will not be transferred outside the UK. We don't use any computers or automated means to make decisions about you based on the information that you provide.

You have a number of legal rights in respect of your personal data which are: the right to be informed about how it is being used and why; the right of access to it to check that we are acting lawfully and, in some cases, the right to rectify it or to have it erased; the right to restrict our processing of it; the right of data portability; and the right to object to automated decision taking.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the way in which Blaby District Council handles your personal information, or want to raise a concern, you may contact:

Name: Louisa Horton, Data Protection Officer

Telephone: 0116 275 0555

Email: gdpr@blaby.gov.uk

You can also contact the Information Commissioner's Office (The ICO) to find out more about your rights as a data subject (a person that we hold personal data about) if you think there is a problem by email to casework@ico.org.uk or by telephone on 0303 123 1113. You can also visit the [Information Commissioner's Office website](#)

Notes about the application form

Please ensure that you read and answer all relevant questions on the application form carefully. These notes give further information for each section of the application form. However, if you have any questions about your eligibility or when completing the application form please contact the Funding and Awards Officer on 0116 272 7566 or email grants@blaby.gov.uk

Section 1 – You and Your Organisation

The total project cost is the total amount required to deliver the project for which you are seeking funding, not just the amount of the grant. We do not accept applications where the total project cost is more than £40,000.

When telling us what your organisation/group does, don't assume that the grants panel will know. This should include a brief outline of what the aims of your organisation/group are, your key activities or services and who you help.

All organisations/groups that have contact with children and young people under the age of 18 years must have a safeguarding policy in place and provide a copy of this with their application.

A vulnerable adult is someone who is 18 years old who is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and, as a result of their care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from these types of harm. Those care and support needs could include: learning, physical and/or sensory disabilities, mental ill health, frailty due to their age, dementia, brain injuries and drug or alcohol problems. All organisations that come into contact with adults who are or may be vulnerable must have a vulnerable adults or adult safeguarding policy in place and provide a copy with their application.

If your organisation/group needs help with policies please contact the Funding and Awards Officer.

The Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work and functions. Blaby District Council is committed to ensuring fairness and accessibility for all and takes the following general public duties very seriously:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is unlawful under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (see below) and those who do not
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The nine protected characteristics are: Age; Gender; Gender re-assignment; Disability (including physical disability, learning disability mental health and long-term illness); Ethnicity and Race; Sexual orientation; Religion and belief; Marital status and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity. In operating a grants scheme, Blaby District Council expects any recipients of funds to have regard for these duties and promote fairness and equality.

Section 2 – Your Project

This section is really important: it is your chance to explain what your project will deliver, why it is needed and what the outcomes will be for Blaby District residents and the wider community. The better your project is thought through and planned, the stronger the application. Please take time to answer these questions fully.

When evidencing why your project is needed, include any consultation you may have done or feedback from previous projects. Include information about local statistics or data, policies or partner organisations that support the need for your project. For example, can you show that your project will meet a gap in provision or widen participation in activities? If you are applying for a green grant, do you have a current energy efficiency report for your building that recommends what changes are needed?

Outcomes or benefits are the improvements that will come about for residents and the wider community as a result of the project for which you are requesting funding. Be specific about these, including targets if possible. Your outcomes should relate to the need for your project and the local priorities detailed on page two of these notes. For example, if you are applying for a Green Grant to install solar panels to your village hall, include estimated carbon savings.

Blaby District Council is committed to tackling Climate Change and becoming carbon-neutral by 2030. This means that we are keen to fund projects that demonstrate that they have considered the environment and taken steps to address any potential negative impacts. This is for all applicants, not just those applying for a Green Grant. For example, reducing waste and promoting recycling at your group or club or promoting sustainable journeys by members.

Blaby District Council's Green Officer – Nick Fear – is happy to advise applicants to the Green Grant. He can be contacted at Nick.Fear@blaby.gov.uk or by calling 0116 272 7605.

Some projects will require special permissions and/or consents and applicants are expected to have these in place prior to applying for a grant and to provide evidence with your application. The list below is not exhaustive. If you are unsure if your project needs any permissions or consents, contact the Funding and Awards Officer:

- If you are making any alterations to land or property that does not belong to you, you will need to provide written proof of the owner's consent (letter) and/or proof of your responsibility or authority to make such changes (such as a copy of your lease)
- For information and advice as to whether your project needs Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent or Advertising Consent contact Blaby District Council's Planning Team on 0116 272 7705 or visit: [Blaby District Council's Planning and Building Control webpages](#)
- For information and advice about Temporary Event Notices, Lottery Registration, Street Collection Permits and more, contact the Licensing Team at Blaby District Council on 0116 272 7782 or visit: [Blaby District Council's Licensing webpages](#)

Some building or refurbishment works may need Building Regulation approval, please contact Blaby District Council's Building Control Service on 0116 272 7533 or visit: [Blaby District Council's Building Control webpages](#)

Section 3 – Your finances and budget

Organisations that have more than £50,000 of funds can still apply. However, the grant panel will want to understand why the grant is needed so please provide an explanation along with your most recent set of accounts.

The grant panel will also want to see value for money in the projects that they fund. For this reason, applicants should provide three quotes for any individual items or works that cost more than £1000. Exceptions will only be made in special circumstances or for very specialist works/items where suppliers are limited.

Make sure your project costings and budget add up: include all costs (expenditure), what the grant will fund and any other sources of income, including what your organisation is contributing and any other match-funding. Remember that the total project cost and grant figures in your budget should match the figures you provide on page one of the application form.

Volunteer hours can be counted for up to half of the match-funding required and no more than £2000 (whichever figure is lower) **for large capital and green capital grants only**. This can only be used where the volunteers are carrying out work that would otherwise be paid for to complete the project, such as a volunteer that carries out painting work as part of a refurbishment project. Volunteer hours are calculated at £10.00 per hour. For example:

- For a large capital project costing £5000 in total, an organisation could apply for a maximum £2500 (50%) capital grant of which a maximum of £1250 of match funding could be made up by volunteer hours (assuming 125 hours of volunteer time is reasonable for the task). Total monetary match-funding required would be £1250
- For a green project costing £5000 in total, an organisation could apply for a maximum £4000 (80%) green grant of which a maximum of £500 of match-funding could be made up by volunteer hours (assuming 50 hours of volunteer time is reasonable for the task). Total monetary match-funding required from the project would be £500

Volunteer hours should be shown in both the expenditure and income breakdown of your application if you are counting them towards match-funding.

For further tips on completing your budget and to see a sample budget, please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The grants panel will want to see that both your organisation and your project are sustainable beyond the end of the grant funding and that you will not be reliant on this type of funding year on year. For example, will your group start charging or increase membership in order to continue in future years? Organisations are expected to carry out day to day maintenance of any capital assets in the future so tell us how you will budget for this.