

Capital Grant Programme 2026-27

Guidance Notes

Deadline for Submission of Applications

**Expressions of Interest opening on Tuesday 1st
September**

**Expressions of Interest must be submitted by
12noon on Tuesday 15th September 2026.**

**The Call for full applications will open on Monday
5th October 2026.**

**Full applications must be submitted by 12noon on
Monday 2nd November 2026.**

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1.0 Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the financial support available through the Capital Grants Programme. They will help you and your organisation decide if the financial assistance offered is appropriate to support the project that you are planning.

Projects must be aligned with programme objectives and have in place a public access agreement for a period of years to be specified by the value of the investment from Council.

You may find it helpful to discuss your project with the following officers before submitting an Expression of Interest or a full application:

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1.1 Purpose of the Grant Programme

The Capital Grants Fund is available to local sports and community organisations for support towards the development of new or the enhancement of existing facilities to meet unmet need.

The Capital Grant Programme will only fund properly constituted not for profit community and voluntary sector organisations.

1.2 Overview of fund

The fund opens for Expressions of Interest on 1 September 2026 and closes for Expressions of Interest on 15 September 2026. We will use the information provided in your Expression of Interest to determine the eligibility of your application / project and provide feedback for the full application.

Organisations considering applying to the fund must submit an Expression of Interest. This will save ineligible organisations or ineligible projects from completing a full application form.

The fund will open for full applications on 5 October 2026 and will close for applications at 12noon on 2 November 2026.

Late applications will not be accepted beyond this date and time.

Grant-aid will be allocated to the highest scoring applications. To be considered for funding, applications must achieve the quality threshold score of 65%. The criteria to be used for assessment and award is outlined in section 3.

1.3 Levels of grant award

A total capital grant pot of £600,000 per annum is available. Council is committed to distributing grants fairly, efficiently and effectively. In order to ensure fair and equitable access, no single sporting code can have access to more than 20% of the overall funding pot in any given year.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will consider grant aid of 80% of total evidenced capital costs up to a maximum total grant value of £120,000. Organisations must match fund the remaining 20% from other sources or from their own resources. (In kind contributions will not be considered).

The level of grant awarded will depend on the following:

- The available budget.
- The number of applications.

Successful applicants must demonstrate that sufficient funding is in place to enable completion of the project. This will be verified by Council before an Authorisation to Proceed letter is issued.

All capital grants must be fully drawn down within a 5-year time frame from the date of grant award.

Capital Grant Programme	Maximum Grant Amount
Not for profit sporting or community organisations can apply for awards of up to 80% of total project costs.	Max amount per application is £120,000 . Max allocation per sporting code is 20% of the annual pot.

Any applicant organisation, facility or site that has received funding through Council's Capital Grants Programme will be ineligible to receive a further award for three years from the date of the final payment made by Council in respect of the previous project.

Council reserves the right to reduce the amount of funding awarded if we do not consider that the amount applied for represents value for money.

There is no guarantee that applicants will receive any award or the amount applied for. Any award will be strictly at the discretion of Council. Council reserves the right not to award the full or any of the allocated budget.

Please Note: Council carries out 100% verification on all capital grants. Organisations will have to provide all procurement documentation, invoices, bank statements or any other documentation deemed necessary. If the requested documentation is not supplied, then payment cannot be made.

1.4 General Principles

In line with Council's Grant Funding Policy the overarching principle for all Council grant funding is that of meeting local needs which have been identified and prioritised by Council or by others but acknowledged by Council. Any activity that cannot be shown to meet the following basic requirements will not be provided with funding:

- The project must be delivered by a credible organisation with the capacity to deliver the project as stated. Council will carry out checks on the applicant organisation to ensure their credibility and that proper and good governance is in place.
- Council will undertake due diligence on an applicant's financial status. The applicant must satisfy Council, that financial need exists and that both the organisation and the facility will be sustainable. The group's accounts and financial reserves will be reviewed taking into consideration restricted and unrestricted funds.
- Have a clearly identified need – this should be identified through engagement with members of your community and the use of statistics and evidence that might support this need.
- This is a competitive fund and grant awards will be determined on the basis of merit. Any applicant organisation, facility or site that has received funding through Council's Capital Grants Programme will be ineligible to receive a further award for three years from the date of the final payment made by Council in respect of the previous project.
- All applications must be completed in full and retrospective applications will not be considered.
- Groups must demonstrate their commitment to promoting social inclusion, equality of opportunity, and good relations in accordance with Section 75.
- The Groups must evidence efforts to maximise their income by securing other sources of funding e.g. through club funds, loans, external grants. Council is therefore "a funder of last resort".
- Groups will be required to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of their grant aid and how it will generate positive and measurable outputs and outcomes for the local community, therefore a method of formal monitoring is required in all applications.
- Any documents referenced in applications i.e. business plans / sport development plans / community development plans etc must be uploaded with the application as a supporting document.

1.5 Who Can Apply?

Only groups which meet these criteria can apply to the Capital Grant Programme:

- Be based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area or have their main activities based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.
- Be committed to Equal Opportunities in terms of organisational policies and the delivery of services to those being served or represented.

- Have a constitution / governing document that has been adopted at a public meeting showing clearly defined purposes that are for the public benefit in line with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.
- Be non-party political and open to the full range of local opinion.
- Be able to demonstrate a fair and equitable ethos through established aims and objectives in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Be able without prejudice to the obligations of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), to demonstrate regard to the desirability of promoting Good Relations between persons of different religious belief, political belief, political opinion or racial group.
- Have membership open to all those residing in the area that they seek to represent, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, religious or political belief.
- Be accountable to local people through an established constitution, open membership, committee elections, accounting procedures and Annual General Meetings. The Office Bearing positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer should be held as a minimum and there should be at least 4 other committee members. None of the Committee members should be related.
- Have appropriate and adequate insurance cover for all activities and all actions proceeding such as costs, claims, demands and liabilities whatsoever, arising from all or any of the group activities. To also ensure that any individuals or organisations worked with are properly insured.
- Ensure that all group activities abide by the law and that the necessary permissions are obtained for activities from the appropriate body/authority.
- Ensure that Child Protection Policy / Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures are in place and adhered to as and where appropriate.
- Have a bank/building society account and keep a proper record of group accounts.
- Be able to produce an annual statement of independently audited or certified accounts.
- Have arrangements in place for dispersing the group's funds if they dissolve/ end.
- Be able to demonstrate that the group works closely with other organisations in the same area / neighbourhood to avoid duplication of activities.
- Agree to Causeway Coast and Glens Council's promotion, monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures as required.

1.6 What cannot be funded?

The following will not be eligible for funding: -

- Individuals.
- Clubs or organisations which have restrictive memberships.
- Revenue funding
- Groups operating outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.
- Organisations with charitable fundraising as their main focus.
- Organisations who have substantial, demonstrable reserves.
- Umbrella organisations that do not have a separate local constitution.
- Organisations whose primary objectives are concerned with health, education or training.
- Schools, pre-schools or nurseries.
- Political Organisations.
- Specific minor components in a substantive scheme that don't realise any/significant community or sporting benefit (e.g. a minor enhancement programme including minor footpath amendments, gates, exterior security lighting, or hand rail provision, etc).
- Ancillary services (e.g. car parking, drainage etc) will not be considered unless they form part of a substantive capital project.
- Any applicant/facility/site which has successfully received funding from the Capital Grants Programme will be ineligible to apply for funding for 3 years after completion of the previous project. The completion date will be the date the last payment was made to you from Council.
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system.
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt.
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT.

2.0 How to Apply

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens for 2026-27 should be submitted online at <https://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding/open-grant-programmes>

3.0 How we assess and score your application

3.1 Stage 1: Eligibility assessment

All applications will be assessed against the following eligibility criteria. Applications must score a “pass” in all eligibility criterion.

	Criterion	Pass	Fail
1	Applications must be from properly constituted not for profit community or voluntary groups. Council will carry out due diligence of legal status and governance.		
2	Applications will only be considered from Sports Clubs and Community projects geographically located within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.		
3	Applications will be considered ineligible where either the applicant organisation or the facility/site has received funding through Council's Capital Grants Programme within the previous 3 years. The 3 year period will be calculated from the date of the final payment made by Council in respect of the previous project.		
4	Applicants must submit final signed accounts for the previous two financial years. Only those organisations that Council considers to be financially sound will be considered eligible.		
5	Applicant organisations must provide legal title. If they do not own the building or land outright, is there a long-term lease in place, are there mortgages or loans secured on the property /land that would make the applicant or project ineligible – outline details.		

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

If your application is not eligible it will not proceed to assessment and scoring. You will be notified once Council has completed the entire assessment process and the reasons will be outlined to you.

3.3 Assessment & Scoring

Applications will be evaluated against the following assessment criteria:

	Criterion	Score (0-5)	Weight	Max Points Available
1	<u>Project description & Strategic relevance:</u> Please provide a description of your project. Please also demonstrate strategic fit with Council's aims & objectives: • Council Plan 2026-2031 • For sporting facilities: Pitches Condition Survey & Strategy 2018 OR • Community facilities; Councils Community Development Strategy 2023-26; Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision		X3	15
2	<u>Community/Sporting Need:</u> Projects must clearly demonstrate a need for the facility. Providing community or sporting access to facilities in areas of clearly demonstrated need. Need can be demonstrated in a number of ways including inter alia: ➤ Council policies and strategies (detailed above) ➤ Fulfilment of national or governing body standards ➤ Binding commitments to use by local groups/organisations ➤ Condition reports on existing provision The residual capacity or otherwise in similar facilities close by <u>Note:</u> 1. Projects that are likely to cause significant levels of displacement from existing facilities will not be funded by Council. 2. Council will not fund facilities that are for the sole use of membership organisations.		X4	20

3	<u>Accessible to All:</u> Demonstrate how you will make the proposed facility attractive, welcoming and accessible to all the community.		X3	15
4	<u>Project Beneficiaries & Participation:</u> Provide detail of the project beneficiaries / those who will benefit from your project. Demonstrate how your project will increase participation in community and/or sporting activities.		X3	15
5	<u>Underrepresented Groups:</u> Council will afford a higher priority to applications that promote participation in community and sporting activities by those currently underrepresented and in particular: ➤ Older people (50+) ➤ People with a disability ➤ Women and girls ➤ People living in areas of high social need		X3	15
6	<u>Sustainability and viability:</u> The application must make reasonable and evidence-based assumptions in relation to construction costs, operational costs and projected income.		X4	20
	Total Maximum Score (65% Threshold)			100

3.4 How decisions are made.

Applicants are assessed in line with the assessment and scoring criteria. Results aim to be communicated to all applicants within 4 weeks.

3.5 What happens if an application is successful?

If an application is successful, Council will issue a letter of offer which is a legal agreement with the organisation to deliver on the proposals outlined in their application form. Signed Letters of Offer will need to be returned before funding is released

If successful, group members can avail of specific training that will explain the processes and procedures that relate to programme monitoring, submitting a financial claim, promoting Council's support for the programme, monitoring and evaluation requirements and the process of verification.

Council funding will be paid to successful applicants retrospectively. Where an organisation can demonstrate that it does not have sufficient financial resources to meet project costs in advance, Council may consider an advance payment. Any advance payment will be subject to assessment and approval on a case-by-case basis.

Successful organisations are required to submit an annual / end of funding evaluation report. Officers may arrange post project evaluation visits to discuss the monitoring information with the groups that were funded and with some of the people who have benefited from the funded project.

3.6 What happens if an application is not successful?

An Appeals Process is available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed are applied fairly and consistently.

The Review will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the Review Panel that either:

- the outcome was unreasonable or
- that the proper procedures were not followed

Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered.

3.7 Fraud and Corruption

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to carrying out business fairly, honestly and openly and has a zero tolerance towards fraud, bribery and corruption. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council expects full compliance with the requirements of both the Fraud and Corruption Policy and Bribery Act 2010 from Groups or Individuals applying for, or in receipt of grant aid. This is also relevant to Councillors, Employees, Agents, Partners and Suppliers involved in your project/event. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining effective procedures and controls to prevent any occurrence of fraud and corruption. The Fraud and Corruption Policy can be found on the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council website.

All cases of irregularities or anomalies involving attempted or suspected fraud will be reported to appropriate authorities, including the Northern Ireland Audit Office, PSNI and any other relevant funding body (if applicable) or departments within the Council (if applicable).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council reserves the right to disallow any other grant applications and claims submitted by a group or an individual member of a group where fraudulent activity has been identified within the current financial year and for at least two forthcoming financial years.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will inform the group's Chairperson where attempted or suspected fraud has been identified.

3.8 Government Funding Database

Please be aware we are required to check the Government Funding Database (GFD) prior to making awards in order to avoid duplication of funding.

If registered on GFD we ask you to state your organisation's Unique Reference Number (URN) to help with this process. Details of grants awarded will be uploaded to the GFD, it is the responsibility of the applicant group to ensure that the organisation details held on GFD are up to date.

3.9 Late Applications

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that their application is submitted prior to the advertised time and date of closing. Applications cannot be accepted after the closing time/date. No exceptions will be made and there is no recourse to appeal. All applications received prior to the time and date of closing will be acknowledged.

Appendix 1: Conditions of Grant

- i. Applicants will obtain and maintain all appropriate statutory approvals and at all times comply with legislative requirements.
- ii. Applicants will be required to sign up to a Public Access Agreement under the direction of Council.
- iii. Reasonable access will be available to Council officials for monitoring and post project evaluation.
- iv. Applicants must maintain adequate insurance to indemnify Council, users and visitors during and after project completion.
- v. Clubs or groups must maintain the facility in a reasonable state of repair.
- vi. Projects already commenced before Council has issued and received a satisfactorily completed Letter of Offer will be excluded from consideration.
- vii. Council's Core Themes are contained within the corporate plan and are available at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk All projects must be compatible and in no way conflict with Council's Corporate Theme's.
- viii. The recipient will comply with Public Procurement Policies as defined by Council at the point of grant award.
- ix. The recipient will have in place a Conflict of Interest Register which will be inspected by Officers from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council prior to all procurement processes.
- x. Payment of the grant will be retrospective.
- xi. The recipient organisation may not assign any interest in the property or dispose of the property/asset without the written consent of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- xii. In the event of breach of grant conditions, the Club or group, will be required to repay the grant in full if the breach occurs in the first 5 years or at a rate decreasing on an annual basis for fifteen years at the rate of one fifteenth of the capital payment for every full or part year after award of grant. This will be entirely at Council's discretion.
- xiii. In the event that the money is not used as intended or if the project makes changes, that in Council's opinion, jeopardizes in any way, Council's Section 75 obligations of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the applicant will be required to repay the grant in full on the terms and conditions set out in any contract entered into between the club or group and the Council.
- xiv. Successful applicants must collect and retain the information necessary to report on the level of achievement of the objectives for the project. Failure to apply the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be considered a breach of these conditions and could result in claw back of award as set out in xiii above.

Appendix 2: Data Protection Act

- We will use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- We may also share information with other government departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- We might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold, subject to certain exemption that may apply. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applicants, grant holders and contractors. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act we will release it, subject to exemptions; although we may consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, you should let us know when you apply. For further information please visit the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk