

Christmas Festive Fund 2026

Guidance Notes

Deadline for Submission of Application

12 noon on Friday 2nd October 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This fund is for outdoor light switch on events only. Council Officials are here to support you with event queries in relation to your application and the associated Risk Assessment and if required, Event Management Plan.

If you require assistance with the completion of the application form you may find it helpful to speak to a member of the Funding Unit:

Christopher Dunne 07925036162 christopher.dunne@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

You may also find it helpful to discuss your event proposal with an officer within the Tourism Events Team before submission:

Gillian Lloyd 07510383811 events@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Tracey Freeman 07712235746 events@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme

The Christmas Festive Fund will support Community Associations from towns, villages and hamlets to help celebrate Christmas. Please note, only **ONE** community group per settlement will be successful.

Projects/events must take place between Saturday 28th November and Wednesday 16th December 2026. Activities must provide an opportunity for everyone in the community to participate.

N.B.

It is essential that your event date falls between the project dates listed above as Council will NOT consider events proposed outside of these dates.

You must not change the date of your event or publicise this change, without prior consultation with the Funding Team, Estates Team and Events Team. If you wish to change the date of your event and the reason IS NOT due to cancellation or postponement, it is an operational need, you must do so within 6 weeks of the date of your new event date.

PLEASE NOTE: It is not guaranteed that if your group suggests an alternative date to run your event from the original submission date, that it can be facilitated – it will be dictated by operational requirements at the time. More information and contact details can be found in **section 1.9**.

1.2 Levels of Grant Award

Christmas Festive Fund	Maximum Grant Amount
FUND A Applications for settlements with a population of 1,000 and above (Band E, F & G listed in the table below) can apply for a range of costs relating to festive entertainment. Priority will be given to projects that promote wide community involvement for outdoor events celebrating this festive period.	Up to £2,500
FUND B Applications for settlements with a population between 100 and 999 can apply for a range of costs relating to festive entertainment. Priority will be given to projects that promote wide community involvement for outdoor events celebrating this festive period.	Up to £750

Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements (**Eligible for £2,500**)

Classification	Settlement Development Limit
Band E – Small Town (Population 5,000-9,999)	Portstewart Portrush
Band F – Intermediate Settlement (Population 2,500-4,999)	Dungiven
Band G – Village (Population 1,000-2,499)	Ballykelly Kilrea Greysteel Cloughmills Bushmills Castlerock Cushendall Garvagh Dunloy Rasharkin

Post event, the applicant will be required to complete the Council's monitoring and evaluation form, and to provide detailed information in order to demonstrate how the organisation met the criteria detailed in their application form. The following information will be required:

- Number of attendees.
- A minimum of 4 hi-res photographs taken during the event/activity that we are able to use in the Council's publicity.
- Publicity material used to advertise your event.
- Evidence of social media exposure.

Please Note: Groups will have to provide all evidence requested once the project expenditure is complete. This will include receipts, invoices, bank statements, or any other documentation deemed necessary. If the requested documentation is not supplied, then payment cannot be made. Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.

1.3 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:

- Have a clearly identified need.
- Can deliver outcomes which meet this need.
- Deliver cost effective and quality service provision, fitting with the purpose and remit of the funding.
- Be delivered by a credible organisation with the capacity to deliver the project as stated.
- Reflect the statutory remit of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, aligning with Council's Corporate Plan, the relevant Service plan and that they can meet the specific criteria of the fund, in this instance the Community Festivals Fund criteria.
- Applicants must demonstrate their commitment to promoting Good Relations and Equality of Opportunity.
- In the interests of transparency, equality and accountability all applicants will have a right of appeal should their application be rejected.

1.4 Who can apply?

Organisations must be from within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. Towns, villages, settlements with a population of over 100 residents may apply or

towns, villages, settlements who have been allocated a Christmas tree from Causeway Coast and Glens borough Council may apply.

Please note if your community organisation is situated within Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Coleraine and Limavady and receives a Council Christmas Event, then your group is, unfortunately, unable to apply. If you're unsure, please contact one of the Events Officers named above in 1.0.

To be eligible for grant-aid, you will have to show that your organisation is a bona fide organisation that is well run and that it has a properly adopted "Governing Document" such as a constitution or memorandum and articles of association which clearly show that it is non-profit making and taking. Evidence that a constitution has been formally adopted must be supplied.

Only one grant per settlement will be awarded. Should Council receive more than one application per settlement the application which is the most inclusive and has the most far-reaching community involvement will be selected. Council may also request that applicants work together to produce one all-inclusive event.

You will be required to complete a Risk Assessment. **Please see the template in Appendix 2 to be uploaded online with your application.**

Only groups which meet these criteria can apply to the Christmas Festive Fund

If an organisation is satisfied that it is an eligible formally constituted organisation as outlined, it **MUST** be able to meet the following criteria:

Be based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area or have their main activities based in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.

Be committed to Equal Opportunities in terms of organisational policies and the delivery of services to those being served or represented.

- Be non-party political and open to the full range of local opinion.
- 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 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.

- 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.
- 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 or be able to present a bank statement in the case of newly established groups.
- Have arrangements in place for dispersing the group's funds if they dissolve/ end.
- Agree to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's promotion, monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures as required.
- Be prepared to take part in any peer supported workshops that the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council deems necessary.

1.5 What can be funded?

Applications may be made for financial assistance towards events which may include:

- Appropriate events that celebrate the festive season within the community in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.
- Costs associated directly with staging and promoting the event – e.g., entertainment, venue hire and promotional literature. Other suggestions below:
 - Performing Arts
 - Visual Arts
 - Cultural, recreational and sporting activities

- Workshops
- Displays
- Exhibitions
- Lectures
- Performances

Eligible items of expenditure may include:

- Event insurance
- Venue hire
- Performance fees
- Transport within the community area the festival is taking place in
- Equipment hire*
- Signage
- Advertising, marketing and media costs
- Printing
- Administration (stationery, postage etc.)
- Costs of Online activities
- Selection Boxes

*Equipment hire from Council must be paid for. This includes equipment such as crowd barriers, event bins, staging units. Equipment can be hired from other private companies. More information can be found in section **1.8**.

1.6 What cannot be funded?

In general, the following will not normally be eligible for funding through the Christmas Festive Fund: -

- Proposals that do not directly benefit Causeway Coast & Glens Council residents.
- Applications for funding which are considered to be the responsibility of another statutory organisation or Council fund.
- Retrospective expenditure where projects have started, or services/items have already been obtained and paid.
- Applications where the applicant will have a personal financial benefit.
- Costs that are not auditable e.g., Cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system.
- Core running costs including overheads such as electricity, rent, rates, membership fees and annual premises and organisational insurance. Electricity costs may be eligible where the supply is specifically for the festival on site.
- Staff salaries - however, where staff are specifically festival-related, Council may consider allowing a proportion of basic salary costs. This must be discussed with Council staff before submission of an application. Staff costs may amount to no more than 10% of total costs and may be capped at the discretion of the assessment panel.
- Festival management / organising fees: professional and consultancy fees.

- Purchase of equipment;
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt.
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g., VAT.
- Alcohol and food costs (excluding selection boxes)
- Gratuities and prizes.
- Provision for depreciation of assets used in the festival; corporation taxation; capital expenditure e.g., equipment such as computers, digital cameras etc.
- Charitable donations;
- Any costs not approved by the assessment panel.

1.7 Exclusions

In general, the following will not normally be eligible for funding from the Christmas Festive Fund: -

- Individuals
- Groups operating outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area
- Organisations with charitable fundraising as their main focus
- Organisations who have substantial, demonstrable reserves
- Political Organisations

1.8 Infrastructure / Equipment Hire

If you wish to hire infrastructure / equipment from Council, a request must be made to our Estates Department. This includes items such as crowd barriers, event bins, staging units etc. Whilst Council will endeavor to facilitate requests, it is not guaranteed that all requests can be met due to operational needs. Costs will be associated with the hire of equipment / infrastructure.

If you are granted the use of equipment, you are responsible for collecting and returning what you hire. When your group makes a request for hiring Council equipment, you will be required to provide contact details for a member of your group who will be the nominated person(s) who are responsible for the equipment.

As an event organiser, you do not have to hire Council equipment. You can utilize private hire equipment companies. Eligible costs include equipment hire.

If you would like to hire equipment from Council, please email estates.helpdesk@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

1.9 Cancellation / Postponement of Event

There may be occasions when your event must be cancelled or postponed. This could be due to adverse weather conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to notify the correct personnel within the Council of any cancellations or postponements.

You must notify the relevant departments in Council in the first instance, before publicly advertising any alternative dates or cancellations.

PLEASE NOTE: It is not guaranteed that if your group suggests an alternative date to run your event from the original submission date, that it can be facilitated – it will be dictated by operational requirements at the time.

You must:

1. Contact the Estates Supervisor in your area. The Estates Team facilitates the switching on of lights. (Below is a list of towns & villages across the Borough) It is your responsibility to ensure that you contact the correct person in your area.
2. Contact **all three** of the following departments, describing the reasons why your event cannot take place on the original date.
 - Estates Team estates.helpdesk@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
 - Funding Team grants@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
 - Events Team events@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Area	Estates Supervisor Contact
Coleraine & Surrounding Areas	Andy Scott andy.scott@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Ballymoney, Ballycastle & Surrounding Areas	Alastair Campbell alastair.campbell@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Limavady & surrounding areas	Stephen Proctor stephen.proctor@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dates of your Event

On application, you are required to provide a date for when your outdoor event is taking place.

You must not change the date of your event or publicise this change, without prior consultation with the Funding Team, Estates Team and Events Team. If you wish to change the date of your event and the reason IS NOT due to cancellation or

postponement, but is due to an operational need, you must do so within 6 weeks of the date of your new event date.

PLEASE NOTE: It is not guaranteed that if your group suggests an alternative date to run your event from the original submission date, that it can be facilitated – it will be dictated by operational requirements at the time.

2.0 How to answer the questions

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens for 2025 should be submitted online at <https://grants.ccgbcapps.com/>

Guidance on completing the application online is provided on the web-site link. Hard copies can be made available.

Please contact the Central Funding Unit on email:
grants@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Questions:

Q1. Date of Event

Q2. Please select the District Electoral Area where the event will take place.

Ballymoney	
The Glens	
Causeway Coast	
Coleraine	
Bann	
Benbradagh	
Limavady	

Q3. What Town/Village/Settlement is your event taking place

Q4. Please confirm that your event is outdoors

Q5. Please provide a brief description of your event, include the number who will benefit and the date of the event.

(Please note, you must not change the date of your event from your original application date or publicise this change, without prior consultation with the Funding Team, Estates Team and Events Team.)

Q6. How will you ensure your event is open to all people in your community?

Q7. Please list a full breakdown of the total costs involved in your project. *(Please see 1.5 & 1.6 of the guidance notes for full details of eligible costs).*

Q8. Please upload:

- A fully completed Risk Assessment Plan (**mandatory for all applicants**) (template provided in Appendix 2).
- An Event Safety Management Plan, where applicable (see guidance below)
- If you are an applicant for **Fund A** (up to £2,500) and deem your event as a large scale celebration, you are **required** to complete an Event Safety Management Plan.
- If you are an applicant for **Fund B** (up to £750) and deem your event as a large-scale celebration, you are **encouraged** to complete an Event Safety Management Plan.

You can use the template Event Safety Management Plan, which is also downloadable within the application form.

How we assess and score your application

Every application that is received requesting a Christmas Festive Fund Grant will be assessed for the following:

- To ensure that the organisation is eligible to apply to this particular Grant Programme
- For reassurance of each organisation's capability to deliver the proposal, and
- How well the activity involves wider community involvement, proposal meets community needs and contributes to Council's Strategic Priorities.

An acknowledgement receipt will be electronically issued to you once your submission has been received. The Funding Unit will assess your application for eligibility. If your application is eligible to apply for grant aid, it will be forwarded to the relevant section for a full assessment and scoring against the stated criteria.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

The assessments in respect of Part 1 of the application are awarded a pass or fail eligibility rating.

If the organisation, based on the information supplied, can satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant, they will progress to the next part of the process.

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

If your application is not eligible, you will be notified immediately and the reasons will be outlined to you, if your application is deemed ineligible, it will not proceed to assessment and scoring.

3.3 Assessment and Scoring

Each application will be assessed and scored against the criteria listed below.

Please provide a brief description of your event, including the expected number of people who will benefit and the date of the event.

Criterion	Pass / Fail
Evidence of a developed outdoor project; with a date within the scope of the advertised fund (activity to take place between Saturday 28th November and Wednesday 16th December 2026)	
Suitable planning for events with a sufficiently completed If required Risk Assessment supplied and Event Management Plan (<i>If applicable</i>)	
Town/village/ settlement with a population of over 100 or who have been allocated a Christmas Tree from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	
Confirmation of Outdoor Event	
Provide a full itemized breakdown of costs	

Criterion	Score (0-5)	Weight	Possible Score
Description of event: Outdoors, marks lighting of tree or turning on of lights, wide community involvement.		X4	20

3.4 How decisions are made

When the assessment scores are finalised, the applications will be presented to the Leisure and Development Committee for consideration and recommendation to full Council for approval. It will be at this point, that the successful/unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

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 any funding is released.)

Based on Council's payment procedures, an advanced payment between 75%-100% of the grant will be awarded upfront, Council will make payments directly into your nominated bank account. The remaining grant will be paid once all required documentation is received and verified by Council.

3.6 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?

If an application is not successful officers from the Council will be available to meet with the organisation to go through their application, develop a working relationship and provide practical developmental support to address areas of concern.

An Appeals Process / Review Procedure is also available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed by Committees for individual applications 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 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.

3.8 Late applications

Applications received after the closing time/date will not be considered for funding. No exceptions will be made and there is no recourse to appeal.

3.9 Use of Council Land

Please Note: If you wish to use Council land to hold an event, you must submit a Request to Use Council Land to Land and Property section in Council in writing at least eight weeks before the proposed event. To hold a large-scale event e.g., a concert, your application should be submitted at least six months in advance.

To request permission to use council property or land for an event click on the link below:

www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/land-and-property

or contact the Council's Land and Property Section,

Telephone: 028 7034 7174/7075 or email:

landand.property@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Appendix 1

General Data Protection Regulations

- 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.

Funding Unit holds personal information on an electronic management system and/or in hard copy for the purpose of administering Councils grants process in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough. As a public authority, Council takes your rights and freedoms seriously and will only release information when required under law or with your consent.

Further information about your rights, how to contact the Data Protection Officer and how long information is held or how we process any payments made can be found at:
<https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/footer-information/privacy-statement>

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 [Northern Ireland office | ICO](#)

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

All applications will be in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; without prejudice, promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, different political beliefs/opinion, different sexual orientation and different racial groups.

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a suitable and sufficient assessment, by an organiser, of risks to the health and safety of their employees and of any persons arising out of or in connection with the conduct of them by an event, for the purpose of identifying the preventative and protective measures they may reasonably take to limit the risks.

Preventative and protective measures are to be based on these principles:

- Avoiding risks
- Evaluating risks which cannot be avoided
- Combating risks at source
- Adapting to technical progress
- Replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or the less dangerous
- Giving collective, protective measures priority over individual protective measures
- Giving appropriate instructions

Please see below a sample Risk Assessment Template for Community Events, however, this is not exhaustive and is for illustrative purposes only. Please ensure that any risk assessment submitted adheres to current Covid guidelines:

Event		Location / Premises / Site		
Date	Review Date	Assessed by	Approved by	
Who might be harmed?	Employees ☒	Contractors ☒	Public ☒	
General Controls: All Event Organisers must maintain good housekeeping ; Avoid trip hazards e.g., Maintain a rolling risk assessment of each site. Always carry out a visual inspection of all equipment looking for defects – DO NOT USE FAULTY EQUIPMENT ; Always use equipment as per manufactures/hirers instructions and according to its purpose; The event areas must be for the event and suitable controls implemented as per HSE conditions; All relevant risk assessments will be complied with.				

GENERAL				
Hazards / Risk	Existing Controls (Change to suit your event or write N/A if required).	Initial Risk		
		High	Med	Low
1. Outside Event.	In a safe location, away from live traffic.			
2. Programming	Singing, dancing, etc.			

3. Toilets / Cleaners	Cleaning up of site before, during and after event.			
4. Stewards	Stewards to safely monitor crowds and assist with ingress/egress.			
LOCATION				
Hazards / Risk	Existing Controls	Initial Risk		
		High	Med	Low
5. Location	Brief description of site required and any dangers. Eg. Near a road.			
6. Time/ Duration of Event				
The Venue or Event Space				
Hazards / Risk	Existing Controls	Initial Risk		
		High	Med	Low
7. Crowd capacity and movement				
8. Site location/design				
9. Access/egress including emergency access/egress				
10. Evacuation of site	In an emergency explain how you will evacuate the site.			
11. Parking				

Other Considerations				
Hazards / Risk	Existing Controls	Initial Risk		
		High	Med	Low
12. Noise control (both people on site and resultant noise pollution)				
13. Communications				
14. First aid/welfare; and	Depending on numbers First Aiders may be required.			
15. Signage				
16. Trip hazards				
17. Damage to hearing				
18. Electrical risk				
19. Fire				
20. Litter/refuse				

Site Construction

Attention should be paid to any temporary structures used in connection with an event that in the event of failure is likely to harm directly or indirectly members of the public. A competent company must be contracted to supply and erect any temporary structure e.g., marquee or stage. The company must provide the event organiser with a signing off certificate placing the safety of the construction and erection of the structure with the competent contractor and not the event organiser.

Electrical Installations

On the completion of installation of any temporary power supplies they are to be examined, tested and a certificate issued and signed by a competent and suitably qualified person.