

Volunteering Small Grant Programme 2026-2027 Guidance Notes

For activities from 1st April 2026 – 31st March 2027

Programme opens for applications on 23rd March 2026

This is a rolling grant programme. Applications will be considered on a regular basis. The Programme will close when the budget is fully allocated. Applications will be dealt with on a first come basis.

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1.0 Introduction

The Volunteer Small Grant Programme is available for local sporting and community organisations and is aimed at providing financial support to recruit, support and recognise volunteers.

If required, you can discuss your application with one of Council's Community Development or Sports Development Officers before submitting your application:

Sports Development Team – sportsdevelopment@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Community Development Team – community.development@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

1.1. Purpose of Grant Funding Programme

The Volunteering Small Grant Programme is designed to support voluntary sporting and community organisations contributing towards their key areas of expenditure. Grant applications should focus on areas of expenditure that support their volunteers so that they can undertake their roles to the best of their ability with the maximum impact.

This programme supports the recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. It aims to strengthen community capacity, encourage wider participation in volunteering, and support organisations to develop sustainable volunteer programmes.

1.2 Overview of Grant Funding Programme

Applicants to the grant programme must demonstrate how the grant will be used to meet any of the following objectives: -

Objective 1:

Increase volunteer activity by under-represented groups in the volunteering population:

- Those not in paid employment.
- Aged 65 and over.
- Under 25's.
- Those with a disability.
- Those from a racial / ethnic minority background.
- Any other section 75 groups relevant to the nature of your organisation

Objective 2:

To support existing volunteers or increase volunteering opportunities within their organisation e.g. provide training and/or mentoring for volunteers.

Objective 3:

Benefit to the local community e.g. provide more trained persons within the community or sporting organisations to maintain or improve the outcomes of the group.

1.3 Levels of grant award

Volunteering Small Grant Programme	Maximum Grant Amount
Council will consider 100% funding of total eligible costs up to a maximum of £500 for eligible applications from voluntary community/sporting organisations with an annual income not exceeding £100,000 per year(based on the organisation's most recent audited accounts)	£500

This is a competitive process, and all grant awards will be determined based on merit. Applicants are advised that success in securing Council funding in the past will not automatically guarantee funding in the future. 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 or if there are insufficient funds available to meet the request. Council also reserves the right to close the call at short notice depending on available funding. Organisations can only receive one award from the Volunteering Small Grant Programme, covering **1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027**.

Please Note: Applicants will have to provide all evidence requested once the application expenditure is complete. This must include receipts, bank statements, application outcomes, end of application Evaluation/or any other documentation deemed necessary. If requested documentation is not supplied, then final payments will be withheld or / and advanced payments will need to be repaid back to Council. Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.

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:

- Have a clearly identified need.
- Can deliver outcomes which meet this need.
- 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.

- 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.
- The programme and grant awards will be determined on applicants meeting the scoring threshold, and availability of funds for the grant. All applications must be completed in full and retrospective applications will not be considered i.e., the application must be submitted before the activity takes place.

1.5 Who Can Apply?

The Causeway Coast and Glens Volunteering Small Grant Programme is open to community & voluntary sector organisations, including sporting organisations. Applicant organisations must not have an annual income exceeding £100,000 per year.

To be eligible for grant-aid, you will have to show that your organisation is a bona fide community/ sporting 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.
- Organisations must demonstrate that they are well run. The initiatives in which they are seeking funding for must be inclusive, open to the whole community and adhere to democratic principles.

Council will consider up to 100% funding of total eligible costs up to a maximum of £500

If you are satisfied that you are eligible to apply, you **MUST** meet the following criteria:

- Be an organisation based in 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.
- 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 meet 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 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 including the project for which they are applying for

funding. 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 Safeguarding Children/ Safeguarding Adults policies 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.
- Where appropriate, evidence of satisfactory risk assessments and insurances must be provided on request.
- Agree to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's promotion, monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures as required.
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council retains the right to request any of the above-mentioned documentation at any stage of the grant process.

1.6 What can be funded?

Applicants can apply for grants of 100% of costs up to a maximum of £500 towards volunteer costs.

The types of expenditure that the grant can contribute towards include:

- Volunteer Recognition – to thank volunteers for their contribution to the organisation (e.g. volunteer thank you event or certificates)
- Volunteer recruitment – to recruit new volunteers for example, to develop a poster campaign or sponsored adverts.
- Travel - Travel on behalf of the organisation relevant to the volunteer role (mileage claim, public transport - all transport within NI)
- PPE – Protective clothing so the volunteer can carry out their role. (Gardening gloves, uniform items etc)
- Training – First aid training, safeguarding/ Access NI, food hygiene etc.

1.7 What cannot be funded?

In general, the following will not normally be eligible for funding through the Volunteering Small Grant Programme:

- Activities that do not directly benefit Causeway Coast & Glens Council residents.
- Activities that are considered to be the responsibility of another statutory organisation or Council fund.
- Retrospective expenditure where activities 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.
- General running costs of current activities (e.g., electricity, rent, insurance etc)
- Insurance
- Affiliation, entry or membership fees
- Publications, marketing, and websites (material not directly related to the recruitment of volunteers)
- Consultancy fees
- Travel outside Northern Ireland
- First aid kits / medical bags, defibrillators
- Capital building costs/ Office equipment/ furniture/ maintenance equipment.
- Secondary, further or higher education costs
- Entertainment costs, food or beverages – (capped at £250)
- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs.
- Fundraising Events
- Clothing – (branded clothing linked to volunteer role can be considered)
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt.
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g., VAT.
- Festivals - carnivals/ fundays/ parties/ commemorative/anniversary events
- Salary costs.
- Alcohol costs.
- Gratuities, gifts, and prizes.
- Leasing equipment
- Admission fees

1.8 Exclusions

In general, it is important to note that this funding programme will not normally award grants to the following:

- Individuals
- Groups operating outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area that do not benefit residents within the Council area.
- Organisations that are 'For-Profit'.
- Organisations with charitable fundraising as their main focus.
- Schools are not eligible to apply.
- Organisations who have substantial, demonstrable reserves
- Political Organisations
- Retrospective applications will not be considered.
- Applications must be compatible and in no way conflict with Council's Corporate Plan.

- Legal costs incurred by the recipient organisation in relation to this grant are not covered under the Letter of Offer.
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council support must be acknowledged prominently on all promotion of the grant awarded and grantee must agree to take part in any promotion of the grant as requested by Council.

2.0 How to answer the questions.

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens Volunteering Small Grant Programme 2026/2027 should be submitted online at <https://grants.ccgbcapps.com/>

Guidance on completing the application online is provided on the web-site link.

Please contact the Council's Central Funding Unit via email at grants@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

All questions must be completed AS FULLY AND CONCISELY AS POSSIBLE. Please see below for help in completing your application.

Q1 – Project Detail – Please provide details of how your volunteers contribute to the activities in your organisation.

Tell us about how your volunteers play a part in the regular activities of the organisation.

Q2 - Please provide a clear link to at least 1 of the 3 objectives for the grant programme as outlined in section 1.6 of the guidance notes. You should clearly detail how the project addresses the objective(s)?

Tell us how your project will address at least 1 of the 3 objectives (see section 1.2 above)

Q3 – Please provide a clear breakdown of the costs relating to your project in the costs table provided.

3.0 How we assess and score your application.

Every application that is received requesting a Volunteering Small Grant will be assessed for the following:

- to ensure that the organisation is eligible to apply to the Volunteering Small Grant Programme
- for reassurance of the organisation's capability to deliver the proposal, and

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 assessed and scoring against the stated criteria.

Timeline for grants process

1. Applications will be considered on rolling basis until the fund is spent. The Programme will close when the budget is fully allocated. Applications will be dealt with on a first come basis.
2. If successful, a Letter of Offer will be issued.
3. Payment for grants will be specified in the Letter of Offer.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

The assessments in respect of Part A of the application form are awarded a pass or fail eligibility rating. If the organisation, based on the information supplied is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant, they will progress to the next part of the process.

If the organisation, based on the information supplied, is not able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant from the fund, they will be advised of specific omissions / shortcomings and how these can be addressed to help prepare them for any future funding requests.

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

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

If an organisation is not eligible for funding through the Volunteering Small Grant Programme, organisations should contact the relevant contact email listed on page 3 who will try to help with signposting to alternative sources of funding.

If an organisation or its activities are deemed to be the responsibility of other Council Departments, statutory agencies, or voluntary bodies then you will be signposted to who you should apply to. If signposted elsewhere you will be required to complete and submit the relevant application form.

3.3 Assessment and Scoring

Assessment & Scoring

	Criteria	Score awarded out of 5	Weighting	Possible Score
1	Project Detail – Please provide details of how your volunteers contribute to the activities in your organisation		X4	20
2	Please provide a clear link to at least 1 of the 3 objectives for the grant programme as outlined in section 1.2 of the guidance notes. You should clearly detail how the project addresses the objective(s)?		X6	30
	Total			50

Applicants must score at least 65% in order to avail of funding

3.4 How decisions are made.

Council has agreed a £20,000 budget for this Grant Programme, £10k of which is for Community and Voluntary Organisations and £10k for Sport and Wellbeing Organisations. The programme will remain open throughout the year until the budget is expended. Council Officers will assess and score the applications at various times throughout the year. Contact the Funding Unit for advice on when the next assessments will take place. This will help you plan your application to ensure that grant-aid is awarded in time, should you be successful. When the scores are finalised, the Funding Unit will inform you of the decision within 7 days of your application being scored.

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. The payment details of the grant will be outlined within the Letter of Offer.

Signed Letters of Offer must be accepted within 14 days of the award being issued.

Successful applicants are required to provide monitoring and evaluation information as outlined in the Letter of Offer. Officers may discuss the monitoring information with the groups that were funded and with some of the people who have benefited from the community activity.

3.6 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?

Officers from the relevant service unit will be available to discuss why the application was unsuccessful, to 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 assessment panels 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.

Council can only approve one application per organisation in any financial year

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 in respect of the financial year and to apply a moratorium on Council funding to any group or individual member of a group where fraudulent activity has been identified within the current financial year and for at least two forthcoming financial years. This also applies to individuals applying or claiming for bursaries.

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 any advertised time and date of closing. 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. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure submission on time.

Appendix 1

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.

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 exemptions 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