

Guidance Notes

The grant fund is open to community and voluntary organisations, social enterprises, outreach projects, charities and local support groups and wellbeing initiatives, aimed at providing awards for equipment, activities, outreach, local services and community improvement projects.

The community grant scheme is our way of giving back to our communities, with a specific focus on creating activities and services that enhance inclusion and wellbeing.

Purpose

The grant fund will look to prioritise small-scale organisations and grassroots bodies, with a strong local and community presence, within our common bond.

Applications for funding must meet at least one or more of the following outcomes:

1. Improved inclusivity
2. Improved wellbeing
3. Improved community engagement
4. Reduced social isolation and loneliness

Outcomes

We would like to see applications that:

- Clearly define in their application how the grant fund will improve involvement within their community
- Work to improve inclusivity and wellbeing, either through new or existing projects
- Outline in their applications how the funding will help the project meet its goals, and improve relations in the community
- If for an existing project, outline how the grant money would help elevate, or continue the existing project

Area

Organisations who apply to the scheme, must be registered within our common bond, and the work must be undertaken within our common bond. This means the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and North and Central Essex. This excludes the districts of Basildon, Castlepoint, Thurrock and Southend.

Timeline

The fund opens on Monday 14th September 2026 and closes for applications on 31st December 2026.

We will not accept applications after this time, and reserve the right to close applications early, if sufficient applications are received.

A grant panel will meet monthly to consider applications throughout the application process.

Notifying you of a decision – Refusals

We will aim to inform you of a decision within seven days of the decision being made.

We will inform you in writing, Due to the expected high number of applications, no reason for refusal shall be given.

Notifying you of a decision – Approvals

We will aim to inform you of a decision within seven days of the decision being made.

We will inform you in writing, including information on next steps.

You will be required to provide us within six months of the grant issuance, a short paragraph on how the grant has helped you reach or contribute to your project. This will be shared on our website and socials.

We may request a photo, this will not be mandated.

How much funding is available

Grants are offered between £100 to £250. We are particularly keen to hear from;

- Those who understand how their idea would improve connections in their communities, alongside wellbeing and inclusion
- Those who can provide insight into how a grant award will positively impact their communities

There is a total funding pot of £2,000. Where applicable, match funding is encouraged but not a requirement.

Who we cannot fund

- Applications from groups operating for profit
- Applications from businesses
- Applications from, or on behalf of individuals or families
- Organisations whose head office is not located within our common bond, and who would not use the grant in full within our common bond
- Organisations who support, or intend to support or oppose any political party, or discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation

What we will not fund

- Applications to cover day to day running and staff costs
- Any activity which would not be undertaken in full within our common bond
- Events which promote political or religious beliefs
- Retrospective funding for costs already occurred, or events already happened
- Sponsorships
- VAT

Timeline for spending funding

- Any successful grant award must be spent within six months of issue
- Funding can only be used for the purpose specified in the application
- If funds are not able to be used within the timeframe, or for the original purpose, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss. We may request funds are returned

Completing and submission of an application

Please ensure you complete the application in full. Failure to answer all questions may result in your application being rejected.

Please ensure you review your application in full, any omission of any information can lead to delays in consideration of your application, and create additional work for our team and you.

On receipt of an application, you will receive an email confirming receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within five working days, please contact us.

Contacting Us

If you have any questions, please email: office@eslcu.co.uk.