Huntingdonshire District Council Community Chest 2026-27 Grant Funding Criteria

Applicants should read these funding criteria thoroughly as applications not meeting the criteria will not be considered.

The 2026-27 Community Chest grant scheme is now open. The scheme welcomes applications from community groups and organisations who would like to help Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) achieve the following priorities set out within the council's Corporate Plan:

- Improving the quality of life and well-being for everyone, particularly:
  - Encouraging physical activity
  - Supporting social connections across communities
- Keeping people out of crisis
- Helping people in crisis
- Lowering carbon emissions

Successful applicants are required to demonstrate the social return on investment of their project. For example, a scheme may find that a £1 investment from a Community Chest Grant creates a £2 return in areas of preventative health outcomes. HDC will assist successful applicants with calculating social return on investment using the "Social Value Engine" tool.

The criteria are as follows:

1. The Community Chest is open for applications with immediate effect.
2. Applications will be considered by the panel monthly. In circumstances where it is necessary to cancel a panel meeting or postpone decision-making, applications will be heard at the next available opportunity on a first-come first serve basis.
3. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within 7 days of a decision being made by the panel.
4. There is no closing date for applications. Once the fund has been fully allocated, the Community Chest will close, and this will be confirmed on our website.
5. Applications must be for projects that are based in Huntingdonshire, and where the significant majority of beneficiaries are Huntingdonshire residents.

6. If successful, applicants must provide any data requested by HDC to demonstrate the social value of the investment.
7. Groups or organisations must demonstrate how the project seeking funding aims to address one or more of the priorities set out within the HDC Corporate Plan (listed above).
8. No precepting authorities, private individuals or commercial organisations are eligible to apply for funding. Town and parish councils may only apply for funding to support Community Spaces - see notes below.
9. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate that the organisation to which the application relates has a dedicated bank account.
10. Applicants are welcome to submit more than one application within a 12-month period as long as the funding requested is to be used on different projects and/or initiatives - not a repeat of the same or a similar project.
11. The maximum amount of funding that can be applied for is:
    a) £800 for Community Spaces (see notes below)
    b) £1,000 (or 20% of the total event cost, whichever is lower) for community events (see notes below) and
    c) £2,500 for longer-term projects.
12. Applicants must provide a breakdown of how the amount requested will be spent.
13. Applicants must demonstrate the sustainability of their project, either in the form of financial self-sufficiency, alternative funding streams or an exit strategy at the end of the project.
14. Grants will not be awarded to projects that promote or oppose any particular political party or religion, or discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
15. If your application is unsuccessful, please do not resubmit the same application unless you have received feedback and been invited to do so.
16. If completing the project costs more than the amount requested, applicants must demonstrate where they have secured, or intend to secure, the remainder of the funding required.
17. We encourage applicants to consider match-funding from other grant-giving bodies, business sponsorship or the organisation's own reserves.
18. Activities that offer free participation will be prioritised for funding.
19. Activities that promote and support volunteering will be prioritised for funding.

20. Applicants must demonstrate, where possible, that they are not duplicating a similar project covering the same area of the district.
21. On completing the funded project, all applicants must complete a brief evaluation to demonstrate the impact that the funding has had, along with copies of receipts upon request. Any unspent funds, or funds that were used for a different purpose to that which the grant was awarded, must be returned to HDC within 30 days of request.
22. Successful applicants must agree to HDC requests for media coverage relating to the project.
23. Grants awarded do not imply tacit successful applications in future years.
24. Funding must be used within 6 months of application. If a grant remains unpaid after 9 months, HDC will contact the applicant to confirm if it is still required. Where no response is received, the funding will be either:
    a) assumed to be no longer required and the award will be cancelled, or
    b) the application will be referred to the Grants Panel for reconsideration.

Community Spaces Funding

HDC recognises that many residents continue to face unprecedented financial hardship. HDC also recognises that the social aspects of Community Spaces are just as important as providing somewhere warm or cool for people to congregate. For the purposes of this grant, a Community Space refers to an indoor, regularly available venue providing warmth or cooling, social connection, practical support or wellbeing activities for local residents (e.g. Warm Hubs). This funding is not intended for outdoor spaces, general recreational areas, or open green spaces such as parks.

Where an existing Community Space can be demonstrated to have had a significant positive impact, HDC welcomes applications of up to £800 per year to help keep these facilities and activities open. Applications will be considered from charities, community groups, town and parish councils and faith organisation. However, the facility and activity must be actively marketed to the wider local population. Applicable costs must be specifically linked to the Community Space provision.

All other criteria for Community Chest funding also apply, except that Community Spaces funding is also open to town and parish councils.

Community Events

HDC will consider applications to support community events up to £1000, or 20% of the total event cost, whichever is lower. Community events are defined as lasting for less than four days. To be eligible they must be free to attend, free to take part and open to everyone. Applications for repeat events/ activities will not be considered. All other criteria for Community Chest funding also apply.

Examples

The following examples illustrate grant applications that were successful, and unsuccessful, in previous years.

Successful	**Unsuccessful**
Furniture, equipment and white goods	Salaries, expenses, professional fees and refreshments
Contributions towards building work to tackle heating and cooling community buildings	Core running costs of an organisation, including premises
Contributions towards technology to reduce the carbon footprint and reduce utility bills of community buildings	Energy and utility bills
Marquees, banners and signs for one-off events offering free activities to the public	First aid staffing, insurance, equipment hire and other running costs intrinsic in event planning
One-off purchase of sports equipment for a new group offering free activities to the public	Personal attire, such as uniforms or sports kits
One-off purchase of equipment that will be available free to the public to create and maintain green spaces	Pre-project costs
Projects that are awaiting confirmation of match funding from other organisations	Goods or services that have already been purchased

Social Value" Engine Tool

HDC has procured the Social Value Engine, a tool that produces Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis using a library of over 650 UK financial proxies. Assurance verifies that an accredited practitioner checks the proxies chosen and the methodology applied, so the resulting ratio is defensible. Most social value platforms track commitments through a procurement process. The Social Value Engine tracks change and impact through the Public Outcomes Lifecycle: understanding what a place needs, hearing from the people who live there, measuring what happened, and learning from the result.