

COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND 2026-27

INFORMATION EVENT

Welcome from St Albans City & District Council and Communities 1st

- **Peggy Sharp**

Community Engagement, Equality and Grants Officer, St Albans City and District Council

- **Kelly Wright**

Voluntary Sector and Community Partnerships Manager,
Communities 1st

- **Isobel Hatfield**

Partnerships and Engagement Coordinator, Communities 1st

Funding Streams

- **Strategic Fund** - key partners
- **Community Project Fund** - for time-limited projects which meet community needs and help reach the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy priorities

Key Information

How much?

Grants will be between £200-£2000

Two stage process:

- Expression of Interest to check if you meet the criteria and fit in with the grant priorities.
- If you do meet the criteria, you will be sent a link to the Full application within 5 days

Dates:

Summer Applications: Expression of Interest form open from **Thursday 21 May 2026**. The last date for receipt of applications is midnight **Sunday 7 June 2026**

Round 1 (for activities from September 2026): Expression of Interest form open from **Monday 8 June 2026**. The last date for receipt of applications is midnight **Sunday 26 July 2026**

There will be a second round opening in September 2025 and possibly a third round in January 2026 depending on funding allocation in the two previous rounds.

When do you hear?

Within 6 weeks from the closing date. (earlier for summer applications)

Who can and can't apply?



Social Enterprise Organisations/
Community Interest Companies (Company Limited by Guarantee model)



Constituted Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations



Groups who do not have a constitution, bank account and management committee/ trustees or a full year's accounts



Statutory organisations such as Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and Schools, (this includes Parent Teacher Associations making applications for projects that will only benefit a particular school community)



Organisations outside St Albans City and District and who do not serve the needs of those living, working, or studying in the district



Organisations whose purpose is to give out funding to other groups.



Private companies and individuals

What can be funded?

What is it for?

Projects and activities supporting the above priorities which allow vulnerable and seldom heard (previously called 'hard to reach') people in the District to enjoy community life and be included.

This could include sports, arts, music, outdoor activities, or social groups.



Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Priorities

Improving accessible communication – ensuring information shared across the district can be understood and accessed by all communities

Reducing digital exclusion – supporting residents who don't have access to digital devices, or who may struggle to use them confidently.

Engaging children and young people – helping them feel involved, able to access services, and empowered to influence change.

Building an Age Friendly District – creating opportunities for older residents to have a voice and take part in local services.

The Application Form:

Key Questions

Key Points

Service users/ beneficiaries should be involved in the planning and design of the project wherever possible



Did they write it, help to put the project together?

Projects must meet one of the priorities



Do not try to 'shoe-horn' an existing project into a priority, work from how you can meet the priority

Projects can be for a small number of vulnerable people or a bigger group



The important thing is to evidence the difference it will make to beneficiaries

Meeting the priorities

Improving accessible communication- Explain how your project will help people to find out about services, whether it's health information or council services - it might be producing materials in Easy Read or supporting people for whom English isn't their first language

Reducing digital exclusion – Explain how your project will support residents to get access to digital devices, or need help to use them confidently, whether that's through training or peer support

Engaging children and young people –not just activities for young people but ways to give them a voice in designing services and decision making .

Building an Age Friendly District – again not just activities for older people but projects that are co-produced, give a voice and enable people to enjoy older life.

Previous Recipients



Redbourn Rovers Football Club Supporting children and young people to take part in grassroots football promoting personal development, social inclusion and improving health outcomes. **Awarded £1,700**



Harpenden Mencap Training and support to empower people with learning disabilities to increase their digital confidence, to stay connected to friends, and perform essential online tasks such as shopping, banking and arranging medical appointments with increased independence. **Awarded £2000**



Sandridge Road Allotment Association. A cabin for workshops, shelter and social activities. Enabling ploholders with reduced physical capacity or a change in circumstances continue their vegetable gardening **Awarded £500**



The Adda Club. Community Connections-A quarterly paper newsletter for the South Asian Community, with articles on council and local health services, healthy eating and social opportunities. **Awarded £2000**

Your Budget

- Projects need to demonstrate value for money.
- List all the individual costs associated with the project and you must total the costs.
- **Grants may only be awarded for part of the requested amount. Please cost up your project, rather than trying to make your project fit the grant amount.**
- **Don't just apply for £2,000.**

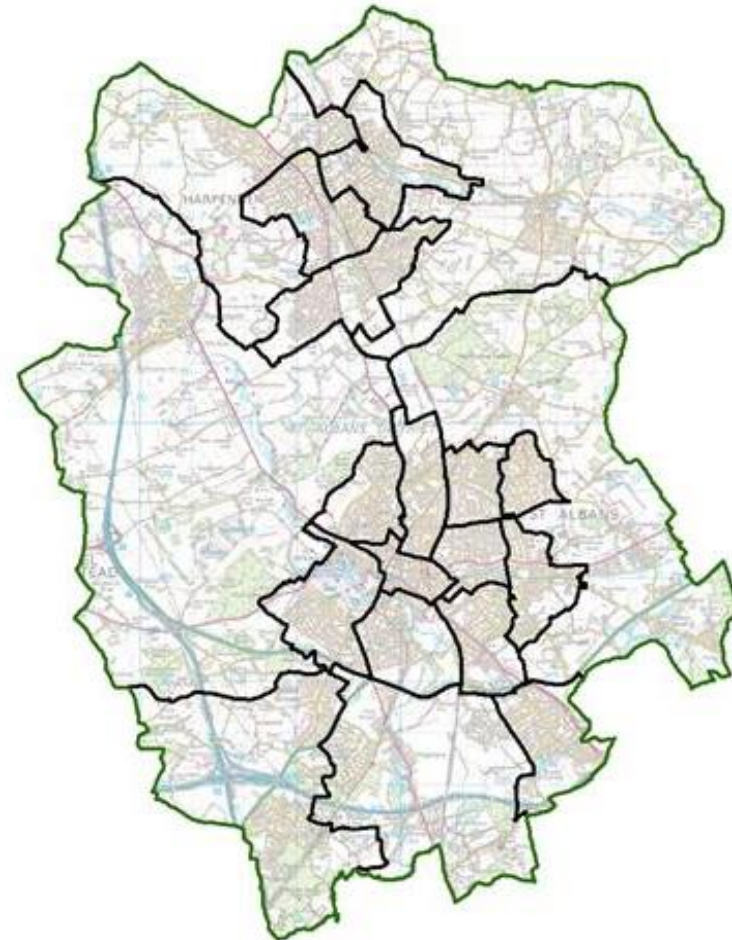
Minibus Hire 3 days (£100 per day) £300.00
Petrol 3 Trips of 20 miles @45p per mile) £ 27.00
Volunteer Driver – 3 days (worth £300) £ 0.00
15 Adults entrance to Zoo (15 x 10) £150.00
15 Adults entrance to pier (15 x £2) £ 30.00
15 Adults talk at museum (15 x £4) £ 60.00
Carers on 3 trips (negotiated - free) £ 0.00
Meal at café paid for by members £ 0.00
Volunteer escorts – 10 x 6 hours x 3days (worth £2000) £ 0.00
Volunteer organiser – 50 hours (worth £600) £ 0.00

Total Cost £ 567.00

Your Beneficiaries

Who are the beneficiaries and where are they from? Why do SADC need to know who the project is for?

It is helpful for SADC to know who is benefitting from the grant in the District. This can help us understand where there are gaps in our funding and to make sure everyone has equal opportunity to participate in community life.



Your Beneficiaries: Service user involvement in the application

- How you know people in the community want or need the project/activities?
- How have your service users/beneficiaries been involved in making this application?
- How have they shaped the proposed project?
- Have they helped to write the application?

Volunteers and service users took part in a survey to choose what activities they would like to take part in as part of the project.

“I really liked completing the application form and learned a lot. I’d like to do more in the future”

The Users Committee came to us with a problem they wanted to fix and we shaped the project around it.

A long-standing service user helped to complete the application, whilst another was able to put together a draft budget with support of the Treasurer.

The difference your project will make

Examples of good answers

Outcome - Older people are aware of services and activities that they previously did not know about

What will you do to achieve this - We will include a broad cross section of organisations offering activities and services to older people with a requirement that all are accessible by phone

How will you measure it - We will use qualitative and quantitative data from feedback from recipients and partner organisations whose information we include to report on the impact of the project.

Outcome - 85 people will have the opportunity to be involved with their community.

What will you do to achieve this - By enabling the service users to meet their friends through one-to-one opportunities and enabling them to access the activities and the club safely.

How will you measure it - By talking to the service users and carers, questionnaires and how many people are accessing the activities.

Safeguarding

Examples of good answers

If someone makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse the scheme will follow the Hertfordshire County Councils SAFA, Safeguarding Adults from Abuse.

We have comprehensive and well-established safeguarding policies and procedures. These include clear protocols and systems in place for our staff and team should we identify that a person is at risk or in danger of significant harm.

If a volunteer is told something they have concerns about they are encouraged to inform the co-ordinator who will escalate the matter to the Named Person within the organisation, who will if needed contact HCC Safeguarding Board.

We have clear processes in place for referring any potential child protection issues to the relevant authorities, and all of our Trustees and key staff members have undertaken an enhanced DBS and safeguarding training.

Equality and Inclusion

Examples of good answers

We provide the opportunity for individuals of all abilities, of all faiths, race, gender, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation to take part. We promote the events across all groups in the district.

We reduce isolation of individuals with a disability/additional needs. This includes providing the opportunity for people to meet each other and to make friends and support each other too.

As part of the ethos of the events across the entire group of participants, coaches, volunteers, parents, carers, friends, siblings, we talk at the beginning of the event and at the end about respect and understanding people's differences.

We work closely with referrers to ensure that our service can support when needed and there is no discrimination.

We do not charge for any of our services, which keeps them open and accessible to all, regardless of background.

We have an inclusion, equality and diversity forum.

We ensure venues are accessible and near to public transport links and encourage parents/carers to bring the individuals where possible so everyone is included.

Financial Information

- Accounts including a Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Account (also known as Profit and Loss Account) for the last financial year.
- If accounts are over 9 months old, a Trading Statement or Management Accounts for the period since the last set of accounts bringing the position as up to date as possible.
- Balance Sheet for last financial year.
- Notes to the financial statements for last financial year.
- Your organisations bank statements for the last 3 months.
- If the above, particularly 1&2 is a serious challenge for very small organisations, bank statements may be acceptable if they show a pattern of sustainability.
- **Clarity & quality of information is most important.** Avoid items in accounts with a description of 'Other'. The more detail that can be presented helps save time with the process and enhances transparency.

Getting Help

Communities 1st Support and Guidance

1. Read SADC's guidance document & Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and follow carefully
2. Review SADC's priorities versus your aims
3. Start writing your application and get in touch for advice and support as early as possible
4. Have a clear project plan, not just a vision. Explain clearly why the project is needed and how you researched this.
5. Detail the impact your project will make, the outcomes you are aiming for that will make the difference in the SADC community.
6. Cost your budget , don't just apply for £2000

The process

If your Expression of Interest is approved, you will receive a link to a full application.

We advise you do not complete the online form until you have sent a draft (in word to Communities 1st) to **stalbangrants@communities1st.org.uk**

Communities 1st will review your application and offer guidance.

Submit your final application on the online form by the closing date

More groups have successful applications if they work with Communities 1st first!

Summary



Key Information

How much?

Grants will be between £200-£2000

Two stage process:

- Expression of Interest to check if you meet the criteria and fit in with the grant priorities.
- If you do meet the criteria, you will be sent a link to the Full application within 5 days

Dates:

Summer Applications: Expression of Interest form open from **Thursday 21 May 2026**. The last date for receipt of applications is midnight **Sunday 7 June 2026**

Round 1 (for activities from September 2026): Expression of Interest form open from **Monday 8 June 2026**. The last date for receipt of applications is midnight **Sunday 26 July 2026**

There will be a second round opening in September 2026 and possibly a third round in January 2027 depending on funding allocation in the two previous rounds.

When do you hear?

Within 6 weeks from the closing date. (earlier for summer applications)

Thank you for attending!

Any questions?