

St Albans City & District Community Grants Project Fund 2026-27 Criteria and Guidance

EARLY ROUND - Summer Projects 2026 ROUND 1- Projects from September 2026 onwards

It is important that you read these notes before starting your application. Everything you need to know about applying for Community Project Fund can be found in this document or links provided.

There is one grant stream available for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in St Albans City and District in 2026-27. The Community Project Fund aims to provide Voluntary and Community Groups with a funding opportunity, to support the delivery of time-limited projects and activities which meet community need.

Amount of funding:	Groups can apply for grants over £200 and under £2,000.
Two stage process	You need to submit an Expression of Interest to check if you meet the criteria and fit in with the grant priorities. Link to the Summer Projects 2026 Expression of Interest Form is here If you meet the criteria, you will be invited to complete a full application form and will be sent a link to the form within 5 working days. Please note- invitation to complete a full application is not guarantee of funding.
Application dates for EARLY ROUND (Summer Projects)	Applications are open from Thursday 21 May 2026 . The last date for receipt of full applications is midnight Sunday 7 June 2026
Application dates for ROUND 1 (Projects from September 2026 onwards)	Applications are open from Monday 8 June 2026 . The last date for receipt of full applications is midnight Sunday 26 July 2026
There will be a ROUND 2 opening in September/October 2026 and possibly a third round in January 2026 depending on funding allocation in the two previous rounds.	
When will you hear?	EARLY ROUND -Summer applications- Applicants will be informed on the outcome of their application by end June 2026 ROUND 1 - Applicants will be informed on the outcome of their application by end August 2026
All projects should be completed by 31 March 2026.	

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed project will help reach one of the following priorities identified by the St Albans City & District Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Partnership

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.

What can be funded:

- 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.
- Projects and activities can be time limited (e.g., over a school holiday) or can run over a longer period (e.g., once a week).
- 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.
- Service users/beneficiaries should be involved in the planning and design of the project wherever possible.

What cannot be funded:

- Applications for funding which replaces or duplicates existing funding.
- Retrospective funding (i.e., grants for projects/activities that have already happened).
- Contributions towards large general fundraising appeals e.g., £2,000 towards a £50,000 project.
- Commercial ventures.
- Applications exclusively for items- please link a request for an item to an activity- e.g., Art materials for an art project.
- Services/activities that promote one particular faith or religious belief (the fund could support a faith group that is delivering something that is inclusive and open to all).
- Applications that support the furtherance of any one political party.

Who can apply:

- Constituted Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (organisations do not have to be registered charities).

- Social Enterprise Organisations/Community Interest Companies (Company Limited by Guarantee model).
- Groups who are registered as a good cause on St Albans District Community Lottery. Note: this is not a requirement. We welcome applications from groups who choose not to be part of the Community Lottery.
- We welcome applications from organisations that are new in the District/have not been funded by SADC before. Evidence of need, understanding of the District and willingness to work in partnership will be assessed. Note: new organisations may need to submit additional financial information and if successful, will be required to meet SADC Officers in person before payment is processed. Applications may also be referred to SADC Internal Audit if deemed necessary.

Who cannot apply:

- Organisations in receipt of SADC Strategic Funding.
- Groups which do not have a full year's accounts available.
- Private companies and individuals.
- Community groups which do not have a constitution, bank account and management committee/trustees.
- Statutory organisations or groups controlled by public sector 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 whose purpose is to give out funding to other groups; the grant must be used by the applying organisation.
- Organisations operating outside St Albans City and District which do not serve the needs of those living, working, or studying in the District.

We will consider applications that:

- Meet the funding criteria.
- Demonstrate how they contribute to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (which can be found [here](#)) and the above priorities.
- Have specific, realistic and deliverable outcomes which will meet an identified, evidenced need.
- Can demonstrate that service users have been involved in making the application or if not applicable, that service users' needs have been fully considered.
- Are fixed term projects (to be completed by 31 March 2027).
- Are previously SADC grant funded projects *if* learning from the project has been applied and applicants can demonstrate added benefit and value and propose new development to enhance users' experience. For example, introduction of new/tailored activities, outreach work to encourage new participants, upskilling management committees/volunteers, work to engage

more volunteers.

- Provide value for money.
- Have a demonstrable impact for the residents of the District.
- Have a clear strategy for sustaining the activity after the initial period.
- Request funding between £200 and £2,000.

Please Note: If your organisation is national/county-wide or operates outside the District, you must clearly demonstrate how your project will meet the needs of people living within St Albans City and District

Application Process:

Read the Funding Criteria section to ensure your project meets the criteria

Complete an Expression of Interest Form - please note, this is an online Microsoft form you will not be able to return to this form, so make sure you have drafted your answers beforehand

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed project will help reach *one* of the priorities identified by the St Albans City & District Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Partnership and our wider inclusion priorities or Age Friendly and Health outcomes.

Demonstrate with examples how your project will meet the specified priority.

Priority	Example
Improving accessible communication – ensuring information shared across the district can be understood and accessed by all communities.	Reduce the isolation of 10 women for whom English is not their first language by providing access to English language workshops Producing Easy Read material on community activities for people with Learning Disabilities
Reducing digital exclusion – supporting residents who don't have access to digital devices, or who may struggle to use them confidently.	Increase 20 older people's access to services by providing workshops to develop computer skills. Provide a supported space/activity group where digital equipment can be used for young people who do not have access to digital equipment, e.g. for recreation such as social media, or specific workshops e.g. CV writing, applying for jobs/education.
Engaging children and young people – helping them feel involved, able to access services, and empowered to influence change.	Enable 30 young people to proactively plan for their future through financial / career workshops. Provide activity groups for young people e.g. a focus on young girls continuing sports, or recreational activities to improve wellbeing.
Building an Age Friendly District – creating opportunities for older residents to have a voice and take part in local services.	Enable 20 older people to plan and participate in an intergenerational community event

If you meet the criteria, you will receive a link to the full application and question guidance.

Data Protection: We expect organisations to be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant. You must not include names or personal details of your beneficiaries in your application without consent. Please be particularly aware of this if you are adding in testimonials or survey results. For further guidance on being GDPR compliant see:

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-07/GDPR-briefings-intro.pdf>

Monitoring: Organisations will be required to report on the agreed outcomes via monitoring reports.

Help to complete your application for the 2026-27 St Albans City & District Council Community Project Fund

Communities 1st provide support and guidance to groups who are applying to St Albans City and District Community Project Fund. You are encouraged to take up this service to support you with the formulation of your project and the application.

Email Communities 1st on StAlbansGrants@communities1st.org.uk to make an appointment.

Grants Information sessions are held periodically online on Teams. To receive the date and Teams link to the next session, email vcsgrants@stalbans.gov.uk