



# **Community Grants 2009/10**

## **Funding Priorities & Guidelines**

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# 1. Introduction

Swindon Borough Council recognises the important contribution groups, clubs and organisations make to improve the quality of life for people in Swindon. Locally, we have hundreds of groups and organisations that reach thousands of residents across the Borough and that the majority of these groups are run entirely by volunteers and often financed from their own contributions.

## **Key Changes:**

During 2008, key changes to the Council's grants programme have been introduced. This has meant that the three-year grant programme has been replaced by commissioned services. It means that following an open and competitive tendering process this year, we will have contracts in place from April 2009 to deliver the following four areas of service;

- Support for Victims of Domestic Violence
- Advice Services
- Infrastructure support for the third sector
- Support for Refugees and Migrant Workers

A new small, easy to access programme (Grassroots Grants) has been very successful in making grants more accessible to local groups this year. The majority of organisations receiving grants have not previously had grant funding from Swindon Borough Council before.

These two changes to the Grants programme have been introduced to bring about an overall approach to improving the quality of life for residents.

The next step is the new Community Grants programme, which will operate from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. This document sets out funding guidelines which explains what we are looking for and what we expect in the application form.

## 2. What is the new Community Grants programme for?

The new Community Grants programme will support local groups and organisations in Swindon to help the Council and partners meet the **Local Area Agreement** (2) targets. For background information, have a look at [www.swindonlaa.org.uk](http://www.swindonlaa.org.uk).

The Local Area Agreement is a document that sets out the key priorities for Swindon over the next three years. It identifies 46 targets, which the Council and partners will work towards achieving by year 2011. The targets are divided among the five strands below, and a full list of targets is included at the end of this document.

- 1. Safer and Stronger Communities**
- 2. Healthy Communities and Older People**
- 3. Economic Development and Enterprise**
- 4. Children and Young People**
- 5. Environment and Sustainability.**

Each of these strands is supported by Council officers and representatives from partners.

## How can you make a contribution?

It is important to look at the Local Area Agreement (2) and its 46 targets. Projects and activities will need to relate to one of these targets. If you want funding for something else, this grant programme is not for you. For other funding opportunities contact one of the organisations listed below or look at the Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation website [www.wscf.org.uk](http://www.wscf.org.uk).

There are lots of ways you can meet one of the 46 targets, this might relate to a new idea, extending a service you already provide or a new partnership you have identified. We welcome innovative and new ways of working.

You will need to be able to describe what you will be doing, who you will be working with, how this will have a positive impact on at least one of the 46 targets, why you are a key group or organisation to deliver this and how you will measure and report your activity.

For example, a residents group could apply for funding under National Indicator 2: the percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood. They could use their grant application form to describe how they will use their local knowledge and skills to successfully involve and connect with local people in their neighbourhood, what activities or opportunities they will be creating with the funding and how it will be measured and reported. We will need to know how will it promote a sense of belonging and how will we be informed of its success.

All grant applications will need to very specific about what the funding will be used for and how it will make a difference.

## 3. Eligibility

Applications for funding in 2009/10 are currently being invited against the targets identified in the **Local Area Agreement (2)**. Groups should identify one (or more) targets to which they can demonstrate a direct achievement or contribution. Each application should explain how they will do this and what skills and experience they have which are relevant.

The Council's Basic Requirements for Community Grants section sets out what the Council expects groups/organisations to have in place, as a minimum, to be eligible to apply for a community grant. If you need help or advice in meeting these requirements, support is available from the following agencies:

(01793) 538398 - Voluntary Action Swindon

(01793) 491271 - Swindon Federation of Community Organisations

(01380) 722475 – Community First

The Council does not expect funding to be used to employ individuals although it may be used to pay individuals to provide a specialist service.

## 4. Management Costs

Where the activity specified requires additional 'management' of the project then organisations can include a fee which should be no more than 20% of the overall cost of the project.

Details of '**What the Council will not fund**' are provided on page 9.

## 5. Termination of Funding

At least three months notice will be given when ceasing or withdrawing funding unless this is due to non-performance or breach of the funding agreement and the Council will provide a clear explanation should this occur for any reason.

## 6. Applying for a Community Grant

For an application pack please contact Kathleen Daley at:

Telephone: (01793) 466468

E-mail: [KDaley@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:KDaley@swindon.gov.uk)

Post: Swindon Borough Council, Premier House, Station Road, Swindon SN1 1TZ

Packs may also be downloaded from the Council's website at

[www.swindon.gov.uk/community/communitygrants.htm](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/community/communitygrants.htm)

Help or advice in completing the application form is available from any of the following agencies:

(01793) 538398 - Voluntary Action Swindon

(01793) 491271 - Swindon Federation of Community Organisations

(01380) 722475 – Community First

**Completed application forms must be submitted to the Council by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. Supporting documentation does not need to be provided at application stage. If you are successful we will need copies of supporting documentation before issuing a contract.**

Any applications received after this **will not be processed.**

Each application will be assessed on eligibility and performance following the process described in this booklet.

Every year applications for community grants greatly exceed the limited funds available. Priority will therefore be given to those applications, which will most assist the Council in meeting its Local Area Agreement aims and objectives using the scoring criteria outlined in the booklet.

Successful applicants will be required to sign an appropriate Funding Agreement which sets out the commitments made by both the Council and the voluntary / community organisation.

Details of grants awarded for 2009/10 will be publicised on the Council's website after decisions have been finalised.

Formal feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants explaining why no funding has been allocated. Signposting to relevant agencies will also be provided regarding alternative sources of available funding.

## 7. Basic Requirements for Community Grants

All voluntary and community organisations applying for a grant, including those that are newly developing, are expected to have the following in place:

**(a) Governing Document**

A written set of rules used by a voluntary or community organisation to describe its aims and how it will manage its affairs (e.g. Constitution, Memorandum/Articles of Association, Terms of Reference).

**(b) Management Committee**

Management committee members should be aware and capable of carrying out their legal responsibilities. The make up of the committee should reasonably reflect all sections of the community being served, and include representation from service users. Officers must be elected to the Committee in a democratic manner.

**(c) Bank Account**

Organisations must have a bank account into which any grant can be paid and written financial management procedures in place to enable the management committee to monitor income and expenditure on a regular basis.

**(d) Equal Opportunities & Disability Discrimination**

Organisations are required to have in place an Equal Opportunities Policy or Statement and be actively committed to develop and implement policies that tackle discrimination. All applicants must be able to demonstrate that their projects will deliver inclusive services in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

**Established** organisations (e.g. those which have been in operation for more than one year) are also expected to have the following in place:

**(e) Annual Report**

An Annual Report must be prepared to reflect the organisation's achievements and challenges, and explain the annual accounts.

**(f) Annual Accounts**

Charitable organisations must prepare and submit annual accounts as follows:  
(NB – figures based on gross income or total expenditure from all sources)

***Not exceeding £10,000 per annum***

- A detailed list of payments and receipts
- A statement of assets and liabilities (Balance Sheet)
- Both documents must be signed by a Member of the Management Committee

***From £10,000 to £100,000 per annum***

- A detailed list of payments and receipts
- A statement of assets and liabilities (Balance Sheet)
- Both documents must be signed by a Member of the Management Committee and verified by a suitable independent person i.e. Accountant

***More than £100,000 per annum***

- Accrual based audited or independently examined accounts
- A balance sheet

Charitable Companies must prepare and submit annual accounts prepared on an accruals basis.

The Council requires that all sources of funding received from Swindon Borough Council be identified separately within restricted funds to assist with the financial monitoring process.

**(g) Insurances/Operating Licences**

Organisations must have appropriate insurance policies and operating licences in place to cover all of its activities. The minimum limits of indemnity for Public Liability and Employers Liability insurances should be £5m and £10m respectively.

For further clarification of 'appropriate insurance policies' please refer to the 'Notes on Insurance Requirements' on pages 13 and 14 of this booklet.

**(h) Complaints Procedure**

Organisations must have a published complaints/comments procedure and an appropriate system for monitoring and responding to these.

**The following requirements also apply:**

**(i) Employment Conditions**

**If** your organisation uses staff, whether paid staff or volunteers, it must comply with all relevant employment legislation and be able to demonstrate that policies and procedures are in place to deal with personnel matters (i.e. Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures, Sickness Policy etc).

**(j) Confidentiality Policy**

**If** your organisation keeps personal records of any nature (i.e. clients files) and/or works with children, youth people or vulnerable adults, you must have a written Confidentiality Policy. Organisations are expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 1988.

**(k) Protection of Children**

**If** your organisation's activities involve children you must have a written policy and guidelines on Child Protection which are consistent with those in the Council's Child Protection Policy. All staff or volunteers working directly with children must be aware of their responsibilities under the Children Act 1985 and provide a satisfactory disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau prior to commencing employment. Further information on this procedure can be obtained from the Children's Information Service on (01793) 541786.

**(l) Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

**If** your organisation's activities involve vulnerable adults you must have a written policy and guidelines for the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse that are consistent with those in Council's Vulnerable Adults Policy which has been developed using the guidelines with "No Secrets", the national guidance on the subject. All staff or volunteers working directly with vulnerable adults must provide a satisfactory disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau prior to commencing employment.

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years and over who *"... is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is*

*or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation”*

**(m) Charity Registration**

Under the Charities Act 1992 it is a requirement that charitable voluntary organisations with a total income from all sources exceeding £1,000\* per annum must seek registration with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. This requirement does not of course apply to those organisations that are excepted or exempt e.g. Co-operatives and Credit Unions. Full details are contained within Charity Commission Leaflets CC21 (Registering as a Charity) and CC23 (Exempt Charities). Copies can be obtained from:

*Charity Commission for England and Wales*

*Helpline No: 0845 3000 218*

*Minicom: 0845 3000 219*

*Website: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration)*

We are aware that many smaller voluntary organisations have yet to register as Charities and this should not prevent them from applying for a community grant. We will however expect such organisations to demonstrate that they are actively seeking registration, wherever appropriate.

*\*(NB –The new Charities Bill, due to be adopted in the near future, proposes to raise the income threshold from £1,000 to £5,000. The Council will of course recognise this increased threshold once it is officially implemented).*

**(n) Funding Agreements / Monitoring & Evaluation**

**If** your organisation’s application is successful you will be required to sign an appropriate Funding Agreement which sets out the commitments made by the Council and the voluntary organisation. Failure to comply with the conditions of the Agreement will result in funding being withdrawn.

You will also be expected to co-operate with monitoring systems that enable the Council to meet relevant statutory requirements. For example, organisations will be required to take part in an annual monitoring visit and complete a financial monitoring form detailing how grant aid has been spent.

## **8. The Council will not fund . . .**

In seeking to use available grant aid resources to the greatest benefit of Swindon residents the Council will not fund:

1. Direct child care services/activities which enable parents/carers to undertake paid work.
2. Counselling or one to one mentoring services (with the exception of advocacy support).
3. Services/activities provided to individuals or organisations not within the Swindon Borough Council area.
4. The major or core costs of organisations providing services which are the primary responsibility of another statutory agency (e.g. primarily social services, education or health initiatives).
5. Organisations proposing to deliver services which duplicate existing provision.
6. Projects exclusively for the teaching of mother tongue languages. (This does not exclude classes where children from black and minority ethnic communities can learn about and celebrate their culture).
7. Newsletters containing opinion or publicity of a political nature.
8. Party political or direct religious activities.
9. Initiatives apparently established for the purpose of providing employment for an individual, or with a view to developing a private business venture.
10. Applications received after the specified closing date.

# 9. Assessment Process for Community Grants

## Eligibility and Evaluation

To be eligible, organisations will need to be Swindon-based and will need to demonstrate that they are:

- operating as a voluntary or community body or social enterprise with a constitution, management committee with appropriate financial controls
- aware of legal and other requirements e.g. CRB, Child Protection etc
- experienced at delivery specified in their application

All applications will be evaluated by a panel comprising officers from the services that can represent interests and local needs across each of the five key Local Area Agreement strands and up to two Cabinet Members will be invited to become members of the panel.

Safer and Stronger Communities  
Healthy Communities and Older People  
Economic Development and Enterprise  
Children and Young People  
Environment and Sustainability

Each of the strands will be asked to nominate a key point of contact who will be invited to all grant evaluation meetings to ensure that we align activity and remove duplication. Applications will be linked to the strands and scored against the following criteria

### 1. Value for Money and contribution towards achieving LAA 2 targets-25%

- Direct contribution to achievement of LAA2 target
- Unit cost of outputs
- Is it integral or additional to achieving the LAA target?

### 2. Ability of applicant to deliver proposal-20%

- Experience and skills within the organisation
- Track Record of delivery

### 3. Quality of proposal-25%

- What research has been undertaken to measure need?
- Is the marketing and targeting good enough?
- Are the outputs achievable?
- Is the budget realistic?
- Is the measurability adequate?

### 4. Innovation-20%

- What is new about the approach?
- Is it capable of replication?

### 5. Contribution to the organisation's development-10%

- How will the project support the on-going development of the applying organisation?
- What is in place for future sustainability or exit planning?

## 10. The Council's Policy Statement on Reserves & their Treatment

1. Swindon Borough Council acknowledges that voluntary bodies need to hold operating balances and to make suitable provision for contingencies. The level of these will depend on the nature and scale of the organisation.
2. The Council recognises that there is a need for clarity about its approach to reserves held by voluntary bodies seeking community grants, and its expectations in this respect of organisations receiving community grants, in line with the recommendations of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.
3. Voluntary bodies need to be clear about the **purposes** for which any reserves are held and also about the legal and constitutional **powers** under which any such reserves are held. For further guidance on this subject voluntary bodies should consult the Charity Commission booklet referred to at the end of this document.
4. The Annual Accounts of voluntary bodies must show all the reserves and balances held. The notes to the accounts should state the precise purpose of all **restricted** and **designated funds**, in line with Charity Commission guidance. [Restricted funds are those given for a specific purpose which cannot be used legally for any other purpose e.g. a grant to purchase equipment. Designated funds are those earmarked by a formal decision of the organisation for a particular purpose, but not legally committed e.g. a fund for repair and renewal of computers.]
5. Swindon Borough Council expects all grant-aided voluntary bodies to develop a simple Reserves Policy or Statement, based on a realistic assessment of each organisation's requirements, which should set out:
  - why the organisation needs reserves
  - what level and type of reserves are needed
  - how the reserves will be established or maintained at the agreed level
  - how the policy will be monitored and reviewed
6. To this end the Council will ensure the provision of training opportunities for voluntary organisations to assist in the development of the required Reserves Policy or Statement and staff support within available resources.
7. Any voluntary body seeking a grant from this Council must demonstrate that it has a financial need which it cannot meet otherwise.
8. Under the terms of the current Swindon Borough Council Funding Agreements there is provision for the return of unspent grant not used for the purposes for which it was given. There should be no presumption that unspent grant aid given by this Council can be used to build up reserves, other than for agreed purposes confirmed in writing.
9. When assessing a grant application due consideration will be given to the overall financial position of the organisation including all unrestricted reserves and balances and the purposes for which these are held.
10. Any of the following recommendations may be made if the amount of general reserves held exceeds 4-6 months running costs, depending on the scale of the organisation and its contractual commitments:

- make or renew a grant at the current level
- suspend grant aid for one year only
- make a reduced grant over one or more years
- withdraw grant aid

11. **The specific circumstances of each organisation will be taken into account.** For example, it is recognised that some organisations such as Housing Associations (which are eligible for both capital and revenue finance to develop and manage housing accommodation) frequently hold substantial reserves. These may be needed as collateral in order to secure loans and to pay for maintenance and repairs. Where an organisation can substantiate the need to hold reserves at a higher level the general 4-6 month threshold will not apply.

NB. *This policy statement should be read in conjunction with booklet CC19 published by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales "Charities' Reserves" (June 1999). Copies of this booklet can be obtained from the following address:*

*Charity Commission for England and Wales  
Woodfield House  
Tangier  
Taunton TA1 4BL  
Helpline No: 0845 3000 218  
Minicom: 0845 3000 219  
Website: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications)*

## 11. Notes on Insurance Requirements

Part of the Council's assessment process for grant applications involves checking that organisations have 'appropriate' insurances in place. The Council requires that all organisations have Employers and Public Liability Insurances in place at minimum levels of £10m and £5m respectively. If your organisation provides advice then the Council will also require Professional Indemnity Insurance to be in place. Your insurance broker will be able to further advise you on this.

The intention of these notes is to clarify what these insurances cover and why they are necessary.

### **Employers Liability Insurance**

Under UK law an organisation must have Employers Liability Insurance to cover anyone who works or helps out at the organisation, **including volunteers**. It provides cover against any claims for illness, injury or death which may occur as a result of any activities carried out by an employee/volunteer on the organisation's behalf.

A current Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance must be prominently displayed in the workplace.

#### **Example of possible claim:**

An employee may suffer injury whilst carrying out duties in accordance with instructions but may not have received proper or adequate training to do this operation.

## **Public Liability Insurance**

An organisation has a 'duty of care' to protect the general public in the same way as it needs to protect it's employees/volunteers. This insurance protects an organisation with an indemnity in respect of its legal liability to pay damages or claims resulting in illness, injury or death, or damage to property caused by the neglect of the organisation or someone working for it.

### ***Example of possible claim:***

A visitor to the premises falls over a briefcase left by the volunteer.

## **Professional Indemnity Insurance**

This protects an organisation against claims for loss, injury or damage caused by services (i.e. advice) provided negligently or without reasonable care.

### ***Example of possible claim:***

A third party follows advice given by an organisation and this advice results in a financial loss to the third party.

## **General Information**

When arranging insurances it is vital to let the company know the full extent of the activities/services your organisation carries out. Whilst the Council is unable to recommend individual Insurance companies to approach, you may find it useful to visit the web site of VolResource at [www.volresource.org.uk/services/serv\\_ins.htm](http://www.volresource.org.uk/services/serv_ins.htm) where you will find details of a number of companies specialising in insurances for charities.

Finally, the Council wishes to point out that Trustees may be personally liable if a claim arises and their organisation does not have appropriate insurances in place.

## **Zurich Municipal Insurance**

Favourable premium rates have been negotiated for voluntary and community organisations in receipt of community grants from the Council. If you are successful in securing a community grant for 2009/10 you will be given an opportunity to obtain a quotation, via the Council's Insurance Officer. This is completely optional as we readily acknowledge that some organisations have policies in place through their national bodies and that this is the most cost effective route for them.

## 12. Notes on Payment of Expenses to Volunteers

Most voluntary groups and organisations have arrangements for repaying volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. bus fares, telephone calls) when working on their behalf. Volunteers are entitled to expect the organisation to meet these costs, provided this has been agreed in advance, subject to the Constitution.

Some groups may try to simplify matters by making "flat-rate" expenses payments (e.g. £2.00 for lunch, or £10.00 per month for travel, or £20.00 per quarter for telephone costs). However, **payment of "flat-rate" expenses to volunteers (other than published rates for reimbursement of car owner-drivers) may result in legal difficulties** for the following reasons:

- volunteers on benefits could have their benefits reduced
- volunteers could become liable to income tax
- it could lead to volunteers being classified in law as paid employees

The amount of the payment - however small - is not the issue, but rather the **method** of payment.

To avoid the above legal difficulties volunteer expenses must be paid on the basis of reimbursing actual out-of-pocket expenditure, supported by receipts, for agreed purposes and within defined limits.

Please note that Council grants cannot be used for flat rate expenses payments for volunteers, only to reimburse actual out-of-pocket expenses.

**If you need any further assistance about applying for a Swindon Borough Council Community Grant, please contact Mark Feeny, Contract and Commissioning Officer, at:**

**Telephone: (01793) 466503**

**E-mail: [mbfeeny@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:mbfeeny@swindon.gov.uk)**

**Post: Swindon Borough Council, Premier House, Station Road, Swindon SN1 1TZ**