

West Down Parish Council

County Councillors Report

December 2023

Growing Communities Fund

The Growing Communities Fund is intended to support proactive, effective, measurable, and sustainable actions to enable individuals and communities to tackle the current cost of living issues through reducing food and fuel inequalities, building self-reliance, community resilience and improving mental health and wellbeing.

The Growing Communities Fund will commonly provide grant awards of between £500 and £1000. You can apply for up to £3000 if you feel you have an exemplary project and are able to accept payment in arrears. Applications, regardless of value, will be assessed using the same process.

Projects can:

- link to already established work and add value
- be new and in response to an identified need
- use innovation to improve efficiency, reach a wider range of people and improve provision.

The fund can support projects that:

- could offer a warm welcome and a safe space, something to eat and drink, and a place to work, learn, socialise or encourage healthy activity and address hardship such as food or fuel insecurity,
- build greater degrees of self-reliance and community resilience for example offering advice, peer support or guidance on budgeting, cooking low-cost nutritional meals.
- tackle loneliness and isolation and build self-esteem.
- Have a clear and direct community benefit as well as consider the environment during this climate emergency.

Applications for both project and core costs will be considered, subject to meeting eligibility criteria. Also, the inclusion of reasonable costs associated with evaluation and identifying learning, sharing and promoting good practice.

The fund cannot be used for:

- projects or items that are the responsibility of another public body (for example, NHS, Local Authority)
- activities that are contributing to general fundraising
- projects that are delegating any acquired funds to third parties

- projects that are solely for the benefit of animals
- projects that are solely counselling based
- projects that are in support of a single faith without wider community benefit. This includes fabric repairs to church buildings, church yards and cemetery walls.
- retrospective applications for projects or activities that have already been completed, or items that have been purchased
- alcohol or medication
- large projects where the link between a grant awarded and overall project outcomes are not clear
- loss of income
- applications from individuals, sole traders, for-private-profit or grant-making organisations (where funding is requested for grant making)
- political activities
- salaries, wages, or expenses of persons employed by a not-for-private-profit organisation unless these are finite, sessional charges and do not imply any ongoing commitment
- projects that provide support to more than 25% of beneficiaries living outside of the Devon County Council administrative area

Who can apply?

- Not-for-profit, voluntary or community groups, registered charities or social enterprises that are providing services or activities for the benefit of people and communities in Devon
- Schools, where the project or activity has a clear benefit to the wider community and is over and above statutory provision.
- Churches or church/faith groups, where the project or activity has a clear benefit to the wider community and is not promoting a specific religion or worship.
- Parish or town councils, where the project or activity has a clear benefit to the local community and is not replacing statutory provision.
- National charities, where there is a local branch that is managed locally and has its own bank account.

How much can I apply for?

The amount you can apply for depends on the type of project and the costs involved. Grants will typically be between £500 and £1,000 and these grants will be paid to organisations prior to work taking place.

How to apply

Applications must be submitted online and funding used or allocated before 31 March 2024.

[Complete the grant application form now](#)

North Devon Link Road

Information about closures.

Currently night-time closure Aller Cross to Landkey 8pm to 6am

<https://community.alungriffiths.co.uk/projects-in-your-area/north-devon-link-road/>

Grit bins and information about gritting routes

With the colder weather we can expect to be using the grit bins, if you find a bin which needs filling there is an easy to use grit bin map on the website, just click on the icon and ask for it to be filled, damaged bins can also be reported here.

There is a map of the gritting routes in Devon but I would advise that when out driving in icy conditions to treat all roads as if they haven't been gritted as it teaks friction for the grit to work.

[Grit Bins map – Road and Transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Highways preparations for winter and defects

A lot of work has gone into the preparation for this winter with the aim of preventing a repeat of the difficulties experienced following the extended freezing conditions through late November and into mid-December last year.

With regard to the winter service and gritting operations, the Highways and Traffic Management Service has been very busy over the summer, preparing for the winter season. This downtime is the opportunity for all the gritters to be serviced and calibrated. This ensures the spread rate and spread pattern for salt is as intended.

Six of the oldest gritters have been replaced with newer models. The approach is to purchase second hand, relatively new gritters and replace them as they approach 10 years old. This ensures the plant is safe and minimises the initial financial outlay and helps to minimise revenue costs.

While last winter was challenging for the service, all the preparation this summer has been achieve while planning for and responding to, an unusually high number of named storms

through the summer and autumn. Particularly the two significant flood events and more recently Storm Ciaran.

Devon County Council's Contractor, Milestone undertook a resource analysis in Autumn to identify where there may be capacity in the current planned works and re-programmed some work to free up additional resource (to add to the reactive and gritting teams) through November and December.

This additional resource is being directed to address non-safety 'serviceability' defects ahead of the worst of the weather.

In addition, a 5th dragon patcher has been employed this summer to help address the backlog of serviceability defects. This additional machine has been working in tandem to the trial of Elastomac, an innovative low-carbon repair technique and the wider patching works which aims to pick up clusters of defects. We had this come to Barbrook last week, following my intervention about the awful defect we had, the other non safety defects nearby were also attended to on this visit.

The Government's announcement ahead of the Autumn Statement of an £8.3 billion investment for road maintenance over the next 11 years is very welcome. Devon will receive an extra £6.663 million this financial year and next. It is unclear how the funding will be allocated beyond next year. The funding is being put to use immediately to carry out patching work and other serviceability repairs.

However, the majority of the funding will enable the County Council to bring forward resurfacing schemes earmarked within its future works programme. The schemes have been identified based on 'need' using the Council's asset management approach. Road condition surveys and pothole data, together with local knowledge has been used to prioritise the next 60 resurfacing schemes in the forward programme. Bringing forward this work will replace worn out road surfaces and prevent the formation of potholes.

Reminder of how to report a Highway issue;

[Report a problem - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-transport)

[0345 155 1004](tel:03451551004)

Live chat is available on the Highways website Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4.30 pm (4 pm on Fridays). To report a problem with road maintenance, traffic management and parking, streetlights and signs and public rights of way

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