



## **SHIRE COMMUNITY GRANTS 2022-23**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1) How much funding is available through the SHIRE Grant Programme in 2022-23?**

A budget of £600,000 is available in 2022-23. The funding will be allocated over 3 rounds of funding, with deadlines in June 2022, September 2022 and November 2022. Eligible organisations can apply for a small grant of up to £3,000 or a large grant of up to £10,000.

**2) Who can apply for a SHIRE Grant?**

To apply for a grant, you need to be a not-for-profit organisation, such as a registered charity or community group, including faith-based organisations. You need to have a constitution, a board of trustees and a bank account. Social Enterprises and Community Interest Companies can also apply, as well as Town and Parish Councils, as long as the funding requested will be used to deliver services, activities and projects which are specifically focussed on improving the health and wellbeing of vulnerable/disadvantaged people who live in Leicestershire County.

**3) What types of projects can be funded/supported through SHIRE Grants?**

We are seeking to fund projects/activities which improve the health, wellbeing and quality of lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and communities in Leicestershire. We also want to invest in organisations who can deliver community-based early intervention and prevention solutions which help to reduce demand on Council services.

We can offer funding towards the costs of delivering projects, such as staffing costs, room/venue hire, promotional activities and volunteer/staff expenses. We are happy to receive applications for larger capital costs such as ICT or other essential equipment, as well as funding for vehicles. We can also consider applications for funding towards new buildings or refurbishments, as long as such building works/improvements will directly help your organisation to deliver services for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups.

**4) Can organisations apply for funding for core organisational running costs?**

Yes, we are happy to consider applications for core organisational delivery or running costs. This can include costs such as rent, utilities, insurance and any other relevant costs related to the operational delivery of your organisation's services. However, we can only award funding for core costs, where it is clear that the activities of the organisation are focussed on improving the lives, health and wellbeing of vulnerable/disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Please note, if your organisation has been awarded a SHIRE Grant (or a grant from the Leicestershire Communities Fund 2020-21) for core organisational running costs in the previous two years (2020-21 and 2021-22), there is no guarantee that a SHIRE Grant for core running costs will again be approved in 2022-23. The Grants Officers will be able to advise whether a grant for core organisational running costs will be accepted from your organisation for a third consecutive year.

#### 5) What can't be funded with a SHIRE Grant?

SHIRE Grants cannot be accessed to fund the following projects:

- General upgrades to community buildings (e.g. village halls, church buildings, community centres) unless the upgrades are focussed specifically on providing services for vulnerable/disadvantaged individuals or groups
- New roofs, resurfacing of parking areas, or new disabled toilets
- Maintenance and/or repairs of equipment
- Sports activities or equipment for the general community (i.e. sports activities which are not specifically targeted for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups)
- General running costs for community radio stations
- Costs for any activities which have already taken place (i.e. we cannot offer retrospective funding for costs already incurred), or for one-off events
- Projects/activities where the primary beneficiaries are residents of Leicester City (and not Leicestershire County)
- Any costs related to the delivery of organised religious activities, including prayer and worship, or any costs associated with the promotion of religion.

#### 6) The application form includes a question about the benefits, outcomes and impacts to be achieved with the funding. What is meant by outcomes and why are these so important?

Outcomes are basically the impacts of your project, i.e. the difference your project makes to the lives of the people who participate in and benefit from the project. It is really important that your application provides clear details about the difference the project is going to make. At the end of the period of funding, you will need to submit a Grant Outcomes Report, detailing how the funding was used and the outcomes that were achieved. Having a focus on outcomes throughout your project will help you to demonstrate what your project has achieved in terms of improving the wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged people. This will also help to demonstrate what the SHIRE Community Grants are achieving for local communities.

**7) Does the online application form need to be completed in one sitting or can applicants save it as they go along and return to it later?**

Unfortunately, the online form doesn't allow you to 'save your work as you go along'. It needs to be completed all in one go. However, we have created a Word template which you can download from the website and use this to draft your application. We're also happy for applicants to send us an initial draft of their application (using the Word template) well in advance of the application deadline, and we will offer comments/feedback on this before you submit the final version of your application using the online form.

**8) What happens after an application is submitted?**

Once an application is received, the Grants Officers will have an initial look at the application, to decide whether your project is eligible for funding or not. If your project has the potential to be funded, we may get in touch with you to discuss any areas of your application which need clarifying. We will then fully assess the application and develop a recommendation, in terms of whether we should award the full amount of grant requested, or a contribution of funding (i.e. less than the total amount you have requested).

**9) How are decisions on applications made?**

Once we have all the required information regarding your funding application, we will take a set of recommendations for final approval to a Decision Meeting with the Cabinet Lead Member for Communities and the Head of Communities, Policy & Resilience for their consideration and final approval. 3 Decision Meetings will be held in 2022-23, one for each round of funding. You should receive a final decision within 2-3 weeks of the deadline date for each round of funding.

**10) How do you decide to reject an application?**

The Grants Officers generally aim to screen out any ineligible or weak applications prior to the decision stage. If your application is deemed ineligible, you will be informed of this quite soon after submitting your application. Only those applications which have been screened and deemed to have the potential to be awarded funding are progressed for a decision. However, please note that your application may still be rejected at the Decision Meeting.

**11) What are the common reasons why applications get rejected?**

Some of the main reasons why applications are rejected are as follows:

- The project does not focus on improving the lives of vulnerable/disadvantaged people who live in Leicestershire County
- The target cohort of participants/beneficiaries haven't been clearly defined or identified
- The information in the application is poorly explained and lacks the required detail
- Unclear information around the outcomes which are going to be achieved by the project

**12) How does a project receive a grant payment?**

If your application is successful, you will receive a letter from Leicestershire County Council confirming the funding offer, along with a Grant Conditions Form and associated paperwork. This information will be sent to you by email. You will need to sign and return the Grant Conditions Form and also complete and return a form giving your organisation's bank details, along with a copy of your bank account paying in slip, or a bank statement clearly showing the organisation's bank account details. Payment will normally be made up-front, once the Grant Officers have received your signed and completed Grant Conditions form, along with details of your organisation's bank account. Please note that it can take up to 6 weeks to process your grant payment, following receipt of your signed Grant Conditions form. You will then be asked to provide documentary evidence of the costs you have incurred, within 12 months of the date of the grant offer letter.

**13) What monitoring information do you ask for in the Grant Outcomes Report?**

We like to know what your project has achieved, in terms of outcomes, impacts and benefits for the individuals who have benefited from activities delivered with the funding. We are also interested in hearing about any challenges experienced by your organisation, or within the VCSE sector more generally. We will also be happy to visit organisations, to see what you do first-hand and create case studies to show on our website.

**14) What help/support is available for community groups wanting to apply?**

Ring or email the Grants Officers ([shiregrants@leics.gov.uk](mailto:shiregrants@leics.gov.uk)) to discuss your grant application, before applying online. It's best to make sure that your proposal is eligible for funding, before submitting your application. The Grants Officers will advise you accordingly and will give you suggestions about the types of information you need to include in your application. We are also happy to receive an initial draft of your application and offer feedback on this before you submit the final version. The website also has detailed Guidance Notes, and our advice to all applicants is to make sure you read the guidance notes carefully before applying!

More information about the SHIRE Community Grant programme can be seen at: [www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/shiregrants](http://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/shiregrants)