

Background

In July 2026, Adur & Worthing Councils agreed to streamline our grants process to make applications simpler and less time-consuming for community groups. This has resulted in the newly named 'Connected Communities Grant Fund', which is made up of four previous sources of grant funding - the Adur Community Grant, Community Transport Grant, Worthing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Fund and income from textile recycling in Adur.

This means voluntary, community and social enterprise groups (VCSE) will only have to apply once for council funding - freeing up time that would have been spent on administration for both groups and our officers.

What can the Connected Communities Grant Fund be used for?

Communities have the freedom and power to spend the money on a wide range of things, in consultation with the local residents. Local project proposals seeking support from this fund, can therefore cover a broad range of project types. This might include the following types of projects:

- Community facilities and buildings
- Open space, play and leisure facilities
- Accessibility improvements
- Environmental and biodiversity projects
- Heritage and cultural infrastructure
- Encouraging community cohesion
- Delivering public art
- Tackling social isolation
- Promoting outdoor spaces or enhance people's health and wellbeing

There are some projects which we cannot fund:

- Projects that cannot demonstrate they will have a clear benefit to the residents or communities in the geographical area to which the application is made - this is also one of the criteria for applications in 2026
- Groups that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, age, or sexual orientation
- Retrospective funding for activities that have already taken place
- Projects which only benefit animals
- Political activities
- Projects which relate solely to religious purposes - unless it has a wider community benefit
- One-off events - unless it can be demonstrated that there will be a lasting impact on the local community

The Fund will be available to fund one-off project costs. This means there will be no commitment by the Council to meet ongoing costs (e.g. maintenance or revenue costs), beyond the initial funding award. The application form asks for groups to consider the impact of funding the project beyond the initial funding.

There is scope for the Connected Communities Grant Fund to be used for revenue funding rather than just capital projects. It is important to note this fund will not be able to be used as ongoing revenue support, but will instead provide one-off emergency funding that could help to keep organisations and facilities alive whilst longer term funding solutions are secured. There will be a stipulation that any funding allocated to revenue projects is time limited and that the group or organisation must seek alternative funding before the allocation runs out.

Applicants should also be able to demonstrate that the impact of the project will be long lasting to the local community.

What types of projects are we looking for in 2026?

We want to continue supporting and celebrating the great work of the voluntary and community sector as we launch the Connected Communities Grant Fund programme. The Council is interested in projects which meet the following criteria:

- **Focus on young people** - this could include:
 - Providing services for children and young people
 - Working to support young people in getting involved in activities and/or collaborating with other local residents/community groups
 - Learning new skills
 - Provide spaces for young people (including access to support services)
- **Climate resilience** - this could include:

- Projects which help our communities and local environment respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Projects which involve climate and environmental action
- Projects which provide benefits to places that could be impacted by a changing climate

Applications should also include evidence of:

- **Direct benefit to residents and/or the environment of the geographical area to which you are applying**
 - Applicants should provide evidence of clear local need and direct benefits to the geographical area to which they are applying
- **Lasting impact on residents and/or the environment**
 - The impact of the project should be felt by local residents and/or the environment beyond just the initial use of the funds

The Council will accept a wide range of projects, as stated in the ‘What can the Connected Communities Grant Fund be used for?’ section above. However, if there are a number of projects which meet the criteria but not enough funds to be allocated to them all in an area, then the projects will be scored by the assessment panels based on a range of criteria. Those which do meet the criteria will score higher and therefore are more likely to receive funding.

How will neighbourhoods be defined?

Following on from the success of the Worthing CIL Neighbourhood Fund, both Adur and Worthing will be split up into ‘areas’ which will have differing amounts of funding available each year.

In the absence of parishes and neighbourhood plans, which is the case in Worthing, the CIL Regulations allow the council to design its own bespoke definition of what constitutes a local neighbourhood area for the purpose of allocating the CIL Neighbourhood Fund. Since 2023, the CIL Neighbourhood funding is allocated based on ‘CIL areas’ (groupings of wards) where the development takes place.

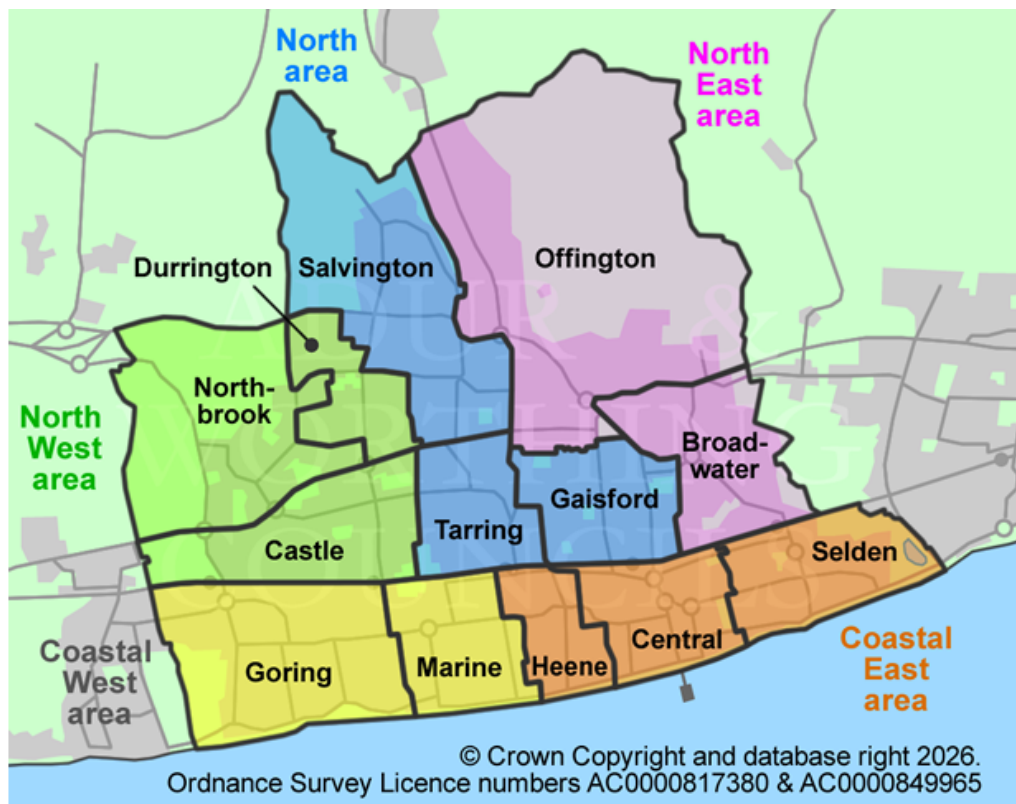
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The aggregated groups of wards which will form the Worthing 'CIL areas' are set out below:

- Coastal East: Heene, Central and Selden
- Coastal West: Marine and Goring
- North West: Northbrook, Castle and Durrington
- North: Tarring, Gaisford and Salvington
- North East: Broadwater and Offington

Communities Grant areas in Worthing showing which wards are in which area:

Note that the Worthing areas exclude any area covered by the South Downs National Park Authority.



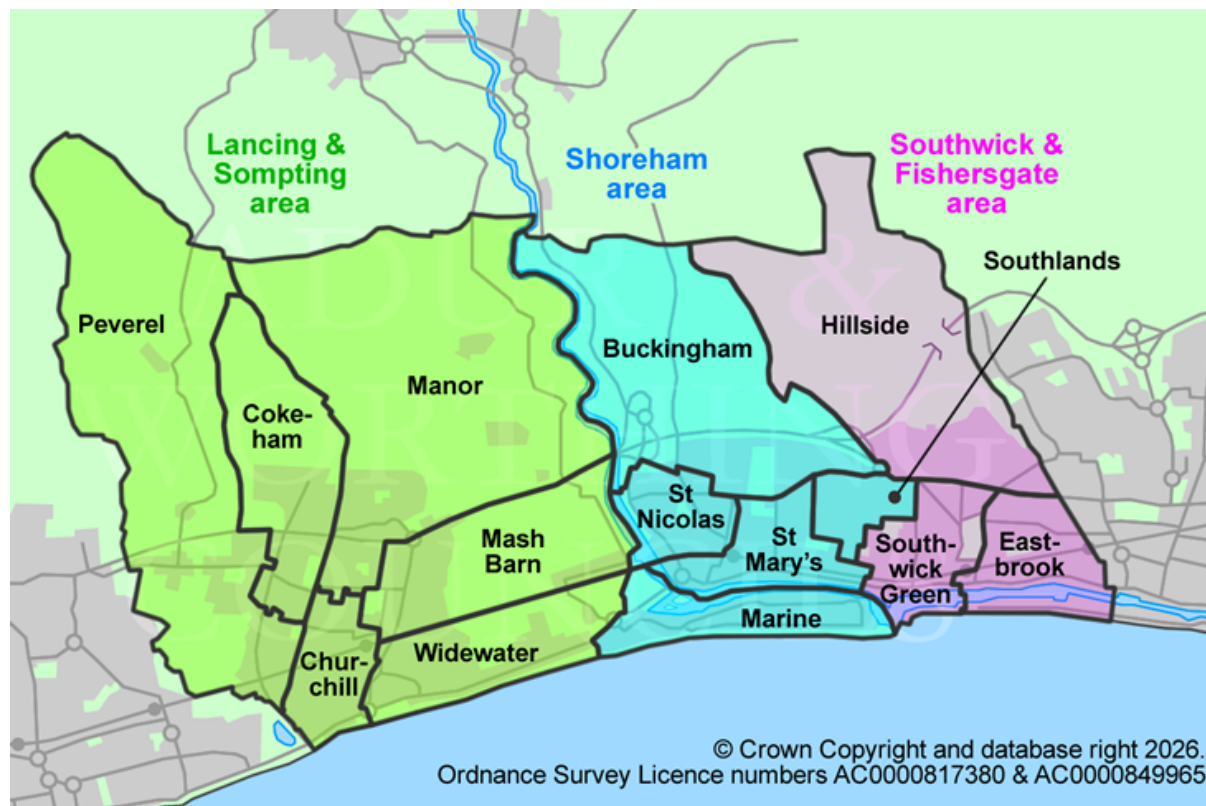
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In order to align the same approach as for Worthing, the Adur 'areas' are set out below which clearly defined three separate geographical regions (groupings of wards) for groups to apply to depending on where their project is taking place:

- Lancing & Sompting; Churchill, Cokeham, Manor, Mash Barn, Peverel and Widewater
- Shoreham; Buckingham, Marine, St Mary's, St Nicolas and Southlands
- Southwick & Fishersgate; Eastbrook, Hillside and Southwick Green

Communities Grant areas in Adur showing which wards are in which area:

Note that the Adur areas exclude any area covered by the South Downs National Park Authority.



Who can apply for the Connected Communities Grant Fund?

Grants may be awarded to not-for-profit organisations, working for the benefit of Adur and Worthing. To apply, your group does not have to be a registered charity but you do need;

- A constitution or set of governing rules
- Accounts or records of expenditure
- To be able to sign a UK Subsidy Form, which details the grants receivable by your group over a 3 year period
- A bank account; or a partner organisation willing to hold the money for you

- To deliver the project/activity within the district of Adur or the Borough of Worthing. Groups must be able to evidence the local need for a project in the area to which they are applying
- To have suitable and relevant policies (such as safeguarding or insurance) to run your project
- To be ready! You'll need to complete the project and have spent the money within twelve months of receiving the grant - therefore you should have all the necessary permissions in place to deliver your project

A school cannot apply by themselves for funding, however the PTA group could apply for funding on behalf of the school.

What funding is available?

The funds will be made available as part of an annual bidding process. The table below outlines the funds which are available to groups for this year.

Table 1: Amount of funds available by area for the 2026 funding round

Area	Amount of CIL funds available in pot
Worthing Coastal East: Heene, Central and Selden	£39,873.27
Worthing Coastal West: Marine and Goring	£20,730.94
Worthing North: Tarring, Gaisford and Salvington	£12,845.89
Worthing North East: Broadwater and Offington	£10,000.00
Worthing North West: Northbrook, Castle and Durrington	£0.00
Adur: Lancing & Sompting	£12,664.00
Adur: Shoreham	£12,664.00
Adur: Southwick & Fishersgate	£12,664.00
Total	£121,442.10

An online map showing the above Worthing Areas can be found on the [Council's website](#).

The Worthing North West Area (Castle, Northbrook and Durrington wards) does not have money available for the 2026 funding round as less than £10,000 is available in the pot from the Worthing CIL Neighbourhood Fund. The CIL Neighbourhood Fund is made up of money collected from CIL liable developments. The money previously allocated to the 'Community Transport Grant' has been chosen to be made available to the Worthing North East Area, as this area has had significantly lower amounts of money made available for community groups over recent years.

The amount of money which is available to groups in Adur is dependent on the level of income from textile recycling (to top up the Council revenue funding that previously formed the Adur Community Grant and the Community Transport Grant). This funding is then split evenly between the 3 areas.

What value of project proposals is invited?

The Connected Communities Grant Fund is intended to support small, local projects. Bids will be considered on their merits, as follows:

- Project proposals can request a minimum of £1,000 and up to a maximum allocation of £5,000
- Project proposals that match this fund with other funding sources, will be encouraged - for example, the Connected Communities Grant Fund could be used as the match funding element to secure a larger funding award from other organisations, or in-kind support such as volunteer hours.

It should be noted that there is likely to be high demand for the Connected Communities Grant Fund in 2026, so it is recommended that groups consider how much funds they are requesting and whether they have access to other sources of funding.

The fund can be used to fund 100% of project costs, or can also be used in conjunction with other sources of funding. For example, the Connected Communities Grant Fund could be used as the match funding element to secure a larger funding award from other organisations. The Councils are keen to move towards a position of a 'last funder' whereby groups have secured additional funding and need a few thousand pounds extra in order to be able to deliver their project.

Applying for the Connected Communities Grant Fund

The step-by-step process for allocating funding from the Connected Communities Grant Fund is set out below.

The process of applying:

Networking events September 2026	Applications 14th September - 25th October 2026	Assessment November - December 2026	Final Decision & Outcome shared December 2026	Agreement January 2027
A series of networking events will be held which community groups are invited to attend. The sessions will be a chance for groups to hear from the Council on what we are looking for from projects in 2026 and to ask questions.	Groups are invited to complete the Connected Communities Grant Fund application form. This will be a simple Google form. The questions will be made available to look at separately, so you can compile your answers before submitting the form.	Suitable projects will be sent through to an assessment panel. This will consist of Council officers, elected ward members and specially invited community representatives. They will go through the application forms submitted to evaluate and score each one. The panel will then recommend which projects are to be allocated funding and provide feedback.	The assessment panel's recommendations will be included in a report to the relevant Cabinet Member(s). They have the final say on which bids are approved.	Formal process starts for allowing transfer of funds, starting with signing a fund agreement.

All applicants will be asked to submit an application form which will allow the assessment panel to assess proposals against a range of criteria. The full evaluation form which will be completed by the panel can be found on the Connected Communities Grant Fund webpage.

Any bids which aren't successful this year will be informed of the reasons why and will be given the opportunity to reapply next year, dependent on sufficient funds being available in the relevant area pot.

Things to consider before applying for the Connected Communities Grant Fund

Adur & Worthing Councils recommend that groups/organisations who are considering applying to the Connected Communities Grant Fund go through the following things to consider:

1. Is your group/organisation set up correctly to be eligible to apply to the Connected Communities Grant Fund?
2. Read all the information on our website
3. Obey the word limit for the application (Note that you will need to check this yourself as Google Form does not have the limit built in)
4. Consider how your project provides direct benefits to the Area residents and/or the environment
5. When will you be able to deliver the project? There is a requirement for your project to commence and the funds to be spent within 12 months of the awarding of the funds
6. Have you got the necessary approvals? For example, does your project require Planning Permission or Building Control approval? Have you got written permission from the land owner for the project to take place? Have you got a lease on the building?
7. Are there any other local community groups who you could partner with to deliver your project and potentially have a wider benefit to Worthing residents?
8. If there are any ongoing maintenance issues/costs associated with your project, how will these be addressed to avoid there being an ongoing financial cost to the Councils?

The following sections relate to the formal application form which will be available on our website between 14th September to 25th October 2026:

Application Form Section 1 – Applicant Information

Community group / organisation:

- Where the bid is submitted from a community group, charity or another organisation it is important for Adur & Worthing Councils to have these details provided.
- If groups are applying for a joint project, one group/organisation should be selected as the lead and submit the application in collaboration with the other groups/organisations. There is a question in section 2 which gives the applicant a chance to list all the groups who are delivering the project

- The Connected Communities Grant is aimed at delivering benefits to local communities. The applications should therefore be submitted from groups or individuals representing community interests and not directly from Council departments. There may, however, be instances where a Council department and a local community group have shared support on a project that could benefit from funding. Council departments can therefore work jointly with communities to support bids in these instances but the bid itself must be demonstrably community-led and submitted from an individual or organisation representing the community. Ward Councillors cannot submit bids on behalf of the local community

Aims of the Organisation:

- This should be a simple explanation of why the group/organisation has been set up. What benefits does the group aim to bring to the local community?

Application Form Section 2 – Project Information

Project title:

- Please consider a suitable title to the project. This will be included in any publicity that the Council puts out regarding successful applications.

Name of the group(s) delivering the project:

- If this is more than one group collaborating on the project, please list all of them

Project location:

- If the project does not have one 'base' then please detail in this question to explain why

Which funding area do you wish to apply to?

- Please note that the area selected here will be the pot of money your application will be assessed against
- If your project has a base location (for example, where people meet for your project), then you should apply for the area which the location is in
- If your project has no specific location, or has multiple locations across different areas, then you should think about which funding area will have the biggest positive impact from your project. Is there one funding area where your group works more intensely? Can you provide evidence that your project will have a positive impact on the residents in that area?

The total (gross) cost of the project:

- Please provide, as far as is known, the total gross cost of the project (including VAT). The total cost of the project will not necessarily be the same as the amount of Connected Communities Grant required as the project may be part funded from other sources. This information is to help the assessment panel determine the various costs involved as well as the extent of grant funds needed to deliver the project

- Where possible, please provide evidence of quotations to confirm the accuracy of the proposed project costs. If possible, a business plan with details of the costings of the project would be beneficial. This can be provided as an attachment at the end of the application form
- The Council recognises that some projects will need to provide less information than others due to different complexities. It is for the applicant to provide the appropriate level of cost information that they consider is required in each case

Funding amount requested:

- Please provide how much funding is being sought from the Connected Communities Grant to help deliver the project. This could be either the same as the total project cost or just the residual amount required (in addition to other funding already secured) to ensure the project can be delivered
- Note that allocations can only be between £1,000 and £5,000
- You are advised to check the availability of funds in your area at the point of submission - for example, funding is not available this year in the Worthing North West area
- Please note that there is the option for the assessment panel to recommend awarding a lower amount than is requested

Expected project start and end dates:

- It is important for the assessment panel to understand how long it will take to deliver a project from start to finish. Please provide details of the following:
 - Start date: Please provide the likely date from which eligible expenditure will be incurred
 - End date: Please provide the likely date by which all the activities / works described in the application will be completed and all invoices will be paid
- There is a requirement that the project is to commence and complete within 12 months of the awarding of the funding

Application Form Section 3 – Project Details:

Summary of the project (max 100 words):

- Please provide as much detail as possible as to what the project is, whilst keeping to the word limit
- Is there the possibility of the project running if only a proportion of the grant funding requested can be allocated?

Under which priority does your project fall?

- There are two priority areas which the Councils are looking to fund in 2026. Details of what these mean are included on our website;
<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/connected-communities-grant/#types-of-projects>

Breakdown of costs (max 100 words):

- Please provide a breakdown of the cost of the project, in as much detail as possible, whilst keeping to the word limit
- There is an option to provide a spreadsheet (or similar) of the costs breakdown as supporting information, at the end of the form
- Given the financial constraints both Councils have to work within it is important to ensure the use of Connected Communities Grant funding does not place significant additional financial and resource burdens on Council operations.
- It is expected that the majority of bids will include information as to how the group(s) delivering the project will account for any future maintenance costs

Local community benefits(max 100 words):

- Please provide as much detail as possible on the likely demographics who will benefit from the project
- Do you know roughly how many people will benefit from the project?
- Can you demonstrate how the funding area you have applied for will receive direct benefit of the project?
- Does your project also have a positive impact on the environment?

Evidence of need for the project (max 100 words):

- What is the reason for the project wanting to be delivered and which group(s) have been involved in the process of coming up with the project proposals?
- Has your project been run before elsewhere or is it being expanded? If so, what are the reasons for this?
- Have you spoken directly with the intended beneficiaries of the project to help you design the project?
- If you have spoken with your local ward councillor, then please detail their support in this section

Partnership working (max 100 words):

- Will your project be delivered in partnership with any other group?
- This could include local schools, community groups, resident associations, or businesses

Approvals required:

- As there is deadline for the funds to be spent, it is important that projects are 'ready to go'
- Therefore, groups should have considered whether or not they have planning approval, have a lease to undertake the works, and/or have agreement from a venue to run a project
- If your project does not require any permissions in order to run, then please tick 'Not Applicable'

Obstacles to delivering the project (max 100 words):

- Please list details of any hurdles which must be overcome in order to deliver the project. Any infrastructure project is likely to have obstacles, which is why the Councils encourage applicants to have considered these and sought the appropriate help in order to overcome them before submitting an application for grant funding
- This section allows you to explain your answer to the previous question
- Will you need permission from the Council?
- Are you reliant on the assistance of another organisation to help deliver the project?
- Will the scheme be on public or private land and has the landowner given permission for the project to proceed?
- Are you reliant on licensing or planning permission?
- Do you require a licence/lease to run the project?
- Note that details on the additional funding required is covered in section 4

Application Form Section 4 – Additional Funding:

Other funding sources (max 100 words):

- Please also provide details of any grant / match funding already or expected to be secured to help meet some of the costs identified. Where alternative funding has been secured please provide as much evidence as possible i.e. award confirmation letter etc.
- Please indicate if the other sources of funding are reliant on you securing the funding from the Connected Communities Grant (i.e. having match funding)
- The Council is looking to move to a position where they are the 'final funder'. Therefore groups who already have funding secured from other sources to contribute to the overall cost of the project may be favoured
- This section can also be used to detail "in kind" contributions i.e. volunteering hours or free labour

Application Form Section 5 – Supporting Information:

- To ensure that all applications taken to the assessment panel are from groups who are eligible to be awarded funding, we are requesting the submission of a number of documents. One of these documents is the UK Subsidy Control form which groups are required to provide, in accordance with UK rules around subsidies (a template of which can be found on our website)
- Please use this section to upload up to 5 files, which includes any documents, spreadsheets, PDFs, images etc.
- Note that the maximum file size is 10MB

Application Form Section 5a – Supporting Information (project information):

- This section can be used to upload up to 5 supporting documents related to your project

- For example, if the word limit is restrictive, you could attach a PDF which provides more details of your project
- You can upload documents, spreadsheets, PDFs, videos, images or audio files
- Note that the maximum file size is 10MB

Further Information

More information will be available on the [Council's Connected Communities Grant webpage](#).

Regarding questions about the Connected Communities Grant Fund, please contact:

- neighbourhood@adur-worthing.gov.uk