

## **BRIEFING NOTE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

The briefing note has been prepared following the agreement in the budget meeting on 29 February 2024 to support the financial increases proposed by the Executive Committee on 14 November 2023 where recommendations relating to the financial support available to community councils were discussed and agreed.

Although SBC is not required to provide financial support to community councils, the Council recognises the importance of remunerating community councils to enable them to deliver their core responsibilities and activity they chose to participate in over and above these.

The following financial support is available to community councils:

1. Annual support grant (grant)
2. Local community paths maintenance grant (reimbursement)
3. Meeting space hire costs (reimbursement)
4. Data protection registration/renewal (costs covered)
5. Insurance (costs covered)

Further to the ring-fenced financial support set out above community councils have access to other grants available from SBC. Advice and support about additional SBC grant schemes as well as those external to SBC is available through the Communities & Partnerships team and the Council's Community Engagement Officers.

Non-financial support facilitated by SBC for community council projects is available through:

1. Community Justice – unpaid work team
2. Community benefits

The support highlighted above is set out in detail below.

## Annual support grant

The annual support grant is structured in five bands according to population:

Population	Funding	No. of CCs
Over 10,000	£1,958.00	2
4,000 – 10,000	£1,501.50	4
2,000 – 4,000	£1,089.00	8
500 – 2,000	£ 693.00	34
Under 500	£ 594.00	21

The total commitment, if all community councils are operational and meet the criteria, is £54,670. In addition to this Scottish Borders Community Councils' Network has access to an annual support grant of £1,250.

### Grant conditions

In order to qualify for the annual support grant, each community council must submit:

- a. Accounts, inspected by an independent examiner, from the previous financial year (March – April).
- b. Evidence that all community councillors agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, as set out in the Community Council Scheme).
- c. An evaluation of how the previous year's support grant had been spent.

Each community council can carry forward no more than twice the value for their annual support grant at the end of each financial year. <sup>1</sup> If more than this is carried forward, as unreserved funds, the community council will not be able to access the annual support grant for that year, although the grant will be available the following year when the same conditions will have to be met.

### Criteria for spend.

The annual support grant is, in the first instance, provided to support the operation of the community council. Once all operating costs have been covered any remained can be used to support other costs the community council may incur.

Costs deemed to be operational are set out below:

- a. Stationery including printer ink,
- b. Secretarial expenses including postage,
- c. Expenses incurred by community councillors carrying out the council council's business (including travel),
- d. Memberships/subscriptions,
- e. Website,

---

<sup>1</sup> This related to the balance of the annual support grant only and does not include money from other funding streams, including other grants from SBC.

- f. Communication costs e.g., newsletters,
- g. Adverts,
- h. Election expenses,
- i. Honorariums for secretary and treasurer,
- j. Hire of meeting space for public consultation meetings,
- k. Preparation of annual accounts/costs of independent examiner.

In addition to this list memorial wreaths associated with Remembrance Sunday/Armistice Day are considered to be operational costs.

Further information is available from Clare Malster at [communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

### **Local community paths maintenance grant**

A Local community paths maintenance grant of up to £600 (see footnote 1 above) is available to reimburse costs a community council has incurred in s grass cutting, vegetation removal, surfacing, installation of gates etc., and can be used towards the purchase of relevant tools and machinery. The total budget available is £20,100.

Application is by way of a form accompanied by relevant evidence of works and/or receipts and any works or purchases must be completed before the grant can be paid.

The deadline for applications is usually early December.

Further information is available from Denise Brydon at [Denise.Brydon@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:Denise.Brydon@scotborders.gov.uk)

### **Meeting space hire costs**

Scottish Borders Council provides free use of premises owned and under the control of the Scottish Borders Council for the purposes of holding Community Council meetings; where such accommodation is not available hire costs are reimbursed. The costs are paid a year in arrears based on claims made in writing if costs had not been paid out before the year end thus showing in the annual accounts.

The amount reimbursed is not currently capped but will be queried if costs are believed to be excessive.

This support is available for ordinary, annual and extraordinary meetings. The cost of subject specific public meetings e.g., wind farm and/or community events e.g., community lunches must be borne by the community council.

Further information is available from Clare Malster at [communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

## **Data protection registration/renewal**

Scottish Borders Council covers the cost and administration of data protection renewals. The annual fee is currently £40 per community council resulting in a maximum budget commitment of £2,760.

A privacy notice and updated GDPR briefing have been prepared as part of the Review of the Community Council Scheme.

Further information is available from Clare Malster at [communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

## **Insurance**

SBC pays the costs of the insurance premiums for all operational community councils for the following cover:

- a. Money
- b. Basic public liability
- c. Employer's liability<sup>2</sup>
- d. Personal accident cover
- e. Employees personal accident cover<sup>3</sup>

From 2024/25 SBC will also pay the cost of the additional cover that community councils had in place in 2023/24. The additional cover is Public Liability for identified events and All Risks (assets owned by community councils).

Community councils informed by the Insurance Team of the information required each financial year.

Assets that should be included on the policy are anything that are owned by the community council except for resilience equipment that has been provided by SBC; this will be replaced by SBC if damaged. The resilience equipment provided by SBC is:

- a. Head torches
- b. Handlamps
- c. Shoe grippers
- d. Plastic ID card holders
- e. Waterproof gloves
- f. Thermal gloves
- g. Rigger gloves
- h. Community council Hi-Viz bibs
- i. First aid kits
- j. Hard hats

---

<sup>2</sup> This cover is added on request and is currently in place for five community councils

<sup>3</sup> This cover is added on request and is currently in place for five community councils

- k. Salt spreader
- l. Standard shovel
- m. Snow shovel
- n. Wheelbarrow
- o. Padlock
- p. Litter picker
- q. Resilience equipment store

An asset can be defined as a resource with economic value that an organisation owns. Examples of assets owned by community councils include:

- a. Defibrillators
- b. Benches
- c. Notice boards
- d. Grass cutters

Further information is available from:

Clare Malster at [communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

Greg Campbell (Insurance Team) at [cr.insurance@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:cr.insurance@scotborders.gov.uk)

### **Additional SBC grant schemes**

SBC operates a range of funding schemes that are open to community councils to apply to. Some will provide financial support for a range of activities while others will fund specific activities. Information about these is kept up to date on the SBC website and/or is available from SBC's Community Engagement Officers.

Also available is an Expression of Interest form that enables organisations to let SBC know what they need and for officers to identify relevant opportunities.

[Grant funding for community projects | Grant Funding for Community Projects | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#)

Berwickshire: Sankafio Martei

Cheviot: Please direct any queries to [communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

Eildon: Erin Coltman

Teviot & Liddesdale: Sarah Culverwell

Tweeddale: Hannah Lacon

[communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@scotborders.gov.uk)

### **External funding**

There are a wide range of funds, external to SBC that community councils, can access. These include funds operated by the National Lottery, including Awards for All, which many community councils will already be familiar with.

[National Lottery Awards for All Scotland | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](http://tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

The Improvement Service operates a website for community councils that includes free access to training, specifically for community councils) facilitated by the Open University, case studies and information about funds available to community councils.

[Funding | Community Council \(communitycouncils.scot\)](http://communitycouncils.scot)

Support to identify the most appropriate grant scheme is available from the Community Engagement Officers as well as Borders Community Action.

Border Community Action [Home - Borders TSI](#)

## **Other support**

### **Community Justice – unpaid work**

The Unpaid Work Team is available to carry out a wide range of work across the Borders for community-based groups, including community councils. Work includes:

- a. Manufacture of items such as picnic tables, planters, benches and noticeboards. The community council is required to provide the materials and the Unpaid Work Team will provide the labour.
- b. Upkeep and construction of paths and fences.
- c. Assisting with community gardens and allotments.

Further information is available at [Community payback order and drug treatment and testing orders | Community based services | Scottish Borders Council \(scotborders.gov.uk\)](#), by emailing [CJSWScottishBorders@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:CJSWScottishBorders@scotborders.gov.uk) or on 01896 664140.

### **Community Benefit**

Within SBC's procurement framework there are community benefit clauses that can provide opportunities for local community-based organisations. Community benefits are the method by which local communities can receive additional value from businesses that are delivering publicly funded contracts and developments.

Constituted not for profit bodies, such as community councils, can apply for community benefits. Support that has been delivered in the Borders includes food to Burnfoot Community Futures, leaflet printing for the Heartland Market in Galashiels and paint to weatherproof Burnfoot Community Futures food shed.

Further information is available at [FAQs \(esescommunities.org\)](http://esescommunities.org) or from the Community Engagement Officers listed above.