

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Community Climate Action Grant

Application guidance

June 2026

Application Deadline: 3 July 2026



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The following definitions are used within this document:

Community Climate Action Grant: the name of the Scheme, providing grants to local community-based organisations working to increase engagement on climate action.

Climate Emergency: refers to the climate emergency declared by the Council in July 2019

Effective Date: That is businesses / social enterprises will need to have been trading in the borough before this date to be eligible for this Scheme. For this Scheme that date is 01 April 2026.

End Date: refers to the final deadline for project completions, being 31 January 2027.

UK Subsidy Control Regime: refers to the framework published by the Department for Business and Trade in September 2022 which dictates the rules around public subsidies to businesses.

1. Purpose of the scheme, background and funding

1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine your eligibility for the Council's Community Climate Action Grant.

1.2 This grant scheme has been developed by the Council in relation to our commitment to our Borough Climate Change Strategy. This commitment aligns with our 2019 climate and biodiversity emergency declaration and strategic plan and our focus on supporting climate action.

1.3 The purpose of the Community Climate Action Grant is to support local community groups, schools, organisations and non-profits to deliver small scale climate action projects, whilst positively engaging with residents around local climate action.

Examples of such projects could include: tree planting, micro forest planting, wildflower meadow creation, rain garden creation, organising litter picks/purchasing better equipment, expand or start a repair cafe, hold a sewing club, open a library of things, open a community garden, open a community fridge, purchase a community composter, organise a local fair, organise local training (carbon literacy).

1.4 All projects must at a minimum engage communities on the environment and achieve at least one of following:

- Encourage sustainable behaviour
- Improve local understanding of climate change and sustainability
- Reduces pollution
- Reduces emissions (either individually or borough wide)
- Improves air quality
- Improves biodiversity
- Improves local climate adaptation

1.5 The idea is that this grant would help to spark and support locally-led climate action, providing small scale funding to help local sustainable initiatives get off the ground or grow.

1.4 The scheme has allocated £15,000 to distribute across local community groups within Tunbridge Wells Borough. This aligns with our Borough Climate Change Strategy and Strategic Plan.

1.5 The Scheme will provide grants of up to £1,500 towards the costs of a community focused climate projects, subject to terms and conditions.

2. Eligibility Criteria

2.1 Applicants must operate a community interest group with a registered address in Tunbridge Wells borough.

2.2 Organisations must be a (1) local community groups, (2) organisations and (4) non-profits, (5) town and parish councils.

2.3 Applicants must provide a quote or equivalent for the works proposed in order to be accepted.

2.4 Applicants must specify how their project increases community engagement in terms of the total number of people engaged in the project.

2.5 Applicants must set out what their project entails and how it increases community engagement on climate action.

2.6 No grant shall be paid for any work carried out prior to an award having been made – grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.

2.7 Projects must have received all necessary permissions before applying for the Scheme.

2.8 The Scheme will not cover any of the following costs:

Any cost incurred prior to the completion of a funding agreement with the Council to receive a grant for a successful application.

VAT.
Statutory works or duties.
Costs related to arranging, financing, or securing additional funding for a project.
Existing and new staff costs and salaries.
Contingency costs.
Costs related to any permissions secured for the project (i.e., Planning).
Existing fixed overhead costs.
Research costs.
Repairs and maintenance work.
Like for like replacement of existing items.
Purchase of land or buildings.
Advance payments.
Insurance costs.

3. Awards

3.1 The Community Climate Action Grant is a one-off award specifically to support the eligible and successful proposals set out by applicants.

3.2 Under the Scheme, applicants are entitled to apply for up to £1,500 towards their eligible project costs.

3.3 Applications will be reviewed and a decision on funding will be made within 1 month of a completed submission. This timeframe will be extended where additional documentation and clarifications are required.

4. Excluded Organisations

4.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list, and it is at the discretion of the Council which businesses will not be eligible for funding under the Scheme:

- Businesses. (There is separate grant funding tailored to businesses).
- Schools. (There is separate grant funding tailored to schools).

5. The Effective Date and Deadline

5.1 The effective date for eligibility is determined as 1 April 2026.

5.2 The application deadline for this scheme is **3 July 2026**.

6. How will the grants be provided to organisations

6.1 The Council is fully aware of the importance of these grants to assist local community-based organisations to encourage engagement and build a climate resilient borough. The Community Climate Action Grant represents a significant intervention from the Council to support communities in their efforts to be more sustainable.

6.2 In all cases, organisations will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grant via the application process. An application for a Community Climate Action Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received in the Council's Sustainability Inbox at sustainability@tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

6.3 Applicants are under an obligation to notify the Council should they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for the Community Climate Micro Grant.

6.4 The council will conduct its due diligence, thus the Council reserves the right to request supplementary information from applicants, and they should look to provide this, where requested, as soon as possible.

6.5 Grant contribution payments will be made retrospectively. Correct quotes must be provided beforehand to cross reference purchasing total to requested funds.

6.6 All monies paid under this scheme will be funded by the Council and allocated from the Council's Local Climate Action Fund.

7. Subsidy Control

7.1 If applicable to your organisation, where have had previous public funding, it is important that you let us know so we will check that you are within the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) limits. The current threshold for MFA (subsidy) is £315,000 in a three-year rolling period. If you have received funding over these limits, we may need to limit the amount of the funding you can get, to comply with the state aid rules. You must notify us if you are close to or above the threshold.

7.2 Compliance with Subsidy Control rules and regulations is a requirement for receipt of a Community Climate Action Grant.

7.3 To check applicability and ensure your organisation is compliant, please visit the Government's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

8. Decision Making

8.1 The Council has approved the Community Climate Action Grant.

8.2 Sustainability Officers will administer the Scheme and make recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability. These recommendations will be based on a scoring matrix linked to the outputs, outcomes and deliverability of proposals.

8.3 All decisions made by the Council shall be communicated to the applicant in either writing or by email. A decision will be made as soon as is practicable after the 3rd July deadline for applications has passed.

9. Complaints

9.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any Complaint received about this Scheme.

10. Taxation

10.1 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to the applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.

11. Managing the risk of fraud

11.1 The Council will not accept the deliberate manipulation of the schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money, proceeding without the necessary permissions, or failing to declare entitlement to any section of the Grant will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.

11.2 For the avoidance of doubt, the Council will undertake pre- and post-payment checks for all Community Climate Action Grant applications in order to ensure the monies distributed by the Council have been allocated to the intended initiatives.

12. Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid

12.1 If it is established that any award has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

13. Data Protection and use of Data

13.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, which are available on the Council's website.