

What is the Sustainable Communities Fund?

The Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) is a grant fund providing up to 50% of your total project cost. It's available to 'not for profit' organisations and 'for profit' organisations delivering non-profit-making projects in the National Park. Applicants can request a small grant of £500 - £2,000 or a large grant of £2,001 - £10,000.

It's important to work with the relevant national park Area Ranger when developing your project. They will provide information on relevant sources of support and link with internal officers who will offer expertise in a range of areas.

Contact information for our area teams can be found by following this link: <http://southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-people/rangers/>

Contact the Grants Officer to have an early conversation about your project after reading this booklet.

After reading this booklet, please contact grants@southdowns.gov.uk or 07471997344 if you would like to discuss an application.

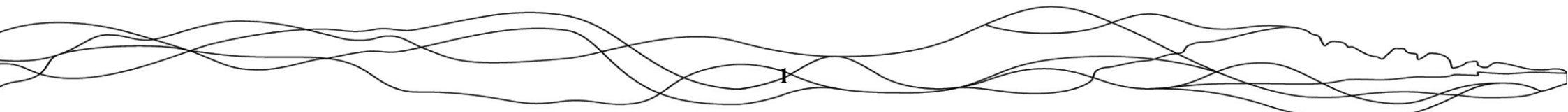
In addition to the SCF there are a range of other grant opportunities for community organisations, farmers and land owners, often paired with advice from specialist conservation staff.

If your project creates new or improved habitat check here:

<https://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/apply-for-funding/>

For larger community infrastructure and building projects check here:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/community-infrastructure-levy/revision-of-spending-cil/applying-for-cil-funds-for-an-infrastructure-project/>



Eligibility Criteria:

- You must be a constituted community, voluntary or charitable organisation, Community Interest Company, Social Enterprise, Parish Council or Local Authority (see match funding requirements). You will have an appropriate governing document in place and a bank account.
- All projects must contribute to at least one policy or outcome in the Partnership Management Plan
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/>.
- The project will take place within the South Downs National Park. Organisations that are outside the boundary can be funded if they demonstrate a clear link to the Partnership Management Plan and look to increase access to and participation with the National Park.
<http://southdowns.gov.uk/discover/communities/do-i-live-in-the-national-park/>
- You should have the minimum information required to validate an application (see page 6)

Applications are prioritised in consideration of:

- Community involvement and beneficiaries
- Contributions to the Partnership Management Plan
- Alignment with the purposes and duty of the National Park and contribution to its special Qualities
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/our-history/why-are-we-a-national-park/>
- Environmental and Financial Sustainability – it is essential that projects show how they are environmentally sustainable and will be financially independent (not reliant on grant funding) after the project. Projects should support native species and use local, sustainable materials where possible.
- Value for money.

What does it fund?

- **Capital items** - such as the purchase of equipment and materials. E.g. a trailer with a hydraulic lift to remove trees from heathland, provision of cycling racks or the construction of a bridge for access to historical facilities.
- **Professional contractors** - such as builders and tradespeople to install the interior of a new community workshop
- **Cultural activities** - community arts and heritage activities that are based on or inspired by the South Downs. For example, the cost of an external artist or facilitators to lead a community workshop, art materials.
- **Events & festivals** – equipment and materials to support events. The events must contribute to and be based on the special qualities of the South Downs rather than simply being a community event which takes place in National Park. Maximum funding is up to £2,000.

Start-up – occasionally the SCF will allow organisations less than a year old to include some revenue funding at the start of a project where this is clearly linked to delivery. The application should show how these costs will be sustained by your organisation after the grant.

What doesn't it fund?

- Curriculum and regular educational programmes. A school may be one of the partners in a project but are unlikely to be awarded a grant themselves unless for a distinct project involving the wider community.
- the cost of planning applications
- acquisition of land and buildings
- long term revenue costs including posts, salaries and building rent
- for profit businesses and organisations for personal gain/profit
- Commissioning public art work such as statues (the Arts Council may offer grants). Creation of South Downs inspired art as an outcome of a community- participatory activity is fundable.
- Introduction of non-native species unless recommended
- academic research although surveys and monitoring may be eligible
- routine repair and maintenance work
- vehicle purchase or hire
- Refurbishment to churches, village halls and sport facilities. National lottery grants and Community Infrastructure Levy funding may help with these.
- promotion of religious or political beliefs.
- Publicity or promotion of your organisation including new websites (promotion limited to the project is eligible)
- projects which are a statutory responsibility or an organisation
- apprenticeships
- projects where the main benefit is outside the boundary of the National Park. For example, buildings outside the park
- Expenses that have already been incurred
- we will not fund the same organisation twice in a financial year.

How much can I apply for?

Small Grants range from £500 to £2,000 and Large Grants from £2001 to £10,000.

You can apply for up to 50% of the total cost of your project. The remaining amount can include investment from your own organisation, other grants, local fundraising and contributions in-kind. You do not have to have secured this 'match funding' at the time of application but will be able to tell us who you are approaching for it.

At least 25% of your total project costs should be met with cash from other sources.

District or County Councils can only apply for a maximum of 25% towards the total cost. At least 50% of the rest of the costs will be made up of cash. The work applied for should not be the Council's statutory responsibility.

Your other funding sources could be:

- Local Authorities and Parish Councils- it's very important to have sought a contribution from your Parish, Town Council or Local Authority
- a grant from a public funding body, trust or foundation
- a company or business sponsorship
- your organisation's own resources
- donated materials
- Community Infrastructure Levy Funding [CIL](#)– organisations are encouraged to speak to their Parish/Town Council to see whether they are able to access an amount of CIL funding as their match.
- in-kind support through volunteer time. Unskilled volunteer time is valued up to £70 per day, skilled time up to £150 per day and professional services up to £250 per day. A day is minimum 6 hours. You will still need to contribute at least 25% cash towards the project. This cannot all be in-kind.

Example of project funding sources:

Total project cost, £15,000, made up of -

County Councillor grant	£1,000
Cash from applicant organisation	£2,000
Planned fundraising	£750
Estimated volunteer hours using suggested rates	£3,750
Application to Sustainable Communities Fund:	£7,500

What's the grant process?

Deadline dates for applications typically fall 4-6 weeks before decision and are advertised online. Small grants are made twice a year and large grants are made twice a year

Staff at the South Downs National Park and members of the dedicated SCF grants panel are consulted on applications. The Grants Officer will contact you if there is information that they require before a decision.

If awarded a grant you will be asked to confirm acceptance of a number of grant conditions. For small grants, payment can be made up-front once you have your match funding in place and any other necessary permissions. For large grants a payment plan will be based on the information in your application with a minimum of 10% retained until completion.

On completion of your project you will submit a form that details your expenditure, achievements against your objectives and qualitative visual and written feedback.

More information and dates here:

<https://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/apply-for-funding/>

Application forms are not available online as we prefer to talk to you about your project beforehand.

What are the grant conditions?

Standard conditions include:

- All information provided during the application process is true and accurate.
- grant must be used for the purposes specified in the application form and any proposed changes to these must be the subject of a formal request to the South Downs National Park Trust and approved in writing.
- assets created or purchased by this project will, upon dissolution of the grant receiving organisation, be transferred to a charity with similar objects or to the South Downs National Park Trust.
- Voluntary contributions will be recorded in detail and evidenced during the grant monitoring phase.
- You are responsible for risk management and the successful delivery of the project; if the project is not successful you may not receive your grant.
- The grant will be not more than 50% of the total cost
- Your project will not commence until all match funding has been secured.
- surplus will be returned in proportion to the percentage of funding received from the Sustainable Communities Fund
- The offer is to remain open until [*dependent on your project*]
- A short report will be sent within 6 weeks of the completion of the project outlining the key results of the project including digital photographic evidence.
- support from the South Downs National Park Trust must be recognised on all publicity and promotional material using the official Sustainable Communities Fund logo. The communications Team should be notified in advance of any publicity that you are planning around this project.

What information do I need to apply?

Without the following your project will not be considered by the panel:

- Location: a postcode and location map (this can be a simple map taken from the internet)
- A detailed budget breaking down all anticipated expenditure (including quantities of items) balanced against your anticipated income from other sources of funding. Ask the Grants Officer if you would like an example budget.
- 3 Quotes: provide evidence of 3 quotes for any expense valued at £1,000 or more. We understand that this is not always possible in which case you should justify why the expense presents good value for money.
- Constitution or governing document. This is a simple set of rules by which you run your organisation, agreed by its members. Local Voluntary Action groups can often offer advice on writing these, and the My Community page has a template: [Download a template constitution for your group - MyCommunity](#). Consider what would happen to assets like equipment if the group is wound up.
- Latest approved annual accounts, signed and dated by your chair, secretary or treasurer and by your auditor or independent examiner, where appropriate. If your organisation has been running for less than 15 months, you may not be able to supply this so please send a 12-month financial projection for the year when you will spend the grant. Organisations with more than 1 year's expenditure in unallocated reserves will need to explain in the application form why grant funding is being sought.
- For built structures, change of use, ground works and other projects likely to need planning permission you should attach proof or planning permission or positive pre-application discussion with the relevant planning authority. See here: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-applications/do-i-need-planning-permission/I-need-planning-permission?> - South Downs National Park Authority

Other useful information:

- Letters of support from your Parish Council and local organisations.
- Photographs showing the site or illustrating the project
- Links to National Park Priorities: Show how your project will contribute to the purposes, duty and special qualities.
- Beneficiaries: details of how many people from which parts of the community will be involved and benefit.
- Information about project legacy. What activities will continue after the funding has finished? What are the lasting benefits? How will assets purchased or created be maintained?

Please contact grants@southdowns.gov.uk 07471997344 if you would like to discuss an application.