

Application Guidance and FAQs

Community Pitch will award funding between £500 and £5,000 towards projects aiming to:

- mitigate the effects of climate change such as flooding, heat gain, loss of species;
- reduce waste, encourage an uptake in recycling and reuse;
- support wildlife by improving and restoring habitats;
- encourage sustainable and low carbon forms of transport. For example, cycling, walking;
- increase energy efficiency leading to a reduction in energy use;
- educate and raise awareness on environmental issues in the Lewes District, Ouse Valley and Havens areas

You are asked to cover a minimum of 10% of the project costs via donations. If your application is supported, you will be given time to raise this amount before the funding is confirmed and would be supported with an online donations page.

Who can apply?

Organisations and non-profits within the Lewes District Council administrative area: this is open to community groups and clubs; parish and town councils; social enterprises; CiCs; charities; schools and businesses if relating to a non-profit project. Check if you are in the Lewes District Council boundary: [Find your local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Your organisation will need to have a constitution (a formalised and agreed set of organisational rules) or governing document as well as a bank account with two un-related signatories. If you need help to set up your organisation you cannot apply at this time, but please contact us so that we can put you in touch with a community development and volunteering organisation.

What does it fund?

This is project funding towards capital costs (such as materials and equipment). Other costs such as contractors and professional fees can be eligible where essential for delivery of the project. We are unable to fund standard operational costs such as core staff salaries or building rent. However, we will consider covering expenses that are directly related to your project and are additional to your organisation's usual activities. We may ask for more information about these during the assessment process.

Your project should be deliverable within one year of having funding confirmed.

It cannot pay for work already complete or started before a funding offer is made.

It cannot pay for costs associated with gaining planning consent. If your application involves physical development or buildings and structures you are advised to check whether planning is needed from your local planning authority.

How to apply

It's advisable to contact the OVCA team before you apply, to let them know about your proposals. They may be able to offer advice and connect you with other relevant organisations or audiences. OVCA@southdowns.gov.uk

To fill in the application form, you will need to know what you are going to do and how much it will cost, as well as the expected start and finish dates of your project. You will need to consider the project's legacy and whether actions will carry on beyond the funding.

You are asked to submit your organisation's governing document and examples of individual expenses proposed at £500 or over. This could be screen shots of an item you would buy or quotes you have received.

You do not need to have your donations in place before applying. You will only be asked to raise this if your application is supported. Once notified, you will be given time to raise donations and funding will be confirmed once you have reached your target.

In the application you are asked to write a short pitch which will be used to advertise your project. In addition, we're asking entrants to send a short video of up to 60 seconds to outline the project, it's aims and beneficiaries. This can be simply shot, using a mobile phone or tablet and you can be behind the camera. You can find examples here: <https://southdownstrust.org.uk/community-pitch-2025/>

Applications should be sent to grants@southdowns.gov.uk with an email titled 'Community Pitch'.

Applications are scored by the OVCA project board who will consider eligibility against the criteria set out in this document, suitability of the work proposed within the natural environment, the proposed legacy of the project, how realistic the activities are within the cost and timeframe and how the outcomes are likely to be shared with others.

Deadline

Details of application submissions dates will be on the web page here: <https://southdownstrust.org.uk/community-pitch-2025/>

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is Ouse Valley Climate Action?

Ouse Valley Climate Action is a National Lottery-funded programme bringing the community together to inspire positive action to mitigate the effects of climate change in the lower Ouse Valley and Havens. Find out more here: [What is OVCA? - South Downs National Park Authority](#)

Am I in the Lewes District area?

Please check if you are within the Lewes District: [Find your local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

We are not a formalised community group and do not have a bank account. Can we apply?

You cannot apply at this time and will need to seek advice to become a formalised organisation.

We have applied before or currently have Community Pitch funding. Can we apply?

Previous applicants can apply. New projects and activities that reach new audiences will be prioritised, as will applications from organisations that have not received funding before. If you currently have Community Pitch funding the OVCA board will consider this on a case-by-case basis. You may be asked to submit a project update or evaluation before new funding is offered.

What can Community Pitch fund?

Any capital costs that meet the objectives of the funding programme. For example, water butts, solar panels, seeds, marketing materials, cycle parking, electric motors, film making, nature monitoring equipment, bird boxes, sustainable drainage systems, ponds – this list is not exhaustive!

Other costs such as contractors and professional fees can be eligible where essential for delivery of the project. We are unable to fund standard operational costs such as core staff salaries or building rent. However, we will consider covering expenses that are directly related to your project and are additional to your organisation's usual activities. We may ask you more about this during the assessment of your application. Funding these expenses is at the discretion of the funding panel.

It cannot pay for work already complete or started before a funding offer is made.

If you are unsure whether or not your project costs can be funded, please contact OVCA@southdowns.gov.uk

We have some ideas but need help planning our project. What should we do?

Contact Ouse Valley Climate Action to discuss your project. OVCA@southdowns.gov.uk

Do I need to submit a video pitch?

Yes, this is so that it can be attached to your donations page to help you raise awareness of, and donations for your project. It should only be a maximum of 60 seconds and can be filmed on a mobile phone. Examples: <https://southdownstrust.org.uk/community-pitch-2025/>

What happens after I submit my application?

If supported, you will be notified and have a donations page created for you. You will then raise the donations to start your project before funding is confirmed.

Where could I get my donations from?

Your donations will come from your community and could be collected by holding a stand or displaying posters at a local event, by asking local businesses or social media groups. You will be provided with a donations page that can be shared with others. If you collect cash donations these can be deposited in your organisation's bank account and then donated onto the page.

How long do I have to complete the project?

Projects should be complete within one year of being awarded funding.

What are the funding conditions?

Standard conditions include but are not limited to the following:

- Your organisation takes responsibility for the Health and Safety of those participating in funded activities and the safety of those using equipment purchased with the funding
- Funding must be used for the purposes specified in your application and any proposed changes are subject of a formal request to the South Downs National Park Trust who will consult with the Ouse Valley Climate Action project board. Changes will be confirmed in writing.
- Any surplus must be reinvested in the project to improve its quality or scope.
- You are responsible for risk management and the successful delivery of the project; if the project does not deliver the activities set out in your application then you may be asked to repay the funding.
- Where your project involves working with children, young people or adults at risk, you must adopt and implement an appropriate written safeguarding policy, obtain written consent from legal carers or guardians and carry out background checks for all employees, volunteers, trustees or contractors as required by law.
- You are responsible for complying with data protection laws and must obtain the consent of your beneficiaries to receive and process their personal information.
- Assets created or purchased through this funding will, upon dissolution of the receiving organisation, be transferred to a charity or constituted group with similar objectives
- You will submit a short project evaluation within six weeks of completion of the project.