

## **Sustainable Communities Fund Information**

### **What is the Sustainable Communities Fund?**

The Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) is a grant fund which is available to community and voluntary groups, social enterprise/'not for profit' organisations and 'for profit' organisations delivering non-profit-making projects in the National Park.

### **South Downs Partnership Management Plan -**

All projects must contribute to at least one policy or outcome in the [Partnership Management Plan](#). Projects which align most strongly with the plan and help deliver the most outcomes will be prioritised above those with more tenuous links.

It is important when developing a bid to work with your local National Park Rangers. They will provide information on relevant sources of support for your project, identify if the SCF is the most appropriate fund for your project and link with internal officers who will offer expertise in a range of areas. Additional support could be offered in the form of information and advice or the Volunteer Rangers to assist in practical help.

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

**All applicants must be open and transparent with their accounts, documentation, recorded information and results.**

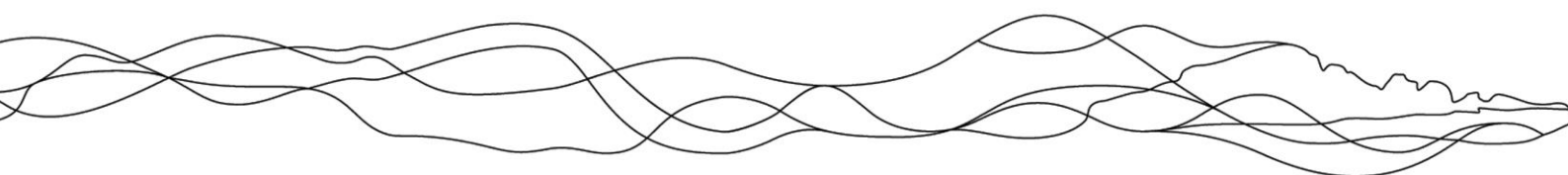
### **Project must demonstrate:**

- Community involvement and benefit
- Alignment with the purposes and duty of the National Park
- A contribution to the Special Qualities of the National Park
- Sustainability – it is essential that projects show how they will develop their income to become financially independent (not reliant on grant funding)

### **Here are some examples of projects that the SCF will support:**

- **Capital** - such as the purchase of equipment. 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.
- **Start-up** – revenue funding at the start of a sustainability project. As part of a project bid community groups can apply for some basic start-up costs.
- **Cultural** - community arts and heritage projects that encapsulate not only the past but the future of the National Park.
- **Events & festivals** - development must be beneficial to the National Park and be themed to its Purposes. Maximum funding up to £2,000.

Organisations that are outside the National Park boundary can also be funded if they demonstrate a clear link to the above priorities in the National Park area. Our web site



includes an interactive map which demonstrates the boundaries of the national park – <http://southdowns.gov.uk/discover/communities/do-i-live-in-the-national-park/>

It is important to contact the External Funding Co-ordinator to have an early conversation about your project before you apply.

### **What are the projects/organisations that we won't fund?**

We will not fund:

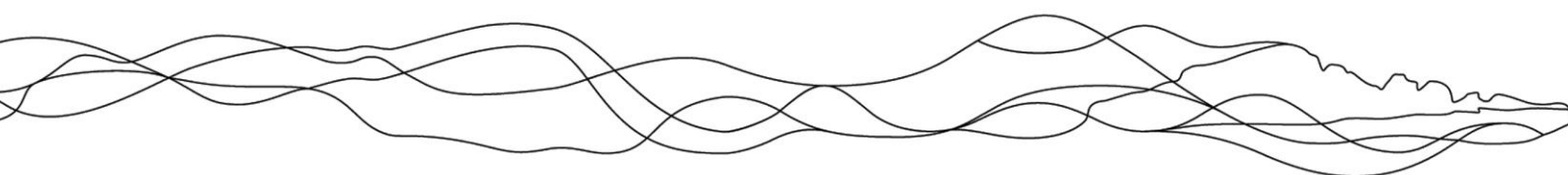
- the cost of making planning applications
- long term revenue costs including posts and salaries
- for profit businesses and organisations for personal gain/profit (the 3 Leader programmes across the NP offer advice, information and grant funding to rural businesses and farm diversification developments.)
- commissioning new art work (the PRS and the Arts Council offer grants and bursaries for these specific projects)
- projects which do not demonstrate public gain and appear to only demonstrate private benefit
- environmental improvement and practical work
- Research
- projects which have already started
- routine maintenance work
- vehicle purchase or hire
- churches, village halls and sport facilities (there are grants from other organisations like LEADER available for this type of work)
- website projects and all other forms of publicity or promotion of organisations (websites and promotion as part of a project are eligible for consideration)
- projects which are the statutory responsibility of other agencies
- apprenticeships
- projects where the main benefit is outside the boundary of the National Park
- generally we will not fund the same project twice in the same financial year (but extension grants may be consider for additions to successful projects), and
- organisations that have more than 1 year's expenditure in unallocated reserves will be questioned as to why grant funding is being sought by an organisation with significant reserves.

### **How much can I apply for?**

**Small Grants range from £250 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 funding can include investment from your own organisation, other grants or contributions, and contributions in kind which would normally include volunteer time or materials.

Applications from local authorities (excluding parish councils) will only be accepted where the project is not the statutory funding responsibility of an organisation and where local authorities demonstrate at least a 2:1 contribution rate. This means that the local authority must contribute twice the amount requested from the SCF.



### **What is partnership or match funding?**

Applicants to the SCF must be able to demonstrate that 50% of the project costs will be met from other sources.

The partnership or match funding can come from:

- Local Authorities - it is very important to have a contribution from local authorities
- a grant from a public funding body, trust or foundation
- a company or business sponsorship
- an organisation's own resources
- donations of materials
- in-kind support for the project through volunteer time cannot exceed the level of cash match funding that you must contribute. For example, if you apply to the National Park for 50% of your projects cost then your maximum in-kind contribution would be 25% and remaining 25% must be a financial contribution – unskilled volunteer time is valued up to £50 per day, skilled time up to £150 per day and professional services up to £250 per day. (This must be clearly recorded)

### **When do I need to apply?**

The submission deadlines for large and small grants are 1 month before the decision date.

Small grants are decided approximately quarterly and large grants are decided twice a year; please check this web page for deadline dates - <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/supporting-communities-business/sustainable-communities-fund/scf-grant-panel-meetings/>

### **What should I do now?**

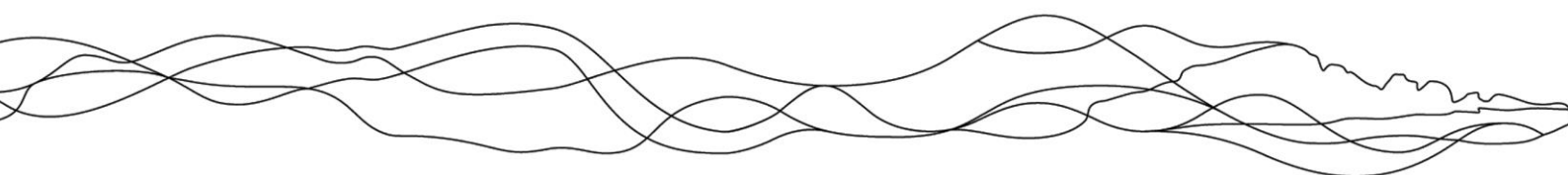
Application forms are not available online as we prefer to talk to you about your project before making an application.

As a first step you should contact your area ranger team – their contact details can be found on this website: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-people/rangers/>. The ranger teams will be able to offer you guidance around your project's appropriateness for SDNPA funding. Once you have been advised by an Area Ranger you can contact the External Funding Co-ordinator (01730-819219, [grants@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southdowns.gov.uk)) for further detail on the application process. For large applications we have a two stage process which requires submission of an Expression of Interest prior to an invitation to submit a large grant application.

### **What are the grant conditions?**

Standard conditions are:

- All information provided by you during the application process is true and accurate.
- The 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 SDNPA and approved in writing.
- Any 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 Authority.
- Voluntary contributions will be recorded in detail and evidenced during the grant monitoring phase.

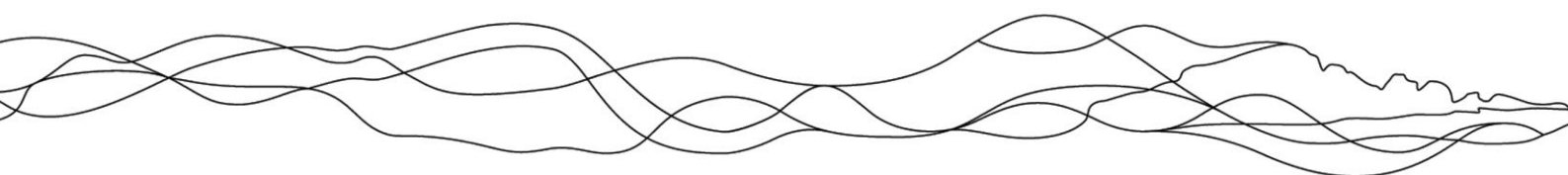


- You are responsible for risk management and the successful delivery of the project; if the project is not successful you may not receive your grant.
- The grant will be a maximum amount of £xxx and not more than 50% of the total cost of the project.
- Payment will be made on receipt of all of the paid project invoices which cover the total cost of the project.
- Any change to your VAT Registration must be reported to the SDNPA immediately.
- Your project will not commence until all match funding has been secured.
- Any surplus will be returned in proportion to the amount of funding received from the SDNPA against the total project cost.
- The offer is to remain open until [*dependent on your project*] - please inform us as soon as possible if you will not have claimed the total of your grant by then.
- 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.
- The support from the SDNPA must be recognised on all publicity and promotional material using the official logo. Please advise the National Park's Communications Team ([press@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:press@southdowns.gov.uk)) in advance of any publicity that you are planning around this project.

The grant conditions will vary with the range of projects and will be proportionate to the value of the grant. Additional grant conditions may include an agreed start date for the project, confirmation of financial contributions, the disposal of assets, performance and monitoring conditions, evaluation criteria, marketing and communications, insurance and indemnity, and any other areas which are relevant.

### **What information should I have?**

- Links to National Park Priorities: Show how your project will contribute to the purposes, duty and special qualities.
- Beneficiaries: Show clearly how many people from which parts of the community (elderly or youth etc.) of the community will be involved and benefit from the project.
- Location: Where will your project take place? Please provide a postcode and a site map if possible.
- How your project will be maintained in the future: What plans do you have to continue the project after the funding arrangements from the SCF have finished?
- Income: List the other sources of funding for your project including secured and pending applications.
- Expenditure: Please include all the expenditure associated with the project including the costs of materials, labour, printing costs etc.
- VAT registration: Please let us know if you are VAT registered and what your registration number is. If you are, we will pay the grant based on the net amount of receipted invoices only.
- 3 Quotes: Please provide evidence of 3 quotes for any expense which is valued at £500 or more.
- Constitution and financial accounts: Please provide a copy of your organisation's constitution and 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.

**What about Planning Permission?**

It is advisable to have Planning Permission in place before you submit your full application but this is not always possible. The panel may consider a grant prior to Planning Permission provided that the applicant has committed to the process i.e. a planning application has been submitted or a positive pre-application meeting has taken place.

This consideration is at the panel's discretion and will result in a condition stating that the project may not commence until Planning Permission has been granted.

