



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

# Application for a Village Hall / Community Building County Grant Scheme



*Please read these guidance notes thoroughly  
before completing the application form*

## 1. Introduction

Each year Devon County Council allocates a sum of money to be given in grants to rural community buildings (i.e. village halls). The Community Council of Devon (CCD) administers this scheme. District match funding is no longer mandatory but will contribute to the strength of the application. Match funding should make up two thirds of your budget; this should include a contribution from your local community and from your Parish Council.

*Please read these guidance notes carefully before completing your application form. If you have any queries, or need help or advice in completing this application form, please contact CCD on (01392) 383443 or e-mail [info@devonrcc.org.uk](mailto:info@devonrcc.org.uk)*

## 2. What sort of work is eligible for grant aid?

Grant aid is available for capital projects only (not to help with running costs or routine repair or maintenance work or new curtains or carpets). Grants may be given for the following:

- To provide a new or replacement hall
- To correct serious structural or other defects of, for example, the roof, walls or floor
- To adapt the building for disabled people
- To modernise outdated facilities
- To improve facilities

## 3. How do we decide which projects to support?

A number of factors are taken into consideration when allocating grants, including:

- Evidence of local need
- Evidence of widespread local support and community involvement in the project
- Evidence of how well the project has been planned
- That **works are ready to go if funding is granted.**
- Evidence of appropriate professional advice - e.g. disability access audit, architect's plans, quality surveyor and costings, as appropriate
- Parish council support
- District council support
- Size of community

## Notes on eligibility

**Please read carefully before making an application**

1. Grant aid is not available for the purchase of land alone. It must form part of an overall plan to build a hall within a reasonable timescale.
2. When land or buildings are being purchased, grants will not be awarded on a price higher than that recommended by the District Valuer.
3. The hall must be freehold or held on a long lease (usually 28 years or more).
4. The hall should be a charity governed by a trust deed based on either the Charity Commission-approved village hall or community centre model trusts.
5. The hall must be multi-use (minimum of three separate user groups), with open community access, and owned and/or managed by the community.
6. For a new building or big extension or refurbishment project, CCD will expect you to have reviewed the present and likely future needs of the whole community, undertaking a consultation exercise such as a survey or village appraisal, and to have held public meetings or exhibitions.
7. Committees must make sure that they obtain planning and building regulation approvals where these are required. You are strongly advised to employ an independent and qualified architect and/or chartered building surveyor.
8. An independent disability access audit of the entire premises should be commissioned for all major projects or those which relate to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) works. Priority will be given to applications from halls that have already undertaken a DDA audit.

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- Other/existing facilities in the area
- Additional benefit to the community
- Sustainability (future viability of project)
- Degree to which funding package is confirmed

**You must tell us about these things when completing your application. We currently see applications for disabled access as a priority for our funding.**

#### **4. What are the levels of grant aid available from CCD?**

Grants are available for between £1,500 and £30,000.

**CCD would expect the majority of applications to be for under £20,000.** Applications wishing to secure awards above this amount must be able to demonstrate exceptional quality of application and should discuss their application with the CCD Grants Officer in advance.

Projects with total costs in excess of £750,000 can not apply under this scheme.

#### **5. What requirements are there for matching funds?**

Devon County Council, the Association of District Councils and the Devon Association of Parish Councils set up the village hall/community centre grants scheme. CCD's maximum intervention rate will be a third of total costs but the remaining match does not have to be covered by district funds. CCD can award a grant even if the district council is not giving one (this includes Exeter city council). Any contribution from the Parish or Town Council can be counted as part of the local two thirds. Note that any grant from a National Park Authority can be counted as a district council contribution. The following example will help illustrate how the system works:

<b>Estimated total cost of project</b>	<b>£30,000</b>	
Village hall committee funds	£ 8,500	
Grant from Parish Council	£ 1,500	
Grant from District Council	£ 2,000	two-thirds
Another funder	£ 8,000	
Grant from Community Council	£10,000	one-third
	<b>£30,000</b>	

A large grant from an external body, such as one of the Big Lottery Fund, cannot replace the local contribution. The following example shows how the scheme works in such a case:

<b>Estimated total cost of project</b>	<b>£130,000</b>	
Grant from Big Lottery Fund	£85,000	
<i>Balance needed</i>	<i>£45,000</i>	
Village hall committee funds	£25,000	- two thirds
Grant from District Council	£ 5,000	
Grant from Community Council	£15,000	- one-third

#### **Notes on grants**

1. Grants are discretionary. There is no automatic right to a grant. Each application is considered on its merit and an offer is dependent on the amount of money allocated by Devon County Council in any year and on consideration of the factors outlined on page 1. Please note that the total amount of funding requested invariably exceeds the amount available and even good projects will sometimes have to be turned down.

2. Grants are limited to one-third of the cost of any project, up to a maximum of £90,000. The current maximum grant available is therefore £30,000.

3. Work may be phased over more than one year, but:

*(i) The total amount allocated by the Community Council of Devon in any year will not exceed the current maximum limit, ie: £30,000.*

*(ii) The award of a grant in one year does not guarantee a grant in subsequent years. Each application will be treated on its merits.*

*(iii) Where we have less funding available than the total grants requested, we may take the view that any hall to have received substantial support in the previous 3 years through the CCD County Grants Scheme is of a lower priority for additional funding.*

4. Any grant offered by CCD can be more than a grant offered by the District Council.

5. A grant cannot be awarded to cover costs already incurred, or contracted for, except where fees have been paid for professional services (e.g. architect, surveyor) in connection with a project which is awarded a grant.

6. You should not start work on a project until you have received a written offer of a grant from the CCD.

**NB:** In exceptional cases it may be possible to obtain 'without prejudice' permission from the CCD to start work or to buy land before a grant is offered, but you should bear in mind that granting 'without prejudice' permission *in no way commits the Community Council of Devon to then offering a grant.*

**Important:** Please note that you must apply separately to your Parish Council and District Council for grant aid. All Districts operate different schemes, and applicants should contact their District Council to find out any particular requirements and closing date for applications well in advance of submitting an application to the Community Council of Devon.

**Loans:** Where there is a shortfall in the local contribution, a loan may be appropriate. CCD operates a scheme offering interest free loans (RILF) of up to £2,000. Parish Councils may also take out a loan from the Public Works Loan Board and contribute this amount to the project, and ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) operates a Village Hall Loan Fund with interest rates similar to commercial rates. Ask CCD for further details.

## 6. What is the timescale?

Closing dates for receipt of applications are 30th June and 30th November each year. You can expect to hear the outcome of your grant application within 14 weeks of the closing date.

Once applications are received there is a fairly critical timescale, and any incomplete applications might have to be deferred to the subsequent funding round. Applications received after any deadline will always be deferred to the following round.

Closing dates for applications to District Councils for their support vary (where applicable), and it is essential that you check the application procedure with your own District Council at the earliest possible stage.

## 7. What's the best way to go about applying for a CCD grant?

The ideal timetable for applying for a grant from CCD is:

1. Agree on and, where internal or external alterations are involved, prepare a scale sketch plan of the project; check with the District Council whether planning and/or building regulation approvals are required; obtain a rough estimate of costs; decide whether the project is affordable and worth the cost.
2. If appropriate, contact CCD to discuss:
  - (a) The outline plan
  - (b) Discuss finance and any funding requirements
  - (c) Discuss charitable status and eligibility
  - (d) Provide application forms and other relevant information

7. By the time you apply for grant aid, you will be expected to have raised, or be confident of raising, the remainder of the cost of the project.

We are unlikely to make an actual offer of grant unless all other required funds have been secured.

The District Councils have different closing dates, requirements and times. You should therefore contact your District Council at an early stage in the planning of your project, particularly if it is to be a large, expensive one. They may be able to offer other kinds of help and advice, too.

In any case, it is advisable to allow plenty of time to prepare your application. We would advise you to contact CCD at least 12-18 months before the time you hope to receive a grant.

### Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

The DDA 1995 (the Act) is the most comprehensive piece of legislation to date in the United Kingdom to address discrimination against disabled people.

Amongst its provisions, the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, facilities and services (Part III). Community buildings are included under the provisions as 'Service Providers'.

Simply considering wheelchair access to your hall is not enough, as the Act includes people with a wide range of disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments.

Given that availability to all is enshrined in the charitable objects of a community building, management committees must undertake an independent DDA access audit of how their premises will comply with the requirements of the Act.

The key word throughout is 'reasonable': what is reasonable may vary from hall to hall, and committees must assess what measures they could reasonably be expected to take and be able to justify their decisions if challenged.

3. Obtain outline planning permission (if necessary) from District Council on sketch plan.
4. Commission a disability access audit for all major projects and/or those that relate specifically to DDA works.
5. Have full working drawings prepared (scale 1/100) with a key plan (1/2500) and a site plan (1/500); prepared specifications.
6. Submit drawings to District Council for full planning approval and building regulation approval.
7. Submit applications for grants to the Parish Council and District Council, in time for their deadlines, if any.
8. By **30th June** or **30th November** at the latest, preferably earlier, submit grant application to Community Council of Devon, together with:
  - One copy of the drawings
  - Specifications
  - Photographs of the front, side and rear elevations of the building or of the specific work to be undertaken
  - In line with good practice, *three* builders' quotations (for projects costing over £5,000), or a bill of quantities prepared by a quantity surveyor
  - Most recent set of approved and signed annual accounts
  - Copies of most recent bank or building society statements
  - Details of offers from any other funders (Parish or District Council, Awards for All, Big Lottery Fund etc.)
  - Copy of Deed of Trust, or other governing document/s
  - Copy of disability access audit if required

*If you would like receipt of your application to be acknowledged, please also enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard.*

**If you are applying to any other funders for grant aid it is important that you check what criteria they may have before starting to plan your project. You should also ensure that grant applications are made in plenty of time to fit in with CCD's timescale. If you receive confirmation of a grant whilst an application to CCD is in progress, please inform CCD of the details and amount.**

The most comprehensive way of assessing the needs of your hall is by having a full disability access audit carried out. We would expect this for any project to provide improved access to your hall, or where major works are being undertaken. It is not enough to rely on building professionals or planning departments.

Priority will be given to applications that have already undertaken a DDA access audit.

Further information is available from CCD.

#### Notes on VAT:

Charities are not exempt from VAT, and most repairs and alterations carry VAT at the standard rate. HM Government has, however, made some concessions in recent years, and the following building works do not bear VAT:

- New charitable community halls.
- An extension to an existing hall to accommodate a new activity. The extension must be able to 'stand alone' - that is, it should have a separate entrance even if it has a door connecting it to the original building.
- Facilities and improvements for disabled people.

VAT regulations are, however, notoriously difficult to interpret. It is essential that you take advice from HM Customs & Excise before assuming any works are exempt or 3<sup>rd</sup> rate.

#### Other sources of grant aid

From time to time, new or temporary sources of funding become available. The Community Council of Devon will be able to give you the latest information.

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