



Carrick Futures Small Grants

Micro Grants Guidance for Community Councils

June 2025

What is the Carrick Futures Micro Grants Scheme?

The Carrick Futures Micro Grants scheme provides an annual grant to Community Councils in the area of benefit for onward distribution by them in the form of very small grants of up to £1,000 for charitable projects. Prior to 2024 these were referred to as 'small grants'. Grant offers will be made in August of each year.

How much is available to Community Councils?

£5,000 for each Community Council in Ballantrae, Barr, Barrhill, Colmonell & Lendalfoot, Dailly, and Pinwherry & Pinmore; and £10,000 for Girvan & District Community Council in recognition of its larger population base.

The Carrick Futures Board will consider an additional payment up to a further £5,000 per year to the Community Council of Girvan, if it has exhausted its grant within 12 months, evidenced by the submission of a completed monitoring report.

A Community Council will not be penalised if it doesn't spend down its micro grants award in any one year. However, if a Community Council is holding a balance of £10,000 or more when it reports at the year end, it will be required to evidence it has spent down to £5,000 before the next allocation can be released.

If a Community Council is unable to draw down its grant within 12 months of the offer being made, that year's offer of grant will be withdrawn when the next year's grant offers go out.

For example, if in August 2025 a Community Council was holding more than £10,000, they would not be able to draw down their 2025 award. If, 12 months later, in August 2026 they are still holding more than £10,000, the 2025 offer will be withdrawn. However the Community Council is still eligible to draw down the 2026 offer, once it has spent down below £10,000.

What is it for?

The scheme is intended to support small, local initiatives, where the project cost is below the application threshold to the main fund; or a rapid decision is required. The scheme can support applicants that would not be able to apply to the Carrick Futures main fund, such as unconstituted groups or individuals. See Who Can Apply below.

Ongoing provision of micro grants awards to each Community Council is conditional on compliance with this guidance and the terms and conditions as outlined in grant offers.

Community Councils may combine the Carrick Futures grant with other donations from other sources from the same purpose of running a micro grants scheme. If this situation applies, the Community Council should bear in mind that other donors will have differing guidance on maximum sums to be awarded and that if these are lower than the Carrick Futures' maximum award of £1,000, these should be adhered to unless a change to upper threshold is also agreed with the other donors.

NEW! Top up for Early Years

In addition, each Community Council may request a top up of £1,000 as a top up to its micro grants budget, **specifically restricted for the purpose of supporting and enabling local early years activity** (such as playgroups). The aim is specifically to enable small grants for early years groups who want to keep things going, get together or try out new ideas.

This is in recognition that, in comparison to school age children and young people, this section of the community has benefited less from grant funding from Carrick Futures. Investigation as part of the fund review process indicated that this is not because groups are applying but are unsuccessful, but because these groups don't exist at all.

Early provision can make a significant difference to children's start in life. However, in rural communities, early years activities are often relatively informal and groupings can form and dissolve rapidly as parents move through the stages of parenting most relevant to them. They can also be difficult to sustain financially as the cost of hall hire often outweighs the subscriptions possible from a small number of parents, and costs for participation may put people off, particularly during the current cost of living crisis.

If your Community Council is interested in drawing down this top up, it can do so using the Grantee Portal or by contacting rosanna@foundationscotland.org.uk

Who can apply to a Community Council for a microgrant?

Constituted groups are eligible for micro grants and Community Councils can also offer micro grants to informal non-constituted groups and individuals if they choose to. Individuals may be supported up to the level of £250 and groups to the level of £1,000.

Individuals must be undertaking an activity which provides community benefit.

In the case of unconstituted groups or individuals, a 'sponsor' organisation can be nominated to hold the grant and make payments in respect of the project. The Community Council may itself act in this capacity.

Written guidance for potential applicants must be made available by each participating Community Council.

What does 'charitable projects' cover?

Carrick Futures is itself a charity, and any funds it passes on must also be used for charitable purposes. Charitable purposes are broad and most community activity is eligible. Community Councillors can read about the 16 charitable purposes on the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) website

here: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/meeting-the-charity-test-guidance/>

There also rules about private vs public benefit that Community Councils must consider.

What can't be funded?

Community Councils must ensure that awards they make aren't used to support the following:

- The advancement of religion or party politics
- Activities that are the statutory responsibility of statutory authorities
- Projects benefiting primarily those residents outwith the area of benefit
- Anti-renewable energy/windfarm activities
- Activities likely to bring the Community Council, Carrick Futures, ScottishPower Renewables or Foundation Scotland into disrepute
- Retrospective funding (i.e. paying for costs incurred before a decision on an application for support can be made)

Constituted groups should not use the micro-grants scheme to circumvent applying for grants through the main fund, for example through submission of multiple micro-grant applications for the same specific activity within one year (although applicants can apply more than once per year if this is for different activities), or by making an application to each Community Council in the area of benefit for the same project, with a total project cost of more than £1,000.

Groups that hold an award from, or intend to make an application to, the main fund cannot also apply to the micro grants scheme for contributions to the same project.

What can't be funded should be made clear in the Community Council's written guidance for applicants. Community Councils can contact the Carrick Futures fund administrator if they need support with this.

Reporting

The Community Council will report at least annually on micro grants distributed, using a simple monitoring report template. This will be sent to Community Councils at the same time as the original grant offer email.

Distribution & Decision Making

Community Councils can approach Carrick Futures' fund administrator at any time for guidance or advice on distributing micro grants. You can read all of the micro grants good practice guidance prepared by Carrick Futures' administrator Foundation Scotland here:

<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/running-micro-grants-scheme>

All participating Community Councils are eligible for micro grants good practice training provided by fund administrator Foundation Scotland. Carrick Futures may require Community Councils which are holding a high fund balance or have had operational challenges to undertake this training before further grant instalments are released.