



FRIENDS OF THE COTSWOLDS

FUNDING CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Introduction

The Friends of the Cotswolds provide grants to projects within the Cotswolds AONB. Projects are eligible for support if they contribute to the purposes of the Friends; namely looking after the Cotswold. There are additional criteria that need to also be met and are detailed in these guidelines.

What kind of projects are eligible?

We welcome applications for grants from projects that further at least one of the Friends' purposes. These are listed below:

- To promote, enhance, improve, protect and conserve the physical and natural environment and its natural beauty for the public benefit within the area of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining and adjacent areas
- To advance the education of the public in the physical and natural environment including but not limited to the proper management of natural resources and protecting the environment as a safe habitat for wildlife
- To provide within the area facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation, sport and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for those living, working, visiting or residing there

Who can apply?

Any of the following types of organisation are eligible to apply:

- Registered charities
- Community groups
- Voluntary groups

Applications from businesses will not normally be accepted. They may be considered in exceptional circumstances, depending on the degree of benefit to the community, and provided that a grant would not be used to support profit-making activity.

You do not have to live or work within the Cotswold AONB or surrounding areas to apply. But you will have to demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact on the area.

Grants can be used to:

- Initiate new projects
- Provide match-funding for new projects

- Add value to existing projects
- Fund:
 - Project materials
 - Equipment and implementation
 - Feasibility studies
 - Publicity and marketing
 - Labour and contractor cost

We have particular interest in granting funds for:

- Projects to conserve historic objects
- Educational projects which promote learning about the Cotswolds AONB

Size of project

Grants can provide the majority of the funding for small projects, or can be used to kick-start appeals for larger projects. Applications from existing appeals for larger projects may also be considered. The Friends of the Cotswolds will take into account the extent to which our grant would make a distinctive and significant contribution to your project.

Projects that are not eligible

We do not give grants for the following types of projects:

- Retrospective funding: Work already undertaken or expenditure already agreed before our award (except in cases of contributing to existing large appeals, see below)
- Projects unable to start within 6 months of the date of our award
- Distribution to other organisations
- Deficit funding or repayment of loans
- Relief of statutory responsibilities
- Promotion of religious or political views
- Campaigns to influence planning decisions
- General appeals for pool funds without a specific project

Project applications must demonstrate how the long-term maintenance and viability of facilities and activities will be funded.

Projects must have the demonstrable support or involvement of the local community. This may be in the form of parish council minutes, informal but recorded discussions in the community, a survey, a parish plan or a feasibility study into the project's viability.

Size of grants

The normal limit for grants is £500. However, applications for larger amounts will be considered on their merits, if we have the funds available.

The maximum grant will be 75% of the project costs for voluntary or community organisations. In the case of projects led by local authorities or statutory bodies, the maximum award will be 50%

In-kind contributions such as volunteer time, loan of equipment, premises, land, etc. can be taken into account when calculating overall project value. Volunteer time is valued at the value of the National Living Wage. Specialist, technical or professional volunteers are valued at £12.50 per hour.

How we assess applications

The Trustees of the Friends of the Cotswolds normally meet every two months. An application will be considered by the Trustees at their first meeting after it has been received. They may seek advice from other organisations if necessary. If an application does not contain all necessary information, it will be deferred until the following meeting.

Trustees will first decide whether the project is ELIGIBLE, using the criteria set out above. They will then weigh each eligible application against the criteria below, and consider its priority relative to others being made at the time and the availability of Friends' resources. Their decision is final and is not subject to appeal. The Friends will confirm in writing whether your application has been a success or not.

Factors Trustees consider:

- Value for money: is the benefit commensurate with the proposed expenditure
- The finances of the organisation applying: is it viable? Does it have adequate reserves? Does it have such large funds as to make a Friends' grant inappropriate?
- Whether a Friends' grant make a substantial difference to the project's success
- How the project fits with other Friends' activities in terms of geography and scope
- Whether the project is related to anything that the Cotswolds Conservation Board is doing. We would support a bid for funds where the Cotswolds Conservation Board were also contributing.
- Whether the project demonstrates any of the following desirable features:
 - Innovation or best practice
 - Developing links between community, economy, culture and environment
 - Developing skills and building capacity in the community
 - Involving young people
 - Combating social exclusion and promoting diversity
 - Encouraging links between rural and urban groups
 - Adding value or new dimensions to existing sustainability projects

If you are successful

In being offered a grant, you are required to sign a declaration stating that you accept the terms and conditions of the fund. This includes acknowledging the Friends of the Cotswolds in your publicity, in ways agreed with the Trustees of the charity.

Grants will normally be paid by cheque in arrears, on receipt of a completed financial report, invoices and any other appropriate supporting papers. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need some or all of the Grant in advance to enable you to pay the bills, this must be agreed with the Friends in advance. Payments can be staged if appropriate.

If your project depends on funding from other sources that has not yet been secured, we may tell you that our grant is available subject to your obtaining all other funding.

How to apply

You should complete the online application form on our website. If you would like to discuss your application with a Friends of the Cotswolds representative before applying, please email us at info@friendsofthecotswolds.org and we will be in touch.