Mayor's Small Grants Fund
April 2027 – March 2028
Guidance Notes

What is the Mayor's Small Grants Fund?
This fund aims to provide 'not for profit' voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to apply for a grant to help towards:

- Projects that champion wellbeing in our town, with a special focus on funding projects for young people.
- A green/sustainable initiative that supports our commitment to reduce the carbon footprint of the borough.
- A one-off community event.
- The purchase of items of equipment.

We are particularly keen to see applications that encourage and embrace community cohesion and unity from organisations that support and work with the many diverse communities residing in Watford.

All funding awarded must be able to demonstrate the benefit to Watford residents.

Who can apply for funding?
- Informal groups (e.g. a group of neighbours, a local playgroup, a women's or men's group, a pensioner's group etc.)
- 'Not for Profit' voluntary & community organisations
- Registered charities
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO)
- Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)
- Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Social Enterprises

Applications from organisations that are 'limited by guarantee' will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Informal Groups
We welcome and accept applications from informal groups. An informal group or non-constituted group is a group of people who have a similar interest and want to work together for the benefit of the local community. The groups' aims must be charitable. Examples of groups include:
- A group of neighbours
- A playgroup
- A pensioners group

You must provide a letter of endorsement when you submit your application. This can be from a constituted organisation, a local Councillor*, your local Police Community Support Officer or other similar representative. The endorsement must be provided on the organisation's headed paper.
* We cannot accept a letter of endorsement from the Mayor.

We can only pay grant awards into an organisation bank account. Therefore, informal groups who are successful with their application will have their award paid to the intermediary organisation Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) and must sign up to their Volunteer Partnership Agreement. This agreement will provide a legal framework within which W3RT can support the informal group to deliver their activities. There are 2 criteria that must be met:

- Activities provided by the informal group must be entirely charitable. Please click on the link below for

further information and guidance.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charitable-purposes/charitable-purposes#descriptions-of-purposes
- Funding cannot be used to pay group members a salary.

If your group cannot sign up to W3RT's Volunteer Partnership Agreement, we will not be able to assess your application. Therefore, the agreement must be signed before any funding is approved.
For further information on W3RT including the services they provide, please visit their website at www.w3rt.org

Constituted Groups
We can accept applications from any voluntary and community organisation who can comply with the following conditions:
- Hold a bank account in the name of the organisation
- Have a management committee of at least 3 unrelated/non-cohabiting committee members
- Be non-profit making, or a social enterprise where profits are reinvested for community benefit

We welcome partnership applications from two or more organisations. Your application must provide details of each organisation you will be working in partnership with and what their role will be. We will also need to know if any of the partnership organisations are providing any funding towards the project.

We have a duty to ensure that public money is distributed to organisations that meet our criteria. We may contact the references you specify in your application to give assurance of your competency.

Council Plan 2026-28 and Delivery Plan 2026-28
On 14 July 2026, Watford Borough Council adopted the new Council Plan 2026-28 and Delivery Plan 2026-28.

Our new Council Plan sets out our aspirations for both Watford Borough Council and the town it serves. It is forward-looking, high level and outward facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments. The plan demonstrates our role as leader of place and how we will continue to build on our strategic and operational excellence.

Our Council Plan themes are:

- A Healthy and Happy Town
- A Safe and Clean Town
- Caring for Everyone
- A Greener Town
- A Thriving Local Economy

You can view our Council Plan here: https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3186/council-plan-2026-2028

Our Delivery Plan 2026-28 sets out how the council will focus our work to bring the Council Plan to life, making sure we deliver what we said we would over the next 24 months. Under each theme and commitment, we set out our key priority areas of actions, which we are focused on achieving by 2028. The Delivery Plan will be monitored and a report on progress will be reported to Cabinet quarterly and annually, we will prepare a report for residents, businesses and partners.

You can view our Delivery Plan here: https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3185/delivery-plan-2026-2028

What are the criteria for funding?
Applications to the Mayor's Small Grants Fund must:

- Meet at least one of the Council Plan themes.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate the project, initiative, event or equipment is needed.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate that there are future benefits for Watford residents.
- *Applications must provide at least 10% match funding on their Mayor's Small Grants Fund request (£300 on an application requesting the maximum amount of £3,000).

*Applications from informal groups will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and we may choose to support an application where 10% match funding has not been provided.

How much can we apply for?
- A maximum of £ 3,000 per organisation per year*
- *Organisation's applying for funding towards a one-off event can apply for a maximum of £1,500 per year.

When can we apply?
- This programme operates one round of funding. The fund is open from 9am on Monday 23rd November 2026 to 5.00pm on Friday 12th February 2027.
- Applications are considered on a first come, first served basis up to the closing date and subject to budget availability.
- Late applications are not considered.

How do we apply?
- Applications must be made online by visiting www.watford.gov.uk/mayors-smallgrants
- **You must** complete **ALL** sections of the application form and provide **ALL** associated documents (see below).
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted, and organisations will be responsible for resubmitting a completed version of the application.

What documents do we need to submit with our application?
- Constitution, governing document or equivalent (signed and dated)
- Equality & Diversity Policy (constituted organisations)
- Environmental Policy (constituted organisations)
- Safeguarding Policy (constituted organisations) – if applicable
- Latest set of organisation accounts (constituted organisations)
- Letter of Endorsement (informal group)
- Public Liability Insurance - if applicable (Minimum cover of £5m)
- 3 x quotes for equipment purchases* - if applicable

*There may be occasions when organisations find it difficult to obtain 3 quotes for equipment purchases, especially if the item of equipment to be purchased is custom made or bespoke. If this is the case, please explain the reasons in your application or contact the Partnerships & Funding Manager for advice.

When will we know if we have been successful?
- Applications will be considered at a delegated decision meeting, scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14th April 2027 but this is subject to change.
- Organisations are informed of the decision by email.
- Successful applicants will be required to complete and sign a Declaration of Funding and agree any individual conditions of funding before your funding award is paid.
- Once we have received your signed declaration, your grant will be paid within two weeks.
- Award payments are made by BACS into the organisation's UK bank account.
- There may be occasions when we decide to pay an award to Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) or another organisation approved by Watford Borough Council and in these instances, we will follow the procedure for informal groups as detailed above.

- Successful applicants must ensure the award is in the organisation's bank account before making payments against it.

Who cannot apply for funding?

- Individuals
- Sole traders
- Statutory organisations (councils, schools, NHS, police etc.)
- Private businesses/companies

Examples of what we can fund:

- One-off cultural/community events
- Green/sustainable initiatives/environmental events, e.g. neighbourhood clean-ups/litter picking, community repair events, community vegetable growing, changing to energy efficient lightbulbs, purchasing bicycle racks, water butts etc.
- Event publicity including leaflets, flyers, banners etc.
- Catering and/or refreshments
- Hall hire (related to the event only)
- Costs of hiring instructors, trainers, facilitators, counsellors (related to the event only)
- Project management costs and expenses
- Insurance (public liability insurance specific to the application)
- Project materials
- Sports equipment

What items will not be funded?

- Core funding including but not limited to an organisation's 'business as usual' service delivery and/or activities, on-going hall hire costs, salaries, utilities, rates, rent, insurance etc.
- Sports coaching qualifications, first aid and equality workshops.
- Any initiative, project and/or piece of equipment that in the opinion of WBC would be perceived as being for a singular religious aim or political purpose.
- The purchase of land, buildings and vehicles.
- Maintenance/repair of vehicles.
- Medium/large scale improvements to buildings/premises (i.e. refurbishments/replacements etc.) including but not limited to structural work that requires planning permission.
- The costs incurred in applying for external funding.
- Loans of any description.
- Projects/initiatives or events that have already taken place.
- Item(s) of equipment that have already been purchased.
- Special Circumstances - White goods (fridge, freezer, dishwasher etc.). Funding for these items will be considered on a case-by-case basis if you can demonstrate considerable community benefit and/or they are an energy efficient appliance.

What are the conditions of funding?

- Constituted organisations must provide a signed and dated copy of their constitution or governing document, their Equality and Diversity Policy and their latest set of accounts at the time of application.
- Informal groups must provide a letter of endorsement (e.g. from a local constituted organisation or charity, funder, Councillor, local Police Community Support Officer or other similar body/representative) on the organisation's letter headed stationery at the time of application. This is required to verify and reduce fraudulent applications.
- We cannot accept applications where the main contact person is a Watford Councillor. Watford Councillors can support an organisation in their application but cannot be named as the main contact.
- Constituted organisations must provide the contact details of 2 references and these must be from a statutory organisation, constituted organisation or charity. If you have not applied to the Mayor's Small Grants Fund before, or if you are an organisation or group we do not know, we may contact your references to confirm your status and suitability for funding.
- It is the responsibility of the organisation to arrange and pay for public liability insurance with a minimum

cover of £5m. If your event requires this insurance, a copy of the insurance certificate must be provided at the time of application. The council will not accept responsibility for the consequences, financial or otherwise, should the organisation fail to uphold their responsibilities to obtain adequate public liability insurance.

- Applicants seeking funding to deliver a one-off cultural or community event must read the guidance available on the council's website.
  https://www.watford.gov.uk/culture-events/holding-event-watford
  This includes a range of documents that are designed to help organisers understand their responsibilities and comply with relevant legislation and good practice requirements.
  Our Guide to Organising a Small Community Event provides information on how to plan and deliver an event safely and responsibly for all participants, volunteers and attendees.
  https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2812/guide-to-organising-small-community-events
  It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have considered and complied with all relevant requirements before submitting their application.
- Applicants organising a one-off fundraising event for a charity must provide details within their application of:
  - How funds raised will be collected
  - How accurate records of all funds received will be maintained
  - How the funds will be transferred to the nominated charity
  - The timescale for transferring the funds following the event

  Applicants must clearly demonstrate that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure all funds raised are properly managed and passed to the charity in a timely manner.
- Art projects including painting, music, performance, drama etc must ensure they have considered the council's Public Art Strategy. https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/363/public-arts-strategy
- Requests for equipment must be supported by 3 quotes, for each item, at the time of application.
- Any equipment purchased through this fund must remain within the organisation and must not be loaned out to external parties without the prior permission of WBC.
- Please keep all receipts for equipment purchases as these will be required as part of the monitoring process.
- Where services or equipment are purchased from persons that are known to the organisation, this must be declared to the council in your application.
- Be aware that if your organisation provides services to residents outside of Watford, we may only fund the proportion that relates to the number of Watford residents benefiting from your event, initiative or equipment request.
- If you will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults, we will ask for a copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy and related documents (i.e. evidence of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS checks). We may not be able to proceed with your application if these documents cannot be provided when requested. You may also be asked to tell us who your Designated Safeguarding Lead is.
- The funding will be used wholly and exclusively for the purpose agreed with WBC.
- Unspent funds or those not used for the described purpose must be repaid to the council.
- Permission must be approved by WBC for any changes your organisation wishes to make to the purpose for which the funding has been awarded. Any changes made without WBC's prior approval may result in the organisation having to return all or part of the funding award.
- Be aware that if your application for funding is successful (for any amount up to £3000) you may be unable to reapply for funding for a period of at least 1 year following a successful application (e.g. if you receive £500 funding in 2027-28, you will be unable to reapply until 2029-30).
- Organisations applying for funding to purchase and install community notice boards and/or welcome signs or similar must confirm that they have identified the owner of the land where the notice board or sign will be located and have obtained the necessary permission for its installation.
  Applicants must also determine whether planning permission, licences or any other consents are required and ensure that any associated costs are included within the project budget breakdown.
  It is the applicant's responsibility to carry out these checks and obtain the necessary approvals. The council will not undertake this work on behalf of applicants. Funding will not be awarded where applicants are unable to provide evidence that the required permissions, approvals and consents have been secured or appropriately investigated.

- Successful applicants MUST acknowledge the council's support in any publicity material by using the council's logo. Should the council's support be withdrawn from the organisation, the council's logo must be removed from all publicity material immediately.

What are the monitoring requirements?

All successful applicants should take photographs if appropriate. You will be required to:

- Provide receipts against spend. Following consideration of these by WBC, please note that unspent awards or those not used for the described purpose must be repaid to the council within one month of WBC's notification to avoid any further action.
- Provide an Outcomes & Achievements Report and Equalities Monitoring Report within 12 months of receiving the grant payment or as advised otherwise by WBC.
- Meet all/any conditions of funding that have been set.

Can I use Artificial Intelligence within my application?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that would normally require human intelligence such as ChatGPT, Bard, Bing, Grammarly, DeepSeek or other similar tools.

When applying for a grant, AI can be a useful tool to support your application. However, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience.

AI can completely make up "facts" because they have ingested information from a large amount of data sources, some of which may be fiction. As a result, it is important to fact check any content produced.

Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be immediately withdrawn from the grant programme.

General Data Protection Regulations

Watford Borough Council takes the security of your personal information seriously. We are required to collect certain personal information from you to deal with your application for grant aid.

You can view a detailed privacy notice to see how we intend to deal with your personal data by going to https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/479/privacy-notice-for-mayor-s-small-grants-fund

The council will use the information you have provided for the stated purpose only. No personal information you have given us will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes. The council's policy is that information may be shared among officers across departments and other agencies, where the legal framework allows, if this will help to improve the service you receive and to develop other services.

This council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

Partnerships & Funding Manager Contact Details:

Kim Bloomfield
Tel: 01923 278319
Email: kim.bloomfield@watford.gov.uk
https://www.watford.gov.uk/councillors-decision-making/mayors-small-grants-fund

Decision Date 2027-28

Please be aware that your application must be submitted by the application deadline for it to be considered at the delegated decision meeting. The meeting date and application deadline are subject to change.

Meeting No:	Date of Meeting:	Application Deadline:
1	14th April 2027	12th February 2027
The Mayor's Small Grants Fund 2027-28 closes for applications at 5.00pm on Friday 12th February 2027		
LATE APPLICATIONS ARE NOT CONSIDERED		