



Severn Trent Community Fund Application Guidance

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WONDERFUL ON TAP



Introduction to Severn Trent Community Fund

Our customers, and the communities we live and work in, are at the heart of everything we do. And that's why, from 2020, we're giving away more than £10 million over the next five years to support new projects by local charities and community groups in the Severn Trent region - helping to make a real and tangible difference in our communities.

Our Fund is overseen by an independent Community Fund Customer Panel who review applications, so ultimately, it is up to our customers to decide where our money goes!

Our Community Fund has proven very popular and it's fantastic to see so many community projects happening across our region. Whilst we'd love to, unfortunately we simply can't fund every application we receive.

Ideally, we're looking for projects that are **unique**, have a **genuine community need**, and stand out as having a **real impact on improving community wellbeing**. To give you an idea of the types of projects that are funded, take a look at our some of the projects we've funded so far at <https://www.stwater.co.uk/communityfundannualreview>

This pack has been designed to help you through our application process and to outline what to expect along the way.

We always recommend discussing the project idea with us prior to application. For Fund Officer support, please contact communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

Before you apply

Check your project is eligible and fits our aims

The first thing you need to do before you apply is to check whether your project is eligible for our Community Fund and that it fits our aims.

Our Fund has been designed to support the wellbeing of communities in the Severn Trent region. We seek to fund new projects that link to three key elements of community wellbeing - People, Place and Environment - with favourability shown to projects that ideally lie within a 'sweet spot' that incorporates all three (if you're applying for over £75,000, please note that a combination of all three of these themes is necessary to be eligible):



People

Projects that support healthier lifestyles and skills development.



Place

Projects that help create better places for communities.



Environment

Projects that look after our natural environment, rivers and water.

And of course, being a water company, naturally we'd love to see applications for projects that have a connection to water too (although not essential)! This might mean installing grey water recycling or creating sustainable drainage (SuDS) and water efficient green spaces.

Both *capital* and *revenue projects* will be considered, as long as the project can evidence it will be **sustained beyond our initial investment without reliance on future grants.**

Check whether your organisation and project are eligible

What we can fund

You can apply for a grant if your organisation is not for profit and you have a governing document.

Applications can be made by:

- Volunteer / community groups
- Organisations registered with the Charity Commission
- Organisations registered with Companies House that are limited by guarantee
- Local Authority or Parish Councils
- Foundation schools, colleges or academies

The proposed project must be located in the Severn Trent region and the community it is benefiting must be Severn Trent customers. You can use the postcode checker if you are unsure:

<https://www.water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier>

If the project is located in the Hafren Dyfrdwy region, it will not be eligible for support from the Severn Trent Community Fund.

IMPORTANT: Organisations applying for more than £10,001 must be either charity registered or company registered (and supply us with a charity or company number), or an exempt charity, Local Authority or Parish Council.

What we can't fund

Unfortunately, we can't fund:

- Individuals;
- Any organisation that is legally able to make a profit (e.g. limited liability partnerships, limited companies, sole traders);
- General organisation or past/current project costs – your application must be for a completely new project;
- Projects where we are NOT the majority funder (50% or more of total project cost);
- Projects with a political or religious purpose;
- Projects not within the Severn Trent region;
- Projects that aren't sustainable (e.g. the project would need a further grant to continue beyond our investment);
- One off events or projects with a limited time frame;
- Retrospective costs – Project/work that has already taken place;
- Any project that is to the detriment of Severn Trent and its interests (for example projects that are harmful to the environment or use excessive volumes of water, such as gas boilers or water irrigation systems);
- Work that is too closely linked to our core services (e.g. new or replacement water or waste pipes, new connections, cess pits or boreholes);
- Any Severn Trent costs (we can't allow Community Fund money to come back into any of the Severn Trent group businesses);
- Improvements to Severn Trent owned property/land unless leased by a not-for-profit organisation, or property/land owned by another water/waste provider within the Severn Trent catchment region;
- Projects that have already received funding from us.

Please see the next page for full list of ineligible costs.

Check whether you can use the grant to pay for your proposed costs

Here is a list of our eligible and ineligible costs – if you are still unsure or if a certain project cost is not listed here, please get in touch with our team by emailing communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

Yes! We can fund these costs	Sorry! These costs are not eligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour required for the set-up of the project. Please note we expect projects to be paying at least the minimum Living Wage https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage. • Running costs of the project, e.g. materials, room hire etc. You will need to show how you have calculated these costs in your budget. • Skills training and other course costs. • Administration costs directly associated with the project. Please ensure you allocate appropriate resource to complete the monitoring reports for your project. • Costs directly associated with the beneficiaries/volunteers' involvement in the project, e.g., travel costs, subsistence while taking part in project activities. • Capital costs of improving a site or building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any costs not directly associated with the running of your new project. • Day to day running costs and organisation overheads. • Any retrospective costs i.e. those incurred before the start date on your award letter. • Any costs that cannot be fully evidenced to your organisation e.g. invoices not in the name of your organisation. • Any bank charges, legal fees, fines or penalty payments. • Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities. • Activities that the state has a legal obligation to provide, e.g. core education, core responsibility flood alleviation, street lighting or pavement maintenance etc. • Marketing or promotion alone. • Fundraising activities or challenges. • Conferences or seminars. • Research or feasibility activities. • Activities which collect funds for redistribution to other charities or individuals. • Overseas appeals, expeditions or overseas travel. • Water fountains.* • Swimming pools. • Public toilets. • Playgrounds. • Work too closely linked to our core service. • Any costs to Severn Trent or the Severn Trent group (we can't allow Community Fund monies to come back into the business). • Drainage designed without SuDS approach (speak to us for more information on this). • Sports sponsorship. • Sports pitches or surfaces. • Sports kit or equipment alone (must be as part of wider project). • Purchase of land or property.

*Why we can't fund water fountains

For water quality reasons we prefer to promote Refill points at local bars and cafes across our region, where we know that they will be kept hygienic and we can keep our customers safe. Find your nearest Refill station here: <https://refill.org.uk/>

Ensure you have the correct documentation to fill out your application

As part of the application process, we will ask you to tell us about how your organisation is structured and how you manage finances. Here is the evidence you will need to provide or confirm you have in place, and when in the process this is required. **If you do not have all or any of these in place, let us know!** We may be able to signpost you to advice and guidance.

Evidence	Provide at Application stage	Provide at Grant Offer stage
<p>Legal Structure A legal structure that is appropriate to the size and nature of the organisation, set out in a constitution or memorandum/articles of association that clearly outlines the aims and rules governing the organisation. This should include not for profit status, application of income and a dissolution clause/asset lock.</p>	✓	
<p>Accounts & Financial Management Full accounting records which are appropriate to the size and nature of your organisation.</p>	✓	
<p>Bank Statement A recent bank statement (dated within the last three months) to confirm where the grant if awarded will be paid. The statement must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your organisation's legal name and match the name on your application • your bank's logo • the address where the statement is sent to or would be if you didn't receive online statements • clearly visible sort code and account number. <p>Transaction listings are not acceptable.</p>		✓
<p>Bank Account Signatories Bank Account with at least two signatories for joint authorisation (not related or living at the same address).</p>		✓
<p>Project Consent Form/Lease agreement or deeds (Capital works) If your project is making any physical change to your surroundings, we will ask to see your property deeds or lease agreement.</p> <p>If your project is being completed on leased land the landowner must complete the project consent form. This form is available on our website and through the application portal. Please note, we require a minimum remaining lease term for the different grant requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £10,000 or less - 2 years £10,001 to £75K - 5 years £75,001 to £200K - 10 years <p>If your organisation has a rolling annual lease, for applications under £10,000 we may be able to accept written confirmation from the landowner that your organisation is able to lease the land for the above terms. This will be reviewed on a case by case basis.</p>	✓	

<p>If your project will be on third-party land, please contact us to check your project is eligible. A project consent form is required if we confirm your project meets our eligibility criteria.</p>		
<p>Planning permission If any aspect of your project involves a change to an indoor or outdoor space, or activities will be taking place outdoors, you may need to get planning permission. Make sure you read the UK Government guidance to check whether you need it or not: www.gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales. If planning permission is needed, you will need to have received this before applying to us.</p>	✓	
<p>Letter of Support/Recommendation (where applicable) If you have referenced a key partnership or an endorsement from a key stakeholder in your application, please make sure this letter endorses that.</p>	✓	
<p>Policies and Procedures You will need to ensure you have policies and procedures in place relevant for your project. If you are unsure you can get help from your local infrastructure organisation or online sites such as the NSPCC https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-checklist/ Here are some examples of expected policies and procedures:</p> <p>Equal Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References Equality Act 2010 • Policy should cover age, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or having a child • Disability, race, religion/belief or lack of, gender, sexual orientation, being or becoming a transsexual person • Equal access to services and employment • Preventing harassment and ensuring everyone is treated equally • Complaints are dealt with fairly <p>Employment Organisations must comply with all employment law including legislation on stakeholder pensions (if appropriate) and pay at least the minimum Living Wage (https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage). Demonstrate good practice in personnel matters by having clear policies and procedures (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and provide appropriate training for trustees, staff and volunteers.</p> <p>GDPR Policy & Procedures All organisations are expected to comply with GDPR particularly where personal and sensitive data is collected and stored.</p> <p>Health & Safety Policy & Procedures Organisations must meet legal requirements under current Health and Safety regulations. In particular statutory obligations covering employees, volunteers and members of the public and buildings. For example, carrying out risk assessments and having fire certificates where appropriate.</p> <p>Safeguarding Policy & Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of abuse and signs of abuse and a description of how abuse is different for adults (if working with both children and vulnerable adults); • Procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns; • Procedure for handling cases of disclosure revealed by DBS checks; 	<p>✓ confirmation only</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the person responsible for child protection; • The name of the local safeguarding board; • All staff, volunteers and Trustees who are working directly with vulnerable adults and/or children should have the appropriate DSB checks and there is an understanding of when enhanced DBS checks should be carried out; • All staff, volunteers and trustees who work indirectly with vulnerable adults and/or children receive safeguarding training; • Risk assessments are carried out to ensure vulnerable adults and/or children in your care are safe; • Frequency at which the policy is reviewed, suggest annually. 		
<p>Insurance Organisations must ensure that appropriate insurance certification and licences are in place. For example, public liability, professional indemnity (where appropriate) and employer's liability.</p>	✓ confirmation only	If requested

Accounting Records

The type of accounts we need will depend on the type of organisation you are:

- If you are a new organisation with no prepared accounts you will need to provide a projected income and expenditure forecast. This must include all secured and expected income (such as other grants) and expected expenditure.
- From an organisation with income less than £25,000 we would expect to receive a basic document highlighting income and expenditure and any balance sheet items.
- From an organisation with income over £25k, but less than £1million we would expect to receive accounts that have been reviewed by an appropriately qualified person (this is not deemed an audit). We would expect this to be a slimmed down version of the accounts that a large organisation produces. Audited accounts will be needed if total assets (before liabilities) exceed £3.26 million and the organisation's gross income is more than £250k.
- From an organisation with income over £1 million we would expect to receive externally audited accounts. This is likely to be a reasonable-sized document with a detailed Trustee or Directors' report and notes to accounts.

Secure any match funding

We would love to maximise our impact for every project we support. For this reason we encourage all applications to provide match funding, where possible.

If you are applying for £10,000 or less, match funding is not mandatory. However, if you secure match funding it is likely to help your application be successful, so we would encourage you to do so where possible. Match funding does not have to be in the form of cash. In-kind contributions for services or volunteering can also add a great deal of value to lots of projects.

If you are applying for £10,001 or more, it's essential that you are able to contribute at least 10% of the total project cost as financial match funding. This must be in your reserves or secured from another funder before your application can progress to the next stage. In-kind contributions and volunteering cannot be used as financial match funding.

Please remember we must be the majority funder of the project, so you'll need to be applying to us for at least 50% of the total project cost.

Including Value-added Tax in your budget and application

You may need to pay VAT on purchases made as part of your project and we can pay for this within the grant. Make sure you check whether VAT needs to be included when you develop your budget. The amount of funding you request should only include VAT where you don't intend to, or can't, recover the VAT at a later date. If you later find that VAT claimed under the grant becomes recoverable, you must repay this amount to us.

Check your timescales fit with ours

Our Community Fund is always open for applications. If you are aiming for review at a specific panel, please try to submit your application in good time. If we need more information about your project and the application has been submitted close to the deadline, there may not be enough time to help you gather this. In such cases, we may need to delay the consideration of your application to the following panel.

We can't allow grant money to sit untouched, so your project must start within 3 months of the grant offer date.

£2,000—£10,000			£10,001—£200,000		
Panel	Submit your application by	We'll let you know the outcome by	Panel	Submit your application by	We'll let you know the outcome by
May 2024	Tuesday 9 April 2024	1 June 2024	March 2024	Sunday 11 February 2024	1 April 2024
August 2024	Wednesday 10 July 2024	1 September 2024	June 2024	Sunday 12 May 2024	1 July 2024
November 2024	Sunday 13 October 2024	1 December 2024	September 2024	Sunday 11 August 2024	1 October 2024
February 2025	Sunday 12 January 2025	1 March 2025	December 2024	Sunday 10 November 2024	1 January 2025

IMPORTANT: We can only accept 1 application per organisation for consideration at a time. Please let your colleagues know that you are applying to our Fund.

If your application is awarded, we will happily consider future projects for funding once your funded project is completed, all required monitoring has been received, and at least 12 months have passed since the date on your previous grant offer letter. If your application is unsuccessful you are welcome to reapply to the Community Fund with a different project.

Filling out the application

Sign up to create an account

Once you have checked your organisation and project are eligible, and read all of our guidance, you are ready to start the process.

Firstly, you need to sign up to create an account on our application portal.

The application portal link is https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/severn_trent. You may find it handy to add the application portal as a favourite on your browser so you can easily access your application.

Create a profile

Once you have logged on, you will be asked to create a profile. This should be a profile for your organisation's details. We will need the person filling out the application for the organisation to provide us with their personal details and contact details for a second person.

Please triple check that the contact information you've entered is correct, as these are the details we will use to contact you throughout the process. This must be a direct contact number that we can reach you on and not for a central office or reception. We will not award projects without a direct contact number.

If either contact changes role or leaves the organisation, please let us know the name and email address of the person who will be taking over the application.

Eligibility check

Now that you've created a profile, you can begin your application. You will be asked to certify that you meet our eligibility criteria. If you don't meet our eligibility, we will soon realise when it comes to reviewing your application, so please be open and honest.

Choose how much you want to apply for

You will then be asked how much you are applying for. We have three categories:

- £2,000 to 10,000 - up to 12 months for project completion
- £10,001 to 75,000 - up to 24 months for project completion
- £75,001 to 200,000 - up to 24 months for project completion

Each category has a different set of questions, so please make sure you get this right.

IMPORTANT: Organisations applying for £10,001 or more must be either Charity Commission or Companies House registered, or an exempt charity, Local Authority or Parish Council.

You can check if your charity is registered at www.gov.uk/find-charity-information. To check registered companies, go to www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house.

IMPORTANT: If you're applying for over £75,001, please note that your project must have considerable links to all three of our wellbeing themes: People, Place and Environment.

Begin your application

Once you have chosen how much you want to apply for, you can now begin filling out the application. We have designed our application form so it is easy to navigate, but if you have any queries, please contact us by emailing our team on communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

Any question marked with an asterisk is required, so you won't be able to submit your application until all these questions have been answered.

You are able to save your application and come back to it another day if you wish, but please make sure you press 'Save Draft' before you do.

TOP TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION:

- Read this document thoroughly before completing your application and refer back to it as you work through your application form;
- Make sure your answers link in well with the Fund's criteria and priorities;
- Back up your project ideas with evidence of need including local consultation and statistics;
- Demonstrate the wide-reaching impact your project could have if funded. Be specific – don't just say 'it will benefit the whole community'. Instead, give measurable examples e.g. 'up to 70 people suffering with poor mental health would no longer feel isolated and could gain new skills and friendships';
- Please provide us with as much detail as you can, particularly if you are applying for a large amount of money, as this will help our Panel make their decisions. But only if it is relevant! There is an opportunity at the end of the form to add additional documents, photographs or videos that you feel will support your application;
- Photographs, imagery, visual plans and videos help bring your project to life for our Panel – include these if you can;
- Give us detail but write it as clearly and concisely as possible; you can use bullet points to get information across and please don't use the full word count limit unless you need it;
- The Panel need a detailed breakdown of your project costs to see how any money would be spent. Only applications which use our template will be accepted. Make sure the totals match the amount of your full project costs and the amount you're requesting from us;
- Don't be afraid to show your passion for your project. You know why it is needed and the difference it will make – tell us!;
- Save, save, SAVE! Remember to save your work. You can return to your application form as many times as you like before marking as complete and submitting. Once you have pressed Mark Complete and submitted it, you will not be able to change it without contacting us.

Submit your application

Once you have marked your application as complete, don't forget to press SUBMIT within the portal homepage.

Please ensure that you are happy with your application before you mark as complete and press submit, because once you do you will not be able to go back and edit. You do have the ability to go back and edit your 'Profile' though, so if any contact details change during the process, please update your profile accordingly as soon as possible.

Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email to confirm we've received your application.

If there are changes within your organisation during the application or grant and you need to change the contacts and/or log in email address for the application, please contact us at communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

IMPORTANT: If you've applied to another funder for the same project and you've been successful, congratulations! Please let us know as soon as possible so we can update your project costs or withdraw your application, to allow another project to be awarded.

The Panel are approving funding for the costs outlined in your application so, whilst we understand plans and costs may change post award, unfortunately we can't guarantee that all changes will be possible. Therefore, please ensure the costs outlined in your application are as accurate as possible.

Review and approval process

Internal review

Once you have submitted your application, your application will now be with our team for review.

There are a number of things our team will need to do:

- Do an eligibility check to make sure you can apply for the Fund
- Carry out due diligence checks
- Scoring and comments
- Get subject matter expert advice when necessary
- Request further detail from you if any clarification is needed

Your application will be assessed and scored against the following criteria:

- **Community need:** Is there a significant need for this project in the community and evidence of good engagement with the community during planning?
- **Planning:** Is the project planned well with a detailed and robust budget breakdown? Have relevant permissions been considered; e.g. land ownership? Have risks (including changing costs of materials) been anticipated and mitigated?
- **Sustainability:** How will the project be sustained and bring benefit beyond the investment period? How will you ensure the project will still be running in a few years' time and won't just rely on future investment?
- **Value for money:** Is the amount requested good value compared to the number of beneficiaries and overall impact of the project? Are costs expensive or inflated? Does the project seem like good value for money in comparison to similar projects?

Unfortunately, if your project is ineligible and/or is not the strongest fit for our criteria, we will let you know that your application will not be progressing any further.

Community Fund Panel review

If your project passes our internal review, your application will then be taken to our Community Fund Panel for final decision. This is an independent voluntary Panel made up of our customers, so ultimately, it is then our customers who decide where our money goes.

Our Community Fund is hugely popular and so, whilst we'd love to, unfortunately we simply can't fund every application we receive. With this in mind, we'd like to make you aware that if you are applying for a large amount of money, the Panel may only choose to support a handful of projects from our largest funding pot each year.

Unfortunately, if your project is not successful, the decision cannot be appealed. We can provide you with reasons why it was unsuccessful, and you are welcome to reapply to the Community Fund with a different project. We only reject applications with good reason so if you want to re-apply, please take the time to understand why your application was not successful and have a chat with us. We really would not want to disappoint you again.

Our Fund Officers are always available to discuss further applications with you.

Grant offer stage, payments and post award

Congratulations, the Panel has approved your funding and your application has been successful!

Accepting our offer

At this point, we will notify you that you have been successful and that you need to log onto your grant portal to view your Grant Offer letter.

There are 3 things you need to do before we can give you the funding:

- Read the Grant Offer letter and Terms and Conditions of the Grant carefully;
- Accept the Grant by signing the agreement;
- Provide us with your organisation's banks details (with two unrelated signatories for joint authorisation), a recent bank statement (dated within the last 3 months) and any other requested documents (such as project consent form or evidence of tenure).

For large grants, this the point where we will discuss and agree a payment structure with you.

Please complete the above within 7 days of receiving your offer letter to avoid any delays. Your offer will be subject to a final financial check.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding this offer letter, please get in touch with the team by emailing communityfund@severntrent.co.uk.

Payment structure

Grants are paid by BACS transfer into your organisation's bank account provided at grant offer stage.

Our payment structure depends on how much you are awarded:

- £2,000 to 10,000 – one payment of 100% (unless agreed otherwise by the Panel);
- £10,001 to 75,000 – two payments: 90% initial payment and 10% final payment made after completion of end of project monitoring;
- £75,001 to £200,000 – on case by case basis, aligned to project-specific milestones.

The first payment will be made following acceptance of the grant and receipt of any additional required documents, as detailed in your offer letter.

Any additional payments will be made once we receive a satisfactory interim report and/or are shown satisfactory overall progress against your key milestones and objectives.

Any amount retained will then be released once we receive your End of Project report.

Provide us with reports and updates on your project

We can't wait to hear how your project is progressing and see it completed, so there will be some required monitoring.

We expect all successful applicants to provide us with an End of Project report, and maybe at least one interim report, both of which we'll provide you with templates for. Information required includes:

- Evidence of the activities undertaken using the grant;
- Monitoring information, including information about number of beneficiaries and activities;
- How you've promoted your project and Severn Trent Community Fund's support;
- Evidence of expenditure during and on completion of project, so please keep a hold of all invoices and receipts you obtain along the way!

For the bigger grants, we will likely ask for multiple reports.

Your Grant Agreement may last for a number of years after your project completes, depending on the nature of your project - 5 years for capital and 1 for revenue.

Monitoring visits

We'd love to see your completed project in person too, so you may receive a visit from a member of our Community Fund Team or Customer Panel. The visit will be pre-arranged and will include discussions on the progress of your project, your budget and lessons learnt so far.

Promote your project and the Severn Trent Community Fund where possible

A condition of your offer is that you promote your project and Severn Trent Community Fund's support as this helps us sustain the Fund and to keep applications flowing. We will share in our Award Offer letter the minimum requirements from your organisation and provide you with a toolkit, including press-release templates and Community Fund branding, to help you with this.

What to do if your project is delayed or encounters problems

If your project runs into difficulties, please don't panic!

If you need help or support, get in touch with us by emailing communityfund@severntrent.co.uk as soon as possible. The earlier you can tell us about a potential problem, the more likely we will be able to help.

You may experience changes to your delivery timeline or project costs due to factors beyond your control. Whilst we can't promise we will be able to accommodate all changes, please get in touch to discuss this with us. Any significant changes to the delivery of your project will be considered on a case by case basis and may need to be taken back to our independent Customer Panel for a decision.

Complete your project on time

For all grant sizes, you must start your project within 3 months of the award date.

For grants up to £10,000, you must complete your project within 12 months.

For applications in excess of £10,001, we allow up to 24 months for project completion.

Within your application you'll let us know the duration of your project and are awarded on this basis. Extensions may be given in exceptional cases, but these cannot be guaranteed. Requests may need to be taken to vote at a Community Fund Panel meeting. If the extension is rejected, any remaining award must be returned.

Applications for other projects

We will happily consider future projects for funding once your funded project is completed, all required monitoring has been received, and at least 12 months have passed since the date on your previous grant offer letter.

We cannot, however, provide more funding for the same project you have already received funding from us for.