



Appendix 1: Introducing A Herefordshire Councillor Ward Fund Grants Scheme.

A new initiative (for Herefordshire Council) was agreed at budget Council in February this year (2026). This scheme provides each individual ward member with their own personal budget (of £1000) to spend in their own ward area.

The scheme will open on 1st April 2026 and will run until 31 March 2027.

1. Background and legal context:

A number of local councils in England provide small ward based budget to spend in their local ward.

The purpose of the Herefordshire Council Ward Member Grant Fund is to enable all ward members to allocate funds to facilitate small scale projects and activities in their respective wards. This is designed to help facilitate closer involvement in local initiatives being led by their communities. A key principle behind initiatives like this is to encourage more localised participation in delivering the council's strategic priorities.

Initiatives like this are not new and there are a number of LAs already running similar schemes¹. The legal parameters for Herefordshire Council to introduce the Herefordshire Councillor Ward Grant Scheme (HCWGS) have been established under s236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This allows local Members to discharge the Council's functions in relation to their local electoral Ward. The Localism Act 2011, also grants local authorities a 'General Power of Competence' - expressly giving authorities the power to take the reasonable action they need *'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'*. Notably, in this scheme, alignment with council agreed corporate strategies and delivery plans².

2. How the scheme will work:

Members will be given discretion to decide items of expenditure which will benefit their ward. There must be a transparent audit trail in respect of decisions under this scheme. The individual Member is responsible for ensuring a record is made in writing of any decision or action she or he has taken in connection with this scheme. They will ensure that records are provided to the Democratic Services Manager within 1 month of the decision or action.

The rationale for each area of spend must be clear and explain how it aligns to the council's agreed policies and plans. We have designed a light touch guide (see paras 3 to 6 below) to assist members to identify what types of initiatives/schemes/projects can be funded.

A light touch standard application form has been created (see Appendix 1 below) to assist community groups in applying for funds from your £1000 allocation. This application form can be shared and filled in by community groups and will be used as the basis to assess funding

¹ Some examples:

- [Ward Budget Scheme - Malvern Hills District Council](#)
- [Councillor Ward Budgets Scheme - Wealden District Council](#)
- [Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- [Locality budgets - Democracy in Devon](#)
- [Warwickshire Councillors Grant Scheme](#)

² Possible adjustment to the constitution may be required to set out a delegations for non-executive members to take spend decisions on behalf of the council.

applications. Any electronic communication about the application must be sent from an authorised Herefordshire Council email address.

At the end of each municipal year an annual report (compiled on behalf of all members by Democratic Services) of the projects/schemes/initiatives that you have funded. Members are encouraged to take pictures of projects/schemes/initiatives that have been funded.

3. Financial mechanism:

This is essentially a grant scheme – whereby members would be able to offer small grants (from as little as £50 up to £1000) to applicants in their ward to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent. Your £1000 fund will be held centrally and payments processed by Democratic Services.

Democratic Services will publish, on the public web-site, quarterly reports on all ward budget spend during the course of the financial year.

Conditions³:

- Your £1000 allocation must be spent within the financial year. I.e. 1 April 2026 to March 31, 2027.
- Payments will be made retrospectively upon receipt of an invoice from the successful applicants.
- Any unspent funds will not be able to be carried over in the following financial year.
- Applications or spend of your allocated budget will not be permitted during pre-election periods.
- Members would need to ensure their registerable interests are up to date – if in doubt about any interest you are unsure need to be declared, please contact democratic services

4. What can be funded?

Ward member grant funding would be made available to projects that are beneficial to local communities and should be in line with the core values and objectives set out in the [2024 to 2028 Council Plan](#) namely:

- **People** - *We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported.*
- **Place** - *We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire remains a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers.*
- **Growth** - *We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county. We want to attract inward investment, create more jobs, enable housing development and provide the right infrastructure to keep Herefordshire moving forward.*
- **Transformation** - *We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money.*

Members will be able combine their allocated funding if, for example, a project/scheme/initiative has an area of benefit covering more than one ward.

³ To be read in conjunction with the Herefordshire Council Ward Member Grant Fund policy

5. What you will not be able to fund:

- Projects/schemes/initiatives that have been completed in timeframes that fall outside of the 2026/2027 financial year;
- Individuals or for-private-profit organisations
- Projects or items that are the responsibility of another public body (for example, NHS, local authority)
- National charities seeking support priorities/projects which have no local ward-based focus
- Ongoing yearly commitments
- Projects to reinstate funding relating to a reduction in a Council service or activity arising from an earlier policy decision of the Council or other public body
- Political activities, lobbying or campaigns
- Salaries, wages, or expenses of persons employed by a not-for-private-profit organisation
- Recoverable VAT (if an organisation is VAT registered and able to reclaim VAT, we cannot fund the VAT element of your project costs).
- Finance charges including bank, finance or audit charges, loans, debt repayments and interest costs or endowments.
- Statutory obligations of the organisation.
- The grant cannot be used to match fund other grant schemes administered by the Council
- Contingency costs.
- Projects that are contrary to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The purchase of alcohol, medication or drugs.
- Projects, initiatives and activities that directly promote a religious belief (this does not exclude applications from faith-based groups who want to deliver community-based projects that can clearly demonstrate a benefit to the wider community and include participation from the community).
- Supporting any contentious matters or disputes.
- Activities causing reputational damage and conflicts of interest for the Council, including campaigns against the Council or its statutory partners.
- Projects which could directly or indirectly be in conflict with the Council Plan

6. Who can apply?⁴

- Constituted, non-profit voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations
- Town and parish councils
- Local Charities
- Unincorporated groups
- Small local businesses or individuals
- Collaborations of any of the above groups
- School PTFA's
- Non-constituted groups

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Groups without their own bank account, will need to apply do so with the support of an accountable constituted organisation acting on their behalf as sponsor or guarantor and as the recipient of the grant.

