**Parish and Town Councils**

**Opening Up Safely and Reconnecting Communities Fund**

As part of its commitment to empowering local communities, Somerset County Council has allocated £500,000 for town and parish councils to help support the safe reopening of parish/community facilities and ensure good prevention control measures are in place. SALC is delighted to be working with the County Council on this project and are managing the fund on their behalf, with support from SCC officers.

**What can the funding be used for?**

The underlying aims for the fund are to support:

1. **Opening Up Safely – to make community facilities COVID-19 secure**

Eligible items would include:

* Provision of increased cleaning, cleaning equipment and hand sanitiser
* COVID-19 signage/posters, or other resources needed to support infection control measures in parish and town facilities
* Or providing a grant to a community group to do any of the above

Some councils may well have already spent money on reopening measures, so you may bid to cover expenditure already incurred since the 1st April 2021.

1. **Reconnecting Communities** – **some people will have been very isolated during lockdown and may be concerned about mixing again****, so we are looking for projects that will support them to get out safely and re-engaged in community activities**

Examples of initiatives to help people reconnect could include:

* Projects to support and promote **safe** social interaction at community level e.g. coffee mornings, outdoor activities and small-scale community events
* Projects which promote the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/mental-health-and-wellbeing/) (click on link for details)
* Projects which help to address health inequalities and improve lives of vulnerable or less advantaged groups

This is very much an opportunity for parishes to get creative but please recognise that we are looking for projects that reconnect people in a safe and responsible way.

**How much can we apply for?**

There will, potentially, be two rounds of funding:

1. Initially, all parishes will be encouraged to apply for up to £1,500 of funding. Grant requests of up to £1,500 are likely to be approved quickly if they meet the broad criteria of the fund and payments will be made to applicants throughout September. An application may be for just one item/activity or be made up of a number of different elements (up to £1,500).
2. However, we recognise that not all parishes will apply and there is likely to be some funding left unallocated at the end of September. Parish and town councils are, therefore, able to submit an additional application, at the same time as their first, for more than £1,500 should they wish to do so. Once we know how much funding is still available in early October, SALC will convene a panel to allocate the remaining funding.

For projects over £1,500, we are keen to receive applications that demonstrate at least one of the following:

* Parish and town councils working together,
* Providing support to those disproportionately impacted (e.g. vulnerable groups, BAME, older people or those with pre-existing health conditions who were previously isolating)
* Promoting equality and inclusion and fostering good relations
* Considering sustainability where it is an ongoing initiative including how the project will be funded in the future.

Evidence of benefit, addressing local need and partner support will all be considered as part of the assessment process. The maximum amount that can be applied for is £5000.

**How do we apply?**

All you need to do is complete the short application form below and email it to us at SALC between the 1st and 30th September (Email only, please, as we are still working from home).

If you want to test your ideas out first to make sure they are likely to fall within the scope of the fund, you can contact Jeff Brown, Service Manager for Stronger Communities at Somerset County Council throughout August via email [jbrown@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jbrown@somerset.gov.uk) or phone 07971 658522

Once we have received your application, we will aim to process your application and make payment within 7 working days, unless we require further information or the project needs revising to be eligible for funding.

If you apply for additional funding beyond the initial £1,500 available to all, we will aim to determine these applications and make payment by the end of October.

**How long do we have to spend the money?**

Projects must commence before the end of this financial year with delivery completed by end of May 2022.

In June 2022 we will ask you to confirm that you have spent the grant in line with your application and seek feedback on the success of your project. We will also be looking to share best practice from innovative schemes.

**Application Form for Parish and Town Councils**

Form to be completed and submitted by Parish/Town Clerk

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| Name of council: |  |
| Completed by: |  |
| Position: |  |
| Contact telephone number: |  |
| Email address: |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Main Fund - please indicate amount applied for (max £1,500):** | |  |
| **Purpose:** | | |
|  | | |
| **Costings Breakdown:** | | |
| **Amount** | **Item / Activity** | |
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| **2. Additional Funding - should funds be available (up to £5k):** | |
| **Amount applied for:** |  |
| **Purpose:** | |
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| **If this bid is in partnership with another parish or town council or partner organisation, please state partners and include details of any other funding contributions** | |
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| **How will you report and monitor the outcome / success of this initiative?** | |
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| **Summary of Costings:** | |
| **Amount** | **Item / Activity** |
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| **Payment details:** | |
| **Full name of payee (as it appears on bank account):** | |
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| **Full address of payee:** | |
|  | |
| **Bank name and branch:** |  |
| **Sort code:** |  |
| **Account number:** |  |

**Please email completed form to:** **justin@somerset-alc.org.uk**