



Active Outdoors Southampton: Grants

Application Guidelines 2026

Please fully read this document before you complete the application form

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Introduction

Support for Active Outdoors Southampton Grants are one-off grants available to the local voluntary and community sector to build on community assets that increase access to physical activity in green spaces. The Active Outdoors Southampton initiative will create positive early experiences for children and young people to be active in nature; increase accessibility to green spaces in the city; and will support people to get started or keep moving when they feel they can't do it alone.

Applications are welcomed for projects which will:

- Increase in physical activity levels
- Increase activity in the green space
- Bring in participants from underrepresented groups

Individual micro grants will normally be awarded up to £1,500.

The deadline for applications is 28th September, and we will notify you of the outcome within the next month. The activity can be seasonal (i.e. only during the summer holidays or during a specified period) but funding must still be used during the year period from 9th November 2026 – 9th November 2027.

The Application Process

This guide has been designed to help you when applying for a Support for Active Outdoors Southampton Grants. It will help you decide if your group and project are eligible for funding and there are also notes to help you complete the application form.

The application process:

- Complete and submit your application by email
- We assess your application
- We tell you our decision
- Successful applicants return their signed grant agreement
- Start your project
- Finish your project and complete monitoring and evaluation. Additional guidance on monitoring and evaluation will be provided to successful applicants.

It may take up to 3 weeks for the grant decision to be made and then up to 3 weeks for you to receive funding. Please make sure your start date for your project is after the 9th of November.

Grants Criteria

Who Can Apply?

- All bids for the Active Outdoors Southampton Grants must be for a project undertaken within a Southampton postcode (SO14-19).
- Where individuals wish to apply, they should contact Southampton Voluntary Services to see if they can match them with a community group to apply for funding. Contact can be made through the Southampton Voluntary Services via the Southampton Green Network at SGN@southamptonvs.org.uk.
- Social enterprises for start-up or additional projects outside of their core business.
- Faith based groups for non-proselytising community activities.
- 'Friends of' (or similar) groups for their own projects/activities.
- PTA or 'Friends of...' school groups or student groups for wider community activities outside school hours where the group is volunteer led and has its own constitution.

What Can Be Funded?

We will consider any reasonable items needed to organise and run a successful project, for example:

- Insurance
- Venue hire
- Materials for use in your project
- Publicity materials, including digital publicity (such as social media), newsletters and flyers. But try to keep these to a minimum bearing in mind the green agenda
- Basic stationery – paper, ink cartridges, envelopes, etc.
- Transport costs within the city for groups of members/attendees who have limited mobility (contribution only, users must also contribute) – please note we cannot support individuals
- Volunteer expenses
- Health and wellbeing activities
- Reasonable fees for services - like guest speakers, artists, bike services etc., excluding professional fees
- Additional costs incurred as a result of promoting environmental sustainability e.g. reusable items rather than disposable
- Groups may buy services for a specific project which include salary costs within the fees. For example, speakers/entertainers for community events and social clubs or trainers/tutors for one-off courses/events

This list is not exhaustive. If what you want to apply for something that is not on this list, we may still be able to fund it.

What Can't Be Funded?

- Activities that happen or start before we confirm the grant
- Projects that cannot be completed by the end of 9th November 2027
- Items that mainly benefit an individual
- CPD and training required to fulfil the role (this must be covered by the service area)

If what you are unsure whether your project can be funded, please contact Southampton Green Network at SGN@southamptonvs.org.uk to discuss.

Green Applications

We are keen that efforts are made by organisations to make their projects and activities a bit greener:

- Encouraging your attendees to leave the car at home and walk, cycle or get the bus to your activities (where possible)
- Using re-useable or recyclable (in Southampton) materials
- Reducing single use items, such as paper flyers – do you really need 5,000? Could you use a mix of flyers and social media advertising?
- Not using single use plastics
- Using local suppliers where possible to reduce travel distance

Active Outdoors Southampton Grant Priorities

The funding is to build on community assets that increase access to activity in Southampton's Green Spaces, you are required to plan your project around at least one of the following priorities:

A Healthier Southampton: Increasing the number of people being active in green spaces will support increase in activity levels for those participating in the initiative, will increase access to nature and increase mental health and wellbeing of the participants

A Safer Southampton: increasing greater use of green spaces for physical activity will increase the number and diversity of people accessing green spaces. Evidence shows that wider community representation in green spaces can make it feel safer for more people to walk through or use green spaces.

A Greener Southampton: This initiative is likely to bring greater understanding of nature and benefits of green spaces near to where people live (potentially reducing car usage), will increase volunteering in these areas and create a greater sense of ownership and pride in shared environments.

We also encourage groups to work together and submit joint applications and for applicants to see this as seed funding and consider the longer-term impact and sustainability of your project.

Standard Grants Criteria

Applications will normally only be considered from voluntary groups and organisations that: -

- Are properly constituted and can demonstrate that their practices and structures are representative of all relevant interests and are clearly accountable to users, beneficiaries and members.
- Can demonstrate the proper conduct of their officers both general and financial and that they keep proper books of accounts together with full written records indicating how any grant monies are used.
- Adhere to all equality's legislation and good practice guidelines.
- Can demonstrate that they receive or are seeking funding from other sources.
- Where appropriate a national or regional organisation can demonstrate that there is a specific benefit to Southampton which is not being offered by a local organisation.
- If you have problems with any of these, please contact Southampton Green Network at SGN@southamptonvs.org.uk to see what support can be offered to you to obtain these.

Evaluation

It is important that applications consider and state clearly the objectives and outcomes they hope to achieve, as well as how this will be delivered, the time frame and how it will involve the people it is trying to reach.

Applications will need to explain how projects will be evaluated and how projects may evolve to reflect changing needs as the project progresses. Successful applicants will be required to produce a short final report and at least one qualitative case study demonstrating the project's impact. Please try to include photos with appropriate permissions to use in your final report.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel. In the review process the panel also reserves the right to achieve balance of projects based on:

- characteristics of the beneficiaries
- the size of the bid
- the nature of the activity

Successful bids will be networked with one another, should they wish, to share approaches and best practice.

Parameters and Exclusions

Only constituted groups or organisations can apply to the fund.

You may want to collaborate with other organisations to deliver your project; the involvement of appropriate partners is encouraged, and details should be provided. Please identify one organisation as the lead applicant.

Projects must aim to achieve the stated objectives or outcomes and produce a short evaluation report by 12 months following award of the grant.

Question Guidance

Q1 Your details

Please give us contact details for the person best able to answer queries about your application.

Please ensure you give us an email address for contact purposes, please make sure it is checked regularly throughout the application period as this is the most likely way we will contact you.

You do not need to be a registered charity, company or community amateur sports club (CASC) to apply, but if you are, we'd like your registration number.

Q2 What does your group/organisation do?

Please summarise the purpose of your organisation. For example, a residents' association might say: "We support local residents to make our area a good place to live."

Q3 What would you like a grant for and why and what outcomes do you expect to achieve?

In brief, what will you be spending the money on, who will benefit, how this will help Active Outdoors Southampton Grants. Think about the [5 Ways to Wellbeing | Mind](#) in your answer. Please detail how success will be evidenced with an approximate timeframe and note that projects should aim to start and finish within the year period of 9th November 2026 – 9th November 2027.

Poorly explained example	Well explained example
"We are going to hold a skate group"	"We are planning to run a skate group every Wednesday evening at the new skate park in Hoglands Park. This group will be targeted at beginners with no previous skate experience. We will be working in collaboration with another local group to promote the activities. We will make the group inclusive to all. We will provide for the group skateboards and safety gear, so it is accessible to everyone. We expect people to learn a new skill they can use in green spaces as well as staying physical fit"
Poorly explained example	Well explained example
"We would like to hold a Nature Walk for kids."	"We would like to hold monthly nature walks in Riverside Park. Focused on local primary school aged children and their parents. Supporting children's physical and mental health by walking outdoors and learning about nature. We aim to recruit volunteers with nature knowledge to support the running of this group. We will

	also be purchasing field guides and binoculars for tree identification and bird watching. As a group we already have a good relationship with the local school so we will advertise with them. We expect by exchanging valuable knowledge of the local environment the participants will gain a greater appreciation of their local green spaces and use them more often. We also expect them to feel more physically healthy after walking.”
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Q4 – Which of the Active Outdoors Southampton Grant priorities is your project aimed at?

The priorities should be used to guide the proposals. Please tick which priority/ies you are aiming your project at.

Q5a – When is this project going to start?

Your project should start after 9th November 2026.

Q5b – When is this project projected to finish?

Projects should aim for completion by 9th November 2027

Q6a – How many people do you expect to benefit directly from your project?

Please give approximate figures of how many people this grant funding will benefit. By ‘directly benefit’ we mean the number of people who will attend your activity/event or are directly supported by the work you do. For example, 8 people might be expected to join a weekly peer support walking group.

Q6b – What approximate percentage of those people live in the city of Southampton?

The city of Southampton is broadly defined as postcodes SO14 to SO19, and we can only fund projects that benefit residents of the city.

Q6c – What demographics do you expect to reach with your activity?

Please give approximate information of the demographics of your intended/expected attendees. For example, your activity is intended for 11-18 year old children of mixed ethnicities and physical ability.

Q7 – How much money are you applying for and what do you intend to spend it on?

What funding is required and specifically what outputs and outcomes will this generate? Please provide an indication of what you will buy and how much it will cost.

Poorly explained activity examples	Well explained activity examples	Cost

Venue hire	2 hours £10 an hour for 10 weeks	£200
Sports equipment	tennis rackets £9.99 each	£99.90
Volunteer travel	3 volunteers at £5 bus ticket	£15
Advertising	500 printed flyers	£50
Total		£364.90

Q8 – Have you applied for any other funding towards this project?

You might have applied to another funder for a different part of the same project. Or you might have applied to more than one funder to increase your chances of getting funding. We ask for details of this to make sure we don't duplicate the funding. If you are still waiting for a decision from the other funder, please give details of when you are likely to hear.

Q9 – If we can only part fund you will the project still go ahead?

Depending on the number of applications, we may choose to part-fund projects and initiatives as this allows us to support more groups. If you were offered partial funding rather everything you requested what would happen? Would you look for match funding from another grant funder or from donations? Would you scale down your project? Would the whole project be cancelled?

Q10 – How will you measure how successful your project has been? Please include in your response, measures that will contribute to at least one of the following outcomes from the table below.

B16	Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons
B18	Social Isolation
B19	Loneliness
C10	Children aged 5-16 sufficiently active for good health
C17	Physically active and inactive adults
C28	Self-reported well-being

We would like organisations to think about how they will measure how successful their project has been. To do this we would like to see measurements that match the outcomes you expect as a result of your project.

Q11 – Have you any plans to make your project sustainable so it can continue after this funding period – please provide details?

We would like projects to be sustainable past the period for which the funding is for. Please note here what opportunities you will explore to continue the benefits your project will bring local people. For example, you may have found out about another grant fund, and you are putting an application in, or perhaps you can continue activities with a small contribution from attendees or plan further fundraising.

Q12 – How will you ensure the safety, confidentiality and safeguarding of people you work with, as well as staff volunteers and members?

It is important that people feel safe and supported while accessing or working for your project and that they feel confident information about them will not be shared unnecessarily. Please describe the processes and safeguards you have in place to look after your staff, members and service users. For example, how do you make your meetings safe places?

Declarations

There are three declarations we ask you to agree to. This declaration box must be ticked for us to accept your application.

- The first confirms that you are authorised to submit the application and everything you have written is true.
- The second asks that where possible, you support our ambitions for a more environmentally friendly place to live, which includes simple pledges to help improve our environment.
- The third asks you to confirm your commitment to producing a short final report (that the Public Health and SVS can use) by 12 months after you are awarded the grant and submit a case study during the project (that Public Health and SVS can publish).

Bank Signatories and Account Details

We ask for a minimum of two signatories for your group's bank account who are not related and do not share a home.

Bank account details are requested to confirm the group has a suitable bank account and also to enable us to pay the grant as quickly as possible once it's been awarded and the signed grant agreements have been returned.

If you have problems supplying some of the requested documents or information please contact Lucy Grehan at SGN@southamptonvs.org.uk before sending in your application.

Application Checklist

The application checklist has details of all the supporting documents you need to submit with your application.

We prefer all supporting documents are emailed, however if you are not able to do this you can post them or hand deliver them (in a sealed envelope) to Southampton Voluntary Services. The email and postal addresses are in the 'Advice to Applicants' section of this document and shown at the end of the application form.

Supporting documents required:

- Governance document/s
- Estimates / quotes
- Annual accounts
- Recent bank statement or photocopy from passbook
- Equal opportunities policy or statement (if not included in governance document)
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy

See the Supporting Documents section below for more details.

Supporting Documents

SVS and Public Health have legal duties and all the money we give out must go to groups who also meet these legal duties. All the information and documents we ask for help us ensure that. We only ask for documents we need.

You can submit your documents in whatever format you like providing it is compatible with PCs/Microsoft Office (please do not send Apple format documents). This could be Word or Excel documents (or open source versions), PDF, scanned documents, photos, emails, etc. Please send all documents as attachments on an email as we cannot access file sharing services for security reasons.

Estimates / Quotes from an External Source

You must fully plan the grant expenditure before you apply. This includes getting estimates/quotes from external sources to evidence what the costs are.

We ask for estimates/quotes for several reasons.

- 1) To ensure you have properly planned your project and your costs are realistic. For example, if you only ask us for £200 for equipment that costs £500 and you have no other funds you will run into problems.
- 2) To ensure what you are asking us to fund is suitable for how you want to use it. For example, making sure the sports equipment you want to buy are suitable for the elderly people who are going to be using them.
- 3) To ensure what you are asking for will provide good value for money, good social value and fits with Southampton City Council's Green City Charter.
- 4) To ensure you have good planning and good financial governance

What we can accept as estimates/quotes from external sources:

- A formal quote from a supplier, either on headed paper or an email that clearly shows the company's details
- A link to an item for sale on a website – the link must be directly to the page the item is on, not just the company's website
- A page from a catalogue or a price leaflet
- A recent invoice or receipt if it's something you pay for regularly
- Volunteer expenses – you do not need to provide written estimates/quotes for these but please provide a breakdown of the costs. For example, bus travel at £3 each for 10 people

How can we get written estimates/quotes?

Most businesses will provide these on request. However, many businesses also publish their prices on their websites. For example, if you are applying for sports equipment, you will be able to find the costs of these on several retailers' websites, and you can submit a list of links to the relevant items.

What if things change between applying for the grant and it being awarded?

We appreciate that costs can change in between you applying for the grant and it being awarded. An item you picked may no longer be for sale or a better item may be on offer. That's okay. If you asked for a printer and still buy a printer it doesn't matter if it's a different make/model from the one in the quote.

Governing Document (Constitution, etc.)

This shows us that you are properly set up as a group and can do the activities you are requesting the funding for. We also check the dissolution clause to see what will happen to any assets bought with the grant funding if your group decides it can no longer continue.

Annual Accounts

All applicants that are more than 1 year old must submit annual accounts for their last financial year. For most groups, accounts can be done on a receipts and payments basis. This simply lists all money received and paid out by the group in the year in question and a statement giving details of its assets (what the group has) and liabilities (what the group owes, if anything) at the end of the year.

Recent Bank Statement

We ask for a recent bank statement or copy from your passbook (less than 3 months old) for two reasons:

- 1) It provides evidence that you have a bank account in the group's name (we are unable to pay grants to individual's bank accounts)
- 2) It shows how much money you currently have. Annual accounts can be up to 22 months old and will not show recent income.

If you have a lot of money in your bank account because of another grant for a different project to the one you're applying to us for or because you are saving for a specific project please make sure you provide details of this in question 10 of the application form.

Equal Opportunities (Equality, Diversity) Policy or Statement

SVS and Public Health have a legal duty to ensure it does not discriminate against anyone that wants to use its services and to actively promote equalities. This means all groups we fund through grants must also ensure they do not discriminate against anyone that wants to join the group or take part in the group's activities and events.

All groups must have either an equality statement in their governing document or a policy stating that they will not discriminate against anyone and will not allow their members/users to discriminate against anyone.

Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Policies

If your project involves working with children or vulnerable adults you must have appropriate Safeguarding policies in place. These policies set out how you safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults who are members or users of your group. If you will be working with children or vulnerable adults without their parents/carers this is essential. If you will be working with children or vulnerable adults and their parents/carers it may not be essential, but is still good practice.

We appreciate that most applicants are small community groups run by volunteers, and therefore try to be as flexible as possible. If you don't have all the information or documents please email or phone us for advice.

How We Make Funding Decisions

All applications go through a two-stage process

Stage 1 – Technical Assessment – Can We Fund It?

An experienced member of staff will assess your application and supporting documents to ensure both you and your project/activity meet the Active Outdoors Southampton Grant eligibility criteria. If we have any queries or we need more information we will contact you. Our aim at this stage is to ensure all applications reach the next stage.

Stage 2 – Panel Meeting – Should We Fund It?

Applications will be reviewed by a panel which includes representatives from various organisations that support or work related to physical activity and green spaces. In the review process the panel also reserves the right to achieve balance of projects based on:

- characteristics of the beneficiaries
- the size of the bid
- the nature of the activity

Applications will be assessed against the programme principles and the broad objectives of the Active Outdoors Southampton Grant scheme as stated in the 'desired outcomes'.

Advice for Applicants

Social Enterprises

New social enterprises are welcome to apply for funding to help them start up. Established social enterprises are welcome to apply for funding new projects that are in addition to their core work. It is expected that established social enterprises will be generating income to fund their core work, and therefore this is not eligible for funding from Active Outdoors Southampton Grant.

'Friends of' Groups

Some statutory services, such as schools, libraries and parks, and occasionally some voluntary organisations have 'Friends of' or supporters groups. While we are happy to support such groups, we can only fund projects which are either directly run by, or in partnership with, the

'Friends of' group which is independently constituted. We are not able to fund projects where the funding or anything bought/paid for with it will be transferred to another organisation.

Good example, a 'Friends of' group of a park applies for equipment for volunteers to use at a tidy up event or for meeting costs to enable the 'Friends of' group committee to meet. This would be eligible for funding as the funding will be used by the 'Friends of' group for their own activities.

Bad example, a 'Friends of' library group applies for funding to provide a new printer for the library. This would not be eligible for funding as the printer will be used for library activities and not the 'Friends of' group's activities.

Training and General Advice

SVS offers support to groups on governance, funding and developing policies. Training is offered to whole committees on a range of topics from roles and responsibilities of trustees, funding and outcome training etc.

If you would like to know more about SO:Linked services, please contact them directly:
<https://www.solinked.org.uk/>

Email and postal addresses for contact

Email contact: SGN@southamptonvs.org.uk

Postal address:

Southampton Voluntary Services
St Marys Street
Southampton
SO14 1NW

Successful Applications

Grant Award Letter and Agreement

If your application is successful, we will email you a grant award letter and our grant agreement (the terms and conditions). To accept your grant, you need to sign and return a copy of the grant agreement, preferably by email. In accepting the grant, you agree it will only be used for the purposes requested and approved and that it must be returned if you do not comply with the requirements set out.

You can sign your grant agreement in several ways:

- Electronically (most touch screen devices will allow you to do this)
- Print the signature page, sign it and scan it to create an electronic copy
- Print the signature page, sign it and post it to the address you will be given in the email when we award the grant (you can also hand deliver it in a sealed envelope)

Payment

Grants are paid once your signed grant agreement has been returned. Our standard payment terms are 30 days, however, we aim to make grant payments quicker than that.

Payments are made via BACS transfer where possible. There are some types of account that we cannot make BACS transfers to, including savings accounts and building society accounts. If you have one of these your grant will be paid by cheque.

Monitoring and Receipts

All applicants must complete a short monitoring form by the date stated on the form. We will ask you to collect data on things such as number and demographics of participants. A Southampton Voluntary Services Development Worker will visit the project within the year. You must submit copies of receipts for all expenditure along with the monitoring form upon request.

If funds are not properly receipted, or you do not fully use your grant, or you do not complete a final short monitoring report then SVS reserves the right to require the grant to be repaid fully or in proportionate part if underutilised.