

Community Grant Applications 2026/27

Purpose of Report

To present to Full Council the outcome of the Finance Committee's review of the 2026/27 community grant applications and to seek approval of the Committee's recommendations.

Grant Review Process

The Finance Committee met on **21 September 2026** to consider the community grant applications received for the current financial year.

The purpose of the meeting was to allow applicants to present their proposals, answer questions from Councillors and enable the Finance Committee to consider each application before making recommendations to Full Council.

The Committee considered the applications against the available **Community Grants budget of £5,000**. Applicants were given the opportunity to explain their projects, the need for funding and the benefits the proposals would provide to the local community.

The Committee also gave consideration to the financial position of applicants, the level of funding requested and, where appropriate, whether the Parish Council could support part of an application rather than the full amount requested.

As The Lansdowne Hall application was a large grant was additionally considered using the Council's grant assessment matrix. The application received a high score of **132**, reflecting its alignment with the Neighbourhood Plan, community benefit, environmental impact, sustainability, funding and costs, legislative requirements and project management/risk.

Following consideration of all applications, the Committee discussed how the available £5,000 should be allocated to provide support across several community initiatives.

Applications Considered

Derry Hill & Studley Youth Club

Amount requested: £950

Representatives explained that the Youth Club is currently rebuilding its membership following a period of uncertainty and intermittent operation. Attendance and income have consequently been low, while some of the club's equipment is beginning to require replacement.

The funding would help the club to organise activities intended to attract and retain members, including a planned Christmas disco, and provide support while membership numbers are rebuilt.

The Committee considered the application to be a positive opportunity to help **pump-prime the Youth Club**, with the expectation that increased membership would allow the group to become more financially self-sustaining in future.

Recommendation to Full Council: £950

St John Ambulance

Amount requested: £1,000

Representatives from the local branch explained their proposal to deliver four community first-aid courses, with up to 30 participants per session. The aim is to give members of the community practical skills to assist in an emergency before professional medical assistance arrives.

The Committee supported the principle of the project but considered that the full amount requested was not appropriate given the available grant budget and the cost of delivering individual sessions.

The cost of one course was confirmed as **£371**. The Committee therefore proposed supporting one session, with the Parish Council also potentially helping to promote the session through *inSPIRE*.

Recommendation to Full Council: £371

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

Amount requested: £650

The application was for funding towards a pump for the local branch of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. The pump would enable volunteers to move water around the canal project site more effectively, including for mixing concrete and cement and working with clay.

The Committee discussed the financial information supplied with the application and established that the reserves shown related to the wider Canal Trust rather than the local Melksham, Chippenham and Calne branch.

The Committee considered the equipment to be useful to the local project and supported the application in full.

Recommendation to Full Council: £650

Lansdowne Hall

Amount requested: £5,000

Lansdowne Hall applied for £5,000 towards the replacement of its front door. The existing door has experienced ongoing problems with locking due to weather-related movement. The proposed replacement would retain level access, improve energy efficiency and provide a longer-term solution.

The Hall Management Committee explained that the building is now around 25 years old and that a number of significant works are becoming necessary. These include replacement fire doors and windows and improvements to the heating system. The cost of heating has also increased significantly.

The proposed door forms part of a wider **10-year plan** to improve the building and its energy efficiency. The Committee discussed the importance of addressing the fabric of the building alongside future improvements to heating.

Concerns were raised regarding the absence of previous financial provision for the door replacement. The applicants explained that reserves had recently been significantly affected by the unexpected roof repair.

The Committee also noted that Lansdowne Hall had received the entirety of the Council's grant budget in the previous financial year. Consequently, while the importance of the work was recognised, the Committee was reluctant to allocate the full £5,000 again.

It was therefore proposed that the Hall receive the remaining grant funding after the small grant applications had been allocated. The Committee also discussed whether an amount should be retained by the Council for potential emergency applications later in the financial year.

Recommendation to Full Council: £3,029

Finance Committee Recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that Full Council approve the following grant awards from the community grant budget:

Applicant	Amount Requested	Recommended Award
Derry Hill & Studley Youth Club	£950	£950
St John Ambulance	£1,000	£371
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	£650	£650
Lansdowne Hall	£5,000	£3,029
Total	£7,600	£5,000