

Title of Report:	Community Festivals Fund 2025-26 Assessment Report
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development
Date of Meeting:	18th March 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy, Active & Engaged Communities
Outcome	The Borough comprises cohesive and stable communities which work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to address issues and deliver on opportunities
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture; Community Development Manager

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	31 st March 2026

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£71,630 Total (£43,930 Cost to Council; £27,700 est DfC Income)
Included in Current Year Estimates	Yes
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	1051
Staffing Costs	£0

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/ <u>No</u>	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/ <u>No</u>	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/ <u>No</u>	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/ <u>No</u>	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/ <u>No</u>	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes of the assessment of applications received for the Community Festivals Fund (CFF) 2025-26, seeking approval subject to confirmation of match funding from the Department for Communities (DfC).

2.0 Background

2.1 The Community Festivals Fund was established by the Department for Communities to acknowledge the positive impact festivals have on communities and the local economy. According to the Department's Policy and Guidance Framework (October 2015), a community festival is defined as: "A series of events (or a single event with several elements) sharing a common theme, delivered within a defined time period, developed from within a community, celebrating and positively promoting what the community represents."

2.2 Annually, the Council receives funding from the Department to operate the Community Festivals Fund, which requires matching funds from the Council. The Department's Policy and Guidance Framework outlines the general principles and assessment criteria that the Council must adhere to.

2.3 In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the Council received £27,700. While confirmation of the 2025-26 grant funding from DfC is pending, to ensure timely communication with applicants, approval is sought in principle, assuming the funding will match the previous year's amount.

2.4 The CFF grant programme opened for applications on 9th December 2024, closing on 7th February 2025. The launch was publicly advertised as part of the Council's annual grant programme, and grant roadshows were conducted to inform potential applicants.

2.5 A total of 50 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Council Officers against the criteria outlined in the programme's Guidance Notes. Applicants were required to achieve a minimum score of 65% to be considered for funding, in line with the Council's Grant Funding Policy.

An extract from the Guidance Notes for the grant programme, detailing eligibility and assessment criteria, is attached at **Annex A**.

3.0 Applications Received

No. of applications received	50
No. of ineligible applications	5
No. of unsuccessful applicants (scoring under 65% threshold)	2
No. of successful applications (scoring 65% and above)	43
Total value of CFF funding recommended	£57,979
Expected budget available	£71,630
£27,700 expected from DfC (2024-25 award)	
£43,930 Cost to Council	

Budget remaining after grants awarded	£13,651
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3.1 A list of the applications received, the assessment scores and the grant amount recommended are listed in **Annex B**. The estimated budget for Community Festivals Fund for 2025-26 is £71,630, including an anticipated award of £27,700 from DfC. The total value of funding recommended is £57,979, leaving an amount of £13,651 remaining after the recommended grants are awarded.

3.2 Unsuccessful/ Ineligible applications -In accordance the CFF Grant Programme criteria, each festival day must be programmed to be of *at least 4 hours duration and include a range of at least 3 activities to suit all sections of the community* as indicated in Annex A. Five applications were deemed ineligible as they did not meet the criteria for sufficient range or duration of activities. A number of applications received a lesser amount than applied for as one or more of the days of their festival did not meet this criterion and so their award was reduced to Level 1 or 2. Officers will provide detailed feedback to these applicants and guide them toward alternative funding opportunities.

4.0 Reallocation of Remaining Budget:

Officers propose the following reallocation of unallocated funds:

4.1 Training:

DfC mandates that Councils assess training needs for festival organisers. Responses indicated a demand for training in Safeguarding, First Aid, and Food Hygiene. It is proposed to allocate £5,000 of the remaining budget for this purpose.

4.2 Community & Culture Funding Programmes:

Some projects ineligible for the Community Festivals Fund may qualify for the Social Connections Grant, which offers £500 for activities promoting social inclusion. This grant programme opens on a rolling basis from 3rd March, with an initial budget of £10,000 for 2025-26. Given its popularity and rapid fund utilisation in the previous year, it is proposed to reallocate an additional £4,840 from the remaining CFF budget to bolster the Social Connections Grant Programme.

In addition, it is proposed that an additional £3,811 is reallocated to Council's Culture, Arts & Heritage Fund, subject to the outcome of that report.

5.0 Recommendations:

Approval is sought for the following:

- I. **Funding Awards:** Approve the recommended funding awards through the Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex B, contingent upon confirmation of funding from DfC.
- II. **Provisional Offers:** If DfC funding confirmation is not received by 1st April, issue provisional letters of offer to applicants with festivals scheduled in April and May 2025.
- III. **Training Allocation:** Allocate £5,000 from the CFF budget for training festival organisers.
- IV. **Budget Reallocation A:** Reallocate £4,840 from the remaining CFF budget to the Social Connections Grant Programme.

- V. **Budget Reallocation B:** reallocate the remaining £3,811 of CFF underspend to Community, Arts & Heritage Fund

Annex A: Eligibility and Assessment Criteria for Community Festivals Fund 2025-26

Levels of grant award:

Community Festival Fund Grant Programme	Maximum Grant Amount
<p>1. One day community fun day type events. Events must be programmed to be of at least 4 hours consecutive duration and include a range of at least 3 types of activities to suit all sections of the community.</p>	Up to £750
<p>2. Festival events lasting 2 consecutive days or more. Each of the days of the festival must include a range of activities to suit all sections of the community and be programmed to be at least 4 hours duration. It is not enough to simply duplicate the same event on 2 days – the festival must have different activities on each day that it takes place.</p>	Up to £1,500
<p>3. Festivals lasting 3 consecutive days or more. Each of the days of the festival must include a range of activities to suit all sections of the community and be programmed to be at least 4 hours duration. The festival must have different activities on each day that it takes place.</p>	Up to £3,000

Eligible organisations:

- Constituted voluntary and community organisations.
- Applications may be from geographical communities (a town, village, neighbourhood, rural area); or communities of interest (a group of people who have a common interest, concern or characteristic).
- A community festival should constitute a series of events (or a single event with several elements) with a common theme and delivered within a defined time period.
- Each day of the festival must be programmed to be of at least 4 hours duration and include a range of at least 3 activities to suit all sections of the community.
- DfC has stated that all festivals must be culture based, where culture is defined as ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or social grouping.

Ineligible organisations/activities:

- festivals taking place outside the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council area;
- festivals of a commercial nature, organised to make profit;
- trade, community or professional conferences/conventions;
- core costs for festival organisers or organisations (staffing, annual overheads);

- festivals that are primarily fundraising events, are heavily branded with charity branding or deploy potential sources of income from a festival to a charity;
- awards ceremonies or industry events;
- residential courses and associated events;
- festivals that are social events for an organisation;
- events developed and delivered by public bodies;
- events initiated and led by private sector organisations;
- festivals that are primarily sporting fixtures or competitive events;
- festivals that are primarily tourism focused events where the organisation cannot demonstrate significant community involvement;
- Events which consist mainly of competitions;
- Transport outside of the area/ community that the festival is taking place in;
- Applications for funding which are considered to be the responsibility of another statutory organisation or Council fund or applications that have applied and secured funding from another Council programme.

Assessment Criteria:

Each application is assessed and scored against the criteria listed below as guided by the Department for Communities (DfC) in its Community Festivals Fund Revised Policy and Guidance Framework (Oct 2015). The criteria are all given equal weighting.

- i. Have strong community participation in the organisation and implementation of the project contributing to building a strong sense of community (x 1)
- ii. Provide opportunities for people to improve their personal skills or receive training relevant to the project (x 1)
- iii. Promotes inclusion in your community including targeting social exclusion and /or poverty; addressing rural isolation and encouraging equality of opportunity for all Section 75 groupings (x 1)
- iv. NIMDM 2017 Ranking/ Access to Services Measure Ranking (X 1)
- v. Demonstrate value for money and maximise income (x 1)

Annex B: Community Festivals Fund 2025-26 Recommended Awards

Organisation	Amount Requested	Assessment Score (%)	Funding Recommended	Amount Recommended
Apprentice Boys of Derry Campsie Club Rasharkin Branch	£2,158	76	yes	£750
Armstrong Storytelling Trust	£6,200	*	no	£0
Articlave District Community Association	£2,000	68	yes	£1,500
Baile An Chaistil CCE	£12,875	96	yes	£750
Ballycastle United Youth Academy	£850	*	no	£0
Balnamore Community Association	£1,284	72	yes	£750
Building Ballysally Together	£2,970	76	yes	£750
Burnfoot Community Association	£1,420	68	yes	£750
Bushmills & District Community Association	£750	72	yes	£750
Bushvalley Primary School PTA	£1,509	80	yes	£729
CAN - Compass Advocacy Network Ltd	£2,050	88	yes	£1,500
Cloughmills Community Action Team	£2,000	68	yes	£750
Cumann Iománaíochta Chaoimhín Uí Loingsigh	£8,500	88	yes	£3,000
Cushendun Building Preservation Trust	£5,165	84	yes	£1,500
Dervock & District Community Association	£1,740	80	yes	£1,440
Drumturn Community Association	£1,150	68	yes	£750
Dunaghy Community Association	£550	52	no	£0
Dunaghy Flute Band	£1,500	76	yes	£750
Dunloy Football Club	£1,500	68	yes	£750
Eoghan Rua GAC	£1,050	76	yes	£350
Friends of Glenariffe	£1,650	80	yes	£750
Friends of Kilmoyle PTA	£1,348	72	yes	£750
Garvagh Cultural Awareness Association	£4,540	76	yes	£750
Glór na Maoile	£4,580	92	yes	£750
Glack Community Association	£4,400	80	yes	£1,500
Glack GAC	£4,500	*	no	£0

Glens of Antrim CCE	£4,000	80	yes	£1,500
Gortnaghey Community Association	£2,450	68	yes	£1,500
Hands That Talk	£3,000	80	yes	£750
Hare's Corner Cooperative (Forest Connections Community Benefit Society)	£750	76	yes	£750
Kilrea Community & Fairythorn Association	£6,349	72	yes	£750
Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster Scots Society	£4,250	84	yes	£3,000
Limavady Community Development Initiative	£1,400	*	no	£0
Magilligan Community Association	£4,000	72	yes	£3,000
Millburn Community Development Ltd	£2,750	72	yes	£1,500
Moneydig Rural Network	£1,500	84	yes	£1,500
Mosside Educational Rural and Culture Society	£710	68	yes	£710
North Antrim Bands Forum	£4,800	92	yes	£3,000
Portrush Heritage Group	£6,000	84	yes	£3,000
Portrush Yacht Club	£840	68	yes	£750
Portstewart Community Association	£4,015	84	yes	£3,000
Portballintrae Residents Association	£2,068	72	yes	£1,500
Pride of the Park Flute Band	£3,750	100	yes	£1,500
Rasharkin & District Land & Property Fund	£5,800	68	yes	£750
St Mary's Faughanvale GAC	£4,470	84	yes	£3,000
St. Mary's GAC Rasharkin	£1,000	68	yes	£750
St. Matthew's GAC Drumsum	£3,000	68	yes	£750
Ullans Speakers Association	£4,300	84	yes	£3,000
Windyhall Community Association	£1,755	60	no	£0
Workers Fellowship	£5,000	*	no	£0
				£57,979

* doesn't meet eligibility criteria