# gentoo

Community Grant Programme Guidance

Community grants that aim to make a big difference

What are Community Grants?

Our Community Grants are accessible to anyone working with local people in the City of Sunderland. The aim of Community Grants are to enable local people to improve their community and the grants are used to support a range of different activities that complement the work we do. We offer grants up to the value of £1000 that meet the following themes:
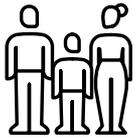
Community projects
Events and projects set up and support for existing groups

Youth projects
Projects and activities designed and delivered by young people

Inclusion projects
Addressing issues around digital, social and financial inclusion

Environmental projects
Improvements to the area around your home and neighbourhood

Health & Wellbeing
Projects that tackle health and wellbeing issues

As with all grant applications, terms and conditions do apply and you will receive a copy of these if your grant is successful. Applications are welcome in accordance with the application cycle, however you can only receive a maximum of £1,000 once every financial year, which runs from 1 April – 31 March.

Who can apply?

Community Grants are available to community and voluntary groups, local charities, social enterprises, community interest companies and residents' associations operating within the City of Sunderland, but especially within Gentoo neighbourhoods; to enable local people to improve their community. The grant must benefit Gentoo customers. To apply, please complete an application form.

Gentoo is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe communities are stronger when they are inclusive. We therefore have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying or harassment in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and all other protected characteristics.

Some of the groups and organisations Community Grants have funded include:

- Art, music and drama clubs
- Children and young people's clubs
- Older people's clubs
- Parent toddler, play groups
- Resident and Community associations

We are unable to make grants to:

- Profit making organisations
- Individuals
- Projects which promote political or religious advancement
- Projects or activities which are the responsibility of a statutory organisation
- Pay for travel & accommodation
- Pay for sponsorship or fundraising activities
- Building maintenance
- Wages and salaries of staff employed by your group / organisation

What we need from you:

- We need you to complete all of the sections and questions outlined in the application form explaining what you intend to do, why it is needed and what difference it will make to your area or the beneficiaries of your project.

- Grants must start within two months of a project being awarded.

- You will need Public Liability Insurance (PLI) and Employers' Liability Insurance in place as well as a Safeguarding Policy, if applicable.

- We need you to tell us how many of the beneficiaries are Gentoo customers.

- We need you to fully understand and agree that any grant awarded is only spent on what you have outlined in your application form and failure to do this could result in the funding being paid back to Gentoo.

- We need you to agree to the terms and conditions of the Community Grant.

- We need you to acknowledge the support of Gentoo Group Limited in any promotional activities or publicity material relating to the project or activity supported by the Community Grant.

- You will also need to provide details of any previous applications as well as provide all receipts and complete an evaluation.

What happens after your application is submitted?

- The completed application form will be checked to ensure eligibility and all of the questions have been completed.

- Your application will be discussed by a Customer Panel.

- You may be contacted if we need to check any details in the application or if we require more information to make a decision.

- You will be contacted in writing following the decision of the Customer Panel.

How long does the process take?

We've refreshed the way we award our community grants to make the process clearer, fairer and easier for local groups to plan around.

Starting February 2026, each grant round will follow a simple two month cycle:

Month 1 Applications Open

Example: February

Applications **open on the 1st**

↓

Groups have the **full month to submit their grant application**

↓

The **deadline** will always be the **last day of the month** at 11:59pm

↓

You can **apply at any time** during the month

Month 2 Review & Funding Decisions

Example: March

Our customer panel reviews all applications submitted in the previous month

↓

We **may contact you** during this time if we need more information

↓

All groups will receive an **outcome by the end of the month**

↓

Successful applicants will then **receive their award and next steps**

Application Month	Decision Month
February 2026	March 2026
April 2026	May 2026
June 2026	July 2026
August 2026	September 2026
October 2026	November 2026
December 2026	January 2027
February 2027	March 2027

How are grant payments made?

A designated person for your organisation/group must sign the Community Grant Terms and Conditions to signify agreement and return them to Gentoo.

Grant award payments will be issued via BACS and made payable to the organisations bank account. We will not make payments to an individual.

How will grants be monitored?

All grants will be monitored to ensure the funding has been used for the purpose set out in the application form. This will be carried out by Gentoo and may include a visit to your group/organisation by a colleague and representative of the Customer Panel.

Once the grant has been used you must supply receipts to the value of the grant awarded. Failure to verify expenditure may result in action being taken to reclaim the grant amount and your group/organisation being excluded from applying for further grants.

As part of accepting a Community Grant, you'll be asked to share information, photographs and publicity about the activity, event or resources funded by the grant. This helps us demonstrate the difference the grants make and acknowledge Gentoo's support. We expect grant recipients to actively promote their project and clearly credit Gentoo in any publicity.

To support you, we've provided practical guidance, graphics and social media templates. Please refer to the guidance document for details on how to share your award and promote your project.

You will be required to complete an evaluation form six months after the grant is awarded. If this is not complete, future applications may be declined.

Case studies

Marta Card Craft were awarded a

£350 Aspire grant for arts and craft materials.

Patrica Ross, Gentoo customer and volunteer at Marta Card Craft, said: "We were so pleased we were able to stock up on card and craft materials that we use to create handmade greeting cards. We get together every week and love crafting the cards."

Pins and Needles Knitting Group were awarded

£500 towards knitting materials.

Freda Grey, a volunteer at Pins and Needles Knitting Group said: "We have used the money to stock up on wool and materials that will keep the group going for the rest of the year!"

Rickleton Community Garden Club were awarded a

£300 Aspire grant to buy gardening equipment.

Anita Bargewell, a volunteer at Rickleton Community Gardening Club said: "We are very grateful to Gentoo for the grant funding. The children were so excited to use the new equipment"

Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre were awarded a grant to buy a new piano

Gary Brooks, Chief Executive of Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre said: "The funding from Gentoo saved our singing group from cancellation as we were able to replace a borrowed piano and buy our own."

Making an application

To apply, please complete an application form. You can download the application form on our website, or apply online.

If you need help, a member of staff will be happy to assist.

You can apply online at www.gentoogroup.com/communitygrant

Please send your completed application form to the office below or email it to customerinvolvement@gentoogroup.com
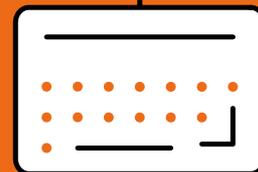
Customer Voice Team

Emperor House

2 Emperor Way

Doxford International Business Park

Sunderland

SR3 3XR

0191 525 5000

Community Grant FAQ's

Can we apply if our group has received a grant before?

Yes. You can apply again as long as you have completed the required evaluation form and provided receipts for any previous grant funding.

Do we need to be based in an area where Gentoo owns homes?

Yes. Projects must take place in areas where Gentoo owns homes and should benefit people living in our communities and our customers.

If your group is based nearby but your project takes place outside these areas, you'll need to show how people from Gentoo communities will still be able to take part.

When should our project start?

It can take up to eight weeks for a decision to be made, so your project should start at least eight weeks after you apply.

For example, if you apply on 1 May, your project should start on or after 26 June.

Do we need to send documents with our application?

No. You don't need to submit any documents at the application stage. If your application is successful, we'll ask for the relevant documents then.

Will we hear back after we apply?

Yes. You'll receive an acknowledgement within five working days, either by email or letter. If you don't hear from us within this time, please contact the Customer Voice Team.

What happens if our application is successful?

You'll need to send us the documents we request (such as Public Liability Insurance and safeguarding policies) within 10 working days.

If you're unable to provide these within the timeframe, please let us know as soon as possible and we may be able to allow extra time. If we don't receive the required documents, your grant may be cancelled.

What can we apply for?

Please read the guidance carefully before applying, as this sets out what the grant can and cannot be used for.

Can we change what we use the grant for?

No. The grant must be spent on the items or activities agreed by the grant panel.

What if we don't spend all of the grant money?

You may need to return any unspent funds. Please contact the Customer Voice Team to discuss this.

What do we need to provide at the end of the project?

You'll need to provide:

- receipts showing how the grant was spent, and

- a completed evaluation form.

What type of receipts do we need to provide?

Receipts or invoices must clearly show what was purchased or what service was provided.