What is the Community Chest?

Launched in March 2007, the Aylesbury Vale Community Chest is a partnership fund accountable to both Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and Vale of Aylesbury Housing (the Trust). This partnership fund was set up during the transfer of housing from AVDC to the Trust.

The budget set aside is up to £500,000 per year for ten years, ending in March 2017, so 2016-17 is the final year of grant awards. Each partner contributes equally to the fund, from refunded VAT. January 2016 takes us to more than £4 million awarded through nearly 700 grants.

The Community Chest is open to applications from all sectors of the community and aims to improve the quality of life for all our residents. As there are some areas of the district which do not enjoy the same high quality of life as others, we welcome applications from projects aimed at addressing those issues.

For applications to succeed, organisations must demonstrate how they contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Aylesbury Vale – the Grants Criteria at the end of this document are taken from the Strategy. Eligible applications supported by evidence of local need will always be considered.

Funding is open to voluntary and community organisations. As the fund continues to be over-subscribed with applications from the voluntary and community sector, collaborative projects involving statutory partners are not currently eligible to apply.

In setting up this fund consideration has been given to the principles of the ComPAct (Communities, Partnerships, Action). The Community Chest aims to work to the guidelines set out in the Buckinghamshire Compact. We want to learn from our recipients in order to be an effective funder, and your feedback on the funding priorities and application process will be collected and considered.

Funding streams from the Community Chest:

- **Micro grants** up to £1,000 – easily accessible grants for small organisations, for a variety of purposes such as buying new equipment, running costs, rent, etc. Applications can be submitted at any time. Closing dates for applications: 15th of each month up to 15th December 2016.

- **Project grants** – one-off grants for revenue or capital costs, up to £25,000 – for new or ongoing projects that can demonstrate they are successful in meeting local needs. This can include funding for social enterprises. Applications will be reviewed three times a year. Minimum total project cost £10,000. Final year closing dates: 11th March, 8th July and 2nd December 2016.

- **3YR** - Three Year Revenue funding. Twelve organisations have been awarded funding for 2014-17, averaging £13,000. This stream is fully allocated and no further applications will be considered.

- Organisations who have already received three or more grants (since 2007) from a particular funding stream will not be eligible to reapply to that funding stream.

Application forms are not available on the website, but can be emailed to you by the Grants Officer. Microgrant forms may be completed on a computer, typed or clearly handwritten in black ink. Project applications **must** be completed using a computer.

If you would like an application form, please contact the Grants Officer, with your email address, organisation name, a brief summary of your project and the amount of funding needed. Application packs are sent out by email.

Please read the notes on the following pages, to help us make the application process run as smoothly as possible.
1. Who Can Apply?

Any voluntary or community organisation may apply provided that it:

- Provides local community activities or services within Aylesbury Vale, which are of benefit to residents of Aylesbury Vale - visitors to Aylesbury Vale may also benefit from the services/facilities, but not to the exclusion of local residents
- Contributes to at least one area of the Community Chest Grants Criteria
- Has a formal constitution or set of rules
- Has a bank account requiring at least 2 unrelated signatories for each payment, minimum 3 signatories total
- Operates with no undue restrictions on membership
- Has an exit strategy or demonstrates clearly what will occur at the end of the project
- Is a not-for-profit group (including social enterprises) or a parish or town council

And either

- Has a volunteer management committee with a minimum of three unrelated members that meets on a regular basis (at least 3-4 times per year)

Or

- Is a registered Community Interest Company, with a minimum of three directors and provides copies of their Community Interest Statement, details of the Asset Lock included in their Memorandum and Articles of Association, and a copy of their latest annual community interest report.

2. What Will We Fund?

Applicants should be able to explain the difference that will be made by their project, and which local priorities are met – these are described on pages 5-6 titled ‘Community Chest Grants Criteria’.

NB: While the application form for microgrants does not specifically ask the applicant to demonstrate how the project meets the grants criteria, this is assessed by the Grants Officer as part of the process to determine whether a grant will be awarded.

To be successful, you must be able to show the need for the project in the local community (identified through consultation with service users, community appraisals/needs assessments, parish plan, survey etc) and local involvement in planning and delivery.

3. We Will Not Fund:

- Activities promoting a particular religious or political belief
- Capital improvements to places of worship or buildings owned by religious bodies
- Capital projects within schools or hospitals
- Projects involving improvements to roads, highways or associated items
- Bus Shelters, War Memorials, Defibrillators
- Any project which is the statutory responsibility of or is led by a statutory body
- Projects outside the boundaries of Aylesbury Vale
- Individuals
- Organisations which aim to distribute a profit
- Organisations with no established management committee/board of trustees (unless a CIC)
- Fundraising events and activities – funding cannot be awarded for onward distribution
- Applications where the same purpose has already been funded twice by the Community Chest
- Organisations which have previously received three or more grants from the Community Chest
- Projects which are already completed - funding cannot be granted retrospectively
- Incomplete applications

This list is not exhaustive, and applications may be considered ineligible or declined for other reasons.
4.1 How to Apply:

Request an application form from the Grants Officer. You can then make an application by emailing a signed copy of the completed form and supporting documents to srothwell@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk or by posting your application to Aylesbury Vale Community Chest, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF

If you submit your application by email and have not been able to add a signature, please print and send a signed hard copy to the above address together with any supporting paperwork.

Before you submit your application please ensure that the planned dates for the project allow enough time for the application to be processed before you start. Contact the Grants Officer if you are unsure.

Please contact the Grants Officer if you need help to complete the form

4.2 When applying, please:

- Don’t bind your application in a folder, ring or spiral binding or send additional documents which are not required – the application may need to be photocopied, and storage space is limited – a staple or paperclip is ok.
- Don’t spend the money before funding is agreed
- Don’t leave it to late – apply in plenty of time, especially for event funding

5. How will the application be assessed?

5.1 Microgrants

Applications for microgrants are not considered by the Grants Panel. Instead, these are assessed by the Grants Officer, using a scoring system, making funding recommendations on a monthly basis, which are then sent for ratification by the Chief Executives of both the District Council and the Trust. From 2007 to December 2015, 95% of microgrant applications received were successful, 470 out of 493.

Limitations: only one microgrant application per organisation per financial year, no more than two for the same purpose/event. Organisations with annual income or expenditure in excess of £100,000 are unlikely to be awarded a microgrant. Organisations who have already received three or more microgrants since 2007 are not eligible to apply for another. These restrictions are to keep the fund remains accessible for new applicants.

Microgrants up to £1,000 are suitable for projects with a total cost from a minimum of £500 to around £20,000.

Sustainability: If you are applying for event funding, even if you don’t charge for entry, do invite donations and/or collect income from activities such as a tuck shop, plant stall, business sponsorship or pitch fees to enable you to set aside funding for future events. See item 3 above.

Community Involvement: Please include the number of volunteers in question 22 and give details, eg number of hours per week and any other community participation in question 28 if not already covered elsewhere in your application.

Closing date: 15th of each month until December 2016, outcome notified within four weeks of the closing date.

5.2 Project Grants

Your application will be considered by a Panel consisting of three elected councillors from AVDC and three representatives from the Trust.

In this competitive application process, the Panel will make the decision about whether or not to fund your project. Decisions will be based on a range of criteria which include:

- The need for the project in the local community: Demonstrate the extent to which you have consulted with your local community, have their support for the project, and that a need exists for it. Include the number of people who will directly benefit from the project.
- The need for financial support from the Community Chest: How vital is Community Chest funding to the success of the project? Will the project proceed without our involvement? If there appear to be other, more suitable ways in which the money can be raised, we are unlikely to award a grant. However, match funding from other sources including other grants, local fundraising or income generation activities will help to support your application. Include details of other applications made, even if these were unsuccessful.
- Contributing to the Grants Criteria: This is a key part of the decision making process - it is important to demonstrate clearly how your project outcomes will assist in the delivery of these aims (see p 5-6).
• **Evidence of self-help**
  The Panel will look more favourably on organisations that can display evidence of other fundraising activity and volunteer involvement. This can include the provision of labour, skills, time, equipment and other in-kind support. Applications will be considered up to a maximum of 50% of the financial cost of a project.

• **Project viability:** Your application will be unsuccessful if you cannot show that it is well planned and that your group is capable of managing it successfully on an on-going basis (i.e. future maintenance of a capital item).

**Expectations:** The Panel meet three times a year to assess project grant applications. Each grant panel has been heavily over-subscribed. In 2014-15, 81% of project applications were successful, receiving on average 73% of the amount they applied for - the average grant was £12,719. There is no guarantee that you will receive the full amount applied for - you may be offered partial funding, or your application may be declined or deferred to a later panel, so please ensure your project timetable is included.

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### ‘Working Together’ – Aylesbury Vale Community Chest

An annual networking and capacity-building event, to celebrate and share what has been achieved by local groups with the help of their Community Chest funding. All grant recipients are invited to send a representative.

- For 2015-16 grants, the event will be held on 8th June 2016 at Westbury Village Hall.
- For 2016-17 grants, this event will take place at the Gateway in Aylesbury, 17th March 2017

6. **What happens next?**

**Once a grant decision is taken, there are some important points to note:**

• **Award** - we will write to let you know whether or not funding has been agreed for your project.

• **Agreement** - if your application is successful, we will send you a funding agreement stating the conditions on which the grant is offered. Please read this carefully. Claim your grant by returning a signed copy of the agreement.

• **Payment** - Your grant needs to be claimed within three months of award and before the end of February 2017. Grants paid by bank transfer within two weeks of receipt of the signed agreement. If your project is delayed, please contact us to agree the best way to proceed.

• **Monitoring** - the Community Chest Grants Officer should be regularly informed of the progress of your project. A monitoring form will be sent to you with your funding agreement for microgrants, or six months after the grant is awarded for project grants. Documents supporting grant expenditure (such as copy invoices and photographs) and a copy of a newsletter or minutes which acknowledge the grant should be returned with the completed monitoring form.

• **Photographs** - even for equipment purchases and capital projects, please supply photos **including people**, as these help demonstrate the benefit to local people provided by your project, and may feature in our annual report.

  Triathlon training equipment (above)  
  Portable floodlights (below)

• **Promotion** - your organisation should acknowledge that the project is funded by the **Aylesbury Vale Community Chest** in any relevant literature or publicity (eg press releases, your newsletter or annual report) and where appropriate, display a plaque (A4 size, provided by us).

• **Quality and Equality** - the Community Chest aims to ensure quality of service and equality of access through all activities. Organisations receiving grants are expected to reflect these standards.

• **Purpose** - the purpose for which a grant has been awarded cannot be changed without prior approval from the Community Chest Grants Panel, contact via the Grants Officer.

Mrs Sarah Rothwell, Community Chest Grants Officer  
The Gateway Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF  
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srothwell@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk  
www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/communitychest  
www.vaht.co.uk
The Community Chest, a partnership fund between Aylesbury Vale District Council and the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, is open to applications from all areas of the voluntary and community sector, delivering projects and services in Aylesbury Vale which aim to improve the quality of life for all our residents. Applications supported by evidence of local need will always be considered.

The Community Chest criteria are based upon the Sustainable Community Strategy for Aylesbury Vale, published in October 2009. The strategy was developed by Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership, outlining an ambitious vision for the Vale in 2026, with key priorities to be addressed in order to achieve that vision. If you wish to read the Strategy in greater detail, you can download the document from the AVDC website, or ask the Grants Officer to email a copy to you.

The five themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy have been adopted by the Community Chest because the vision for the Vale can only be effectively delivered with the support and active involvement of local residents.

1. **Cohesive and Strong Communities**

We have a strong voluntary and community sector which provides a range of leisure and support services. There are many ways for residents to get involved in their local community, as part of a club, community group, neighbourhood action group, parish or town council.

Projects that contribute to these aims will be supported:

- **A** Encourage local community participation and volunteering
- **B** Increase the confidence of local communities, supporting them to identify local solutions to local problems
- **C** Help all communities get on well together
  - Improve community cohesion, particularly between new and existing communities
  - Provide support for community participation and engagement
  - Provide facilities in new and existing communities, especially for young people
- **D** Reduce levels of disadvantage, including social and geographical isolation

2. **Safer Communities**

Our district is generally a low crime area. However, the fear of crime is a consistent concern for residents and we aim to improve security and safety, and reduce the fear of crime. We will consider funding projects which improve the safety of local people, particularly where these help to safeguard vulnerable adults and young people, and that:

- **A** help to reduce levels of crime and the fear of crime - community clean-ups, projects that help to improve security and safety in local areas, contribute to a reduction in anti-social behaviour, or provide diversionary activities.
- **B** help reduce the harm caused by alcohol or drug misuse
- **C** raise awareness of road safety or safer driving
- **D** raise awareness of fire safety, particularly in vulnerable households
3. **Thriving Economy**

Our priorities in this area include projects that:

A support families and vulnerable people  
B develop workforce skills and improve employability  
C bring additional funding into Aylesbury Vale from external sources

We particularly welcome applications from projects aimed at those areas of the district that show higher levels of unemployment, or which help to overcome the economic difficulties associated with rural isolation.

4. **Sustainable Environment**

We will support projects which:

A enhance and protect the local environment, improve green spaces in towns and villages, enhance biodiversity or reduce littering.  
B tackle climate change through reducing carbon emissions and implementing sustainable energy solutions.  
C reduce waste, reuse resources, increase recycling or recover energy

5. **Health and Wellbeing**

There are inequalities in health, particularly affecting vulnerable groups and low income households. Projects which promote health and help to reduce these inequalities will be considered under the following headings:

A Help residents live healthier, longer and happier lives  
   encourage participation in cultural and sporting activities  
   reduce smoking and obesity, encourage healthy eating  
   help people to reduce or manage stress and promote mental health  
B Reduce health inequalities through  
   supporting families with budgeting advice  
   targeting particular groups at risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes  
   reducing homelessness  
C Improve the quality of life for  
   our ageing population – provide activities, support and reduce isolation  
   children and young people - provide positive activities, encourage achievement  
D Connected Communities – improve access to services and rural transport

Sarah Rothwell, ☎ 01296 585634 (Mon/Weds/Fri)  
email srothwell@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

Aylesbury Vale Community Chest  
Communities Team  
The Gateway  
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www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk  
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