

Impact of Exeter Community Grants 2019-21

Introduction

The Exeter Grants Programme was launched in autumn 2019 following an extensive listening and consultation exercise which helped us to gain consensus on a common set of priorities and principles. These set out shared aspirations to support Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches which build on the assets in the community and mobilises individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to realise and develop their strengths.

The Exeter Grants Programme aims to support community groups and organisations to use their passion, skills, experience and knowledge to focus efforts on working sustainably to make a difference and create change by focusing on:

- Helping people to help themselves and each other
- Building on the strengths of people and communities
- Connecting people and organisations within and across communities

Intended long term impacts:

- Reducing disadvantage and inequality
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Increasing individual and community resilience (the ability to manage)

Key priorities are to:

1. Address inequalities
2. Improve health and wellbeing
3. Get people active
4. Support communities working together to address local needs
5. Encourage volunteering
6. Improve where we live

The Exeter Grant programme is broken down into 4 awards:

- Exeter Ward Grants: maximum grant of £500 for one-off local projects that are community led.
- Exeter Small Grants Fund: maximum grant of £3,000 for running a city-wide project, event, festival or celebration.
- Exeter Large Grants Fund: maximum grant of £30,000 towards building or refurbishment costs or the purchase of equipment. (This has been brought down to a maximum grant of £10,000 in 2021/22 due to financial pressures on the grants fund).
- Community Buildings Fund: up to £5,000 pa; this fund is for running costs of community centres.

Since the launch of the programme in autumn 2019 up until end of March 2021, 203 projects across all areas of Exeter have been supported by the funds. This period has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, where the grants programme was suspended between March 2020 and July 2021. During this time the City Council, with much appreciated support from the Exeter Chiefs, introduced a Community Action Fund (CAF) to support our voluntary sector and community groups, helping them to stay afloat during the pandemic, and offer support where it was most needed.

£126,000 was awarded to 100 community organisations. This funding supported the community response, helping to ensure vulnerable residents and families were able to stay better connected, have the basic essentials, and remain

supported through the restrictions of the pandemic. There is a separate outcome report for this period can be found [here](#).

Exeter Ward Grants

The Exeter Ward Grant allows community groups to apply for a maximum grant of £500, to support a community project, a local community festival, a local theatre production or a craft group. Examples of costs that could be supported include equipment or resources, publicity, materials, and refreshments. The Ward grants helped Exeter City Council meet all six of its priorities:

Priority	Examples
Address inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 projects were supported to help address inequalities. • St Petrocks is one of the projects supported; a community garden project with vulnerable rough sleepers where they had the chance to grow their own vegetables and flowers, and socialise with others.
Improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 projects were supported to help improve health and wellbeing. • Wood for Good is one of the projects supported; a project providing opportunities for adults to learn DIY and similar skills, and make new friends in the process.
Get people active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 projects were supported to help get people active. • Wonford Park Yoga is one of the projects supported; a partnership between Active Devon and Wonford Community Centre which provided opportunities for outdoor physical activities for community.
Support communities working together to address local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 projects were supported to help support communities working together to address local needs. • Ringswell Residents Association is one of the project supported; they installed a defibrillator for use in the community to help ensure anyone experiencing a heart attack or cardiac arrest can be supported.
Encourage volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 projects were supported to encourage volunteering. • Sylvania Community Store sand Cafe is one of the project supported; volunteers are ready to welcome visitors, serve, unload goods, stock shelves, clean and more.
Improve where we live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 projects were supported to improve where we live.

Priority	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St James Vegetable Gardens is one of the projects supported; they run a project pruning and shaping their ash trees to limit Ash Die back problems for plots of garden space held by St James residents.

Community Buildings Fund

The Community Buildings Fund allows Community Centres to apply for a maximum grant up to £5,000 per year. It is designed to support Community Centres with running costs of their buildings and can be used for rent, utilities, maintenance costs etc. Applicants usually specify what they will use funds for in their application. This grant helped meet Exeter City Council's priorities and two examples are given below:

Addressing Inequalities	Improve health and wellbeing
St Sidwell's Community Centre received a £5,000 per year grant to support their volunteering and work experience programme.	The Club received a £5,000 per year grant to run their centre, where they provide a number of services and activities for people affected by mental health.

Small Grants Fund

The Small Grants Fund allows community groups to apply for up to £3,000 for projects. This grant can support projects and activities taking place across multiple Wards or across the City. The Small Grants Fund is typically for events and festivals; example of costs that could be supported include equipment or resources, publicity, materials, and refreshments. Applicants for a Small Grants Fund need to demonstrate that there is community support for their project.

From June 2019 to July 2021, only one round of applications (totalling 10 supported projects) was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the grants programme being suspended in March 2020. The Small Grants Fund was reopened in August 2021, information for this round will feature in the 2021/22 report.

Priority	Examples
Addressing Inequalities	CEDA, Exeter Respect, Dreadnought Southwest and Magic Carpet were supported for their work with marginalised community groups including Black and Minority Ethnic communities, LGBTQ+ communities people experiencing mental health challenges and learning disabilities.
Improve health and wellbeing	Wren Music, PaddleBoat Theatre and Better Health Exeter were supported in running events and workshops for the community. Hospital Radio Exeter were also supported in keeping a radio station running for the benefit of hospital patients and their wellbeing.
Get people active	Freemoovement were supported in their work running physical activities across the city including exercise in the park. Park Life Heavitree was also supported in running Park Life events.

Strategic Fund

The Strategic Fund allows Community Centres and other similar groups the opportunity to apply for funding, up to £80,000 (in 2019) or £75,000 (in 2021), to carry out refurbishment work or towards new community facilities. The fund is designed for one-off capital costs such as major refurbishment. The Strategic Fund was open for applications during a short period in Autumn/Winter 2019 and again in Spring/Summer 2021. From both of these application windows, a combined total of £411,414 was committed for eight projects.

Addressing Inequalities	Improve health and wellbeing
<p>Both Exwick Community Centre and Sidwell Street Bakehouse/Cookery School are working in some of the most deprived areas in the city. The grants they have received will help with refurbishment work to provide group opportunities to run activities and offer volunteering, work-experience and training, as well as locally made produce for sale.</p>	<p>Positive Light Projects are using their grant to make their Creative Hub safe and accessible. This will provide space, creative experiences and opportunities for the community. Funding will go towards essential electrical and plumbing works, ensuring wheelchair access and the installation of a disabled access toilet, renovation of communal workspaces and artist studios, cleaning, painting and decorating, fire safety precautions and a heating system; all to make the building secure, warm and accessible for all at which point they will be able to deliver an exciting range of activities, events and workshops.</p>

A full list of projects we supported, broken down by grant type, can be found in Appendix 1. Additionally, Appendix 2 shows how many projects were supported in each Ward, again broken down by grant type.