



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

**Ards and North Down
'in Bloom'
Funding Policy**

Ards and North Down Borough Council

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| Policy Title | Ards and North Down “In Bloom” Funding Policy |
| Version | V2 |
| Summary | The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines and criteria for In Bloom funding applications and how the funding should be utilised. |
| Source / Author | Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager |
| Date of Council Approval | January 2025 |
| Implementation Date | February 2025 |
| Next Review Date | Every 3 years |
| Officer Responsible for Review | Head of Parks and Cemeteries |

Revision History

| Date | Changes Made | Version |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| April 2019 | New Policy Created | V1 |
| January 2025 | Agreed at Community & Wellbeing (15/01/2025) | V2 |

1. Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council currently makes budget provision for the allocation of 'one off' in year funding to community groups in order to assist with floral displays in the towns, villages and city throughout the borough, to assist with the council's commitment to the Ulster In Bloom competition.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines and criteria for In Bloom funding applications and how the funding should be utilised.

An advert requesting applications will be published in the local press in the January of each year.

Funding availability will be subject to budget approval on an annual basis.

The policy is applied in line with Ards and North Down Borough Council's Grants Policy.

Grant Timescales

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Scheme Open / Advertisement | January |
| Closing date for submissions | February |
| Date of Assessment | March |
| Award and regret letters issued | April |
| Letter of acceptance received | April |
| Completion of grant period | September |
| Claim to be submitted | By end of September |
| Monitoring Form to be Submitted | November |
| Close of Scheme | November |

2. Guidelines

The allocation for funding is intended to compliment the horticultural displays carried out by the councils Parks and Cemeteries Service. This may be in the form of environmental improvements including, planters, flower displays etc. on council or other statutory properties, or privately owned non-domestic areas in public view.

Once submitted, applications will be assessed using set criteria and be subject to council approval.

The maximum limit for floral funding is £1,250 per annum per group. A further grant may be provided for funding, in whole or in part, appropriate liability insurance covering the floral display work over and above the group's normal insured activities. Funding will be allocated with 80% advance payment, with the further 20% paid upon the receipt of invoices.

Council wishes to encourage a collaborative approach by groups, where there are more than one group applying in a town, village or city,

consideration may only be given to one project. For appeals process, please refer to the Council Grants Policy.

3. Insurance

Organisations must demonstrate that appropriate liability insurance is in place to cover the remit of the funded scheme. Depending upon the required cover, an insurance grant may be available. This should be requested on the application form. Insurance cover allocated shall not be more than 40% of the total grant requested.

In order to facilitate the payment of insurance grant, applicants will be required to demonstrate:

- The need for insurance cover
- The extent of insurance cover
- A valid invoice, or
- A paid invoice.

On receipt of the above, the council will consider the extent of grant which can be paid. All such grants will be subject to the availability of appropriate budgets.

4. Criteria for Funding

Applications will be required to demonstrate how they meet the following criteria:

- Provide a vision as to how the funding will enhance the particular area and how this will be sustained in subsequent years.
- Evidence of approval from relevant landowner where works are to be carried out.
- When appropriate insurance liability cover is in place, copy of certificate and schedule to be submitted.
- How the works are to be carried out, and by whom.
- Detailed breakdown of how funding will be utilised, and receipts submitted accordingly.

In addition, that the application adheres to the Ards and North Down in Bloom four core objectives i.e.

- to increase environmental responsibility
- to strive for horticultural excellence in public, business and residential areas
- to encourage community participation
- to support endeavours to achieve regional and national awards such as Ulster in Bloom

If the grants are oversubscribed, a percentage reduction to all successful applicants may be applied, or allocation of funds to successful applicants until the maximum available funding is reached, i.e. based on ranked scores.

5. What the Council will not fund

- Projects, events, activities undertaken, or equipment purchased outside the specified award period
- Projects, events, and activities where the primary benefit is outside the Borough
- Events, projects or activities which conflict with any Council run project, event or activity
- Organisations not legally established in the UK
- Projects, events, activities not compliant with the Council's aims and objectives

6. Evaluation of Application

Application assessment process

- Received applications will be acknowledged in writing (which includes email);
- Fully completed and signed applications received by the closing date and time will be assessed against the criteria detailed in the application pack by an assessment panel;
- Assessment panels will apply a minimum pass mark of 50%; marking criteria will be detailed in the grant criteria and supporting guidance notes; details of a situation where the amount of grant funding exceeds the available grant budget will be outlined in the grant criteria and supporting guidance notes; and
- All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.

Grant retention: 10% of the award may be withheld until the applicant has submitted all financial claims and monitoring information.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Council is required to monitor the progress of all projects, events and activities supported through grant aid. To support this, this grant scheme requests two photographs in addition to receipts during claims process.

Marketing: Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge the contribution made by the Council, in proportion to the level of funding awarded. Therefore, Council's branding and messaging must be included in all relevant marketing materials including flyers, programmes, posters, banners, advertisements, press releases and social media posts, with final agreement from the Council's Communications Team. In addition, successful applicants will be required to work with Council in promoting 'Ards & North Down in Bloom' and organising a press photo opportunity to promote the funding contribution made by the Council. Where grant recipients do not comply with the Council's publicity requirements, 10% of the total grant awarded may be withheld.

7. Issuing of Grant Advances

Depending on the amount of grant awarded advance payments can be issued by the Council where a specific written request is submitted demonstrating the need for the payment. The need for an advance payment may require a projected cash flow for the life of the project, along with an up-to-date bank statement.

For awards:

- up to £500 the full amount can be paid in advance;
- up to £1250, up to 50% can be paid in advance.

8. Additional Support for Applicants

Council officers will provide support for applicants via online workshops produced to advise potential applicants on the purpose of the grant and the application process.

The policy has been screened by the Council's Equality Working Group. No negative impacts were identified, and the policy was screened out for EQIA.

DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT

Ards and North Down Borough Council values your right to personal privacy. Personal information provided to the Council is processed in order to fulfill its obligations under the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. We collect this information solely for the purposes of this application and do not share it with anyone unless there is a legal requirement to do so. We comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held longer than necessary. For further information our Privacy Statement can be viewed at <https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies> or contact the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk