

Caithness & North Sutherland Fund

Guide for Applicants

Caithness & North Sutherland Fund aims to help people of Caithness & North Sutherland by giving money to increase the attractiveness of Caithness & North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvements.



Up to £4M has been provided by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, £1M at start of construction in 2011 and £300,000 in 2014 and each year until 2023.

The fund aims to assist people living in the Dounreay Travel to Work Area, see map below.



You can apply for between £1,000 to £30,000 (requests for higher amounts may be considered in exceptional circumstances).

This guide tells you:

- Who can apply
- What we will and won't fund
- How to apply

If you have any questions or communication needs (such as Braille or large print, screen reader, audio tape, sign language or a community language) please:

- visit our website: www.cnsf.org.uk
- send us an email: enquiries@cnsf.org.uk

This guide will be reviewed periodically, so if you have had this guide for more than six months, please visit our website to check that you have the most recent version.

Is Caithness & North Sutherland Fund right for you?

1. Do you need assistance of between £1,000 and £30,000 towards your project to help people become actively involved to increase the attractiveness of Caithness & North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvements?
2. Are you a voluntary or community organisation, school parent council or community council?
3. Do you have a UK based bank or building society account in the name of your organisation that requires at least two people to sign cheques and make withdrawals?
4. Can you send us an application at least four months before your project starts?
5. Can you explain the requirement for your project and how it will benefit Caithness & North Sutherland?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then Caithness & North Sutherland Fund may be able to assist you.

What will Caithness & North Sutherland Support?

Caithness & North Sutherland Fund aims to help people of Caithness & North Sutherland by giving money to increase the attractiveness of Caithness & North Sutherland as a place to live, work and invest with particular emphasis on achieving environment, social, culture and infrastructure improvement.

To achieve our aim, we want to fund projects that will improve Caithness and North Sutherland, making it more attractive to live, work and invest. Our aim is to focus on environment, social, culture and infrastructure projects.

We will consider how well your project meets our aims during our assessment. You must show how your project meets at least one of them to be considered for a grant.

Who can apply?

You can apply to Caithness & North Sutherland Fund if you are a:

- Voluntary or community organisation
- School Parent Council (not for statutory function)
- Community council
- Community groups
- Community development groups

We will not fund:

- Individuals and sole traders
- Operations for personal benefit
- Non-departmental public bodies
- Government departments
- Statutory bodies (for example, a local authority or health board)
- Funding consultant fees

We are unlikely to fund organisations that are in poor financial health or those that have had a previous grant from us which has not been managed satisfactorily.

The organisation filling in the form must be the same organisation that will receive the grant and manage the project. We will not consider an application made by one organisation on behalf of another or fund consultant fees.

Voluntary and community organisations

Voluntary and community organisations are also known as 'third sector' organisations, as they are separate from the public and private sectors. They are value-led organisations established for social purposes rather than the pursuit of profit and they reinvest surpluses to help tackle issues facing people and the planet.

They include:

- Registered and unregistered charities
- Co-operatives
- Friendly societies
- Industrial and provident societies
- Companies that are not-for-profit businesses
- Unincorporated associations

Voluntary and community organisations must have a written governing document (ie a constitution, set of rules or trust deed) and at least three unrelated people on their governing body/management committee.

Independent branches of larger organisations

Independent branches of larger organisations can apply direct to us. They must have their own governing document and be allowed to manage funds and staff without referring to another body. Dependent branches can also apply directly to us if they have their own governing document (or adopted the parent organisation's governing document), produce their own annual accounts and have a bank or building society account and are responsible for how the funds in it are spent. If we offer a dependent branch a grant, we will ask the parent organisation to accept overall responsibility for it.

School Parent Councils

We welcome applications from school parent councils, but we will not pay for activities or services that schools have a statutory responsibility to provide. This means we will not pay for activities that are in the school curriculum or directly related. We expect projects to take place before or after school, during lunch or in the holidays unless you can explain in your application why this is not possible. We will accept applications for projects working solely with children with special needs although you still need to provide evidence that your project is extra-curricular. The parent council chairperson must submit the application with an accompanying letter from the head teacher.

What will we fund?

In your application you will need to tell us what the grant would be spent on and how this will achieve one of our aims. You can apply for between £1,000 and £30,000 to fund part of your project. It should be noted a higher percentage of match funding will be looked upon more favourably and evidence will be required of that match funding.

Some examples of what we will fund:

- Equipment hire or purchase
- Annual events we have not previously funded
- Feasibility studies for community projects
- Improvements or additions to playing or arts facilities
- Information technology equipment
- Building, refurbishment, landscaping or property projects (including playpark associations and temporary buildings)
- Materials or equipment for use in your project
- Some publicity materials for use in your project
- Sessional workers
- Start up costs
- Team clothing or kit
- Training costs
- Transport costs
- Venue hire
- VAT that you cannot recover

What we won't fund:

- Activities that happen or start before we confirm our grant
- Any costs you incur when putting together your application (i.e. consultant's fees)
- Any expenditure incurred or committed before we confirm our grant
- Contingency costs
- Endowments
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or others
- Items that mainly benefit individuals (eg equipment that is not shared)
- Loans or interest payments
- Political or religious activities
- Projects that you cannot maintain because of high ongoing costs or the need for specialist skills
- Projects or activities that the state has a legal obligation to provide
- Purchase of alcohol
- Registration and affiliation fees for existing clubs
- Repeat or regular events we have funded previously
- Routine repairs and maintenance
- VAT that you can recover
- Projects that do not demonstrate community support

VAT

You may need to pay VAT on purchases you make as part of your project. You must only include VAT in the amount you request from us if you cannot claim it back from HM Revenue and Customs. If you later find that you can recover VAT that we have included in our grant you must repay this amount to us.

Land and Buildings

Projects involving work on land or a building (including refurbishment) can be complicated and take time to complete. So if you need planning permission, you must have it before you apply. You also need to own the freehold of the land or building, or hold a lease that cannot be ended by the landlord for at least five years. Evidence will be required with your application.

Other funding

If you need to raise funds from other sources you must be able to show that this will not delay your project. Evidence of confirmed match funding must be provided. An indication of a timeline for pending match funding applications must be provided and the outcome advised once known.

In general, where an applicant is considered eligible for support from other existing community benefit funding available in their local catchment area, we would normally expect such applications to include an appropriate level of match funding support from those funding sources.

Projects should only be supported by one source of NDA funding i.e. Caithness & North Sutherland Fund, Dounreay Communities Fund, or Dounreay/NDA Socio-Economic Funding.

Application Process

Read this guide to check your organisation can apply, that we can fund your project and it meets our aims.

1. Submit enquiry form and send it to Fund Administrator.

Send this at least four months before your project will start. This will be screened, and an application number will be allocated. Funding Administrator will issue full application form to you.

2. Complete application form and send to us with any requested information.

Send this at least three months before you project will start. Your application will be acknowledged within 7 working days, including an indication of timeline. Your application will be scored. If your application form is not complete, we will return it to you and give you 10 working days to provide the missing information. We might contact you with questions during our assessment, but this is often not necessary.

3. We will notify you of the assessment date.

Following scoring your application form is then submitted to the Caithness & North Sutherland Fund Board for assessment. The board may still require further clarification on some points of your application. This may delay the decision.

4. We advise board's decision.

We will notify you of the board's decision in writing. If we offer you a grant it will be conditional on you signing and returning our offer letter and accepting our terms and conditions of grant. If your application is unsuccessful, we will write to you informing you of our decision.

5. Documents returned to Funding Administrator

You must return everything we ask for within 20 working days of the date of our offer letter. You cannot start your project until we have received, checked, and approved the signed offer letter and any other documents we may have requested. If you do not return everything by our deadline, we will withdraw our conditional grant offer (although we may agree a short extension if you contact us before our deadline and there is a good reason).

6. Payment of grant

If all documents are returned, we will write to you to confirm the grant and advise how payment will be made (we may offer a staged payment, but we will advise you of this in our terms and conditions of grant). If the documents returned are unsatisfactory, we will contact you if we think you may be able to resolve the problem. If there is a major problem or something that cannot be resolved, we will withdraw our conditional grant offer and write to you to advise why. A press release will be submitted to local press for successful applicants.

7. Project Commencing

You can commence your project once you receive our letter confirming the grant. Once you have spent your grant and we have approved your end of grant report you can apply again. We want our funding to help lots of groups, so we will not normally give more than a total of £30,000 (in one or more grants) to an organisation in any 3-year period.

8. Project Completion

We will monitor your project as it progresses and we will ask you to complete an end of grant report, telling us how the grant has been spent and what you achieved with it. We may visit or phone you to check how the grant has been spent and will ask to see original receipts for the money that you spent.

Completing your application form

Filling in your application form can take time, but you may find it easier to work with someone else. We want to make a fair assessment of your application but can only base it on the information provided. We recommend the following approach:

1. Start off by thinking about the need you want to meet and how a grant from us might help you to do this.
2. Read this guide carefully to check that your organisation qualifies, and we can fund your project.
3. Make a list of all the things you think we need to know about your project. Keep this as a checklist to ensure you have included everything in your application.
4. Consult with your management committee or staff to go through the application form and take note of the main points that answer the questions. Use your checklist to ensure you have not missed anything.
5. If you are unsure of a question, then please contact us by email at: enquiries@cnsf.org.uk and we will help you.

Completing the form

It is best for one or two people to have a go at a first draft, issuing to others for comment. There is no need to use jargon, you need to ensure your answers are clear and easy to understand.

Checking your answers

Make sure you explain the need you want and how your project will meet that need. We assess every application against our aims so tell us how your project meets them. Your project budget must be as accurate as possible. This may take time but is a requirement as we are unlikely to offer a grant without it. Back up your answers with evidence. You may not need to send all evidence with the form, but you can tell us about the evidence you have in your answers – we may ask for this evidence if we believe it is required.

Prior to submitting your application

Check that you have answered all the questions. Uncompleted questionnaires will be returned to you which may cause delays that mean we are unable to give our decision in time for your project to proceed.

You must be prepared to comply with our terms and conditions if we offer you a grant.

Remember to keep a copy of your application form in case we contact you with questions.

Other information to consider

Projects working with children, young people or vulnerable adults

If you are applying for a project to work with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable (because of their circumstances or problems) you must have a policy that explains how you will make sure they will be safe. You must be able to demonstrate in your application that your policy will be put into practice. It is your responsibility to have acceptable safeguarding protection policies and procedures for children, young people, and vulnerable adults in place, which we may ask to inspect at any time if we offer you a grant.

Insurance and safety

Depending on the type of project, you may need public liability insurance or qualified leaders. It is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate insurance in place. This should include cover for any assets you buy or events and activities you run using our grant. We may ask to look at these policies at any time. Your organisation must be affiliated to a governing body if your project involves a dangerous sport or activity.

Equal opportunities

We expect projects to be open to all who want to be involved, unless you can give a good reason why this should not be the case. If you plan to restrict who can take part you should explain why in your application, so that we can consider whether this is acceptable. If unsure, guidance can be provided.

Assessing your application

When we receive your completed application form, we will start our assessment. We will only consider one application from your organisation at a time. We will check that your organisation can apply and whether your project meets our aim. We will then consider:

- The need for your project
- Who will benefit
- How you will achieve to meet our aims
- Whether you meet our mission statement
- If we have funded you before
- Your organisation's income
- The total project cost
- The wider community involvement

We would like to support all the applications, however due to limited funding this may not always be possible. When this happens we need to make some difficult decisions.

We have a scoring system that helps us to do this. We give more points to applications that:

- Show strong evidence of need
- Seek to involve as wide a range of people as possible
- Meet our aims more closely
- Meet our mission statement
- Are from organisations that Caithness & North Sutherland Fund has not previously supported
- Are from organisations with a smaller annual income
- Are for smaller projects
- Are for projects that involve the wider community

The score that an application needs for us to fund it will vary depending on the amount and quality of the applications we receive and the amount of money we have available at the time.

Grants will be assessed on a competitive basis, taking into consideration of other available funds.

A subsidy assessment will be carried out, as required by the Subsidy Control Act 2022. You will be advised if the project is subject to subsidy control.

We aim to assess each application equally and fairly. The fund directors approve the final decisions. We will require details of an independent referee who may be contacted to confirm details on your application. Your independent referee must be a professional person or a person of standing in the community.

If we offer you a grant, we need you to confirm what you told us in your application before we will pay the grant to you. This means that our grant offer is conditional on you and a senior contact from your organisation signing and returning our offer letter and accepting our terms and conditions of grant. Both signatories must be over eighteen years old, and the senior contact must be your chair, secretary, treasurer, or chief executive.

As part of our terms and conditions of grant your project will be monitored until completion.

You must return everything that we have asked for within 20 working days from the date of our offer letter, otherwise we will withdraw our conditional grant offer (although we may agree a short extension if you contact us before our deadline and there is a good reason).

You cannot start your project until we have received, checked, and approved the signed offer letter and any other documents we have asked for.

Confirming our grant

If what you send is satisfactory, we will send a letter of commitment of grant, informing you when we will pay the grant (this may be staged payments).

Withdrawing our offer

If what you send is unsatisfactory, we will contact you if we think you may be able to resolve the problem. If there is a major problem or something that cannot be resolved, we will withdraw our conditional grant offer and write to you telling you the reasons why. You can send us a new application but before you do, you must address the reason why we withdrew our grant offer.

Monitoring your grant

If we fund your project, we will need you to complete an end of grant report to confirm how the grant has been spent and what you achieved. We may ask you for original receipts so make sure you keep them. We may also visit you to check how the grant has been spent.

Future Applications

Once you have spent your grant and we have approved your end of grant report you can apply again. In some cases, if you need funding assistance for an additional project that meets our aims, you may be able to apply again before your current project is completed. We want our funding to help lots of groups, so we will not normally give more than a total of £30,000 (in one or more grants) to an organisation in any 3-year period. We work this out using the date we confirmed our grant. This includes dependent branches. Your organisation (parent organisation and dependent branches) will not normally receive more than £30,000 in any 3-year period.

If you have already received funding from the Caithness & North Sutherland Fund and are unsure whether you can apply again or how much you can apply for, please contact us to check before you apply. We consider each application on its own merits, so there is no guarantee that we will make another grant to the same organisation.

We are unlikely to fund the same project twice, so you need to show that you are doing something different, or making an important new development, compared with the previous application.

The Fund reserves the right to assess each application on a case-by-case basis, with the discretion to award outside the guidelines.

Our scoring considers whether we have funded your organisation recently, so your chances of receiving another grant may be lower, unless your application is stronger in other areas.

Unsuccessful Applications

If your application is unsuccessful, we will write to you informing you of our decision. We may not be able to support all the applications we would like to. Unsuccessful applications will not usually be invited to re-apply and we recommend you seek funding from other sources.

What you need to send us

Before you apply make sure you can provide the following information if we make a conditional grant offer. Please do not send it with your application (unless stated on the application form).

We will confirm with you what we need from you in our offer letter. You cannot start your project until we have received, checked and approved everything we ask for.

- We will need a copy of your organisation's latest approved annual accounts, signed, and dated by your chair, secretary or treasurer and by your auditor or independent examiner, where appropriate. If your organisation has been running for less than 15 months, you may not be able to give us this so in these cases we will accept a 12-month financial projection for the year when you will spend the grant.
- We will need the last three month's original bank (or building society) statements. If you use a building society passbook, we will need copies of pages containing the last three months transactions which must be certified by your building society with a stamp and signature as 'true copies of the original'. The pages you send must include your account details.
- Unless you are a community council, registered charity or a company limited by guarantee (or a registered company that is also a company limited by guarantee) we will need a copy of your organisation's governing document, constitution or set of rules.
- If you are a branch of a larger organisation that has management and financial control over your work we will need a letter, signed by a senior officer from the larger organisation, confirming their support for your application and accepting overall responsibility for it.
- We may contact you to ask for details of an independent referee, someone independent of your organisation but who know its work well. If we need an independent referee, we will explain our requirements when we contact you.

Bank or building society account requirements

You must have a UK based bank or building society account in the name of the organisation that submits the application to us and will carry out the project. We will require at least two people to sign each cheque or make a withdrawal. If any signatories are related or live at the same address, we need written confirmation from your bank or building society that these people cannot authorise payments together. If you are a school, a local authority bank or building society account is acceptable. We may ask you to open a new and separate bank account that will only be used for our funding.

New organisations

If your organisation has been running for less than three months, we will need all the original statements you have received from the bank or building society (or certified copies of all the pages from your building society passbook that have transactions on them). We will also need an original letter from your bank or building society showing your account details and when the account was opened.

Internet bank or building society accounts

If your organisation uses an internet account, we still need original, paper statements. You will need to ask your bank or building society to send these to you, as we will not accept downloaded versions. We also require at least two people to authorise a payment. If any of the people who can authorise a payment are related or live at the same address, we will need written confirmation from your bank or building society that they cannot authorise the same payments.

Governing Documents

A governing document sets out in writing how an organisation works. It may be called several things, such as a constitution, set of rules or trust deed. It explains what your organisation is set up to do and how it does it. We need to be sure that the organisations we fund are set up properly and able to manage a grant. Considering an organisation's governing document is one way we do this.

If we offer you a conditional grant and then find we cannot fund your organisation, we will have to withdraw our offer. So, if you are a new voluntary or community group, or have not applied to us before, we recommend you think about whether you need some assistance to write your governing document before you apply.

Data Protection

We will use the information you give us on the application form and supporting documents during assessment and for the duration of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.

We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programme works and the effect it has. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.

We may also share information with other government departments and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention and detection of fraud.

We may use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applications, grant holders, contractors and people making a complaint.

If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act, we will release it, subject to exemptions, although we may consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release, you should let us know when you apply.

