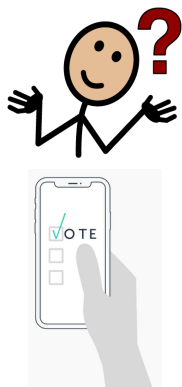


# GUIDANCE NOTES

## 2025 – 2026

### FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS UP TO £5,000



#### What is LeithChooses?

LeithChooses gives the people of Leith a unique opportunity to choose, by vote, which local projects should receive funding. It works on the principle of 'participatory budgeting' (PB) which means local people get to say how public money is spent.

Everybody who lives, works, volunteers or studies in Leith, and is over 8 years old, can vote. We want as many people as possible to take part.

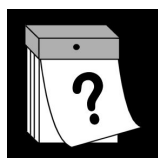
Voting will take place in January 2026. There will be both 'in-person' voting and online voting, like last year.

Anybody who needs help to apply and/or to vote is welcome to contact the LeithChooses team for support at [LeithChooses@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:LeithChooses@edinburgh.gov.uk)



#### How much is available?

Currently, approximately £44,000 is available for projects. This is from the City of Edinburgh Council Community Grants fund for Leith. Any further funds raised throughout the year will be added to this same 'pot' to extend the number of grants that can be made to community groups.



#### What are the timescales?

This is an annual process, so there is only one window for making applications.

- 13 August 2025: LeithChooses opens for applications.
- 22 October 2025: all applications must be completed and submitted. Check [www.leithchooses.net](http://www.leithchooses.net) for exact deadlines.
- January 2026: voting (exact dates and details to be confirmed).
- February 2026: results will be announced.
- If successful, you will receive a funding agreement letter within 2 weeks. This must be completed and returned with one month.
- By 31 March 2026: all funds will be disbursed to project groups.
- All grants must be used and projects concluded within 12 months of grant award (by 31 March 2027).

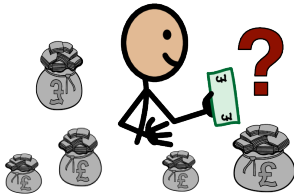
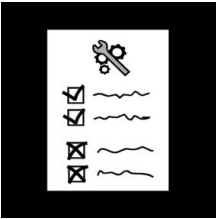
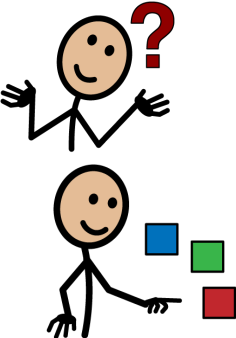




#### Who can apply for money?

Any group or partnership with charitable purposes, or that is set up for community benefit, can apply as long as the **Council's Funding Conditions** (see below) are met. Schools may not apply, but parent councils can apply for projects that benefit the wider community and are not part of the core curriculum.

Appropriately constituted Community Interest Companies (CIC) may be able to apply.

Groups can partner with another group or groups, with one group taking a 'lead' role in the application and assuming overall responsibility.

	<p><b>How much can you apply for?</b></p> <p>Groups or partnerships can apply for a grant of any size (but please only apply for what you actually need), up to a maximum of £5,000.</p> <p>All applications are welcome! <b>Each group or partnership can only submit one application for funding.</b></p>
	<p><b>Council Conditions of Grant</b></p> <p>To qualify for a grant, you must have a constitution or articles of association showing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation has charitable purposes/objects or is set up for community benefit</li> <li>• If the organisation dissolves, any funds/assets will be transferred to another organisation set up for community benefit</li> <li>• Funds are appropriately managed (e.g. has a bank account in the name of the group, with at least two authorised signatories required for banking transactions).</li> </ul> <p>(If further funds were to become available for small projects by <b>unconstituted</b> groups, this would be advertised separately.)</p>
	<p><b>What types of projects will be funded?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your project must benefit the community and the people in Leith.</li> <li>• Your project must address real needs in the community, and your application should reference evidence of these.</li> <li>• Your project must either be a new project or a distinct addition to an existing project, not just a continuation of an existing/ongoing project.</li> </ul> <p>Funding can cover things like buying equipment, transport, event costs, sessional/ additional staff time, specialist services, reimbursement of volunteer expenses, communications/ promotional materials for the proposed project, special licenses or insurance required for the project.</p> <p>LeithChooses has been running since 2010. For examples of past projects, check out the online gallery at <a href="http://www.leithchooses.net/leithchooses-2024-2025/gallery/">www.leithchooses.net/leithchooses-2024-2025/gallery/</a></p> <p>You can also find more information about what can/cannot be funded on pages 5 – 7 of the <a href="#">Community Grants Fund Applicant Guidance Document</a>.</p>
	<p><b>Is there a theme, this year? Will there be a Boost Vote again?</b></p> <p>Yes, your project must fit within the theme: <b>‘Well-being in Leith’</b></p> <p>Yes, there will be a Boost Vote option again for minority ethnic community projects. The details of the qualifying criteria for the Boost Vote are available within the Application Form. LeithChooses will make the final decision on whether a project qualifies for a Boost Vote.</p>
	<p><b>Can you get help with your application? How can we support you?</b></p> <p>Yes! We really want your application to succeed and are very happy to help you. Please contact LeithChooses as soon as possible, and we will do our very best to help you.</p> <p>You can contact us directly with questions, or just for advice. You can ask for someone to speak with you and/or your group by phone, email, on a face-to-face visit, or by video conference etc. You can ask for a named LeithChooses ‘mentor’ who will guide you through the whole process. You can come along to group support sessions that may be offered (to be advertised in due course).</p>



If you want help and support, the main thing is **‘Don’t leave this until the last minute!’** Get in touch with a request for support as soon as you are clear that you wish to apply.

Email: [leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk) Tel: 07743 167 340



## What kind of things will NOT be funded?

Applications will **not** be considered for:

- Organisations/groups/projects that do not comply with equalities duties ([Equalities Act 2010](#) & [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012.](#))
- Party political, lobbying or religious activity, although applications can be accepted from faith groups if they are for local community work.
- Self-payment – e.g. charging for use of your own venue or materials.
- Routine property maintenance or repairs, overheads or ongoing running costs, e.g. rent/rates, insurance, office supplies, postage, phone bills, website etc.
- Utility costs such as heating, electricity, water.
- Salary for core staff/ staff time that isn’t specifically for delivering the project in question.
- General administration.
- Servicing of debt or monies already spent.
- Contributions to much large fund-raising, e.g. for a new building. Unless the funding applied for is for a specific stand-alone element of the larger project that can be delivered independently of the other work.
- Applications from bodies that are publicly funded, e.g. schools, NHS, Police. (Exceptionally, projects based on partnership with community group(s) may be considered.)







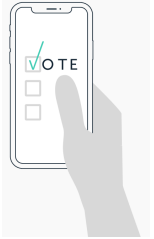

## Any other rules?





**Applying: You must submit your project outline, logo and photograph by the deadline.**

- You must send with your application a good quality photo that illustrates your group and/or your project, along with permission for this to be displayed online. You must also agree that your text describing your project, will be displayed online for people to consider before and at the time of voting.
- If your project or organisation has a logo, please send this with the application and photo.
- If your project involves public or private property, you must show evidence that the owner supports your project, and that appropriate planning permission or licences are in place.
- If relevant to your project, you may also need insurance or Disclosure Scotland PVG checks.
- If your project will cost more than the amount you are applying for, you must show that you will have the rest of the money, and can complete the project.

## Taking part and collecting votes

- **In order to receive votes, your group MUST attend and participate in the in-person voting day event.**

  	<h3>How to apply?</h3> <p><b>This is a change from previous years</b></p> <p>You should <b>apply online</b> at <a href="https://edinburgh.gov.uk/applyleithchooses">edinburgh.gov.uk/applyleithchooses</a></p> <p><b>Please note that you cannot save and come back to your online application, if you close your browser at any point, so we recommend that you write your application answers in advance before completing the online form. A copy of your application answers will be sent to you via email upon completing the online form.</b></p> <p>If you would like access to the application form in a different format, please contact <a href="mailto:leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk">leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Fill out the online application form and submit it by Wednesday 22 October 2025 at the latest. This date gives time for any necessary cross-checking and final adjustments.</p> <p>You must also attach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a copy of your group's constitution</li> <li>• details of your group's most recent accounts</li> <li>• quotes for any single items to be bought that cost £500 or more</li> <li>• two good quality images that will illustrate your group and your project visually: (1) your group's logo and (2) a relevant photo or image (or two photos if you don't have a logo). These must be in JPG or PNG digital format, not on paper, emailed to <a href="mailto:leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk">leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Your application will be checked and, if needed, you may be asked for a bit more information.</p>
 	<h3>What happens next?</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You may be contacted about details of your application that need adjustment.</li> <li>2. If your application meets the conditions and is accepted, you will be informed.</li> <li>3. Information about your proposed project will be published online, for the Leith Community to read about, in an online 'gallery' on the LeithChooses website, and later on the City of Edinburgh Council Consultation Hub.</li> <li>4. You should ensure that your current and potential service users know about your application, and you are free to 'advertise' in order to encourage people to vote for you.</li> <li>5. You are required to attend the voting day event on a Saturday in January 2026, in Leith, where you will run a stall/table and explain your project to people who come to cast their votes in person. <b>Please note that if you do not attend, your group is at risk of being disqualified.</b> (In case of last-minute unavoidable emergency, please be sure to contact LeithChooses.)</li> <li>6. People from Leith will also cast votes online. Online voting will be open for a period of two weeks.</li> <li>7. Total vote numbers will be calculated to determine which projects will get money.</li> </ol> <p><b>The results will be announced publicly about 2 weeks later.</b></p>
	<h3>If the Leith people vote to give money to your project</h3> <p>You will be sent a 'letter of offer' that will ask you to complete a simple funding agreement and acceptance form, within one month.</p> <p>When you send back those documents, the money will be put directly into your group's designated bank account.</p> <p><b>If your project is awarded LeithChooses funding, it must be completed within 12 months from the receipt of funding, that is by 31 March 2027.</b></p>

	<p><b>What if something goes wrong?</b></p> <p>If your project needs to be changed, please contact us to discuss and agree changes. If the grant is unspent, the project cannot be delivered, or if the organisation dissolves, any unspent LeithChooses project funds must be returned. Funding cannot be retained or added to the organisation's reserves.</p>
	<p><b>Do groups need to report on their project?</b></p> <p>Yes, you need to send us a short report within 12 months of the start of the project, that is, by 31 March 2027 at the latest. We will send you a report template at the time funding is transferred initially, and we will also remind you around the 6 month and the 9 month stages, if necessary. You will be asked to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a breakdown of how the money was spent, together with all receipts.</li> <li>• a short report, including photos if possible, detailing what impact the project had, who benefited, and how the project addressed inequalities.</li> </ul> <p><b>We try to keep this process as short and easy as possible for you, but it is very important that this report is submitted. If it is not, your group will not be eligible to apply for funding in the future.</b></p>
	<p><b>Who do we contact if we need more guidance?</b></p> <p>Please refer to the <a href="#">Community Grants Fund Applicant Guidance Document</a> for more information about eligibility criteria and what can/cannot be funded.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk">leithchooses@edinburgh.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07743 167 340</p>
	<p><b>Online</b></p> <p>The online application form can be found here: <a href="https://edinburgh.gov.uk/applyleithchooses">edinburgh.gov.uk/applyleithchooses</a></p> <p>For general information, checkg: <a href="https://www.leithchooses.net">www.leithchooses.net</a></p> <p>Facebook: <a href="https://facebook.com/LeithChooses">facebook.com/LeithChooses</a> 'X' (Twitter): <a href="https://twitter.com/LeithChooses">@LeithChooses</a></p>