

# Small Grants Scheme 2026/2027

With generous donations from Neo Next and Liam McArthur MSP, Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) is pleased to offer **grants of up to £500** to support charities, community groups and voluntary organisations across Orkney.



## What the grant can be used for

Constituted groups with charitable aims (excluding party political groups) can apply for funding towards a project or activity that benefits their local community.

Examples of what we have funded before include:

- **Equipment**, such as goal posts, tables for community halls, display boards or replacement outdoor lighting.
- **Specialist clothing or safety gear** to support volunteers, such as waterproofs, gloves or hi-vis vests
- **Venue hire** for workshops, exhibitions or community events

This is a competitive fund, so it is important that your application clearly explains what you want to do, who will benefit and the impact it will have in Orkney.

Applications will be assessed by a panel of VAO Directors. Their decision will be final. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a strong local impact.

## Grant period and payments

- Grants must be used for projects taking place between 1 April 2026 and 31 December 2027.
- Successful applicants will receive the full grant payment upfront, once:
  - a signed grant award letter has been returned to VAO
- Grant recipients must submit:
  - a final project report, and
  - copies of invoices and/or itemised receipts showing how the grant was spent
- Final reports and receipts must be submitted no later than 31 January 2027
- VAO may request repayment of the grant if:
  - the project does not go ahead, or
  - the grant is not used for the purpose agreed.

## Eligibility

Priority will be given to organisations that have not previously received a Small Grant, although past recipients are still welcome to apply.

To be eligible groups or organisation must:

- Be a member of Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO)
- Have an annual core income of less than £50,000.
  - Groups with an income above £50,000 will not be considered
- Have or be in the process of setting up its own bank account.
- Submit one application only per organisation per year
- Provide all required supporting documents by the closing date.

## Supporting documents required

- A copy of the group or organisation's constitution or equivalent governing document
- A copy of the most recent set of approved accounts. Group/organisations in their first year should contact us for guidance on what to provide to support their application.

## VAO Membership

All applicants must be members of Voluntary Action Orkney.

VAO membership gives organisations access to a wide range of support, including:

- Funding advice and application support
- Training, networking and learning opportunities
- Information updates and sector news
- Representation and advocacy for the voluntary sector in Orkney

If you are not already a member, you can find out more and join here:

<https://www.vaorkney.org.uk/who/become-a-member>

If you are unsure about your membership status, please get in touch and we will be happy to help.

## Fund Criteria

- Maximum grant available: £500
- The total cost of your project must not exceed £5,000
- Projects must demonstrate clear local benefit in Orkney
- Funding is for one-off costs only
- Where possible, purchases should be local and environmentally responsible

### What the grant will cover:

The grant can be used for one-off costs, including:

- Equipment (e.g. sports, music or outdoor activity equipment)
- Group training delivered in Orkney (e.g. craft, dance or sports sessions)
- Resources to support an event (e.g. materials, display items or safety equipment)
- Venue hire in Orkney for one-off creative, fitness or community events
- Travel within Orkney only

### What the grant will not cover:

The grant cannot be used for:

- Travel outwith Orkney
- Building maintenance and repairs
- Training for individuals
- On-going costs, such as
  - salaries
  - rent
  - other running costs

## Support with your application

We know that some groups may have limited experience of applying for funding. VAO is here to help.

If you would like to:

- discuss your project before applying, or
- get help completing the application form

please contact the VAO Community Development Team:

[development@vaorkney.org.uk](mailto:development@vaorkney.org.uk)

## How to apply

Completed application forms (preferably in Word format) and all supporting documents must be submitted by:

- 9:00am Monday 2 March 2026

Application forms are available from [www.vaorkney.org.uk](http://www.vaorkney.org.uk) or by contacting Mark Bailey by email: [mark.bailey@vaorkney.org.uk](mailto:mark.bailey@vaorkney.org.uk) or by phone: (01856) 872897.

**Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO)**

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