Digital Inclusion Grant 2021/2022

Swale BOROUGH COUNCIL

Guidance on applying to the Digital Inclusion Grant Scheme

Before completing an application form please read this document carefully.

Digital inclusion is all about giving everyone the same opportunities to access digital devices and the Internet. Low-income families and those most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic are disproportionately affected by a lack of digital connectivity. With support from Kent County Council (KCC), Swale Borough Council has allocated £25,000 in grant funding to support Voluntary and Community Sector organisations operating on the Isle of Sheppey that are engaging in digital inclusion projects (or thinking of starting a new digital inclusion project). A grant of up to £5,000 will be provided to applicants that can demonstrate all requirements below can be met.

Once you have completed the application the form should be submitted to Swale Borough Council for assessment.

Successful applicants will be notified 3 weeks after submission, (subject to meeting all grant conditions), and payment will be made within 30 days from receipt of the completed grant acceptance form.

Who can apply for funding? (refers to Status of your organisation)

- Unincorporated associations such as community groups;
- Incorporated organisations such as registered charities;
- Companies limited by guarantee and
- Social enterprises.
- Other (a full explanation needs to be given on the application form)

Voluntary and community groups can apply if they have:

- A governing document that has as a minimum the name, aim/purpose, objects, a dissolution clause, for the organisation, a list of Trustee/committee members and Trustee/committee member signatures. This can be known as a Constitution or Terms of Reference, please contact the office if you are unsure;
- A bank or building society account in the organisation's name;
- Up-to-date annual accounts (for groups over 12 months old), or a 12 month cash-flow forecast for new organisations.

What can the grant be used for?

The fund can be used for digital inclusion projects on the Isle of Sheppey that are either already existing and would benefit from additional funding, or brand new projects that support in an area not already addressed by other service. Projects can include providing digital devices to low-income households, holding training courses/workshops for residents, or improving the digital infrastructure on the Isle of Sheppey. The fund cannot be used to support any other activities or projects that do not focus on digital inclusion.

What are the Criteria?

This grant scheme is currently only available for activities and projects taking place on the Isle of Sheppey. Other areas of Swale will not be considered at this current time. Activities and projects must be focused on improving the digital inclusion of Sheppey residents and must run until the latest of the end of March 2022. Priority for funding will be given to bolstering existing digital inclusion projects. Appropriate costings must be presented for the awarding of funding, with a maximum grant value of £5,000 available for application.

Making the application

Applications are made by filling out the Digital Inclusion Grant Application Form. Forms can be downloaded from our website **swale.gov.uk/dig**, or acquired through Swale Borough Council Offices. Applications should be sent for the attention of the Community Development Team via email to **communitydevelopment@swale.gov.uk**, or via post to Community Development Team, Economy and Community Services, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT.

Who will assess the bids?

The bids are assessed by the Community Engagement & Social Inclusion Officer and approved by Councillor Angela Harrison, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing.

Required Information

Please be aware that before the offer of a grant, further information may be required about your project.

Please also note that the grant award must and can only be spent on the project as you have outlined in your application form.

Grant Payment

Successful applicants will be notified by the Community Development Team 3 weeks after submission, and a grant acceptance letter or email will be sent to you to finalise payment. Once the acceptance letter has been returned, we will arrange for the payment of the grant, which takes approximately 30 days from receipt of the completed acceptance letter.

Monitoring and Grant Evaluation

A monitoring form must be completed and sent back no later than 3 months after the grant has been paid or following project completion. Swale Borough Council will also require evidence, through relevant invoices or accounts, of how the grant has been spent. If monitoring information is not provided to a sufficient standard, Swale Borough Council reserves the right to request the full repayment of the grant or will be unable to process any future applications, until the information is received.

Exceptions to funding

- Individuals (or where the benefit of the grant will only benefit an individual)

This Council will not fund any project or organisation that does not act responsibly, in line with the relevant laws and regulations.

For further information please contact:

Community Development Team, **communitydevelopment@swale.gov.uk**, 01795 417421