

**COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND**

**2024/2025**

The closing date for applications is 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

Please note late applications will not be accepted

Please refer to the associated guidance when completing this application form.

All projects must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

This is an application form for the Coastal Communities Fund managed by South Ayrshire Council. Please complete all parts of the form. If you require any clarification or additional information then please contact [grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**Amount of grant requested**

TYPE OF GRANT	AMOUNT	PURPOSE	SELECT ONE
*Small grant	Up to £1000	To support small grass roots groups and organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
*Development grant	Up to £4,950	The Development Grant will assist groups to plan & develop small scale projects that will link into one of the priorities of the Coastal Communities Grant Fund. Projects will essentially make communities a more attractive place to live & work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Section 1: Organisation Details**

Organisation Name	<b>Friends of Dundonald Castle SCIO</b>
Organisation Address	<b>Dundonald Castle Visitor Centre/Community Hub,  Winehouse Yett, Dundonald, KA2 9HD  South Ayrshire</b>
Type of organisation (voluntary organisation, charity, CIC, Ltd. by	<b>SCIO</b>

guarantee, SCIO, unincorporated association etc. or private sector)	
If a charity or Limited Company please include your number	<b>SC031541</b>
Does your group/organisation have a bank account?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In progress <input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 2: Contact details

Contacts	Lead Contact
Name	Dr Kirsteen Croll
Position in Organisation	General Manager

## Section 3: Project Details

### Project Title

**Dundonald Community Hub Evening Groups Project**

### About your project/what are you seeking funding for?

Friends of Dundonald Castle SCIO are applying for project funding to staff and deliver evening clubs and activities to our community. We have been consistently approached by members of our community to increase our extensive daytime offer of clubs and groups into the evenings. This will allow us to increase the demographic spread of our Community Hub users and visitors, improving accessibility for all those with daytime commitments.

Over the past six months, we have piloted a free Silent Book Club using existing funds. The response has been fantastic, with over 70 people signed up from across South Ayrshire and beyond, and an average of 17-18 participants attending regularly. The club's success lies in its unique, relaxed format; it's a drop in, no pressure group, where people can join when they are able. Meeting fortnightly in our Community Hub, it has quickly become a much-valued fixture, and participants are very keen for it to continue.

The popular and longstanding Dundonald Historical & Archive Society recently found itself unable to continue for a variety of reasons. FoDC was approached by the organisers and asked to take over the management of the group, the organisation and delivery of an

annual programme of monthly history talks and the physical safeguarding of the historically important archives of the village and surrounding area. With a membership of over 40 at present, attendance is expected to increase with promotion across FoDC's social media channels and membership newsletters. The syllabus of talks, events and annual trips will remain open to all and to help secure the continuation of the popular and important community asset we are seeking project funding.

Following the success of a previous community Poetry Group, we have this month launched a pilot of a new Creative Writing group to meet fortnightly in the Hub. As the only writing group in our village, the first session attracted 10 individuals from across South Ayrshire and we hope that with additional funding we can encourage growth.

To enable and embed these much-needed community groups into the Hub's offer, we are seeking a contribution towards staffing and utility costs. This will allow us to open the Hub in the evenings over the autumn and winter months. Previous surveys and ongoing consultation have highlighted a real need and demand for free and accessible activities over the colder months, helping to tackle social isolation and loneliness in our rural area.

#### **What community will this project be delivered in and what communities will benefit?**

The project will be delivered at FoDC's Community Hub in Dundonald. The project will benefit not only residents of Dundonald and the surrounding area, but individuals from across South Ayrshire have shown an interest in attending these groups already. We are keen to widen the reach of all three with additional support and promotion post-pilot.

Accessible, free and open to all, we wish to provide opportunities for individuals to develop new skills, interests and hobbies, as well as make new friendships through participation in our community groups. In particular, we wish to provide activities for those with daytime commitments (caring, parental and employment amongst others) and to support those who may be socially isolated, especially during the winter months.

The three groups will capture a cross section of our community, ranging from those in their late teens to older people, supporting South Ayrshire's Ageing Well Strategy as well as tackling health and wellbeing priorities.

#### **Please provide information you have about the need and support for the project, eg community consultation**

These three proposed community projects have all consistently been requested by members of the local and wider South Ayrshire community.

Attendees at our pilot Silent Book Club have been unanimously supportive of the initiative and a recent consultation of those attending included the following feedback from 10 people who attend:

1. 'It's such an amazing concept, it allows you the freedom to read whatever you want whilst still socialising in a diverse group. As someone who recently moved

here it's been a godsend to have something like this that doesn't fit the standard book club format. I've met lovely people and look forward to coming every session. I look forward to building relationships and joining in with activities outside of the club too'.

2. 'We meet in a quiet, scenic setting that feels both social and relaxed... Everyone is friendly and welcoming... I'd absolutely recommend it to anyone looking for a calm, flexible, community-focused reading group.'
3. 'This invaluable club focuses me to spend a whole blissful hour of reading... It's great meeting up with different people each time... The people, the venue, the staff and the cake are all fab. It's so much more than just a book club.'
4. '...it can be difficult for me as a socially awkward introvert to meet new people or feel comfortable in a group setting but with the Silent Book Club is super relaxed... The in person chats, the online chats and other meet ups have made a big difference to me during what has been a difficult time.'
5. 'It was one of the first things that got her [mum] out the house again after her accident and hip replacement. Her confidence has been knocked but knowing how relaxing this is and how lovely everyone is has really helped her.'
6. 'We are lucky to have the castle and the centre in the village and to be able to use it for something like this is awesome.'
7. 'My wife and I always look forward to the Silent Book Club, it's a brilliant escape from the pressure and noise of everyday life... it a wonderfully inclusive and friendly club... Meeting in a perfect venue too, quiet, comfortable, gorgeous setting and with lovely staff providing coffee and cakes what more could you wish for!'
8. 'I love being part of the book club because it has such a community vibe and it gives me the opportunity to meet like minded people... At home I always find a reason not to read but here it's a dedicated hour of doing what I love'.
9. 'I was nervous coming along for my first book club meeting but I'm so glad I did. It's a wonderful space... The staff at the café deserve a wee shoutout too, the iced vanilla latte is 10/10.'
10. 'Although I work at the Castle and Visitor Centre, Silent Book Club gives me the chance to enjoy the hub as a user. As someone with chronic illnesses and anxiety, leaving the house can be something I find difficult (especially in the evenings)... Coming to Book Club encourages me to get out, slow down and appreciate focusing on one thing for a whole hour.'

Dundonald Historical & Archive Group:

Previous Chair: 'Glad the FoDC Team have picked up the reins. Hope it continues for a long time!'

Feedback on our previous Poetry Group, some members of which are now piloting the our new Creating Writing Group:

**What do you enjoy most about the group?**

Being able to connect with like-minded people

Meeting others who share an interest of poetry

Camaraderie, interesting subjects to write about, friendly yet honest feedback.

Company of like minds

**What do you enjoy most about meeting at Dundonald Castle Visitor Centre?**

The warm welcome and amazing site, very conducive to being creative

The setting makes this group really special. There is something which would be missing about the energy if it wasn't set in Dundonald Castle.

Scenery, it's a special thing seeing the castle in all its glory in different natural light as the seasons change. Like being in the visitor centre, staff are friendly and knowledgeable about the castle history as well as providing great service serving

Not in high tech high emf environment- casual and kind venue good for neurodivergence

**How would you feel if the group was no longer able to meet at the Visitor Centre?**

On every level Dundonald Castle Visitor Centre is the perfect venue for our needs and if we could no longer do so I would be saddened. I'm sure we would find somewhere else to meet but some compromises would have to be made because no-where has everything like Dundonald has.

Really disappointed and saddened.

I would be sad because I think the group would lose the ambience it gains from working in the shadow of such a historical site. It may even fold if another location could not be found.

Sad( I'm a coffee addict and history lover)

- We come for the community writing group which is supportive and friendly – and a real laugh!
- A place to experiment without judgement – wield words towards their true power
- Wonderful to spend time with a lovely group of people
- Time-out from my everyday routine. An opportunity to be creative.
- Just love spending time with people who love words as much as I do <3
- I attend Write Lines and I love the company of like-minded people. Highlight of my week.

**Which of the following Council plan priorities most aligns with your proposed project:**

Priority 1 – Spaces & Places ☒

Priority 2 – Live, Work, learn ☒

Priority 3 – Civic & Community Pride ☒

**Please select the grant you are applying for and the relevant priority (you can select more than one priority, if applicable)**

**For small grant only:**

- To assist with barriers to sustain the group ☐

- To develop new projects/ideas ☐

**For development grant only:**

- Deliver improvements to public places that will increase the number of visitors ☒
- make coastal communities more attractive places to live and work ☒
- demonstrate a strong link to local strategies and local place plans ☒

If linking into a place plan or a community action plan, please details which priority it will be achieving:

South Ayrshire Council Development Plan 2023-2028.  
 As a national award winning Ayrshire charity we pay good attention to all priorities in the South Ayrshire Council Development Plan 2023-2028. We engage with our community and bring economic benefit to local area and rural community as well as the wider Council area. We also offer employment and opportunities in lifelong learning and skills development through our programmes to disadvantaged and disengaged young people and adults.  
 The Dundonald Place Plan  
 We acknowledge the poor transport system in our rural area by offering as many groups and projects as possible to engage and support our community, and provide activities which may otherwise prove inaccessible for many. As noted in the Place Plan Dundonald is a welcoming village and we are proud that this is exemplified in our ethos at the Community Hub.

<b>Estimated start date:</b>	<b>30/09/2025</b>
<b>Estimated completion date:</b>	<b>31/03/2026</b>

**Section 4: Project Costs**

How much funding are you requesting from the Coastal Communities Fund?

**£4643**

Are you applying for Revenue or Capital costs, or both?

Revenue ☒ £4643

Capital ☐ £

Please provide a full break down of costs for your project.

If applying for both revenue and capital, then please detail costs separately.

Item/Activity	Cost
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Staffing to run the three community groups in the evenings for 6 months Write Here at Dundonald Castle (13 fortnightly meetings) Dundonald Historical & Archive Group (6 monthly meetings) Silent Book Club (13 fortnightly meetings)	£2688
Utilities to open the Hub in the evenings to run the three community groups for 6 months (hourly rate calculation based on 2024 actual utility rates: electricity; water; communications; waste)	£720
Management, administration and marketing of project	£1235
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4643</b>

**For development grant only:**

Individual item costs over £1000, 3 quotes need to be provided – if relevant quotes are not provided when submitting application, it will not be considered.

**Section 5: Checklist**

**Please confirm you have the following documents:**

Constitution/Memorandum & Articles ☒

Audited or independently verified accounts ☒

Last 3 months bank statements ☒

**Section 6: Declaration & Conditions**

I, on behalf of, (organisation name):

- Certify that to the best of my knowledge the information contained in this application is true and accurate and will adhere to the following terms and conditions;
- Understand that making this application does not entitle the organisation to funding as a right;
- Will not commence or commit any expenditure before receiving approval of the funding;
- Confirm that the quotations are bona fide competitive quotes;
- Will provide the External Funding officer with digital colour photos of the work, both before and after the work has been completed. I understand that these images will be kept on record and used for future publicity;
- Understand that this funding award does not cover retrospective work;
- Understand that to make any misleading statement in relation to this application could make the application invalid, or may mean the organisation has to repay the funding;

- Understand that this application is subject to appropriate checks and meets appropriate conditions such as planning, procurement guidelines, and other statutory consents; and
- I Have read the associated guidance before completing and submitting this application form.
- Understands that if I do not provide satisfactory evidence of spend then the council may request I repay the grant

Failure to return or complete and return any evaluations requested then I may not receive any future funding from South Ayrshire Council. I may be asked to repay the funds if I cannot provide evidence that they were used for the purpose intended.

Name of Person Completing Application: Kirsteen Croll

On behalf of: (Organisation name) : Friends of Dundonald Castle SCIO

Date: 10/09/2025

Completed application only should be saved as a PDF document and uploaded to the [Your Area Your Voice Your Choice](#)

Supporting documents should be e-mailed to [grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:grants@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

These include:

- Constitution
- Last 3 months bank statements
- Independently verified accounts
- Quotes (where required)