



Northumberland Parish Plans Fund **Community Action Northumberland**

The fund:

The fund provides grants to enable parish councils and their communities to undertake and implement a parish plan. Money comes from DEFRA (the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and is administered by CAN (Community Action Northumberland). Grants are available for parish plans in Northumberland and in the 'parished' areas of Newcastle. The scheme runs until the end of March 2008.

Parish Plans:

Parish plans, or community appraisals and strategies, are an important vehicle for developing local communities and influencing the policies and programmes of agencies and departments, which have an impact in the local area. Parish plans are compiled by and for the community, involving a wide range of local people and interests. They are not only an expression of local needs and ideas: they are a plan of action, which demonstrates how these needs will be met and how various local bodies will work – both on their own and together - to get things done.

Parish plans should be inclusive: both in the range of interests and people who get involved, and in the array of issues and opportunities which are addressed.

Grants:

Grants are available through this Fund to support the costs of producing a Parish plan. Eligible costs might include printing, data analysis, room hire, special surveys, word processing etc. Grants of up to £1500 or 80% of total eligible costs, whichever is the smaller, are available. At least 5% of money should be supplied by the applicant, and up to 15% can be help in-kind. Normally, payment of 60% of the grant will be paid in advance, with the remainder being paid in arrears

Support and decisions:

Staff of CAN are available to advise on grants, as well as to support the compilation and implementation of parish plans. Decisions will be made by a county wide panel consisting of community representatives, CAN and the Northumberland Association of Local Councils.

Applications:

Applications should be made by the parish council using the proper application form. Applications may be submitted at any time. A decision will normally be made within four weeks.

Terms and Conditions

1. The scheme is only open to parish councils in Northumberland and Newcastle. Priority will be given to those who have not undertaken a parish plan, community appraisal or market town health-check in the last 5 years, but those with more-recent examples will not be ruled out.
2. Grants will be available only for parish plans which: involve the whole community; address a wide range of issues, including special or 'minority' needs; aim to improve the way in which groups within the community work together and with 'outside bodies'; and have a clear programme of implementation and action.
3. Expenditure incurred before the project is approved will be deemed ineligible.
4. The grant received should be used for the sole purpose outlined in the application.
5. Any change in the nature, ownership, financial profile or timing of the project should be reported immediately to CAN for approval.
6. Applicants must comply with any requests for information relating to the progress of the Project. An activities report must be submitted to CAN after a period of 6 months or when the work is completed, whichever is the earlier.
7. Every effort should be made to publicise DEFRA and CAN assistance. Grant recipients must be prepared to co-operate in initiatives regarding publicity and the sharing of good practice relating to Parish Plans
8. On completion of the project, all evidence of expenditure i.e. original invoices, till receipts, etc., must accompany a final claim/activities report for submission to CAN. These documents will be retained by Community Action Northumberland, for audit purposes. In addition to providing a "hard copy", an electronic version of the parish plan should be submitted to CAN, to be placed on a national web database of parish plans.
9. Final grant payment will be made when Community Action is satisfied targets have been achieved and expenditure properly defrayed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the offer letter. Please note, grants are offered on a gap-funding basis, and the final payment **may be reduced** if the expenditure actually incurred is less than that originally approved.
10. Community Action Northumberland reserves the right to withdraw the offer of grant or request repayment in full if:
 - a) the information on the grant application is found to be substantially incorrect;
 - b) the grant monies are used for purposes other than those specified in the application;
 - c) there is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the project.

CAN November 2006