

# Clare Local Area Grants Scheme (CLAGS)

## 2026

### Guidelines for Applicants



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## Purpose of the Grant Scheme

The Clare Local Area Grant Scheme offers financial support to community and voluntary groups for projects that contribute to the development of their communities and improve the quality-of-life experience in their areas.

## Who can apply?

Any Community and Voluntary group operating in County Clare may apply. Public sector/commercial organisations are not eligible to make an application. Groups are encouraged to register with the Clare Public Participation Network (PPN) and be actively involved in the PPN.

***Applicants are strongly advised to engage with the Rural & Community Development Officer and/or the Municipal District Office in their area to ensure projects align with work programmes in their respective municipal districts.***

## How much is funded?

The maximum grant available depends on the scheme category under which you are applying.

Requests for assistance usually exceed the funds available for allocation. In cases where the scheme is oversubscribed, applicants should be aware that offers of funding may be for a lesser amount than that sought.

Groups must hold a Bank or Credit Union Account in their legal name and have an up-to-date tax clearance certificate. As the funding represents a contribution towards the overall cost of a project, groups must demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to finance the balance i.e., submit an up-to-date statement showing sufficient funds are available to match fund the project. Applicants must also declare any additional Council, agency or governmental funding or grant-aid associated with their project.

## What type of proposals are considered?

The Clare Local Area Grants Scheme comprises 12 different support types. These supports are coordinated through one single service contact point for applicants.

Proposals must meet the following general conditions:

- (1) Projects must be of benefit to the wider community by promoting well-being and quality of life for all or by making the area more attractive for locals/visitors.
- (2) Purchase of equipment is only eligible if it is required in relation to the project being proposed in the application.
- (3) Costs incurred during the grants scheme period (February to September 2026) apply. Grants will not be awarded retrospectively i.e. grants will be paid only for work/resources still to be purchased at the time the application is made.
- (4) Where the land/buildings, the subject of the grant application, are not in the ownership of the applicant, written consent from landowners/property owners will be required for any works undertaken.
- (5) Where the project involves children and young people, applicants must confirm they have a Child Protection Policy in place at the time of application.

## What items are ineligible under the Scheme?

1. Routine operational/running costs such as wages, utility bills
2. Personal Equipment i.e. laptops
3. Capital sports projects
4. Large Capital projects i.e. construction of buildings, facilities or refurbishment works
5. Entry fees to competitions
6. Purchase of Vehicles

7. Food and Drink
8. Pesticides (gallop, roundup etc.)

### Grant Support Categories 2026:

The following grant supports are included in the Clare Local Area Grants Scheme:

#### Support Scheme for Public Realm Initiatives, Amenity Projects & Tidy Towns Initiatives (Max Grant €5,000)

This scheme supports small-scale community projects that enhance the visual appeal, accessibility, and functionality of public spaces and local amenities. The focus is on initiatives that improve the appearance and enjoyment of shared outdoor areas, promote community pride, and encourage sustainability and biodiversity.

Examples of eligible works include:

- Streetscape enhancements (e.g. painting, landscaping, planting schemes)
- Street furniture installations such as benches, planters, bicycle stands, inclusive seating/rest areas, outdoor exercise equipment.
- Signage and name plates, including welcome or interpretive signs highlighting heritage, nature, or local identity
- Public art or creative placemaking projects, such as sculptures designed with community input
- Biodiversity and sustainability initiatives – pollinator planting, native hedgerows, tree planting, waste reduction or recycling features
- Improvements to community walkways, nature trails, or open spaces
  - For the purpose of this fund, “community walkways” refer to shared outdoor walking routes or trails that are publicly accessible, enhance connectivity between community spaces and encourage outdoor recreation or engagement with nature
  - This does not include general footpaths within towns or villages, pathways to or within graveyards, walking tracks around GAA pitches or sports facilities or pathways within private or club car parks
- Accessibility upgrades to improve usability for all, including seating for older people or sensory garden features
- Community clean-up, rewilding, or habitat enhancement projects

#### **Additional Guidance**

*Funding for planting schemes involving flowers will be provided only for perennial species, to encourage sustainability and long-term visual impact*

Funding preference will be given to applications that:

- Clearly demonstrate a visible and lasting positive impact on public spaces
- Benefit the wider community and encourage public participation
- Promote sustainability, heritage awareness, or biodiversity
- Contribute to the objectives of Tidy Towns, local development, or community plans

Applications are welcome from: Community and voluntary groups, Tidy Towns, Local heritage, environmental, or biodiversity groups, Other non-profit community-based organisations

Large-scale capital or commercial projects are not eligible under this scheme.

Consent from the Municipal District (MD) Office may be required for certain works — such as signage, lighting, or street furniture on public land. Applicants must consult with their local MD Office in advance and submit written consent for same from the MD with their funding application.

### Support Scheme for Maintenance of Open Spaces in Private Housing Developments

This scheme is intended to support private resident associations/groups in actively maintaining open spaces within their estates by providing funding for:

- grass cutting,
- landscaping,
- and other works that enhance the estate's appearance.

Eligible estates must be located within the Clare County Council administrative area. All contractors hired by resident associations or groups must have appropriate insurance, including public liability and employer's liability coverage, to perform the assigned work. It is the responsibility of the resident association or group to ensure these requirements are met. Resident associations or groups that carry out work themselves must also ensure they have adequate insurance coverage in place.

### Support Scheme for Community Playgrounds

Small scale funding supports will be provided under this scheme which will benefit existing community run playgrounds located in County Clare. Eligible costs include insurance, annual certified safety inspections and reports, audit fees, general playground maintenance costs and the purchase and installation of smoke-free and vape-free playground signage. Also, to make playgrounds inclusive, enjoyable, and accessible for all children, the scheme will also support the installation of Communication Boards in community playgrounds.

Small scale capital works (e.g. improvements to boundary walls etc.) will also be considered. Maintenance works to be carried out must have regard to the actions specified in the annual safety inspection reports completed for each respective playground.

### Support Scheme for Burial Ground Maintenance, Boundary Repairs and Provision

(a) **Maintenance Works: (Max Grant €1,200)** Funding is available to groups that carry out maintenance works within burial grounds. The grant can be used for the purchase of trees, shrubs, maintenance equipment, petrol and other items which are required to carry out maintenance works in a burial ground. Clare County Council discourages the use of weedkillers in burial grounds and therefore this is not an eligible cost. Please refer to 'The Care and Conservation of Graveyards' booklet in relation to all works in burial grounds carried out under the scheme. **Proposed works on national monuments/protected structures within burial grounds, or on burial ground walls must be notified to Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht - Historic Monument Service, two months before the proposed start date.** Grants cannot be paid to groups who do not adhere to these requirements.

(b) **Boundary Repairs: (Max Grant €10k)**, funding is being provided to assist with boundary repair works in burial grounds. Funding will be available for 1-2 selected projects, with a maximum grant allocation of €10,000 per project. Eligible projects should focus on essential repairs that contribute to the structural stability of boundary features. Interested applicants should submit a detailed project proposal, including costs and timelines along with evidence of the need for repair and any supporting assessments or inspections, if available.

It is at the discretion of the Council to decide whether a proposed project qualifies for consideration



under this element of the scheme.

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a clear need for structural repair and a strong potential for improving the appearance and safety of the burial grounds

(c) **Provision: (Max Grant €10k)** Funding is available to community groups towards the cost of extending an existing burial ground or providing a new community-operated burial ground. This includes the provision of a columbarium as a means of extending capacity within an existing community burial ground. Costs can include acquisition and development costs. **Please contact the Burial Ground Unit directly on [burialgrounds@clarecoco.ie](mailto:burialgrounds@clarecoco.ie) to submit an Expression of Interest under this element of the scheme.**

Please note the following must be in place prior to a request for funding being made under (b) above:

- Approval has been received from National Monuments Service (if required)
- Full planning permission has been granted and confirmed in writing. A copy of the planning permission for the development should be provided.
- Evidence of Ownership/purchase of the site for the development must be submitted
- Committee have in place plans/actions for funding of said project

### Support Scheme for Christmas Lighting

#### Max Grant €500 per town/village

Groups wishing to avail of small scale funding towards the cost of purchasing or upgrading town/village christmas lighting displays can apply under this scheme.

### Support Scheme for the Maintenance and Upkeep of Local Authority Estates

#### Max Grant €500

The aim of this scheme is to encourage social housing residents to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of the estate e.g. litter control/litter awareness projects, general appearance and presentation of dwellings and open spaces, recycling initiatives, wildlife and general environmental projects, community projects including links with the tidy towns committee. This scheme will support small-scale projects.

### Support Scheme for the Arts

Assistance under this scheme supports local organisations and artist-led projects that stimulate public interest in, promote knowledge, appreciation, and practice of or improve standards in the arts. This Scheme is aimed at events which will take place between January 1st and December 31st, 2026.

Funding is available for eligible events and activities scheduled to take place between 1 January and 31 December 2026.

All grant payments will be made on the basis of vouched and verified expenditure. Claims for payment must be submitted no later than 25 September 2026. For events occurring after this date, only expenditure incurred up to 25 September 2026 will be considered eligible for reimbursement.

In the event that a funded project or event does not proceed, any grant monies received must be fully repaid to the Council

Due to the large interest in this scheme only one application per artist / organisation can be considered. This is a highly competitive scheme and not all eligible applications will be funded. Applicants will be assessed on the basis of:

- a) The artistic merits of the proposal
- b) Quality of community engagement / participation proposed
- c) Experience /potential of artists involved

There are 3 categories of support under the Arts Act Grants:

1. Events and Projects / Organisational Support: maximum grant award is €1,000
2. Traditional Arts: Maximum grant award is €1,000
3. Arts festivals: Only for festivals in receipt of Arts Council funding. **All other festivals should apply under the Events and Projects stand.**

Specific requirements for support under this Scheme are as follows:

- a) Applications should seek to:
  - Provide open and accessible opportunities for all
  - Foster continued appreciation and development of the arts
- b) Support for groups or individuals applying under this category can contact Clare County Council Arts Office (065 6899091).
- c) The following are **not eligible** for funding assistance under this specific category of the Community Supports Scheme:
  - Artists costs associated with exhibiting at the Clare Museum, Scariff Library or Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee or Súil Gallery, Ennis.
  - Studio rental.
  - Provision of classes
  - Competitive or charity events and activities.
  - Food and drink and refreshments served at events and launches.
  - Projects funded through the Creative Ireland Project Awards
- d) Successful organisers and organisations must be able to provide proof that artists are being paid for their work.
- e) Only groups who are in receipt / have been in receipt of Arts Council of Ireland funding will be eligible to access the **Arts Festivals fund**. All other festivals and events should apply under Events and Projects / Organisational Support

### Scéim Deontais na Gaeilge/Support Scheme for the Irish Language

#### Uasdeontas/Max Grant €800

Cuireann Scéim Deontais na Gaeilge fáilte roimh iarratais ó eagraíochtaí atá ag eagrú aon imeachta a spreagadh spéis an phobail sa Ghaeilge, a chuirfeadh eolas, tairbhe agus cleachtadh na Gaeilge chun cinn nó a chuirfeadh feabhas ar chaighdeán na Gaeilge. Tá an Scéim seo dírithe ar imeachtaí a bheidh ag tarlú ón 1 Eanáir go dtí an 31 Nollaig 2026.

Déanfar gach íocaíocht deontais ar bhonn caiteachais dheimhnithe fhíoraithe. Ní mór éilimh ar íocaíocht a chur isteach tráth nach déanaí ná an 25 Meán Fómhair 2026. I gcás imeachtaí a tharlóidh tar éis an dáta sin, ní dhéanfar ach caiteachas a bheidh tabhaithe suas go dtí an 25 Meán Fómhair 2026 a mheas a bheith incháilithe le haghaidh aisíocaíochta.

I gcás nach rachaidh tionscadal cistithe nó imeacht cistithe ar aghaidh, caithfear aon airgead deontais a fuarthas a aisíoc go hiomlán leis an gComhairle.

Ní thabharfar cúnamh ach amháin i ndáil le taispeántas, le tionscadal nó le himeacht eile arb é an toradh a bheadh ar é a sheoladh, i dtuairim na Comhairle, ná go spreagfaí eolas an phobail sa Ghaeilge, go gcuirfí eolas, tairbhe agus cleachtadh na Gaeilge chun cinn nó go gcuirfí feabhas ar chaighdeán na Gaeilge i gContae an Chláir. Ní thabharfar cúnamh ach amháin i ndáil le himeacht a sheolfaí i gContae an Chláir nó a mbeadh tábhacht aige do Chontae an Chláir, nó le himeacht nó tionscadal arb é an toradh a bheadh air, i dtuairim na Comhairle, ná go spreagfaí eolas an phobail sa Ghaeilge i gContae an Chláir, go gcuirfí eolas, tairbhe agus cleachtadh na Gaeilge chun cinn i gContae an Chláir nó go gcuirfí feabhas ar chaighdeán na Gaeilge i gContae an Chláir. Ní mór don eagraí nó don eagraíocht bheith lonnaithe i gContae an Chláir.

€800 a bheidh san uasdeontas i leith aon taispeántais nó i leith aon imeachta eile. Is i leith gníomhaíochtaí sonracha, agus ní i leith fiacha atá ann cheana a íoc, a íocfar aon deontas. (Ba cheart iarratais ar thionscadail ealaíon traidisiúnta Éireannach a chur isteach faoi Scéim an Achta Ealaíon thuas).

Scéim Deontais na Gaeilge invites applications from organisations hosting an event, which would stimulate public interest in the Irish Language, provide a knowledge, appreciation and practice of the language or improve the standard of the language. This Scheme is aimed at events which will take place between January 1st and December 31st, 2026.

All grant payments will be made on the basis of vouched and verified expenditure. Claims for payment must be submitted no later than 25 September 2026. For events occurring after this date, only expenditure incurred up to 25 September 2026 will be considered eligible for reimbursement.

In the event that a funded project or event does not proceed, any grant monies received must be fully repaid to the Council.

Assistance shall be given only in respect of an exhibition, project or other event which when held would, in the opinion of the Council, stimulate public interest in the Irish language, provide a knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Irish language or improve the standard of the Irish language in County Clare. Assistance shall be given only in respect of an event held in County Clare or having significance to County Clare, or an event or project that would, in the opinion of the Council, stimulate public interest in the Irish language in County Clare, provide a knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Irish language in County Clare or improve the standard of the Irish language in County Clare. The organiser or organisation must be Clare-based.

The maximum grant in respect of any exhibition or other event shall be €800. Payment of a grant will be in respect of specific activities and not towards the payment of former debts. (Applications for Irish traditional arts projects should be submitted under the Arts Act Scheme above)."

### Support Scheme for Tourism Marketing & Promotion

This fund aims to support new /7 established Tourism Networks to market and promote Clare as a destination. The objective of this funding measure is to encourage and support tourism networks to market and promote County Clare.

Funding Applications should be consistent with Visit Clare promotions; Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 '*Guiding our journey to a Vibrant new Future in Tourism*' and the Fáilte Ireland destination brands, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

### Support Scheme for Sustainable Tourism

The Support Scheme for Sustainable Tourism fund aims to support community-based Tourism Operator Networks that work towards continuous improvement in sustainable tourism practice and implementing an approved Code of Practice and an established accreditation process (where relevant). The incorporation of sustainable management practices must be the focus of each member of the Network, there should also be clear strategic focus on expanding their mentoring and support role to other Tourism Networks.

Funding allocated in 2026 under the Sustainable Tourism Category of the Clare Local Area Grant Scheme must be directly linked and measurable to the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 – *Guiding our Journey to a Vibrant New Future in Tourism*.

In order for the funding applicant to be successful, there must be a detailed report outlining how each of the three outputs have been delivered by the respective Tourism Network.

#### Outputs Expected:

- Output 1.0 – Clare Tourism Strategy Sustainable Tourism
- Output 2.0 – Clare Tourism Strategy Accommodation Challenge
- Output 3.0 – Mentoring and Support to Tourism Networks



See County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030:

- <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/65325108/county-clare-tourism-strategy-2030>
- <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/tourism/publications/county-clare-tourism-strategy.pdf>

### Support Scheme for Community Project Development

#### Max Grant €5,000

This fund provide support to Community Groups in the development of projects. The majority of medium-to-large scale community-led projects require at some stage the input of specialist expertise to help bring a forward a project from initial concept stage to being 'shovel-ready' for implementation. This fund will assist groups to acquire technical expertise for project development. A one-off grant to groups up to a maximum of €5,000 will assist groups in preparing technical reports, planning costs, design, drawings in order to assist groups trying to develop projects to funding application stage to support their ability to access various funding opportunities.

#### Criteria: Groups **must** –

- Engage with the Rural & Community Development Officer for their area in advance of making an application.
- Demonstrate the need for project development funding.
- Demonstrate how the project concept/description aligns with the Local Economic & Community Plan
- Demonstrate the longer-term aim/intended outcome of the project.
- Demonstrate community consultation on the proposed project.
- Demonstrate the potential wider impact on the local community.

### Support Scheme for Age Friendly Initiatives

This funding opportunity is designed to assist community groups to promote wellbeing, inclusion, and active participation among older adults.

The grant supports projects that:

- Promote social inclusion and help reduce isolation among older people.
- Encourage meaningful intergenerational connections and collaboration.
- Support healthy ageing through recreational, cultural, and educational activities.

All projects must demonstrate a direct benefit to older adults and align with the goals outlined in the *Clare Age Friendly County Strategy (2024–2030)*.

#### Important Notes:

- **Mandatory Pre-Consultation Requirement:**  
Applicants must consult with the Age Friendly Programme Manager prior to submitting an application. Applications submitted without prior consultation will not be eligible for consideration or funding.
- Funding is not available for operational or ongoing running costs.
- Projects already covered under other grant schemes are not eligible.
- Each application will be evaluated individually on a case-by-case basis.

## Quotations

Applicants applying for less than €500 in grant funding may submit an estimate of the cost of their proposal based on verbal quotations. Applicants who are applying for in excess of €500 must submit one quotation supporting the costings (emailed or written quotes, catalogue extract). Clare County Council encourages applicants to 'Shop Local' where possible.

## How to apply

Applications for funding are required to be made via an **online application system**. The link to the online system is available on the Council's website at the following address:

<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clarelocalareagrantscheme/>

## How will my application be assessed?

Your application will be assessed **only** on the information provided in or along with the completed application form. You are encouraged to include documentation with your application to support any information given.

An internal Evaluation Group within the Council, comprising members of the executive, will assess your application and make a recommendation. The internal Evaluation Group will draw on the professional staff expertise of the relevant Council departments related to the specific project and grant type.

Following this evaluation, the Elected Members will consider the Evaluation Group's recommendation initially at the relevant Committee of Council comprising Elected Members nominated from each of the Municipal District Committees. Subsequently at the full Council meeting, Elected Members will consider the recommendation of this committee. Final approval of funding rests with the Elected Members of Clare County Council based on a decision at a full Council meeting.

The following criteria will be used when assessing applications

- (i) The project must come within the definition of one of the categories listed and must comply with the eligibility criteria.
- (ii) Evidence that the project is aligned with the Local Economic and Community Plan and will impact positively on the local community should be demonstrated
- (iii) The capacity of the applicants to implement the proposal within the designated timeframe and within budget will be assessed
- (iv) Quality of the application

## Acceptance of Offer

Following the approval of grants at the full council meeting, the council's Rural Development Directorate will formally write to the applicant informing the applicant if the application has been successful or not and will indicate the level of support on offer. The letter of offer will be accompanied by a Funding Agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the offer. This Agreement must be signed by the relevant persons and a signed copy must be returned to the Rural Development Directorate within 10 days of receipt of the letter of offer. Offers will lapse in the absence of the return of a signed Funding Agreement.

## How do I draw down the grant? (online process)

- Claims are processed online, through email or post and must be submitted upon project completion.
- Funding is allocated on an annual basis and cannot be carried forward.
- Projects/Proposals **must be completed** before you can draw down the grant. Before final payment, Clare County Council may carry out a site inspection or project visit to confirm that all works have been

carried out.

- A Project Completion Report must be submitted with any claim. This is a short summary report on the funded project/event. The Report must be accompanied by:
  - Invoices and original receipts detailing expenditure on the project – Invoices and Receipts must reference the name of the Grantee e.g name of the Community Group
  - Before and after photos or improvements to amenities or facilities or photographs of events held. By submitting photos, the applicant is giving permission to Clare County Council to use the image(s) for promotional purposes, and confirming they have the permission of the photographer and any people who appear in the photo.
  - Any other documentation which will be notified to you at approval stage.

**Please note that:**

All projects must be completed by **4<sup>th</sup> September 2026** and **all approved funding claimed by the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026**. After this time, the funding will be withdrawn. Funding not claimed by the agreed deadline will be withdrawn.

*Please ensure that your current financial details (i.e. Bank Account number, Treasurer's name, address and contact details etc) are up to date and notified to our Accounts Payable Team, Finance Directorate. [A Supplier Setup / Amendment Form](#) may need to be completed.*

**What else do I need to include with the on-line application?**

- For grants in excess of €500, copies of relevant quotations of all costs.
- Evidence of matching funding required for proposal for example current bank statement
- Evidence of Land Ownership/Permission to use land (If relevant)
- Where a project is proposed on public land, written confirmation from the Municipal District offer, consenting and supporting the application.
- Where relevant, evidence of Public Liability Insurance for any one claim with Clare County Council named as an indemnified party.
- Where the proposal involves site works, a copy of Ordnance Survey maps indicating location of proposal (if relevant)
- Where applicable any consents required under heritage legislation such as consents from National Monuments and National Parks and Wildlife or the National Museum of Ireland
- Details of any planning permission sought and/or agreed/proof of exemption (if relevant)
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy if you are organising an event or programme that involves children.
- Any relevant further information on the activities of your Group in support of your application (annual report, leaflets)

Closing Date for Submission of Completed On-line Application Forms:

**4.00 pm, Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026.**