

Appendix 1

Dumfries & Galloway Major Events Fund

Criteria and Guidance Notes 2026/27

To be read before completing the Fund Application form.

1. Introduction

The Major Events Fund has been introduced in recognition of the vibrant role festivals and events play in our regional quality of life and their value in the promotion of tourism and economic regeneration. The Fund is open to applications for festivals and events projects that take place between April 1 2026 and March 31 2027.

In recognition of the forward planning and early financial commitment required to secure official European or World Championship level sporting events, any such events that are taking place in Dumfries and Galloway later than March 31 2027 are also eligible to apply, if they are confirmed by the related national governing body.

2. The Aim of the Fund

The aim of the Fund is to enhance and develop festivals and events across Dumfries and Galloway that are eligible for support via the Dumfries and Galloway Events Strategy 2023-2027. It is now well recognised that the regional portfolio of major festivals and events continually delivers cultural, sporting, wellbeing, environmental awareness, tourism promotion and economic benefits. This Fund has been introduced to:

- Develop the quality of our festivals and events, to add to the quality of life in Dumfries and Galloway;
- Develop the long-term sustainability of festivals and events of national significance in Dumfries and Galloway;
- Develop the economic impacts delivered by major festivals and events;
- Develop a greater number of festivals and events that comprise the regional major events portfolio;
- Promote innovation in the festivals and events sector;
- Provide low cost and affordable entertainment and sporting and cultural opportunities close to where people live in Dumfries and Galloway.

3. Scope of the Fund

The Major Events Fund will be able to consider support for your project if it fits within the criteria of a major event, as designated by the 2023-2027 Dumfries and Galloway Events Strategy (DGES 2023-2027):

- an event which attracts in the region of 1,000 or more unique visitors;
- that operates on a net budget that exceeds £50,000;
- that is marketing to a quantifiable target of out-of-region visitors; and
- that can demonstrate a good return on public sector investment.

Applicant organisations can only apply to this grant-funding programme for a maximum of four consecutive years (from 2023/24 onwards). The Fund is available to develop the sustainability and growth of festivals and events in the region but should not be regarded as a source of ongoing revenue funding.

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4. How Much Funding is Available?

- Major Events will be eligible for funding of up to £15,000.
- The minimum grant that organisations can apply for is £5,000.
- The intervention rate of this Fund is 25% - this means that applicants can only apply for up to 25% of the total costs of the festival or event project seeking grant support. Evidence of how the remaining 25% of the project costs will be secured is required but can include your projected ticketed income and sponsorships secured. It cannot include 'in-kind' support.

Please note that demand for funding is likely to be high from this Fund, and applicant organisations are encouraged to also apply to other funding programmes to secure the budgets required for projects.

The Major Events Fund will open for applications on Friday 11th September 2026 and close for applications on Sunday 20th September 2026 at 5pm.

5. What are the Conditions?

There are a number of conditions that need to be considered before submitting an application:

- Grants will only be awarded to projects that demonstrate sustainability and which support the strategic objectives of the Fund (detailed in The Aim of the Fund section above).
- Dumfries & Galloway Events Partnership will require evidence of the management capacity and expertise required to deliver the project for which the applicant is seeking funding.
- If your event project is projected to have a budget of less than £50,000, it is ineligible for this Fund – do consider an application to the Council's Regional Events Growth Fund 2026/27
- Organisations applying for support must be fully constituted community organisations, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Community Interest Companies, Charitable Trusts or registered businesses.
- Only festivals and events taking place between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027 are eligible to apply*
- Your application cannot include 'in-kind' contributions as part of the project finance.
- Late applications will not be accepted for the Fund.
- The decisions reached by Dumfries & Galloway Council regarding grant awards will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Detailed financial information, i.e. a copy of your most recent independently certified annual accounts, is required with your application to ensure your project meets the criteria.
- You should not use or apply to other Dumfries and Galloway Council funding sources for match funding for your event.
- Your project must include very good quality community engagement and consultation in the planning and delivery of your project. The Council reserves the right to provide advice and direction in this aspect of the event's planning if it falls below community requirements
- Religious organisations organising religious events are not eligible to apply

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- The Fund will not support awards ceremonies or events that are fundraising projects for charities or community organisations
- Evidence of social inclusion within your project and its support for the aims of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership
- Organisations that are offered grant awards will be asked to undertake environmental management training in an effort to reduce the carbon footprint of your project
- Successful applicants, on a voluntary basis, will be asked to promote the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership
- Any lobbying of Councillors or Officials in support of your application, once it has been submitted, is strictly prohibited and will lead to the application being withdrawn from consideration

* Official European or World Championship sporting events that are taking place later than March 2027 are also eligible to apply, if they are confirmed by the related governing body.

6. When Will Grants Be Awarded?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application in November 2026

7. Who Makes the Decisions regarding Funding?

Applications will be considered by Dumfries & Galloway Events Partnership. The Events Partnership will consider applications and score projects against a scoring framework based on the following criteria. The partnership will then provide recommendations to Elected Members of Dumfries and Galloway Council:

- How well the project fits with the aims and scope of the Fund;
- The economic impacts of your project;
- The financial viability of your project;
- The level of additionality demonstrated by the project i.e. how can grant-support help your festival or event grow?
- The level of innovation in the project;
- The contribution the project makes to the sustainability of individual festivals or events and the festivals and events sector in the region as a whole;
- The quality of your environmental management and processes to minimise carbon emissions;
- The contribution the project makes to Dumfries and Galloway tourism;
- The extent to which the project sets clear, measurable and realistic targets of outputs and outcomes;
- Events management experience of the applicant or the demonstration of this experience in similar contexts;
- The ability of the festival or event to grow and/or the economic potential of your project;
- Evidence of social inclusion within your project and its support for the aims of the Dumfries and Galloway Poverty and Inequalities Partnership;
- Evidence of productive links with local/regional small and medium sized enterprises, food producers and accommodation providers.

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8. How to Apply

For support and assistance with completing your application please email events@dumgal.gov.uk.

Please **email** your application and supporting documents to grantapplications@dumgal.gov.uk by 5pm Sunday 20th December 2026

Print and sign the declaration page, then email a scan or photograph to the address above, or post it to us at:

Festivals and Events, Dumfries and Galloway Council,
Militia House, English Street, Dumfries DG1 2HR

Phone 0303 333 3000

Please ensure that all questions are answered and the required documentation is submitted with the application. If you've not received an acknowledgement within 14 days of sending us your application, please contact us.

Guidance re specific questions

Question 18 – Council Priorities and Commitments

Your application must be able to show that it is addressing our Council's Priorities and Commitments. You can find out more about our Priorities and Commitments on our website at www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15608/Council-priorities.

Question 19 – The Sustainable Model for Growth

The Major Events Fund aims to leave a legacy of sustainable festivals and events after its time limited funding is dispersed. The Fund's effectiveness will be increased if it invests in events organisations that are well governed, have sustainable income streams, have effective management and leadership and take on creative risk and change management responsibly. This section of the application form enables your organisation to fully outline why it is 'investment ready', and able to demonstrate a model of excellent governance and planning.

Question 20 – Sources of Competitive Advantage

Successful festivals and events provide compelling reasons for visitors to attend. To survive and thrive over the medium to long term they establish competitive advantages to secure a renowned position within the crowded marketplace that is the Scottish and UK national festivals and events calendars. Dumfries & Galloway Events Partnership wants to invest, via the Strategic Fund, in festivals and events that have competitive advantages, and to support their growth. Below are listed just a sample of forms of competitive advantages for major events:

- The event forms part of a UK or International Sporting Federation's championships and elite competition.
- Your organisation owns significant intellectual assets or copyrights.
- You have access to forms of funding that similar events do not.
- You have 'captured' through reputation and excellence significant dates linked to heritage, arts or culture.

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- You have developed a national reputation for your event or festival and benchmarking exercises demonstrate this excellence.
- You utilise volunteers effectively.
- Your event is linked to important regional assets or destinations.
- You have established cost effective delivery mechanisms.
- Your event has a high degree of interest to regional, national and international media that helps generate significant PR.
- Your form of governance enables your festival or event to develop effective longer-term planning and management.
- Your organisation has deep rooted proprietary management skills, knowledge and events expertise.
- You have developed unique selling points for your event.

Question 21 – Niche Marketing

Niche marketing refers to targeting particular subsets of people – rather than marketing a walking festival to all of the people of Glasgow for example, niche marketing would target those individuals known to have an interest in walking for leisure. This may be via specific leisure magazines or via targeted mailings or astute use of social media.

Question 22 – Visitor Information

Total visitors refers to the total number of ticket sales and may also include spectators or visitors who can access any free elements of your festival or event e.g. a free exhibition or sporting event. Unique visitors is normally a lesser number. For example, if you have a two-day event and the same 500 people attended both days, the Total visitors number would be 1,000 and the Unique visitors number would be 500.

Question 24 – Public Relations

This section lets you extend the information you provide regarding the marketing of your event. If you undertake public relations work to promote your event, please describe this work here. Public relations work can involve press releases or photocalls, attendance at tourism or trade fairs, smaller events or receptions to promote your main event or features in magazines and/or newspapers and social media.

Question 26 – Making Your Event(s) as Affordable and Accessible as Possible During the Cost of Living Crisis

How are you responding to the cost of living crisis in your ticket prices or the activities you are putting on within your festival or event? In this section, demonstrate how you are making your event(s) as affordable and accessible as possible to enable people within your local community to be able to attend, whatever their financial circumstances.

Question 27 – Counteracting Risks

Please describe the main risks to your event. Are there financial risks to your organisation or are there physical risks to visitors from potential access problems or the risk of overcrowding? Do you have signed contracts with the main performers at your event? Please list the risk assessments you carry out for your event and/or confirm that there are up to date risk assessments/health and safety certificates associated with the venues you use.

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Question 28 – Working with Local and Regional Businesses

Please outline the involvement local businesses have in the planning and delivery of your event/festival. This may include working with local service providers re catering for your event, first aid or other services at your event, links you have fostered with accommodation providers or any specialist events services that you have been able to source within Dumfries and Galloway.

Question 29 – Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to identify and outline how you will record and measure the economic and tourism benefits you forecast in your application. Identify how you will measure the effectiveness of your:

- Marketing plans;
- Community involvement efforts;
- Economic benefits achieved.
- Describe how you propose to gain visitor or audience feedback.

The Council's Greener Events Toolkit has detailed guidance on monitoring and evaluating events that may be helpful in responding to this question. You can access the toolkit here;

[Support for festivals and events - Dumfries and Galloway Council \(dumgal.gov.uk\)](https://dumgal.gov.uk/support-for-festivals-and-events)

Question 30 – Public Goods Events

The Major Events Strategy identifies that Dumfries and Galloway has major events which can be identified as Public Goods – and that the presence of these events within our region is cause for particular celebration and support. The primary definitions and criteria for Public Goods Events, within this Strategy's context, are those where:

- The event is operated on a not-for-profit basis;
- Substantive elements of the event are free to view, and are important for the free access they create for all sectors of the population to significant sporting or cultural occasions;
- The event has properties which are unique to Dumfries and Galloway;
- The event can be viewed as both nationally and internationally significant;
- The event has widespread, unambiguous community and public support;
- It is recognised that the event requires a degree of public funding to continue.

During this period of economic difficulties for many individuals and families, public goods events can be further defined as events that enable people to get out and enjoy and spectate or participate in events at little or no cost.