

Sustrans ArtRoots Fund Guidelines



Enhancing the National Cycle Network

August 2025

Cover Photo: Circus of Lights Glow Parade by Think Circus, Craigmillar
Edinburgh. Photo credit: Colin Hattersley

We work for and with communities, helping them come to life
by walking, wheeling and cycling to create healthier places and
happier lives for everyone. www.sustrans.org.uk

Registered charity no. 326550 (England and Wales)
SC039263 (Scotland).

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About ArtRoots

ArtRoots allows communities to make aesthetic improvements to the National Cycle Network (NCN). We provide grants towards projects that will enhance spaces, aiming to encourage active travel.

ArtRoots empowers communities to plan and deliver what they want and how to make it happen. Sustrans Scotland provides funding for projects, and the ArtRoots officer will support them with advice and help where required.

The key point to ArtRoots is that the community manages the project and shapes the outcome. Engaging and delivering locally is essential to a successful project. Communities play a crucial role in encouraging active travel and by making areas more enjoyable or interesting to travel through.

By increasing walking, wheeling and cycling, traffic congestion is reduced, public health improves, and carbon emissions and air pollution is lowered.

This document provides an overview of the key elements to consider before applying for the fund. Further information about existing and past ArtRoots projects can be viewed on the ArtRoots interactive map. [Click here.](#)

The ArtRoots Fund is funded by the Scottish Government.

Accessibility

We want ArtRoots fund to be accessible to as many people as possible. If you would like to apply for the fund but feel you

need additional support to do so, please contact us via email: artroots@sustrans.org.uk or phone: 07475044927

General Criteria

1. All ArtRoots projects must take place on a traffic free section of the NCN (marked orange on the map: [click here](#)) or immediately visible from or adjacent, such as on a connecting ramp.
2. A community group is defined as an organised group of people who come together on a voluntary basis for the benefit of the local community. A constituted community group has a management committee, a constitution and its own bank account.
3. We will prioritise applications which clearly demonstrate how they apply best practice in identifying the need and impact of the proposed project and that will lead to an increase in awareness and usage of the NCN.
4. Grants will be offered solely at the discretion of the Sustrans Scotland awarding panel.
5. Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement confirming their understanding of the funding requirements and commitment to delivering the project.
6. The grants offered are for services or goods completed June 2025 and invoiced or purchased between and March 2026.

7. The final date for applications is 15 October 2025. All projects must be delivered, and grants claimed by 15 March 2026.
8. By submitting the application, the groups agree for their projects to be used as case studies for Sustrans Scotland.

Application process

Who can apply?

1. All applicants must be embedded in the community and the project must be community led.
2. Any constituted community group in Scotland are eligible to apply for an ArtRoots grant.
3. Non-constituted community-based groups, individuals or organisations may be considered at the discretion of Sustrans Scotland.
4. Only one grant application can be made per community group, per financial year.
5. To be considered all prospective applicants must first complete an online expression of interest form ([click here](#)). Sustrans Scotland staff will then be in contact to provide feedback or an invitation to submit a grant application.
6. If invited to apply the applicants must submit their application via the Sustrans Scotland online Project Portal system. Access support is available on request.

Funding Available

1. The standard maximum grant for ArtRoots NCN projects is £2500. However, a higher award up to £6000 may be available if applicants can demonstrate that their project would significantly increase or raise awareness of active travel through wide engagement.
2. Applicants will be required to source any additional funding for goods or services totalling more than the ArtRoots grant. This funding must be secured and evidenced in the application.
3. There is an Access Fund available to applicants with additional support needs to support them to deliver the project. The amount of up to 10% of the original grant applied for can be requested. Eg. If the grant is £2500, you could request up to £250 access support. This would be assessed on a case by case basis. Please contact the ArtRoots team to discuss this.

Funding Conditions

1. The grant can cover services provided by external contractors such as, but not limited to artists, designers, construction workers and engineers.
2. Funding project management fees is possible but assessed on a case-by-case basis by Sustrans Scotland. If approved, project management fees cannot exceed 10% of the total amount requested and can only be

claimed after the project has been completed and the final project report submitted.

3. The total cost of the proposal should include the cost of materials, delivery, and installation where applicable.
4. Quotes must be obtained and submitted to Sustrans Scotland with an application as evidence of the anticipated costs of the project prior to receipt of any grant from the ArtRoots Fund.
5. Recoverable VAT is **not** an eligible cost and should not be included in the application. Non-recoverable VAT is an eligible cost and can be included in the total award. You must be able to demonstrate that any VAT being claimed is non-recoverable.
6. Grant recipients will be obliged to make repayment of all funding received in the event of a breach of the conditions of grant.

Grants Criteria

1. Funding applications are for grants. These will help fulfil the general criteria outlined in section [1](#). Grants will be considered on their individual merit by Sustrans Scotland. **Please see Appendix 1 for a list of examples of what can be applied for with the grant.**
2. No part of the grant shall be used to support option appraisals or feasibility studies which cannot be properly capitalised in accordance with proper accounting practice.

3. No part of the grant shall be used to support any activity carried out, or material published by the grantee, which is partly political in intention, use, or presentation, or appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.
4. In carrying out the project, recipients must comply with all relevant legislation.

Landowners' permission

1. Landowner's permission may be required for your project; for example, a planning permission, if you are installing an artwork or an event permission if you are organising an event. Please confirm with your council whether you will need permission for your proposed project and include costs where applicable.
2. Landowner's permission must be attached to the application. If not applicable, an explanation must be provided.

Community Involvement

1. Evidencing community involvement is a crucial element of the fund. Applicants must describe what communities are engaged and in what way they will participate in the delivery of the project.

2. Applicants will be asked to provide any relevant examples of previous community engagement and/or examples of working with local organisations.

Design

Copies of any design documents or artists' briefs for the proposed project should be attached to the application. If these are not available at this stage, applicants should attach a description of how they will choose the design for the art project.

Promotion

1. Promotion is a requirement of this grant. A promotion plan acknowledging Sustrans Scotland and its funders, Transport Scotland, need to be included in the application. Applicants will be required to outline how they intend to promote their project and the resulting publicity is to be included in the final project report.
2. The support of Sustrans Scotland shall be acknowledged by the display of the Sustrans and Transport Scotland logos in promotional material and alongside the final project outcome recognising the Funders support of the project. Sustrans Scotland will supply an official ArtRoots plaque to be installed alongside projects that result in a permanent artwork.

3. Sustrans Scotland retains the right to use details about the projects the organisations have realised, including photographs for publicity purposes and for creating case-studies.

Maintenance

All the permanent artworks and/or installations require a maintenance plan and schedule. You must specify the frequency and way of monitoring the artwork including measures of mitigating its wear and tear but also possible acts of vandalism. This will need to be in agreement with landowners.

Application Feedback

Sustrans Scotland will aim to respond to each application within 2 weeks of the submission date. Applicants should not make financial commitments until they have received a formal written offer of a grant.

Applicants will be given the opportunity to adjust their applications in response to feedback to ensure a fair and equal process which is not defined by how well an application is written.

Grant offer, agreement, and claim

1. A grant offer with agreement will be sent to successful applicants.
2. The grant agreement sets out the line of action to be followed and must be signed and returned before the release of any funds.
3. A grant claim form with appropriate account details must be completed on the Project Portal and authorised by two representatives of the project before any of the funds will be released.
4. Copies of quotes, receipts or paid invoices must be attached to the authorised form which equate to the sum of the entire project proposal and not just the grant element.
5. It may be possible to receive funding **prior** to any costs for the works being made. This must be approved by Sustrans Scotland before the grant being offered.

Final Project Report

1. A final project report is a requirement of this grant. By submitting an application, you agree to produce a report with photos of the works undertaken and the inclusion of an acknowledgement recognising Sustrans Scotland's contribution to funding the project.
2. Sustrans Scotland retains the right to gather data and carry out a review before, during and after to assess the

effectiveness of any project carried out with grant support.

3. Claimants must keep and maintain proper accounting records of expenditure in the implementation of their scheme. Sustrans Scotland must be given access to these records, after giving prior written notice, at any time within the period of five years after the date of receipt of the grant.

Site Visit

Once the grant is awarded Sustrans Scotland may be in touch to arrange visits to view the project at any stage of its progress.

Funding Timeline and milestones

1. Complete an Expression of Interest form. If the grant is open then you will be contacted by a Sustrans officer within 2 weeks of submitting your EOI. They will either request further information from you or advise you on how to make a full application via the Sustrans Portal
2. You then have 3 weeks to submit your application and supporting documents via the Sustrans Portal
3. Within two weeks, your application will be approved/declined or you will be given further feedback
4. If the application is successful you will be required to sign a grant agreement

5. The grant can then be claimed via the portal. Please note that it can take up to four weeks to receive the funds after submission of a grant claim
6. At the end of the project, you will be required to produce and submit a final project report with evaluation, feedback and photographs. The feedback form must be submitted with one month of the project completion date
7. Applications to be submitted by October 15th when the fund will close
8. All projects must be completed by March 15th 2026

The following is an example of a funding timeline to give an indication of the turnaround of applications and completion of the project. **Please note** this is an example timeline only, all dates are flexible on a case-by-case basis. Please make it clear in your application when you think your project will be completed or contact us to see what is possible.

***Please note that the later date of the fund being open in August 2025 will have an effect on these indicated dates below**

Milestone	Description	Completion Date
1. Expression of Interest submitted	Forms submitted online.	25 th June 2025
2.Feedback	Feedback from Sustrans Scotland as to whether your project is suitable for this fund.	9 th July 2025
	You can register on the	

3. Online application form opens	Project Portal and start 10 th July completing your online form or 2025 request the offline form to collate your responses once approval has been received for your EOI.	
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4. Full bid	Electronic applications to be submitted submitted via the Portal.	26 th July 2025
5. Award	All applicants notified of funding application outcome whether successful or not.	2 nd August 2025
6. Documentation completion	If successful, Sustrans Scotland will offer a grant and issue two copies of the grant agreements signed by Sustrans Director. The applicant will return their countersigned copy to Sustrans Scotland, keeping the other one for their records.	8 th August 2025
7. Grant claims returned	Completed grant claim forms returned to Sustrans Scotland.	15 th August 2025
	All project funds spent.	September

8. Project completed and project funds spent		13 th 2025
9. Final project reports returned	Final project report (template provided) including before and after photos and feedback form submitted to Sustrans Scotland.	12 th October 2025

Appendix 1

Examples of what can be applied for:

1. Sculptures, murals and mosaics
2. Artistic benches and seating
3. Decorative signage
4. Planters and plant pots
5. Interpretation boards
6. Interactive objects and equipment
7. Transient art (e.g. temporary installations, live, performances, events)
8. Lighting
9. Paint
1. Hand tools needed to complete the project

2. Repairs and improvements to existing artwork
3. and interpretation
4. Contractor fees such as construction workers,
5. designers, and artists
6. Project management fees (at the discretion of
7. Sustrans, see Funding Conditions)
8. Tool and machinery hire
9. Local press advertisement
1. Planning and event permission
2. Insurance

Examples of what cannot be applied for:

1. The construction of paths
2. General path maintenance or re-surfacing
3. Structural repairs to existing infrastructure, e.g., walls, bridges, etc
4. Recoverable VAT for organisations who can recover their VAT costs

Please Note: These are not exhaustive lists and applications can include things which do not appear here. Please contact us to discuss your ideas.

All applications will be considered on merit of the potential impact and sustainability of the grants spend as well as funding available.

For any queries, please contact our team:

artroots@sustrans.org.uk or phone **07475044927**
(MondayThursday 9:00 - 4.30)

About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

Join us on our journey: www.sustrans.org.uk