

Guide for Panellists

This guide is designed to help COCF Panellists make decisions about granting awards to applicants. Please read the guide fully. The reading time is typically 2-3 minutes. This will help you and the rest of the panel as you work together to reach your decisions. Key to those decisions is your appreciation as a Panellist of what community benefit will come from a project. No application will be perfect and as long as you are satisfied that there is sufficient community benefit, then it will be fine to approve the application.

The first thing to read is the full description of the principles and operation of the COCF (attached below). This sets out the core criteria for grants to be given, in particular it sets out the need for community benefit, which is core to the use of money from the fund. Community benefit can come in different ways so there is a Mission Statement and Ethos to help you understand what community benefit is.

COCF Mission Statement and Ethos

The overall aim of the COCF is to help our community. As each of us has our own idea what this might mean in practice, what “community benefit” looks like on the ground, to help get everyone on the same page the community has adopted this mission statement for the fund:

“The aim of the Fund is to offer financial assistance to local projects which aim to increase the resilience, sustainability and well-being of the community of Colonsay and Oronsay.”

In addition, the following brief statements describe the ethos of the fund.

- Successful applications should increase community resilience, sustainability and well-being as outlined in the COCF Mission Statement.
- For our purposes, this ‘community benefit’ can take many forms; panel members are asked to interpret what constitutes, ‘benefit’ in broad, general terms.
- Panellists are asked to make their decision based on the awareness that ‘community benefit’ may be an indirect result - a ‘fringe benefit’ - of a project and not the main focus.
- Therefore, panel members are asked to bring *all their experience of island living and community to bear* on their decision-

making process. It is precisely this experience that makes your contribution to the award process so valuable.

The Mission Statement and the Ethos should go a long way to answering your questions about what the fund is intended to do. However, if you do still have questions or an application raises questions in your mind, please do discuss these with other panellists in your meetings and do ask the chair, a community councillor, for their advice.

Review Guidance

In addition, for panellists there is a special document, Review Guidance, which gives practical advice on reviewing applications, a checklist to help you work through your consideration of an application, and a summary of the key criteria you should consider.

Advice to Applicants

Panellists are also encouraged to read the ‘Advice to Applicants’ on the Apply page of the COCF website, so that you can see what applicants are expected to do.

Principles

Applications for grants from the COCF will be considered on their merits, and a project must meet a local need or benefit the community of Colonsay and Oronsay. The Mission Statement and Ethos of the COCF have been created to help us all have a shared understanding of what community benefit can be. It is accepted that as well as community benefit a project may bring personal benefit, and this is acceptable and supported within the Mission and Ethos of the COCF. Successful applications may be funded subject to certain conditions, for example, reporting back on the success of the project.

Generally, the larger the grant being requested from the COCF, the greater should be the community need being addressed and also the greater the community benefit resulting. For a grant to be awarded there must be sufficient community benefit to justify the size of grant requested. As a special case, where a grant is for less than £1000 and the applicant is a community member, a grant can be given even where there may be a greater personal rather than community benefit. This is because there is an inherent community benefit in a community member having a grant from the COCF.

Applicants are encouraged to look for other sources of funding, for example, government and other charitable funding, and the use of ‘match funding’ is encouraged. In making a proposal, applicants should take into account and

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highlight voluntary contributions of time and effort, as this can be considered as equivalent to ‘match funding’.

Operation

The CCC administers the COCF on behalf of the community.

A Panel made up of residents of Colonsay and Oronsay will consider the merit of applications to the COCF and make recommendations to the CCC and MOWI as to which projects to fund. The Panel will be subcommittee of the CCC, and the CCC will convene a new Panel once or twice a year, when there are applications to consider. A Community Councillor will act as a neutral chair of the Panel, and not participate in the decision making of the Panel. Membership of the Panel will be confidential and will rotate through the residents of Colonsay and Oronsay. There is an expectation that over time all residents will serve on the Panel, although when asked, a resident may defer this service.

The CCC and MOWI must be satisfied that a grant brings community benefit, and their decisions in this regard are full and final, and will be published by the CCC. The CCC will provide accounts of the COCF annually to the community. Day-to-day administration of the COCF may be delegated by the CCC to an administrator.

It is not necessary for all the money in the fund to be allocated each year, so a reserve of money may be built for bigger projects. The CCC may be able to ask MOWI for an advance of future annual gifts if a big project justifies spending more money than is currently available. The community will be consulted before such a request was made by the CCC to MOWI, as an advance from MOWI would be expected to limit future project funding.