

**FALKIRK COUNCIL
POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL
COMMUNITY COUNCIL SUPPORT SURVEY**

1. FUNDING – Administrative Grant

Falkirk Council provides funding towards administrative costs to all community councils. This is by way of a grant of £250 plus a per capita amount.

(i)	<p>Are you aware of the purpose of the administrative grant and what it may be used for?</p> <p>Yes (all)</p> <p>Please explain your answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – to be used for administrative costs / mainly for sundries associated with the CC. (Bo’ness) (Bo’ness) • Yes – we use this funding for general expenses, secretary expenses, incurred by any of the members. (Brightons) • Yes – to assist with the cost of administration and other basic functions. (Airth Parish) • Yes – we currently use the grant to pay for the room we meet in, administrative expenses (e.g. paper, ink, and postage), insurance and our website costs. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • To assist with the cost of administration and other basic functions. (Shieldhill & California) • Yes – the administrative grant can be used to cover the cost of the day to day expenses incurred by the Community Council. e.g. Printing agendas and minutes. (Maddiston)
(ii)	<p>Does your community council apply for an administrative grant from Falkirk Council?</p> <p>Yes (all)</p> <p>Please explain your answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – it is available for all Community Councils after annual accounts have been audited. (Bo’ness) • Yes – treasurer makes us aware at start of financial year. (Bo’ness) • Yes – to cover postage, stationary, ink for printers and computing equipment. (Bo’ness) • Yes – we do as it is available for all community councils. (Airth Parish) • Yes – apply every year. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Yes – this is the nominal grant provided every year for running the CC's per capita of the population within the CC's area. (Shieldhill & California) • Yes – Maddiston Community Council Apply for the Grant to help fund our administration costs. (Maddiston)
(iii)	<p>Is the funding available sufficient to allow your community council to operate effectively?</p> <p>Yes (8) No (3)</p> <p>Please explain your answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – it covers essentials - paper, ink, stamps, etc. but not enough to get a laptop for convener. (Bo’ness) • Yes – for the most part but some items may not be covered by the grant. (Bo’ness) • Yes – the grant is fully used each year, maybe the grant should increase year in line with the cost of living or some other criteria. (Bo’ness)

- Yes – but does not cover costs for IT, should bespoke equipment be req'd. Eg if member/Secretary did not have own facilities, to accept emails, media and create minutes, documents, accounts etc. (Brightons)
- Yes – we currently manage our costs within the grant allocated. However, if we were to undertake specific consultation campaigns or community wide newsletter on a more regular basis, we would require further funding. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- Yes – we try to keep our costs as low as possible. (Maddiston)
- No – community councillors are often out of pocket. (Bo'ness)
- No – as we have to apply for additional funding for a minute secretary. (Airth Parish)
- No – it limits our abilities. It does not provide for community consultations or relevant issues as they occur. (Shieldhill & California)

(iv) If your community council does receive an administrative grant - is it fully spent?

Yes (6)

No (4)

Please explain your answer.

- Yes, overall expenses tend to use it all up. If surplus builds up, grants have not been applied for. (Brightons)
- Yes – and could do with extra funding. (Bo'ness)
- Yes – spent on administration and travel costs. (Airth Parish)
- Yes – grant is always fully spent. (Shieldhill & California)
- Not always. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)
- No – we are now spending more funding than in previous years but do not fully spend the grant every year. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- No – we use it throughout the year. (Maddiston)
- A wee bit left over – to keep us going until we apply for next grant. (Bo'ness)
- I think so, but you would have to ask the treasurer. (Bo'ness)

(v) Are there barriers which prevent your community council from applying for this funding?

Yes (2)

No (9)

Please explain your answer.

- Yes – no 'barriers' as such – but process could be simpler. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)
- Yes – existing paperwork is longwinded. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)
- None that we are aware of. (Bo'ness) (Bo'ness) (Airth Parish) (Shieldhill & California)
- No – not really as we are lucky to have members who have the where-with-all to manage applications etc. (Brightons)
- No – we are always able to apply. (Maddiston)

(vi) Do you/your community councillors incur expenses in their role as community councillors but not claim these from the community council?

Yes (all)

Please explain your answer.

- Printing in particular – ink cartridges). We also organised a litter pick last year and no claim was made - Various items and costs involved – although the council did assist with bags and gloves etc. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)

- Yes – no claims made for IT equipment, internet or phone calls. (Bo’ness)
- Yes – we use our own PCs, printer ink and paper. (Bo’ness)
- Yes – most are met however phone calls for the office bearers could be subsidised. (Bo’ness)
- Yes – often travel expenses to attend meetings and staged events. (Bo’ness)
- Yes – time, petrol, meetings. Some items are intangible, but the time and effort put into projects and managing communications can be considerable. (Brightons)
- Yes – in the past year this has been the case, however we fully expect this to change this year due to rising costs. (Airth Parish)
- Yes – for example, travel expenses to meetings on Community Council business. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- Yes – Most councillors all use their own equipment:-
paper/media and inks for printing incurring printer/equipment wear & tear.
Personal pc's/laptop's/mobile devices are all used for CC work. At least three CC members this year have spent their own money to get new essential equipment. Please refer to section 4(ii). (Shieldhill & California)
- Yes – we incur expenses by frequently travelling to meetings. (Maddiston)
- Yes – phonecalls, paper, ink. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)

If you wish to comment further, please do so below.

It is not always easy to get a hard copy of lengthy attachments. Who wants to print off a 50+ page document – or sit at a computer and read it? We are volunteers and should get help when we need it. (Bo’ness)

If money was no object an iPad for everyone would cut down on personal expenses. (Bo’ness)

IT is becoming a more important requirement, particularly data protection, virus software protection and software upgrades etc. It might be useful if Falkirk Council were able to provide kit at the better rates which their economies of scale will provide – i.e. cheaper. Or even “hand-me-downs” PC's from Falkirk Council. (Brightons)

Our Secretary has recently retired, and did not always claim his expenses, he uses his own computer, printer and ink, we feel he should not be out of pocket and should claim expenses for the administration costs also travel expenses for attending meetings, which have been a few already this year. (Airth Parish)

We are advised that we should not be out-of-pocket personally when carrying out our duties as Community Councillors but, how far do we go to follow this rule? Personal equipment is used for CC activities. It is therefore not easily quantifiable in monetary terms as to how much wear & tear can be attributed to CC work especially when this is done on several different devices. Nor is the use of media and ink quantifiable and neither is the physical wear & tear that occurs on printers. How much time and money can be attributed to phone or internet use and the connection charges? What of wear and tear of private vehicles. Some members in other CC's do not use IT equipment and conduct their business by manual means. Community Councillor's are volunteers but the time and energy expended is un-accounted and deemed "cost-less". This can possibly lead to complacency and wasted resources.

SCCC has been an active participant in engaging with the public. In the recent past, with no extra funding, SCCC:-

- has always leafleted every household in both villages when deemed necessary.
- sought the opinions of whether a local pharmacy was required by residents.
- Requested a Public Inquiry on the Dart Energy application, kept residents informed and attended the Inquiry with active participation.
- Worked through and commented on the Local Development Plans. (Shieldhill & California)

2. FUNDING – SPECIAL PROJECTS

Funding for special projects is available through Falkirk Council’s community grant scheme.

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| (i) | Are you aware that funding for special projects is available, and the range of projects for which a grant may be made? |
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Yes (8)

No (3)

Please explain your answer.

- Yes – we are aware of some funding opportunities however not the full range of projects that we could potentially apply for funding, this would be useful to know. (Airth Parish)
- Yes - we are aware of this as we helped to complete an application for this fund with the Management Committee of our community centre. (Maddiston)
- No – but I am now, but I do not know the range of projects covered.. (Bo'ness)
- No - In the past when a request has been made, the requests have been deemed to be outwith the grant remits (special or other). e.g. Ground maintenance of "new" areas of Shieldhill and more recently, funding the public representation at the Dart Public Inquiry. (Shieldhill & California)

(ii) Has your community council made an application for a special project grant in 2013/14?

No (all)

Please explain your answer.

- No.
- No – but will be soon. (Airth Parish)
- No - we have not required funding through this fund for any projects. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- No - not aware what a special project is. (Shieldhill & California)
- No - we have no projects at present which require addition funding. (Maddiston)
- You would need to ask the treasurer and chairman. (Bo'ness)

(iii) Are there barriers which prevent your community council from applying for grants for special projects?

Yes (4)

No (7)

Please explain your answer.

- Yes - the main barrier is the ability of the Community Council to lead and develop specific projects for implementation. This would require additional time and human resource which we do not always have available over and above our normal monthly duties. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- Just red tape. (Bo'ness)
- Other than lack of knowledge and the formidable forms which are repetitive of information already received about each CC and the time it takes to fill them in. Remembering that most of us work as well. (Airth Parish)
- Don't know - unable to answer this question as we do not know the criteria for an application or what a special project may be. (Shieldhill & California)

If you wish to comment further, please do so below.

CC members put in a lot of time and use all their own resources at home with no charge to the Council. More help and training should be available. (Bo'ness)

We would be interested in any grants for renewable/sustainable energy projects. (Shieldhill & California)

3. ACCOMMODATION

Council premises are available for community councils to use for their meetings.

(i) Does your community council use Falkirk Council premises for meetings?

If yes, which ones do you use?

Yes – Banknock Community Centre.

Yes – Bo’ness library meeting rooms upstairs (no disabled access)

Yes – Airth Primary School, Airth Community Centre

Yes – Shieldhill Community Education Wing (Next to Shieldhill Primary School)

Yes – Maddiston Community Centre

If no, where do you meet?

No – Brightons Community Hall

No – Church Halls of Larbert Old Church

No – Reddingmuirhead Community Centre which is co-partnered with Hall Trustees

(ii) Are there barriers which prevent your community council from using Council premises in your area?

Yes (2)

No (6)

Other (3)

Please explain your answer.

- Yes - The community room in the library is no longer large enough for our meetings. The acoustics in the hall in the community centre are not good and would require us to use sound equipment e.g. microphones. The meeting room in the community centre is too small for our meetings. In addition a number of meetings run to beyond the time we could use Council facilities. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- Yes – there are none. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)
- No – not aware of any barriers that prevent CC from using Council premises. (Shieldhill & California)
- No – as long as they are free. (Bo’ness)
- No – we are able to use the community centre when it is available. (Maddiston)
- Sometimes there may be an issue of cost if premises are under FC Community Trust. (Bo’ness)
- There was a threat to charge us like any other group and for us to have 5 million public liability insurance. After a strong objection form the committee this did not come to pass. (Bo’ness)
- Premises are not always available, especially for special meetings. (Airth Parish)

If you wish to comment further please do so below.

Community centre is good for meetings – well located etc. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)

Airth Primary School requires 21 days notice can only acquire during school opening times. And the Community Centre is always fully booked. (Airth Parish)

There can be a problem in that some meetings could in the course of discussions run past 9pm. A strict 9pm cut-off is adhered to and can mean an item or more cannot be fully discussed and can possibly not wait until the next meeting. A special interim meeting is not desirable on several fronts and informing all attendees of where this would be continued would not be possible before the 9pm curfew. (Shieldhill & California)

We at present have a lot of people attend our meetings and may at some point require to move to a bigger space as the Community Centre is no longer big enough for our meetings. The only other place to meet is at the Old Folk's Hall and we would have to pay for this. (Maddiston)

4. EQUIPMENT

(i) What equipment do you feel you require to manage the business of your community council?

Please say what you require.

- Office equipment /phones. We use our own basically and do not claim or ask for anything. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)
- Laptop and projector, perhaps tablet as well for ease of transportation. (Bo'ness)
- IT equipment. (Bo'ness) (Brightons)
- More up to date I.T equipment. (Bo'ness)
- Laptop and projector.
- A computer, printer, photocopier would be an advantage. (Airth Parish)
- We do not have a projector or screen for PowerPoint presentations. If we have speakers, we ask them to bring their own equipment. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
- A networkable/internet colour printer with media, inks and toners. It is not convenient to say that printing can be done in the community wing or other council premises as they are not accessible in the evenings or weekends without impinging on people's personal time. (Shieldhill & California)
- None (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)

(ii) Do you use a pc/laptop for community council business?

Yes (all)

Do you use a printer for community council business?

Yes (all)

If no – would access to a pc/laptop/printer assist allow the community council to operate more effectively?

- We need laptop on occasions if we are using projector for a presentation. Secretary brings their own. (Bo'ness)
- We receive all communications via our personal emails and print off with our own printers. If it is handouts then the secretary will print off with the council printer. (Bo'ness)
- However this is a cost to the wear and tear of the Secretary and Treasurers personal equipment. (Airth Parish)
- A PC/Laptop & printer are essential. We have one member who currently does not have access to a PC. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)

(iii)	<p>Do you/your community councillors claim for the administrative cost/partial cost for broadband, ink, paper, from the administrative grant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (Bo'ness) (Shieldhill & California) • Occasionally – not for broadband equipment etc – occasionally for consumables. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft) • Just ink and paper. (Bo'ness) • Yes I believe the officer bearers can and do claim assistance for ink, paper etc. (Bo'ness) • I don't know about personal broadband at home, is that considered an allowable cost? (Bo'ness) • Not separately, any claims come from the available funds. (Brightons) • We do claim for ink and paper however not for broadband. (Airth Parish) • The Convener & Secretary currently claim for paper & ink but no Community Councillor claims for broadband costs. There has been no guidance issued on this or what would be deemed fair usage etc. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Ink and paper sometimes. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)
<p>If you wish to comment further please do so below.</p> <p>We receive petrol expenses when we go on council business having at least 2-3 passengers onboard. (Bo'ness)</p> <p>I believe broadband assistance should be available to office bearers. (Bo'ness)</p> <p>Previously, the secretary (non-SCCC member) claimed for stationery. As stated at 1(vi), obtaining a receipt for claims is virtually impossible. The new SCCC secretary has been advised to keep receipts for ink and media for re-imbursement but as stated in section 1(vi) it is proving difficult without changing inks and paper for CC related work. All SCCC members will now be advised to obtain receipts (where possible) when carrying out CC related activities. (Shieldhill & California)</p>	

5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON OFFICER

Falkirk Council has nominated two Liaison Officers, Brian Pirie and Shona Barton, to support Community Councils.

(i)	<p>Do you/your community council feel that the Community Council Liaison Officers provide you with adequate support?</p> <p>Yes (all)</p> <p>Please explain your answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian and Shona are always helpful. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft) • Only a phone call away. (Bo'ness) • They are always available for any queries we may have and are very helpful. (Bo'ness) • They always answer questions directed to them. (Bo'ness) • Yes, always available for consultation. (Bo'ness) • Timely, efficient, approachable, knowledgeable, sensible and friendly. (Brightons) • Yes they are adequate, helpful and usually available to talk to. (Airth Parish) • Brian & Shona are always quick at responding to queries and issues when they are raised. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Yes, with a proviso - It would be helpful if the CCLO's attended at least one full CC meeting/year of all CC's to ensure meetings are held and operated in a consistent Falkirk-wide manner and CC's are taking the proper actions to represent their communities. CCLO's need to fully inform and assist CC's on all the available methods in keeping the community informed and hopefully engaged. (Shieldhill & California)
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- (ii) The Community Council Liaison Officers organise training sessions for community councillors – please comment on whether :-
- (a) the training meets the needs of your community councillors.
- Yes. (Bo’ness) (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft) (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)
 - Not always enough especially for new members. (Bo’ness)
 - Yes they do. (Bo’ness)
 - Yes – though we have a good support of skills and experience in our membership. (Brightons)
 - Since the formation of the new CC we have only had one which was useful. (Airth Parish)
 - Yes – specific topics such as data protection and social media are more useful than the general sessions. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
 - At the last meeting, the question of obtaining the views of the community was discussed but no proper conclusion was reached. There didn't seem to be a clear path or method for public engagement or consultation. (Shieldhill & California)
- (b) there are any barriers to your community councillors participating in training.
- No.
 - Sometimes there is a clash of events. (Bo’ness)
 - Only if training clashes with a local event. (Bo’ness)
 - Times are convenient as long as they are at the weekend or in the evening. (Bo’ness)
 - Most sessions are outside normal working times, which is usually suitable to most people. (Brightons)
 - At times not always suitable times for working CC. (Airth Parish)
 - They need to be held in evenings and weekends to enable all to attend. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood)
 - Time is the major barrier. (Shieldhill & California)

If you wish to comment further please do so below.

Our present clutch of community councillors all have a few years experience (and more). (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)

Being a new member of the CC I am unable to comment on the effectiveness of training however it may be a good idea to run induction courses for new members. (Bo’ness)

More flexibility in arrangements for when meetings can be arranged; weekends/evening would be advantageous. 5pm is too early especially travelling from work. (Airth Parish)

Training is difficult as not everyone can attend but instead of trying to cover all the aspects at one session it should be broken into two or three sections and the sections covered with ample time. (Shieldhill & California)

6. PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

It is in the interests of the community councils and their communities that there is an understanding of the role of community councils.

- (i) Does your community council actively promote itself within its area?
- If yes – how do you do this?
- Yes – but perhaps not enough. We use a notice board and local press. (Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft)
 - Yes – Website, Facebook, Our Bo’ness, S1 Bo’ness and local papers. (Bo’ness)
 - Yes – through the media and personal communication with public. (Bo’ness)
 - Yes – display and issue minutes monthly to shops and public buildings, email to known contacts. We have in the past produced and issued Newsletters within the village. We

	<p>have a permanent case & poster on the canal tow-path and an interpretive panel in one of the parks. (Brightons)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – notice Board in the villages; Falkirk Herald; Falkirk Council Website and email. (Airth Parish) • Yes – press (press releases and monthly meeting notifications), posters, leaflets, information folders in library & One Stop shop, website, Facebook, Twitter, & e-mail distribution list. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Yes – village flyers (18 different locations), public notices in Falkirk Herald, local e-mail list, web presence on Falkirk web-site and door-to-door flyers when necessary. (Shieldhill & California) • Falkirk Herald, leaflet drops, posters. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone) <p>If no – what are the barriers which prevent you doing this?</p>
(ii)	<p>Does your community council have its own website/ use Facebook/twitter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. (Bo'ness) (Bo'ness) • Yes – see above (Bo'ness) • Yes – it has its own website and members contact details are available on it. (Bo'ness) • Yes – Facebook, website, twitter. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Yes – SCCC uses Falkirk Council website. (Shieldhill & California) • No. (Banknock, Hags & Longcroft) (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone) • No – we do not use social media platforms as we do not have the experience, time or inclination to use these at present. (Brightons) • No – however we would like to set something up. (Airth Parish)
(iii)	<p>Is there a role for Falkirk Council in promoting community councils?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website is helpful – but perhaps it could be enhanced. (Banknock, Hags & Longcroft) • Yes – not all CCs have websites so Falkirk Council can put details up on that part of their website so a community can access minutes, contacts etc. (Bo'ness) • Yes – definitely – the local councillors could attend at least a few meetings in the year. It may be a good idea if Heads of Services came once a year to discuss their role; we can put a face to a name making the community council more community friendly. (Bo'ness) • I think it is important Falkirk Council promote and support community councils throughout their area as they are often the voice of the people. (Bo'ness) • Any help would be useful like advertising the websites in the Falkirk Council One Stop Shop and the library. (Bo'ness) • Access to designers and production costs for literature would be advantageous Leaflet distribution is expensive for villages. If they shared Falkirk Councils' economies of scale, rates would be more affordable for community councils (Brightons) • There could be support in developing a new website. (Airth Parish) • Yes – Active ongoing promotion is required through newsletters, website, press etc. (Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood) • Falkirk Council should be positively promoting CC's to prevent decline and apathy. There are a third of all CC's not active in the Falkirk area. Firstly there should be a CC for people to turn to if a local issue or need arises. The public should engage with their CC's as the first step to raise awareness of local issues. It should also give the public a chance to engage with their elected councillors (who attend regularly) and access public bodies (i.e. Police, Fire Service, Council bodies, etc.) (Shieldhill & California) • Yes – more on CCs should be included in Falkirk Council newsletter. (Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone)

If you wish to comment further please do so below.

Falkirk Council must keep web site up to date. (Bo'ness)

I heard a lovely quote that stated; 'professionals built the titanic but a layman built the ark.'
- if the council and the community can work in partnership look what we could achieve together.
(Bo'ness)

CC's need to be promoted to have people ready to succeed them after a four year tenure. Successful CC's should not have members having to stay on longer than two successive four-year terms. This would keep the CC's rejuvenated and could follow new and old ideas with more vigour. There should be a CC for every area and where there isn't one, more needs to be done to promote and encourage the formation of one. When a CC does carry out a consultation of the community, there should be weight given to these views. Too often it seems that the public is given a voice only for it to be disregarded by people who know best and are from outwith of the area (as has happened with a hard-working Grangemouth CC). The CC's are made up from residents and these residents should be obtaining the views of their communities and their voices need to be heard and acted upon. CC's are declining where the public do not see what role a CC plays within their communities - they are not seen to be fulfilling any positive roles. Unfortunately, where CC's are doing a good job, the residents sit back assured "someone else" will let them know what's happening and when to act. In both and all cases CC's need to be promoted positively and with greater conviction - many will criticise but far less step forward to help. (Shieldhill & California)