Fife Strategic Events Funding Criteria

Introduction

The Fife Strategic Events Fund supports high quality events that strengthen Fife's visitor economy, enhance the profile of its towns and communities, and deliver meaningful benefits for local people and businesses. The programme aims to attract visitors from across Scotland, the UK and beyond, generating significant economic impact, supporting responsible tourism, and showcasing Fife's unique culture, heritage and places.

The 2nd 2026 funding round is a hybrid transition round, combining elements of the previous funding model with new, strategically aligned criteria that will be fully introduced from 2027. This approach allows organisers to begin adapting to the future direction of the fund and to align their events with emerging priorities such as economic benefit, place based value, sustainability, community impact and national-level visibility.

A new Events Strategy for Fife is currently being developed, which will guide future investment and shape the long-term strategic priorities for events across the region. The updated criteria in this transitional round have been designed to support that direction of travel while still providing continuity for organisers.

Objectives

The Fife Strategic Events Fund aims to support the development of high-quality events that strengthen Fife's visitor economy and contribute to Scotland's wider national events strategy. The programme is designed to enhance the regional impact of events while supporting sustainable, responsible growth across Fife's towns, communities- and visitor destinations.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Generate economic benefit for Fife, increasing spend in local businesses, supporting the visitor economy and contributing to Scotland's overall tourism and events sector.
- Attract new visitors into Fife from across Scotland, the UK and internationally, growing the region's reach, profile and market appeal in alignment with national ambitions.
- Enhance the profile and distinctiveness of Fife's places, strengthening the area's brand as a diverse, vibrant and attractive visitor destination. Events should showcase Fife's unique cultural, coastal, heritage and natural assets.
- Inspire and involve local communities, ensuring residents have opportunities to participate, volunteer and benefit from events in a confident, inclusive and responsible way.

- Encourage responsible tourism, ensuring events support the sustainable use of Fife's landscapes, coastal environments, town centres and community spaces in line with Scotland's responsible tourism principles.
- Support strategic event development, enabling organisers to introduce new elements, innovations or enhancements that grow impact, extend reach and improve event sustainability.
- This programme is a strategic development fund. It does not provide long-term, core or startup funding. Instead, it supports -project-based activity that adds value to existing events or helps new events grow responsibly—such as innovation, programme development, audience growth initiatives, destination marketing enhancement, skills development, sustainability improvements- or activity that strengthens Fife's position within Scotland's national events landscape.

Event Eligibility

- Events must demonstrate strong potential to attract visitors to Fife and generate measurable economic benefits for the local area. The ability to bring new audiences into Fife and stimulate visitor spending is a core requirement of the Strategic Events Fund.
- Visitor Attraction Requirements
    - Applicants must evidence:
        - Minimum anticipated attendance of 1,000+
        - At least 30% of visitors travelling from outwith Fife
- Applications may be submitted by constituted groups, organisations, private sector companies and public sector agencies for strategic events taking place in Fife. All applicants must provide evidence of their current organisational status, including:
- Confirmation of the group's continued operation (e.g., constitution, minutes of AGM, or equivalent governance documentation),
- Companies House registration details (company number and registered status) for incorporated organisations, CICs, or businesses.
- Applications without valid organisational or registration evidence will be considered incomplete and will not progress to assessment.
- The funding requested must not exceed 25% of the overall event costs excluding ineligible costs (See eligible costs)
    - *Example 1: Total event costs £40,000*
    - *Total Funding Available 25%: £10,000*
    - *Example 2: Total event costs: £20,000*
    - *Total Funding Available 25%: £5,000*
- Event organisers may apply for funding on a year-by-year basis, with each application assessed as a new application. Events that have previously received one or two years of funding are eligible to apply again; however, the maximum number of funding rounds any event may receive is three or to a maximum of £24,000 in a five-year period

- Funding will reduce by 20% in each subsequent year of support.
- All previous funding from the Fife Strategic Events fund and Fife Council must be declared on application
- No organisation may apply for, or receive, funding for the same event from any other Fife Council funding stream. Events receiving support from another Council funds (e.g. community grants, economic development grants, or area budgets) will be considered ineligible for the Strategic Events Fund.
- Each organisation or working group may submit only one application per financial year. This applies regardless of whether the application relates to the same event or a different event. No additional applications will be accepted within the same financial year, even where an organisation delivers or plans multiple events. This restriction applies to all applicant types, including Community Interest Companies, charities, businesses, constituted groups, and informal working groups.
- Financial support cannot be retrospective, and the requested activity must not already be in process
- Whilst we are looking to see that event budgets are viable, applicants should also demonstrate a clear financial need for funding support to deliver the requested activity. Successful applicants will provide transparent and realistic budgets which are balanced, achievable and show other income sources
- Due diligence will be undertaken for all applicants; the financial health of the applicant organisation will be taken into consideration during the assessment process
- Applicants must declare all other funding, income, or grants secured or applied for from external sources as part of their application. If your funding position changes at any stage after being awarded Fife Strategic Events Funding, you must notify Fife Council immediately.
- All funding awarded through the Fife Strategic Events Fund must comply with the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022. Applicants must confirm that accepting this award will not exceed permitted subsidy thresholds and must declare any public funding received within the current and previous two financial years.
- Organisations are required to ensure the proposed activity meets the principles of subsidy control, including delivering public value and avoiding undue distortion of competition. Applicants must retain records of all subsidies received and understand that Fife Council may be required to publish details of certain awards on the UK Subsidy Control transparency database.

- This is not a rolling funding programme. Applications will only be accepted during the designated open rounds.
- Applications and all supporting documentation must be submitted by the published deadline. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.

- The fund is not available to event organisers who have already received three years of Strategic Events Fund support since 2020 (reset in 2026), nor for events expected to generate significant commercial profit.
- Application rounds and dates will be available on the Welcome to Fife website please ensure you are aware of funding dates
- Applications will be assessed following each deadline, with a target 30-day notification period.
- Applications must be received a minimum of three months before the start of the event. Late submissions will be deemed ineligible.
- The Strategic Events Fund supports unique, strategic and niche event concepts that deliver tourism impact and long-term legacy for Fife. Events that duplicate existing local activity or are primarily aimed at local audiences—such as community galas, fayres, local concerts or markets—will not be supported.
    - See appendix 1 for details of eligible events

Financial Practice & Governance Requirements

- Applicants must demonstrate that their organisation's financial practices are sound, transparent and compliant with recognised accounting standards. Evidence must be provided to confirm that the organisation is financially stable and capable of managing public funds responsibly. This should include:

    - Recent financial accounts (audited or independently examined, where applicable) covering the most recent financial year
    - A current bank statement from an account held in the organisation's name
    - Details of financial governance arrangements, such as named office bearers, financial oversight structure, or trustee/board responsibilities
    - Confirmation that appropriate financial controls are in place, including two signatory approval for expenditure, accurate recordkeeping, and documented financial procedures
    - Clear evidence that the organisation is compliant with relevant regulatory requirements, such as OSCR for charities or Companies House for incorporated bodies
    - For newly established organisations, alternative financial evidence (e.g., forecast budget, governance documentation, or financial policy statements) may be accepted at the Council's discretion

- Organisations with evidence of poor financial management, outstanding debts to Fife Council, unresolved audit issues, or incomplete financial documentation will not be eligible for funding.
- Fife Council reserves the right to request additional financial information if required to assess the financial stability of the applicant or the viability of the proposed event.

Eligible Costs

- Innovations to develop, enhance or grow the event
- Strategic marketing & PR activity to increase audiences / profile
- Hired equipment to improve the visitor experience
- Hired equipment to increase capacity
- Initiatives or developments aimed at enhancing the event's environmental sustainability credentials and contribution towards responsible tourism in Scotland
- Specific new activity or event related projects which provide opportunities to inspire or engage the local community with the event or festival
- Initiatives or developments which improve accessibility and inclusion at the event or festival
- All cash costs related to event delivery and marketing, including performance fees and hire of external contractors
- VAT inclusion requests for community groups, charities and Non-VAT Registered organisations

Ineligible Costs

- Office accommodation, equipment and supplies
- Rent \ Rates
- Contingencies
- Fees and salaries for direct employees of apply organisation
- Significant capital, equipment and infrastructure purchases
- VAT for VAT-registered commercial businesses
- Funding gaps left by other funds being withdrawn
- All in-kind costs
- Hospitality costs

Application Process

All organisations seeking support through the Strategic Events Fund must first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) during the advertised funding window. The EOI stage is designed to assess strategic fit and eligibility against the fund criteria before applicants are invited to complete a full application.

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by officers to confirm eligibility, alignment with strategic objectives, and capacity to deliver. Only applications deemed eligible at the EOI stage will be invited to proceed to a full application.

Submission of an Expression of Interest does not guarantee an invitation to submit a full application, nor does it guarantee funding. Full applications will be assessed in detail and considered competitively against available budgets and assessment criteria.

Submit Expression of Interest

For further information contact: strategic.events@fife.gov.uk

Website: industry.welcometofife.com/ftp-events/event-planning-support/

Additional Support and Contact Details

For further support on completing funding application

e-mail: strategic.events@fife.gov.uk

Website: www.industry.welcometofife.com/ftp-events/event-planning-support/

Event Support: Our Events Team are here during office hours to guide you through the process of planning your event. You can contact us through:

e-mail: fifeevents@fife.gov.uk

phone: 01592 583109

Website: www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/community-life2/planning-an-event/what-to-consider

Appendix 1.

Eligible	Ineligible
Open to the public cultural, MICE and sporting events taking place in outdoor, indoor or hybrid settings and environments. These are generally one-off or annual occurrences. This includes but is not limited to; • Agricultural events and shows • Arts festivals • Book, Poetry and Literature festivals • Comedy festivals • Dance festivals • Design festivals • Drive in events • Fashion festivals • Film festivals • Food and Drink events and festivals • Highland Games • History and Heritage festivals • Lighting trails and illuminations • Maritime events • Mass participation sporting events • Music festivals, in all genres • National and International Sports Championships / Competitions • Nature and Wildlife festivals • Piping events • Science festivals • Sports competitions or tournaments that are not part of regular fixtures, and which attract spectators • Visual arts festivals • Wellness festivals • Conferences, AGMs, incentive programmes, business to business trade shows or consumer exhibitions with an audience from predominantly outwith Fife and over 250 people* see separate criteria	Private events not open to the public are ineligible for this fund. The following types of events and activities are also ineligible. This includes but is not limited to • Civic Events and Ceremonial Functions • Coffee mornings and jumble sales in community centres, church halls, schools etc. • Demonstrations / Marches / Parades of a political nature • Group activities, self-guided and guided tours • Local markets including car boot sales and regularly scheduled or pop-up craft fairs, food and drink/ farmers markets • Online classes • Participative events with a principal focus on fundraising, generally these are run by the charitable organisation • Conferences, AGMs, incentive programmes, awards dinners or social corporate parties, with a predominantly Fife audience and attracting less than 200 people • Away-days, team-building, training • Business to business trade shows or consumer exhibitions with a predominantly Fife audience and attracting less than 300 people • Private, social or family events such as weddings, birthdays, dinners, functions or parties • Regular or recurring programming in year-round venues unless part of a wider festival. This includes productions in; theatres, cinemas, arts centres and galleries; seasonal promotions and activation in shopping centres; live music and DJ sets in venues, pubs and clubs; comedy gigs in venues, clubs and pubs • Regularly scheduled sports fixtures and club championships e.g. football, hockey, rugby, golf, bowls or tennis club • School, college or university group events including concerts, productions, proms and balls, school sports days and graduation ceremonies • Series of events – an application should be submitted in relation to single events or festivals. • Showgrounds and funfairs • Community gala days and fetes • Seasonal community celebrations • Theatre Productions