Kingston First Town Centre Community Fund

2026/27 Application Guidelines

About the fund

Kingston First, the Business Improvement District for the town centre, values the vital contribution of local and community groups in shaping a lively and welcoming town centre.

To champion this, we launched the Kingston First Town Centre Community Fund - designed to inspire and support ideas and projects that have a positive impact on the town centre, support local businesses and promote positive community engagement.

Following three successful years, we are pleased to announce the next round of funding, with applications open from Monday 2nd November 2026 until Friday 29th January 2027.

The funding available for this year will be £30,000. Organisations can bid for any amount from £500 - £10,000, as long as they can outline how they meet the criteria. We are keen to support as many projects as we can, but please note, organisations may not submit more than 3 separate applications for the fund.

The fund is primarily for local community groups including not-for-profit organisations and charities. However, other types of organisations are welcome to apply, including businesses or individuals, as long as they can demonstrate they meet the criteria.

We will offer successful applicants access to our training and learning opportunities until the end of 2028 and support with promoting and marketing the project.

To apply we ask you to complete an application form by 29/01/2027 demonstrating how you meet the criteria. In a nutshell we're open to projects and activities that can be delivered in the town centre by the end of December 2028 that fit the criteria. This could be an event, a trail, artwork, performances, community project, a service or operational support or something else (the only limit is your imagination).

We welcome diverse and creative ideas and are happy to have an informal conversation with you before you apply, just get in touch with us, funding@kingstonfirst.co.uk or 020 8547 1221.

About Kingston First

Kingston First Business Improvement District is a not-for-profit organisation, funded by and representing businesses in Kingston Town Centre, dedicated to creating a town where businesses can thrive and people want to be. We are democratically elected every 5 years, and have a Board, comprised of representatives from different sectors in London.

We listen to and work in partnership with Kingston's businesses

- Representing them at a local and national level, and providing services which save them money and give them insight into the town centre.
- Working to create an attractive and welcoming town centre through events and investment and improvements to public spaces.
- Managing a strong consumer facing brand - Kingston Upon Thames - that positions Kingston as a destination and promotes local businesses and what's on offer in the town centre.

What we won't fund?

- Ongoing projects and associated organisational costs/overheads (however if it is an annual event/project run by the organisation, this is fine).
- Projects run solely for commercial benefit.
- Projects that have a religious or political focus (however this does not necessarily stop religious/political organisations applying).
- Projects that don't take place or have primary impact in the town centre (defined here).
- Projects by previous recipients who have not fulfilled the terms of their funding agreement.

What successful applicants can expect from us

- Ongoing support from the Kingston First team throughout the project lifecycle.
- Access to Kingston First training and learning opportunities, and networking events until the end of 2028.
- Online, social media and PR promotion for your project through Kingston First's consumer and corporate marketing channels where appropriate (InKingston app, websites, @InKingstonUK social media channels, LinkedIn, newsletters & media networks).

What we expect from successful applicants

- Maintain regular communication with Kingston First throughout the project, including completing a mid-project evaluation form and participating in informal check-ins. This is a mandatory requirement of receiving funding.
- To acknowledge Kingston First as partners in all project communications.
- To provide a full and transparent evaluation of the project within 3 months of the project completion.
- To be willing to be part of any marketing, PR and promotional opportunities to promote the project.

The application process and timings

To apply for the fund, you will need to fill in the application form to the best of your knowledge. Each section will contain explanations of exactly what we need you to address for that section.

Applications open on 02/11/26 and will close on 29/01/27. Please email your completed application form to funding@kingstonfirst.co.uk.

We will assess all applications and shortlist applicants by 26/02/27. We will inform all applicants of the outcome at this stage.

All shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview w/c 08/03/27 . The committee will then make their decision and announce the outcome by 12/03/27.

If you have any questions regarding the application process, the fund, or whether you are eligible please get in touch with us.

We are also happy to have an informal conversation ahead of any application should you wish. You can contact us at funding@kingstonfirst.co.uk or 020 8547 1221.

We will also be happy to make accommodations or provide the application in an alternative format where we can.

We are happy to take applications from those under 18, but this must be supported by a guardian or organisation who will be responsible for receiving the funds on behalf of the applicant.

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How we will assess applications

We accept applicants from all types of groups and for all types of projects. We seek to assess these in a fair and transparent manner. If we feel we want to clarify any part of your application, we will contact you.

All applications will be assessed on specific criteria by the fund committee, using a scoring methodology. These are detailed below and will be used to shortlist applicants.

Criteria

You will be scored on the below criteria (section 1, project goals), and each section has been assigned a weighting. It is also important that you demonstrate that you have addressed criterion 2 & 3 in the application form, we will assess this further at the interview stage.

We recognise the importance of all criteria; however, as a Business Improvement District, our main purpose is representing and supporting businesses. For this reason, this area has been given greater emphasis.

Criteria		Weighting
1. Project Goals	a) Support local businesses	40%
	b) Have a positive impact on the town centre	35%
	c) Promote positive community engagement	25%
	Total	**100%**
2. The project will take place between the funds being allocated by 31st March 2027 and 31st December 2028 and support this with a high level delivery plan of how this will be met.		
3. You must demonstrate that you have the capacity and resources to deliver the project effectively		

The committee

The committee is made up of Kingston First team members, as well as a member of the Kingston First board of directors.