



## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

# Community grant application form - part A

Please ensure you complete all of this form and Part B and send the following information to [enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk):

- X forms A and B, completed in full
- X your organisation's last set of accounts
- X the most recent bank statement for your organisation, which should match the payment information on form B

## 1. About your organisation

Name of the organisation requesting the grant

The Archway Foundation

Please state briefly what the purpose of your organisation is

Providing support to alleviate the hurt and distress, and the impact on mental and physical health, caused by loneliness and social isolation

## 2. Your grant request

Please describe the project for which the grant is needed.

**We are applying for a grant to support the costs of providing our one-to-one support services and social support group in Abingdon in 2026.** Our work increases social connection and builds a sense of "togetherness" and belonging for those most vulnerable to exclusion and loneliness in the town, creating a pathway into re-engagement with the Abingdon community and ultimately relief from the mental and physical impact of chronic loneliness (which includes a 29% increased risk of coronary heart disease, a 32% increase in risk of stroke and a greater risk of dementia, depression, and anxiety).

**We have been operating in Abingdon for the past 17 years, and 15% of our beneficiaries live here (24 people), as do 14 of our volunteers** (we operate across Oxfordshire, but any grant from the Town Council would be used specifically to support our Abingdon work).

Wealth inequality, rurality and age distribution in Oxfordshire exacerbates loneliness with 2,500 people or 7% being either often or always lonely in Abingdon alone (figures proportionalized from

Oxfordshire Uncovered, OCF, 2023). Almost all of our work is with individuals who have needs in addition to loneliness such as mental health, substance misuse, housing, or physical health needs. Disconnection makes these needs more likely and severe; through tackling loneliness we reduce pressure on Abingdon's (and Oxfordshire's) statutory and voluntary services. A majority of our Abingdon service users (who we call our 'Friends') come from within Abingdon's more deprived LSOAs, especially Abingdon Caldecott.

We reconnect individuals experiencing loneliness via our bespoke Pathway of Support:

- **Individual one-to-one telephone support.** This is our first stepping stone, and supports Archway Friends who are not ready for face-to-face contact (those who have been isolated for many years often face anxiety about re-engagement), with an attentive listening ear and friendly conversation. It also provides opportunities for Archway Friends to share worries and concerns and any additional needs requiring help from other sources (we liaise with a wide range of community partners in Abingdon to provide an overall network of support).
- Moving to **Individual face-to-face support**, where a volunteer will meet a Friend for ideally e.g. a coffee or walk (encouraging wider community engagement and time outside - including use of Health Abingdon pavement health walking routes), or at home.
- Our **social group** in Abingdon then provides a supportive environment in which Archway Friends can meet with others who are struggling with feelings of loneliness and related issues, creating connections and community. A warm welcome, a high ratio of volunteers and staff to beneficiaries, the provision of refreshments and an opportunity to engage in a low key accessible, non-threatening shared activity, helps even the most anxious individual feel supported and included. Staff and volunteers model good social communication and move around the room to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share concerns on a one-to-one basis, as well as facilitating interactions between people. The social group runs monthly, and we have multiple contact touchpoints with people in advance to gently encourage participation, and provide transport to those that need it. The group is hosted at Café@35 on Ock Street, helping to ensure accessibility for individuals living in Abingdon South.

We know that the Council prefers to support specific new projects or equipment purchases, but note that you will support revenue costs if funding will have a positive impact on the town. Our positive impact in Abingdon has been long-recognised; we were selected by the Abingdon Mayor in 2022 as one of two charities supported during his tenure.

**Unfortunately, an unanticipated fall in our organisation's overall funding this year means that we will potentially soon need to make difficult decisions about our reach, the services we provide and their frequency.** We are working hard on our fundraising and future sustainability plan, but a grant will really help us ensure that our Abingdon services (which we know are very valued by current service users and will help many others in future) can continue.

**What is the total cost of the project**

£11,315

**How much grant are you seeking**

£2,000 (though we would be grateful for any amount)

**What percentage of the total cost of your project are you seeking via this grant**

18%

**How do you plan to raise the rest of the money for your project**

Through further grant applications and fundraising events (e.g. ticketed events, volunteers undertaking sponsored activities)

**Please show roughly how the costs of the project are broken down**

£8,656 - contribution to staff costs (salary + on costs) for staff that support our Abingdon work. This is primarily our Social Group/Area lead, who organises and hosts the social group, and co-ordinates volunteers in the Abingdon area that provide phone and face-to-face support.

£1,466 - activity costs including venue hire for the social group, refreshments, providing transport to and from the group for those for whom this would otherwise be a barrier to participation

£1,073 - volunteer support costs e.g. training, reimbursing reasonable volunteer expenses (e.g. travel, buying a coffee for themselves and a Friend as part of a visit).

£120 - advertising and promoting our services in Abingdon

**What fund-raising have you undertaken for this project or others in the past 2 years**

We fundraise to cover the costs of our social support groups (we also host two in Oxford City, and are working to start one in Banbury) on an ongoing basis. In the last two years, we have had successful funding from the OCVA Connected Communities Fund and The National Lotteries Reaching Communities Fund - in both cases this funding has covered our social groups across Oxfordshire, and we have assigned a proportional amount to support the Abingdon group. We have also been supported by some community fundraising e.g. the 2023 St Michael's & All Angel's Church craft fair.

### 3. Local benefit

**How many people take part in your organisation's activities? Give local branch numbers if you are a national organisation.**

<b>As members</b>	<b>14 (Abingdon-based volunteers)</b>
<b>As recipients</b>	<b>24 (Abingdon-based service users)</b>

**Please fill in the table below relating to numbers of members and/or recipients falling into each category. Estimates are acceptable provided an "e" is put after the figure.**

<b>Age profile</b>	<b>0-16</b>	<b>16-65</b>	<b>over 65</b>
- Members	0	8	6
- Recipients	0	16	8

<b>Gender profile</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>

- Members	4	10
- Recipients	13	11

Local connection	Town resident	Attend education in town	Neither resident nor attending education in town
- Members	14	N/A	N/A
- Recipients	24	N/A	N/A

## 4. Vision and objectives

Please explain how your project will meet the town councils vision and objectives, which are set out below. **You do not need to respond to each point** but it is important that your project addresses the town council's vision and at least one objective.

### 4a. Vision

**To develop an inclusive community so that Abingdon is the place where everyone wants to live and where the wellbeing of residents is prioritised. In developing this community, the town will be one which is environmentally sustainable, vibrant, resilient and safe.**

Our Abingdon one-to-one services and supported social group meet the Town Council's vision by:

- Prioritising the overall wellbeing of some of your most vulnerable residents, ensuring they know that they are cared about at an individual level - giving consistency of support
- Helping those who are currently isolated from the wider community take steps towards re-engagement, creating overall community cohesion
- Facilitating and creating social bonds - The World Health Foundation call these critical for safe and resilient communities
- Decreasing reliance on statutory services e.g. adult social care, health services, through a proven alternative intervention path
- Working as part of a wider network of social support in Abingdon to do the best by all of its residents and ensure equal opportunity for all.

### 4b. Objectives

- 1 **To respond effectively and speedily to the climate emergency**

Our project does not primarily relate to this objective, though of course we do seek to be an environmentally responsible organisation and environmental impact is considered in how we operate.

**2 To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future**

The World Health Organisation says that “communities with strong social bonds tend to be safer, healthier and more resilient”. Our social group creates and sustains these bonds for the individuals in the Abingdon community who find creating them most difficult. Our staff and volunteers work with the group to delicately enable introductions (drawing on knowledge of service users built via one-to-one support to “make matches”) and help build sustained connections that can turn into healthy friendships. For example, two of our Friends at the Abingdon social group built immediate common ground because of similar interests - they now meet regularly to attend a walking group, or go for coffee. They care for each other deeply, and now rely on each other as a support network (e.g. only one drives, and gives the other a lift). Another recent friendship has been formed after two of our Friends bonded having both experienced deep loss; they now regularly meet for coffee and activities and are planning a holiday together.

By enabling connections and friendships, we create the social bonds that lead people to see Abingdon as their home - the place where they have a network that they can rely on when times are tough.

**3 To manage the Council’s assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future**

Chronic Loneliness has a number of well-documented mental and physical impacts, including (as summarised by Shankar, 2023):

- Significant adverse impacts on the cardiovascular, immune, and nervous systems (including 29% increased risk of coronary heart disease, 32% increased risk of stroke).
- Worsening of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.
- Increased risk of future mental health problems.

Overall, The World Health Organisation indicates that chronic loneliness increases the risk of early death by an incredible 25%, equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

It’s also estimated to cost UK employers £2.5 billion a year, due to its impact on employee sickness, caring activity, productivity, and voluntary staff turnover (New Economics Foundation, 2017).

What does this mean for the Council? It means that loneliness comes with a cost to your community; those that are chronically lonely are more likely to need the intervention of statutory services, and are less likely to live independent, healthy and long lives.

**4 To work with community partners to support those who are vulnerable and in need and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity**

By intervening in a bespoke way, meeting people where they are and offering long-term help to lift people out of loneliness, we effectively reduce that burden.

For example, an Abingdon recipient, after receiving our long-term support, became comfortable enough with increased social connection that they started to volunteer with us as one-to-one support for others. This was the start of their gradual increase of community engagement, which culminated in a return to full-time work.

(This type of impact is also documented by research e.g. Shanker, 2023 summarises how robust social support is correlated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, and acts as a facilitator of healthy behaviors such as diet, exercise, abstinence from smoking, and increased adherence to medical regimens.)

Loneliness disproportionately affects the most vulnerable - there's been extensive research showing the increased likelihood of loneliness for many vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, those with existing mental health conditions, those with caring responsibilities, new parents, older adults, ethnic minorities and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds - and most of those we support in Abingdon fall into these categories. Our social group is in itself an opportunity for social inclusivity, as we take all possible steps to remove barriers to participation (e.g. providing travel, creating a facilitated and low-anxiety environment).

We regularly work with partners in Abingdon - both to take referrals for people needing our help and referring into other services; participating in an overall Abingdon support network that is working towards the Abingdon vision.

We are active participants in the South Abingdon Partners Network - which we find helpful and useful - collaborating on what is working well, and what is needed/should be considered to tackle the social concerns within the area. The network ensures other organisations operating in South Abingdon are aware of our services and can make referrals, and keeps us up-to-date on what they are doing (including community activities like art projects and events, which is useful for our staff and volunteers to capitalise on e.g. suggesting a one-to-one meet up at a community event). We also regularly liaise with Cathie Ng, Community Health Development Officer

for Abingdon Caldecott, partnering to support those who are vulnerable and in need.

Across Abingdon, we also work with the Adult Mental Health and Social Care teams, the local GPs and social prescribers, the Abingdon Keystone Hub, Healthy Abingdon, Connection Support and Oxfordshire Mind, Host Abingdon, The Church in Abingdon, St Vincent de Pauls. E.g. We have worked closely with the Keystone Hub to understand, cross-refer and signpost respective services - they now make regular referrals which has led to individuals receiving one-to-one and group support. This has included a Friend initially attending our social group with Keystone Hub worker support, enabling the person time to settle and feel less anxious.

## 5. Other/previous grant awards

**Please provide details of any grant awards you have received from the town council, other councils or large organisations that you have received in the past three years**

We have not received a grant from the town council in the last three years.

Grants we have received from other Councils and Large Organisations in the last three years are:

2024/25: The National Lotteries Reaching Communities Fund, Oxfordshire Community Foundation Connected Communities Fund, Garfield Weston.

2023/24: Oxfordshire Community Foundation Pathways of Support, The National Lotteries, Christ's Hospital, Garfield Weston, McFarlane Family Foundation.

2022/23: Oxford City Council (1 year grant), County Councillor Grant, Oxfordshire Community Foundation Pathways of Support, Oxfordshire Community Foundation Loneliness and Isolation Grant, The National Lotteries, Christ's Hospital, Garfield Weston, Edward Gostling Foundation.

(Note that with the exception of previous support from Christ's Hospital, the listed grants have been across all of our work in Oxfordshire or in specific other Council jurisdictions).

**Please list any grant applications to other councils or bodies which are currently pending**

We have a number of pending applications with grant-making Trusts and Foundations (none with other Councils) including The Headley Trust and Sovereign Network Group.

## 6. About your organisation

**Please explain what structure your organisation has, i.e. is it a charity, a society, or another type of model**

Charity

**What is the balance of your main account according to the most recent bank statement?**

£12,196 (CAF Bank - as of 30th Nov 2025)

### Additional financial information

**Does your organisation have any other finances held in other accounts?**

Yes

**If so, please provide full details of all your additional finances, including recent figures.**

As of 30th Nov 2025:

Redwood Bank - £62,037

Co-Operative Bank - £8,349

Cambridge & Counties - £57,297

**If these funds are earmarked for any specific projects, please provide further information about this.**

CAF Bank, Redwood Bank and Co-Operative Bank - c. £30,000 is restricted funds provided by previous or ongoing grants for a particular purpose e.g. our National Lotteries grant is assigned against specific budget lines; we have received grants that are to support specific activities e.g. providing free transport to and from social groups.

Monies in the Cambridge & Counties account is a restricted endowment given by the Edward Gostling Foundation.

Our current unrestricted reserves amounts to c. 2.5 months of our whole organisational costs.

If you require further information regarding any of the above please do let us know.

## 7. Reporting back on your grant

Organisations receiving a grant from the town council are required to provide a written report on their event or project within twelve months of the award date. The report should detail how the funds were spent and how residents of Abingdon are benefitting. The report may be included in any town council publicity, including the website or the Town Crier magazine.

### Declaration

**I declare that the information given in this grant application, both parts A and B, is complete and accurate and that no relevant information has been omitted.**

**I agree that the organisation receiving the grant will report back to the town council within 12 months of the award of this grant on how it has been used.**

**Signature**



**Name**

Angelo Fernandes

**Position with organisation**

CEO

**Date**

16/12/2025