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## **Forth Valley Climate Action Hub Funding for Community-Led Climate Action First Steps and Next Steps Grants 2025-26**

FEL Scotland and the Forth Valley Climate Action Hub is offering a new round of grants to empower community-led climate action. For a second year, the First Steps and Next Steps grants will be joined by new rounds of funding for the Women's Climate Leadership Fund and Climate Leadership programme grants. Grants are available to eligible FEL member organisations only.

### **How much can I apply for?**

Two levels of grant are available to FEL Scotland member organisations:

#### **First Steps:**

Communities taking their first steps in climate action are invited to apply for between £250 and £1,000

#### **Next Steps:**

Communities taking their next steps in climate action are invited to apply for over £1,000

There is no maximum limit, however, please note we expect most successful awards will typically fall below £2,500. An *Expression of Interest* is required for requests of £5,000 and more, in advance of an application. Deadline for Expression of Interest is 12 September.

### **What is the Climate Action Hub?**

FEL Scotland is one of 25 organisations and partnerships funded by Scottish Government to deliver Climate Action Hubs at a regional level. Climate Action Hubs are a ground-breaking initiative from Scottish Government's Net Zero campaign designed to empower communities to increase climate awareness and deliver their own climate actions. Hubs offer a range of support to meet local priorities and needs, from helping people to better understand what is happening to our environment, how they may be impacted and what they can do to adapt to changes, to learning from others who are taking steps to mitigate or adapt in their own parts of Scotland. Hubs aim to both inspire communities and provide knowledge, connections, and practical support.



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Forth Valley Climate Action Hub, hosted by FEL Scotland, networks with communities across the region to support them to respond to the climate emergency at a local level. Providing grants for community-led climate action is one of the ways we do this.

FEL Scotland is grateful to **Foundation Scotland** for its investment into Forth Valley Climate Action Hub which has helped to make a third consecutive year of grant giving possible.

### What is the Aim of the grant?

The grant aims to empower communities to:

- Increase climate-aware consumption and production
- Increase nature-based solutions to climate change
- Increase climate change awareness

Applicants are asked to show how their proposed actions meet one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), as set out below and, additionally, how they meet one or more of Forth Valley Climate Action Hub's objectives:

#### Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3 - Good health and well being
- SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities
- SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities

(Find out more about UN SDGs here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

#### Forth Valley Climate Action Hub Objectives:

1. Making the community more aware of climate change and its local impacts
2. Building partnerships between community groups and organisations around climate issues
3. Developing solutions that help communities adapt to climate change or reduce emissions
4. Empowering Communities to advocate for themselves on climate themes
5. Building a sustainable and fair future, with a focus on climate justice

### Which grant should I apply for?

**First Steps** applicants will consider themselves new to any significant coordinated approach to community-led climate action. They will not have previously received funding specific to climate outcomes.



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Typically, First Steps may involve consultations, awareness raising, community engagement events, research and evidence gathering including, hiring consultants or trailing activities designed to reduce carbon emissions or adapt to locally felt impacts of climate change.

**Next Steps** applicants will have already have a track record of coordinating climate action. They may have received funding from FEL Scotland or other funders with climate specific objectives.

Typically, next steps may deliver against aspirations from existing place plans, scale-up existing activities or innovate and test new ideas based on past learning. Next Steps applicants may also be seeking match funding for larger scale projects.

### When is the deadline?

The fund will stay open to applications for First Steps grants and Next Steps grants of below £5,000, until no later than **30 January 2026**. The fund may close sooner and without notice depending on how quickly it is fully allocated. Previous rounds of funding have been over-subscribed, so we encourage applying as soon as you are ready.

Groups requesting £5,000 or more must submit an expression of interest (EOI) by **12 September**. Successful EOIs will be invited to meet to discuss their proposal and then to submit a formal application. One-to-one support to help develop the idea from EOI to final application is available.

### Why is there no upper limit for the Next Steps grant?

We have not capped to the Next Steps grant to encourage applicants to consider and request an amount that is both appropriate and justified for the scope and ambition of their proposed project. Budgets should be realistic, cost-effective, and clearly aligned with stated project goals and outcomes.

Applicants should consider the following when determining a realistic and appropriate amount to request:

- **Project Scope and Scale:** Ensure the budget aligns with the size and complexity of the proposed work
- **Demonstrated Need:** Justify why each cost is necessary to achieve your objectives
- **Value for Money:** Budgets should be cost-effective
- **Track Record and Capacity:** Consider your organisation's experience and capacity to manage and deliver a project of the proposed budget size
- **Comparable Projects:** If possible, use similar past projects as benchmarks for estimating costs
- **Sustainability:** Consider how the project will be sustained or what impact the funding will have beyond the grant period



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All applications should include a budget or estimated breakdown of spend.

Applicants requesting £5,000 or more are encouraged to pull together supporting evidence and to set out measurable and achievable outcomes that demonstrate the community's capacity to prioritise and develop their own solutions to climate change at a local level.

Requests significantly above £5,000 (e.g., for £10,000) will need to demonstrate exceptional value, strong justification, clear impact, and ideally form part of a detailed long-term strategy. We encourage applicants to ensure their budgets are costed, realistic, proportionate, and aligned with their project's scope and outcomes.

### **What support is available?**

We are happy to discuss your proposal with you prior to receiving your application form. Applicants submitting an EOI will be invited to meet and discuss their proposal before being invited to proceed to with an application.

Please note that any discussions, guidance, or feedback provided by FEL during the application process are intended to support understanding the process and criteria. Such interactions do not have any bearing on the outcome of funding decisions, which are made through a formal review process.

### **Expressions of interest (EOI) for grants of £5,000+**

Those planning to apply for more than £5,000 should send email an Expression of Interest, in the first instance (maximum 300 words). This should include:

- The total amount requested
- An overview of the proposal, with evidence of need and desired outcomes
- Confirmation of any evidence you have to hand, and can supply on request, to support of your application. For example, Community, Climate or Place plans, research, results of consultation, any price quotes already in hand etc.
- Your availability to meet us and discuss your EOI ahead of a final application
- Why you feel this fund and the opportunity of greater collaboration with FEL Scotland and the Forth Valley Climate Action Hub is a good fit for your community.

### **Who Can Apply?**

This fund is open to FEL Scotland member organisations based in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk or Stirling Council boundaries, including any area of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park that fall under Stirling Council. Constituted community groups, community councils,



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community development trusts, community interest companies (CICs) and similar not-for-profit groups with governance in place that meet all eligibility criteria may apply.

Joining FEL Scotland as a member is free. Register at [FELScotland.org/membership](https://FELScotland.org/membership).

If you are unsure if your group is eligible, please get in contact via [Climate@FELscotland.org](mailto:Climate@FELscotland.org) and we'll be happy to discuss this with you.

If you are based in the Argyll and Bute area of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, please contact, ABCAN, who will share details of the support they offer. Email ABCAN at [Jamie@act-now.org.uk](mailto:Jamie@act-now.org.uk)

### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible the lead applicant organisation should be able to provide evidence of all the following:

- A bank account in the organisation's name (not an individual's name)
- A committee with at least 3 unrelated members
- A constitution or similar governing document
- Most recent audited signed accounts, or similar evidence of financial management
- Most recent bank statement

If your group isn't able to provide accounts or any of the other documents requested, please get in touch to discuss alternatives. Assistance can be provided by our partner Third Sector Interfaces, CTSI (Clackmannanshire); CVS (Falkirk); and SVE (Stirling) all of which can also provide advice and practical support around governance.

### **Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

- Please note that it is a condition of grant that the recipient organisation has a policy and procedure in place relating to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (PCVA). Guidance on PCVA can be found at:  
<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/>
- A sample PCVA policy and further support and guidance is available at:  
<http://www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services/resources/>

### **What costs are eligible?**

Eligible costs include:



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- Venue or equipment hire
- Catering
- Marketing and promotion
- Material and supplies
- Reasonable travel costs (excluding flights)
- Engagement tools
- Learning exchange visits
- Volunteer expenses
- Training costs
- Research
- Fees of consultants or specialists where essential to achieving project aims

We may ask for evidence that best value is achieved for any single purchases exceeding £500+ If you are not sure what costs are eligible, please get in touch.

### What costs are not eligible?

- Salary costs are not eligible.
- Capital costs or contribution to larger capital costs in other projects you may be running are not eligible. Capital costs are defined as a cost incurred on the purchase of land, buildings, construction and equipment to be used in the production of goods or the rendering of services.
- Costs incurred outwith the funded project, or incurred prior to the project start date are not eligible.

### How can my project reduce its climate impact?

#### 1. *Make Eco-Friendly Choices:*

- Go green! Think about the environment in every step of your project
- Use local, recycled, or second-hand items when you can
- Make sure products are kind to the planet and consider their lifespan
- Plant-based foods are a low carbon choice and culturally accessible for all
- Choose to support local food sources. FEL has support and advice available relating to climate friendly food

#### 2. *Make Sustainable Travel choices:*

- Travel sustainably: walking, wheeling, trains, and buses are great options. Consider using FEL's library of ebikes - <https://felscotland.org/bike-library/>
- Sorry, no funding for flights, but we might consider taxis or petrol expenses in special cases where you have discussed with us in advance



3. *Projects should also:*

- Not discriminate against any individual or group and must not cause harm. Talk to us about support available to make your project inclusive, diverse and equitable.



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### **Important dates**

- 19 August: Applications open for all funds
- 12 September: Deadline for EOIs for requests of £5,000 or over
- 30 January 2026: Latest date the fund will close to new applications, but please note the fund may close sooner, and without notice, if the total fund has been fully allocated by this date
- April 2026: Interim report required
- 30 October 2026: Final report due. Projects continuing into a second year to provide detailed update report

### **Preview of online application questions:**

1. Name of organisation
2. Title of project
3. Type of organisation
4. Please give an overview of your organisation and its objectives (200 words)
5. How would you describe your experience delivering climate action projects?
6. Please explain your project idea. (500 words)  
Tell us what your project aims to achieve, what activities will be involved, and how you intend to deliver it
7. Please tick all UN Sustainable Development goals your project supports:
8. Please tick all Forth Valley climate action Hub goals your project supports:
9. Which grant are you applying for?
10. How much are you applying for?
11. Upload Your Budget
12. Confirmation of FEL Scotland membership
13. Contact details
14. Declaration, sign and date
15. Upload evidence of eligibility



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## **Document uploads**

Submit essential documents, including:

1. Your governing documents (e.g., constitution)
2. Most recent audited accounts or income expenditure report
3. Most recent bank statement

## **Accessibility and inclusion**

Should you have any difficulties with the online form, a word document format is available on request as an alternative.

FEL commits to equity, diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) in its work and the Forth Valley Climate Action Hub. If you need support around EDI in relation to your proposal please don't hesitate to get in touch.

## **Questions?**

For assistance with your application please get in touch with your Climate action Hub officer at FEL or [stuart@felscotland.org](mailto:stuart@felscotland.org)

The Climate Hub team can help you with planning for future funding with tips and helpful resources, please get in touch if you'd like more support.

We're here to support your community's efforts to address climate change. Apply and let's work together to make a difference.

## **How do I apply**

Please complete the form on at [Climate – FEL Scotland](#). The form will be available here from 19 August. Please note you will be required to upload a budget template for any grant applied for. A template [budget can be downloaded here](#).

We recommend completing the form on a laptop or desktop computer rather than on a mobile device. A version of the application form can be supplied to you as a word document if you have technical problems. If you would like a word version, or need any help with completing the form please email [climate@felscotland.org](mailto:climate@felscotland.org)