



MAIN GRANTS PROGRAMME
(for applications to a maximum value of £2,500)
APPLICATION FORM

Name of organisation	Amber Button CIC
Official address (if applicable)	

	First contact	Second contact
Name	Jeanette Cook	David Mills
Position	CEO	Office Manager
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Does your organisation have a bank account with a minimum of two signatures? <i>Grants will only be awarded to organisations with a bank account.</i>	YES	x
	NO	

Registration status (if applicable)	
Charity Commission registration number	
Companies House registration number	11044944

Your organisation	
What does your organisation do?	Amber Button CIC is a community interest company that provides affordable and accessible creative, vocational and wellbeing activities for children, young people and adults. We use practical, hands-on activities such as arts and crafts, sewing, cooking, hair and beauty, upcycling and environmental projects to bring people together, reduce social isolation and improve confidence, wellbeing and life skills. Our programmes are designed to be welcoming and inclusive, particularly for people who may face financial, social or personal barriers to taking part in community activities. We work closely with local schools, community organisations and venues to deliver activities within the communities we serve. Alongside recreational sessions, we also provide opportunities for volunteering, skills development and progression, helping participants build confidence, develop new

	abilities and become more connected to their local community.
How does your organisation benefit the local community? Please include a specific example.	Amber Button CIC benefits the local community by creating opportunities for people to come together, build friendships, improve their wellbeing and develop confidence and new skills. We work closely with local residents, community organisations and partners to identify gaps in provision and respond with activities that meet local needs. We have a long-standing involvement in Neston and have supported a number of community initiatives. This has included our involvement with Young Voices of Neston, helping to establish the Neston Gentlemen's Breakfast Club and Neston Umbrella Group, supporting the development of a group for stroke survivors, and delivering regular Crafting for Wellbeing workshops. A specific example is our work with local stroke survivors. We developed a programme of relaxed, accessible creative and social sessions which provided a safe place for people affected by stroke and acquired brain injury to meet others with similar experiences. Attendance grew from an average of around seven people to a regular group of around eleven, with participants reporting improved wellbeing, greater confidence and reduced isolation. The sessions also helped people form friendships and support networks outside the group itself. Our approach is very much about listening to local people and working alongside them rather than simply delivering activities to them. By providing welcoming, affordable and inclusive opportunities within Neston, we help people who may otherwise be isolated or unable to access activities because of financial, health or social barriers to feel more connected to their community.
How many people benefit directly from the work of your organisation (itemise numbers of members, volunteers and service users)?	Amber Button CIC is not a membership-based organisation, so we do not have a formal membership figure. During 2025–26, more than 500 children,

	young people and adults directly benefited from our programmes, workshops and community activities across the areas in which we work. Our direct beneficiaries can therefore be summarised as: • Volunteers: 21 • Service users/participants: 500+ per year In addition to these direct beneficiaries, our work also has a wider impact on families, carers and the local community through improved wellbeing, reduced isolation, increased confidence and stronger community connections.
What activities, events or services has your organisation provided in Neston during the last 12 months?	During the last 12 months, Amber Button CIC has delivered a varied programme of community activity in Neston for children, young people and adults. Our provision has included: • Stroke and ABI Support Group: We delivered 12 dedicated sessions at Neston CYC for people affected by stroke and acquired brain injury. Attendance grew from an average of around 7 participants per session to 11 regular attendees, and 9 participants reported improvements in their wellbeing. The sessions combined creative activity with social contact and peer support, helping to reduce isolation and build confidence. We have continued meeting beyond the initial 12 sessions and the support group continues to run, funded by Amber Button CIC. • Adult Crafting for Wellbeing: We continue to provide regular, accessible creative sessions at Neston CYC, giving adults the opportunity to learn new skills, meet other local people and improve their wellbeing. These sessions are offered free of charge wherever funding allows, removing financial barriers to participation. • Holiday Activities and Food (HAF):

	We have delivered school-holiday provision for children and young people in Neston, including creative activities, games, food and enrichment opportunities. Our Neston HAF provision has been particularly valuable in reaching some children who can be difficult to engage in larger or more formal settings. Smaller group sizes have helped children build confidence, form friendships and receive more individual support. • Young Voices of Neston: Amber Button has been actively involved with Young Voices of Neston, supporting opportunities for young people to express their views, participate in local activities and have a greater voice in their community. We have developed a programme of creative workshops in partnership with Neston CYC, including evening activities specifically aimed at local young people. • Supporting community-led groups: Amber Button has established and continue to support initiatives including Neston Gentlemen’s Breakfast Club and Neston Umbrella Group, responding to identified needs and helping local residents develop sustainable opportunities for social connection and mutual support. Across all of our Neston work, our focus is on providing welcoming, affordable and inclusive opportunities that reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, develop confidence and skills, and help people feel more connected to their local community.
What activities, events or services does your organisation plan to provide in Neston for the next 12 months?	Over the next 12 months, Amber Button CIC plans to continue developing its presence in Neston and build on the relationships and partnerships we have established within the community. We intend to continue providing accessible creative and wellbeing activities for adults, alongside opportunities for children and young people through school-holiday and community-based programmes. We will also continue to

	work closely with Neston CYC and other local partners to identify gaps in provision and respond to the needs of local residents. A key priority for the coming year is to establish a new regular community group in Neston, subject to funding. Our proposed Neston Connect & Create programme would provide a welcoming weekly space for adults who may be experiencing social isolation, loneliness, low confidence or barriers to accessing other community activities. Rather than focusing on one single activity, sessions would offer a varied programme including arts and crafts, upcycling, simple cooking activities, wellbeing sessions, seasonal projects, guest workshops and opportunities for participants to suggest and shape future activities. The social element would be equally important, providing a regular place for people to meet, make friendships and become more connected to their community. Our experience delivering Crafts for Wellbeing and our Stroke and ABI programme in Neston has demonstrated the value of small, friendly and accessible groups. We would like to build on this experience by creating an additional opportunity that is open to a wider range of local residents and which can respond flexibly to their interests and needs. Funding from Neston Town Council would enable us to keep the cost of participation free or very low, purchase materials and equipment, contribute towards venue and staffing costs and ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to taking part. Alongside this new provision, we will continue to support community-led initiatives and work collaboratively with other Neston organisations so that our activities complement, rather than duplicate, existing local services.
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Your project	
Project title	Neston Connect and Create
Amount requested	£2443

Project start date <i>The project start date must be later than the meeting at which your application is to be considered. It is not possible to award grants retrospectively.</i>	1 November 2026
Project end date	30 April 2027
Describe your project	Neston Connect & Create will be a welcoming weekly community group for adults in Neston who may be experiencing loneliness, social isolation, low confidence or simply looking for an affordable way to meet new people and take part in enjoyable activities. The group will offer a varied programme of practical, creative and wellbeing-based activities, including arts and crafts, upcycling, simple cooking, seasonal projects, gentle wellbeing activities and occasional guest workshops. Sessions will be relaxed and informal, with no previous experience needed, and participants will be encouraged to suggest activities and help shape the programme. The aim is not only to teach new skills, but to create a regular, friendly space where local people can build confidence, form friendships and feel more connected to their community. We know from our existing work in Neston that small, supportive groups can make a significant difference to people who may otherwise have limited opportunities for social contact. We would particularly like to reach people who may face barriers to taking part in other activities because of cost, confidence, health, caring responsibilities or social isolation. Grant funding would allow us to keep the sessions free or very low cost and would contribute towards venue hire, materials, equipment and delivery costs. We anticipate that the project will improve wellbeing, reduce isolation, increase confidence and provide participants with new skills and stronger social connections. Over time, we hope participants will take an active role in shaping the group, helping it develop into a sustainable and valued part of the Neston community.
List the main objectives of your project	The main objectives of Neston Connect & Create are to:

	• Reduce loneliness and social isolation by providing a regular, welcoming place for local adults to meet and build friendships. • Improve mental wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem through positive social interaction and participation in enjoyable activities. • Provide affordable and accessible opportunities for people to learn new practical and creative skills. • Remove financial barriers to participation by keeping sessions free or very low cost. • Encourage participants to become more involved in their local community and develop stronger social networks. • Create an inclusive environment for people who may lack confidence or face barriers because of health, caring responsibilities, financial circumstances or social isolation. • Give participants a genuine voice in shaping the programme, with activities developed around their interests and suggestions. • Build links with other community organisations and services in Neston, helping participants access wider support and opportunities where appropriate. • Develop a sustainable community group that can continue to grow and respond to local need beyond the initial funded period.
Explain how each main objective will be achieved.	Each objective will be achieved through the following approaches: • Reduce loneliness and social isolation: We will provide a regular weekly group in a welcoming local venue, giving participants a consistent opportunity to meet others, socialise and build friendships. • Improve mental wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem: Sessions will be relaxed, supportive and non-judgemental, with activities designed to give people a sense of achievement. Participants will be encouraged to work at their own pace and celebrate what they

	create and learn. • Provide opportunities to learn new skills: Each session will include practical or creative activities such as crafts, upcycling, simple cooking, seasonal projects and wellbeing activities. Sessions will be suitable for beginners and all materials and guidance will be provided. • Remove financial barriers: Grant funding will help cover venue hire, materials, equipment and delivery costs so that sessions can be offered free of charge or at a very low cost. • Encourage greater community involvement: Participants will be encouraged to take part in local events, community projects and shared activities, helping them feel more connected to Neston and more confident about joining other local opportunities. • Create an inclusive and accessible environment: Sessions will be informal, friendly and adaptable to individual needs. We will work to ensure people who may lack confidence, have health or mobility difficulties, caring responsibilities or limited income feel able to take part. • Give participants a voice in shaping the programme: We will regularly ask participants for ideas and feedback and use this to plan future sessions. This will help ensure the group remains relevant and reflects the interests and needs of those attending. • Build links with other local organisations: Amber Button CIC will continue to work with Neston CYC, community groups and other local organisations to promote the project, encourage referrals and signpost participants to additional support and activities where appropriate. • Develop a sustainable community group: Throughout the funded period we will monitor attendance, gather feedback and identify future funding opportunities. We will also encourage regular participants to become more involved in supporting and shaping the group, helping to build longer-term
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	sustainability
Provide a timeline for implementation of your project.	November 2026 – Project set-up and launch Confirm venue, staffing and session timetable. Purchase initial resources and equipment, promote the project locally and through partner organisations, begin taking referrals and registrations, and launch the first Connect & Create sessions. December 2026 – Establishing the group Continue weekly sessions with a mix of creative, practical and seasonal activities. Gather early feedback from participants and identify any barriers to attendance. Encourage participants to suggest ideas for future sessions. January 2027 – Building engagement Resume regular sessions after the Christmas period and focus on strengthening relationships within the group. Introduce new activities and continue local promotion to reach additional residents who may benefit. February 2027 – Developing skills and confidence Continue weekly delivery with varied creative, cooking, upcycling and wellbeing-based activities. Encourage participants to try new skills, support one another and become more involved in shaping the programme. March 2027 – Community connection and participation Continue regular sessions and strengthen links with other Neston organisations and community opportunities. Encourage participants to take part in a shared project or community-focused activity. April 2027 – Final delivery, evaluation and next steps Deliver the final sessions, gather participant feedback and evaluate attendance, wellbeing, confidence and social connection outcomes. Celebrate participants' achievements and identify opportunities for future funding or continuation of the group beyond the funded period. Throughout the six-month project we will

	monitor attendance, collect informal and formal feedback and adapt the programme in response to participants' interests and needs.
Detail the evidence that proves why this project is needed.	Our proposal for Neston Connect & Create has developed directly from our experience of working with residents in Neston and from the needs we have observed through our existing community provision. One of the clearest indicators has been the growth of our Stroke and ABI group in Neston. After a slow start, averaging 3 participants per week, attendance increased from an average of approximately 7 people to 11 regular participants, demonstrating that once an accessible, welcoming and supportive activity is available locally, people want to engage. Of those taking part, 9 participants reported an improvement in their wellbeing. We have also seen through our Crafts for Wellbeing activities that people value opportunities which combine an enjoyable activity with informal conversation, friendship and a reason to leave the house. Our experience has shown us that people do not necessarily identify themselves as being “lonely” or seek out a formal support service. A creative or practical activity provides a much less intimidating way of bringing people together. Participants may initially attend because they want to make something or learn a new skill, but the friendships, confidence and sense of belonging that develop through regular attendance can become equally important. This local experience is supported by Cheshire West and Chester Council's 2025 Loneliness and Social Isolation Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which identifies loneliness and social isolation as a significant and growing public health issue. The Council found clear evidence that a significant proportion of residents do not have as much social contact as they would like and acknowledges that the true level of need may be greater because many people experiencing isolation are not known to services or community organisations. Importantly, the Council's research found that

	social gatherings are particularly valued, while arts and crafts and food and cooking are amongst the activities popular with older residents. It also highlights the importance of groups being available locally, having a welcoming approach for new participants and recognising that lack of confidence, anxiety and other emotional barriers can prevent people from joining activities. These findings closely reflect Amber Button's experience and the proposed Connect & Create model. The Council's recommendations specifically state that programmes which reduce loneliness and social isolation should be prioritised within grant programmes and that opportunities should help people develop social connections beyond the structured group itself. It also recognises the value of small grants in helping community groups to grow. There is already recognition of this need specifically within Neston: the Council's Let's Talk Neston service includes support for residents to access community activities and activities which reduce loneliness and social isolation. Connect & Create would therefore not duplicate a formal support service. Instead, it would provide the practical community opportunity that people can be signposted into – a friendly, low-pressure weekly group where residents can meet others through creative, practical and social activity. The evidence from our own participants, the increasing demand for our existing Neston provision and the Council's own assessment of local priorities gives us confidence that there is a genuine need for an additional accessible, affordable and welcoming community group of this kind.
Please demonstrate how the people who will benefit from your project, with lived experience of the issues tackled, have been involved in its development and how they will be involved in its delivery.	The development of Neston Connect & Create has been informed by our existing work with people in Neston and by the views and experiences they have shared with us during our community sessions. Through our Crafting for Wellbeing activities,

	Stroke and ABI group and other community programmes, we regularly speak with participants about what they enjoy, what prevents them from taking part in other activities and what they would like to see available locally. People have told us that they value activities which are informal, welcoming and affordable, where there is no pressure to have previous experience and where the social element is just as important as the activity itself. Many of the people we currently work with have lived experience of issues that Connect & Create aims to address, including loneliness, social isolation, low confidence, reduced mobility, financial pressures and difficulty joining unfamiliar groups. Their experiences have helped shape our decision to create a broad, activity-based group rather than a service specifically labelled around loneliness or mental wellbeing. We know that for many people, attending a craft, cooking or practical activity feels much more comfortable than attending a group specifically because they are feeling isolated. Participants have also helped us understand the importance of variety. Rather than deciding on a fixed programme in advance, Connect & Create will include different creative, practical and wellbeing activities and will be shaped around what local people tell us they would like to do. This involvement will continue throughout delivery. Participants will be regularly asked for ideas, feedback and suggestions and will help choose and plan future activities. We will use informal conversations, simple feedback methods and periodic reviews to make sure the programme continues to meet their needs. As confidence develops, participants will also be encouraged to become more involved in the group itself. This could include welcoming new members, sharing a skill with others, helping with an activity or volunteering within sessions. This will enable people with lived experience to move from simply receiving a service to actively contributing to and helping shape their own community group. Our aim is for Connect & Create to be
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	something that is developed with local people rather than for them, ensuring that their experiences, interests and ideas remain central throughout the project.
What difference will your project make to the lives of the people who will benefit from it and how will you measure its legacy?	Neston Connect & Create will make a difference by reducing isolation, improving wellbeing and confidence, and helping local people build stronger social connections within their community. For some participants, simply having a regular reason to leave the house and a welcoming place to go will be significant. Others will benefit from learning new skills, trying activities they may not otherwise be able to afford, meeting people with similar experiences and gradually becoming more confident in social situations. We expect participants to experience: • reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation; • improved confidence and self-esteem; • improved emotional wellbeing; • increased social contact and new friendships; • opportunities to learn practical and creative skills; • greater confidence to take part in other community activities; • a stronger sense of belonging within Neston; and • increased opportunities to volunteer, share skills or support others. We will measure the impact of the project in a simple and accessible way. At the start of the programme, participants will be invited to tell us how they currently feel about areas such as social connection, confidence and wellbeing. We will revisit these questions during and at the end of the project to identify changes. We will also record attendance and repeat participation, gather participant comments and case studies, and ask people whether they have made new friendships, tried new activities, increased their confidence or become involved in other community opportunities as a result of

	attending. The legacy of the project will be measured not only by the number of sessions delivered, but by what continues after the funded period. We will look at how many participants have developed friendships and support networks beyond the sessions, moved on to other local groups or volunteering opportunities, shared their own skills with others, or become more involved in shaping and supporting Connect & Create itself. We will also use participant feedback and evidence of demand to seek future funding and explore ways of sustaining the group beyond the initial six-month project. Our longer-term aim is that Connect & Create will leave Neston with a stronger network of connected, confident and socially engaged residents, with participants feeling that they are not simply attending an activity but are an active and valued part of their local community.	
How many people do you estimate will benefit from your project?	Direct beneficiaries	25
	Volunteers	3
If you aim for your project to carry on in the future, how will you ensure it continues after the funding from this application has been used?	Our intention is for Neston Connect & Create to continue beyond the initial six-month funded period, provided there is sufficient demand and resources to do so. During the project we will gather evidence of attendance, participant feedback, case studies and outcomes so that we can clearly demonstrate the value of the group. This evidence will be used to support applications to other local and national funders and to seek further community funding. We will also keep the delivery model as affordable and sustainable as possible by making good use of existing resources, reusing materials where appropriate, working with local partners and seeking donations of suitable craft and activity materials. As the group becomes established, participants will be encouraged to take a more active role in its development. This may include volunteering, welcoming new members, helping prepare activities, sharing skills or leading simple	

	sessions. This will help reduce reliance on staff and strengthen a sense of ownership within the group. We will continue to build relationships with Neston-based organisations and explore opportunities for partnership working, shared resources and referrals. Where appropriate, we may also introduce a small voluntary contribution towards sessions in the future, while ensuring that cost does not become a barrier for those most in need. By the end of the funded period, we aim to have established a strong core group, clear evidence of community need and a realistic plan for securing the resources required to continue the project.
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Breakdown of project costs	
Description of expenditure	Amount £
Venue hire	408
Facilitation costs	1100
Project management, to include marketing, data collection and evaluation, monitoring, reporting	350
Project administration services	225
Materials, resources and equipment	300
Refreshments	60
TOTAL PROJECT COST (do not include in-kind costs)	2443

Sources of project funding and in-kind support	
Have you secured any other funding for your project? If so, where from?	Amount
NA	
Description of in-kind assistance secured (eg volunteer hours or donated equipment)	Amount (what is the financial conversion for this in-kind help?)
Volunteer hours	305.04

Financial information about your organisation (last financial year)	
What was the date of your last financial year end?	31 August 2026
What was your organisation's income in the last financial year?	84,165
Did your organisation have a surplus or deficit for the last financial year?	Surplus £0
	Deficit ££9,622
What were your organisation's unrestricted reserves at the end of the last financial year?	£-£11,042

Financial information about your organisation (current financial year)	
Are you projecting a surplus or deficit for the current financial year?	Projected surplus £0
	Projected deficit £0
What are your organisation's projected unrestricted reserves for the end of the current financial year?	£0

Previous grant support from Neston Town Council		
Please detail below previous grant support that your organisation has received from Neston Town Council during the past five years		
Date of grant award	Purpose of grant award	Amount

The Town Council's funding priorities	
We look for projects that support the funding priorities detailed in the Town Council's Grants Policy. Which of these priorities does your project support?	
To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.	/
To help the Neston area's voluntary and community groups to improve the impact on the community.	
To ensure the provision of services, needed by the residents of the Neston area, via the voluntary sector.	/
To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.	
To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all Neston area residents to the services it provides and funds.	/
To improve or enhance the local environment.	

Checklist	
Latest annual accounts	/
Copies of written estimates or catalogue pages (if applicable)	
Policies for the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults (if applicable)	/

Declaration

1. I am authorised to make the application on behalf of the above organisation.
2. I have read Neston Town Council's Grants Policy and Funding Agreement.
3. I certify that the information in this application is correct.
4. If the information in the application changes in any way I will inform Neston Town Council.
5. I confirm that our organisation has the necessary governance in place to ensure accountability for the spending of any grant money allocated by Neston Town Council.
6. I understand that information provided in this application (with the exception of contact details and signatures) will be in the public domain and will be uploaded to the Town Council's website.
7. I agree to participate in monitoring, auditing and reporting feedback related to Neston Town Council grant funding.

Name	Jeanette Cook
Signature	Jeanette Cook
Date	17/9/26

Applications to the main grants programme are considered twice a year and the deadlines for submission of applications are **31 March** and **30 September**.

You can submit your application electronically to council@nestontowncouncil.gov.uk or by post to Neston Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Neston CH64 9TR.

NESTON TOWN COUNCIL PRIVACY NOTICE FOR APPLICANTS TO THE TOWN COUNCIL'S GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Data Protection Act 2018 governs how we handle personal data.

Why are we collecting your information?

On our grant application forms most of the information we need relates to your organisation. However, we are often provided with names, email addresses, contact telephone numbers and addresses relating to named individuals who are submitting the form on behalf of the group. We are processing the data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only use the personal data supplied for the means of administering the grants programme.

How will we use your information?

The information you provide to us in connection with your grant application (including personal contact details) will be held securely as hard copy originals and as electronic data on Neston Town Council's shared drive. We will only use this information to assess, process and award community grants. For those successful in obtaining a grant award, we will use information about the project in publicity to promote the grants programme but will not share any personal data. If we want to use any photographs showing people at your events we will ensure we gain consent from them at the time in order to use images of them.

Who will we share your information with?

The information may be shared with other Council Officers and Town Councillors as part of our grant assessment and monitoring process. A redacted version of your grant application (removing private addresses, private telephone numbers, private email addresses and applicant signatures) will be considered at a grants meeting and, as such, will be uploaded to

the Town Council website alongside other papers detailed on the agenda. Your contact details will not be passed on to third parties. Please note that Neston Town Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and other legislation.

How long will we keep your information?

Information from successful applicants will be retained for the current financial year plus six years. A redacted version of the grant application uploaded to the website as a meeting paper will be available to view for an indefinite period (private addresses, private telephone numbers, private email addresses and applicant signatures are redacted).

Information from unsuccessful grant applicants will be kept for 12 months from the point of application. A redacted version of the grant application uploaded to the website as a meeting paper will be available to view for an indefinite period (private addresses, private telephone numbers, private email addresses and applicant signatures are redacted).