



Start Thurrock

Creative Community Support

Guidance Information for 2026/2027

Community creativity starts here
StartThurrock.org



Welcome

Do you live in Thurrock and have a creative idea you'd love to try out?

Maybe it's a workshop, a small event, a group activity, or something creative that would bring people together, but you're not quite sure how to make it happen, or you've never filled in a funding form before.

Creative Community Support is here to help.

This programme is designed to support local people, small groups and small organisations to test out creative ideas that matter to their community. You don't need to be an expert, and you don't need everything figured out - curiosity, care and a willingness to involve others is where it starts. We're here to help you bring it to life.

What is Creative Community Support?

Creative Community Support is a programme run by **Start Thurrock that provides support and funds for** creative activities that:

- Take place in Thurrock
- Involve local people
- Help people try something creative or cultural they might not normally access
- Bring communities together

This could include things like:

- Creative workshops or short courses
- One-off community events or festivals
- Small performances, exhibitions or screenings
- Creative projects designed *with* local residents.

We're especially keen to support ideas from people and places that don't usually receive arts funding.

How much support is available?

- You can apply for **between £500 and £1,500 (including VAT)**
- In 2026–2027, Start Thurrock has **£18,000** available in total
- We expect to support **around 12 projects** this year

***Tip:** We're not looking for people to automatically ask for the maximum amount. We'd rather see a budget that makes sense for your idea.*

You must talk to us first (don't worry, it's friendly!)

Before you apply, you must have a short **pre-application conversation** with us.

This is a mandatory part of the process and is there to help you, not test you.

Applications submitted without this conversation may not be taken forward to panel, and we reserve the right not to assess proposals that haven't completed this step.

In this conversation we will:

- Listen to your idea

- Help you shape or clarify it if needed
- Check it fits the programme
- Spot any gaps, risks or misunderstandings early
- Talk through accessibility, budget or delivery questions

Many people tell us this chat is the most helpful part of the process.

To arrange a conversation, email info@startthurrock.org

Who can apply?

You can apply if you are:

✓ An individual

This might be:

- An artist or creative person
- Someone with no arts background who wants to try something new
- A local resident with an idea for their community

✓ A small group or informal collective

For example:

- A few parents, neighbours or friends
- A community group that isn't formally set up

Including:

- Community or voluntary groups
- Not-for-profit organisations
- Faith groups
- Small creative or cultural organisations
- Schools, libraries or youth centres (for activity beyond the curriculum)

✓ Commercial organisations

Only where:

- The activity is **not-for-profit**
- The public are the main beneficiaries

Who cannot apply?

Unfortunately, we cannot support:

- ✗ Projects that don't benefit people living in Thurrock
- ✗ Projects that have already started or already happened
- ✗ Organisations that distribute profits to members or shareholders
- ✗ Projects where only the applicant benefits (with no wider community involvement)
- ✗ Schools applying for curriculum-based activity or teacher training
- ✗ University students applying for tuition-related costs

What kind of projects are we looking for?

We're open-minded, but your idea must:

- ✓ Be new (either something you haven't run before, or something new for a specific audience or community you haven't previously reached).
- ✓ Involve local people in shaping or delivering it
- ✓ Reach people who don't regularly take part in arts or culture
- ✓ Be welcoming and accessible
- ✓ Aim to reach:
 - At least 10 people for workshops or participatory activity
 - or - At least 50 people for public events

You don't need to get everything perfect, we care more about intention, learning and care than polish.

Examples of projects we might support

- Residents working with an artist to design and paint a community mural
- Parents co-creating a one-day family arts event in their neighbourhood
- Beginner music workshops for young people who don't usually access music provision

These are just examples - your idea doesn't need to look like these.

Making your project accessible

We want everyone to feel welcome. When planning your idea, think about:

- Cost to participants – activities are usually free, so please outline any additional costs people may need to cover (e.g. travel, materials, childcare or access support).
- Location and transport
- Timing
- Language and communication
- Physical access

If you're not sure what's possible, talk to us - we may be able to help or provide additional support (for example, BSL interpretation or subtitles).

How to apply (step by step)

Step 1: Have a conversation with us

Email **info@startthurrock.org** to book your pre-application chat.

Step 2: Submit a proposal

After the conversation, if you decide to apply, you can submit your proposal:

- In writing ([USING THIS ONLINE FORM](#))
- or - As a video (up to 20 minutes)

You'll be asked about:

- Your idea
- Who it's for
- How people will be involved
- When it will happen
- What it will cost
- What difference it will make

We're happy to help if forms or technology are a barrier.

Application deadlines (2026–27)

- **Thursday 30 April 2026** – projects starting from June 2026
- **Thursday 30 July 2026** – projects starting from September 2026
- **Thursday 29 October 2026** – projects starting from December 2026

The decision-making panel, made entirely of Thurrock residents, usually meets within three weeks of the deadline.

If your project is supported, we'll ask you to:

- Sign a simple support agreement
- Keep basic evidence (photos, short notes, feedback)
- Complete a short end-of-project reflection
- Acknowledge Start Thurrock and Arts Council England

We'll support you through this; you won't be left to figure it out alone.

Final reassurance

If you're reading this and thinking: "I like the idea, but I'm not sure I'm the right person..." You probably are.

Creative Community Support exists for people *just like you* - people with ideas, questions, and a desire to do something positive where they live.

Get in touch: info@startthurrock.org

We'd love to hear your idea.

For further assistance or enquiries, please email info@startthurrock.org or call 01375 531410

