

Annex: Our Funding Context for This Application

Broadstairs, September 2026

Neurodivergent Friends CIC (NDFT) is a Neurodivergent and disabled-led organisation supporting Neurodivergent adults across Thanet. This annex sets out the wider funding context behind our request to continue the Creative Connection Club (CCC) in Broadstairs, and why we are asking the Town Council for this support again rather than seeking funding elsewhere at this time.

1. Funding secured this year

Over the past year we have made significant progress in strengthening NDFT's core funding base. We were awarded £122,000+ from the National Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund, secured over three years, to sustain our regular social programme for Neurodivergent adults across Thanet. We were also awarded £8,000+ from Kent Community Foundation towards our internal operating costs – core running costs such as governance, compliance and organisational infrastructure, explicitly excluding delivery costs for individual programmes such as CCC and our social programmes.

Together, this funding gives NDFT a stable base for the first time, but it does not fund the Creative Connection Club. The creative workshops programme remains reliant on the kind of dedicated, programme-specific funding that Broadstairs Town Council has previously provided, and continues to need it if it is to run in 2026/27.

We reported to the Council on the pilot CCC programme in March 2026, and in response the Council indicated that a further application would be welcomed. This application is a direct response to that invitation, and reflects our confidence – based on the pilot's results – that this programme is worth continuing.

2. Why we are asking Broadstairs again, rather than elsewhere, right now

Securing the Reaching Communities grant is a major step for NDFT, but it also means the next few months are about implementation: setting up multi-year reporting, and using the stability it provides to properly resource our small team. From October, we will begin developing a dedicated funding strategy specifically for our creative programmes, including CCC – looking at trusts, foundations, Arts Council England, and relationships with other Thanet town councils as we grow our reach across the district.

We are not in a position to run that strategy work now, in parallel with everything else, but we will be within the next 6 months or so. Trying to plan this strategy now,

before we have settled a little, would be irresponsible and come with a risk of diluting our efforts. . Asking Broadstairs to fund this next round of CCC, as you have previously indicated you would welcome, lets us keep the programme running for the people who rely on it while we do that strategy work properly and build a more diverse funding base for future years – rather than approaching multiple funders on a rushed timescale this year and risking a weaker application to everyone, including you.

3. Why it matters now

2025-2026 has been a demanding year operationally. We completed a Director transition, recruited two additional freelance facilitators, while remaining a small core team of three Neurodivergent and Disabled Directors, overseeing all of NDFT's output, including programme delivery and training. Over the summer it was necessary to take a pause for a few months, to protect our Director and freelance facilitator team's capacity and wellbeing. We are through that now, with a stable team and, thanks to the Reaching Communities fund, a firmer financial footing (relating to core operational costs) than we have had before.

What we do not want is for our community to lose out because of that timing.

The pilot CCC programme had an 82.5% attendance rate and saw participants' self-reported confidence in creative expression rise from 4.5 to 7.6 out of 10 across a single session – participants have told us clearly that they want it to continue. Without this grant, the CCC would not be able to run in 2026/27. It would be a huge blow to our community and the work that we do if a programme they have told us they love would sit unavailable for a year while we build the funding strategy to sustain it long-term.

We are asking for this support one more time, on this specific programme, while we stabilise and work on the strategy – not as an ongoing assumption for continued programme funding in the future, but as the bridge that lets us grow into a more sustainable footing without the local Neurodivergent community missing out in the meantime.