



# House Project at the Eden Centre: Funding request for 2026/27

Places to live. Space to grow.

## Background

Edenbridge Town Council has contributed towards the costs of the HOUSE Project at the Eden Centre since it opened in 2013. Since April 2017 a Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been in place between Edenbridge Town Council and West Kent. We are very grateful for generous contributions towards the project, including your current annual donation of £9,000. We are seeking a further annual grant of £13,500 towards the running costs of Edenbridge HOUSE for financial year 2026/7. This increased level of funding will enable us to offer an enhanced youth service, including weekly detached youth sessions.

## Proposed project

Edenbridge HOUSE is a safe place for young people to socialise, have fun and get information, advice and support on a wide range of health issues. The project offers a free, fully inclusive and accessible service to all those aged 11-19 (or those aged up to 25 with learning disabilities). We will deliver:

- Open access youth sessions on three evenings a week for 48 weeks (a total of 144 sessions). Each session will last for three hours.
- Weekly detached evening youth sessions, in partnership with Eden Christian Trust. This work will involve engaging with young people in public spaces such as parks, streets or housing estates. We aim to reach young people who don't access traditional youth services and establish positive relationships with them.

## Project budget

The project budget for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 is as follows:

Category	Cost
<b>Direct project costs</b>	
Staff costs – Youth Coordinator and three youth workers	£41,744
HOUSE premises costs (room hire, broadband etc.)	£14,233
Resources, session materials and refreshments	£2,920
<b>Sub-total for direct project costs</b>	<b>£58,897</b>
<b>Indirect project costs</b>	
Management overhead costs	£5,889
Other overhead costs	£8,834
<b>Sub-total for indirect project costs</b>	<b>£14,723</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£73,620</b>

We expect to secure external funding (from The Great Stone Bridge Trust, local funders and our suppliers) of £10,000. West Kent will contribute £50,120 (including all indirect costs). This leaves a funding gap of £13,500.

### **Why are we seeking an increased level of funding?**

It is increasingly difficult to secure external funding for youth services. Kent County Council decommissioned all voluntary sector youth services in 2024, including funding for our detached youth service. Youth organisations throughout Kent have increased fundraising requests to charitable trusts and lottery funders to keep services going. This increased competition for funds has resulted in significantly reduced success rates for external bids. Last year our funding bids for youth projects were turned down by both National Lottery Communities Fund and BBC Children in Need.

We believe that the funding landscape will improve in the next few years. For the time being, projects can only survive if they have reliable local funding sources. In Edenbridge we are fortunate that there are three local funders (West Kent, Great Stone Bridge Trust and Edenbridge Town Council) that have financial resources to support local youth services. Great Stone Bridge Trust continues to support us but has received more bids from local projects. The Trust has recently reduced their annual commitment to the Edenbridge HOUSE project to £6,000 (from £7,000).

We request an increase in funding from Edenbridge Town Council of £4,500 for the next financial year, taking our total request to £13,500. This funding will ensure that we can deliver a weekly detached youth service and also maintain an adequate staffing level in our three weekly clubs. With your support, one of our youth workers (working in partnership with the Eden Christian Trust) would deliver weekly evening street-based sessions in Edenbridge (for 48 weeks a year). We would work with your staff and other local organisations to identify hot spots for antisocial behaviour. We will work with young people to identify local issues and find solutions. This tried and tested preventative approach has helped us divert young people from antisocial behaviour and support safer communities. With your support, we will have the necessary resources to deliver regular street-based sessions. (Without additional funding of £4,500, we would be unable to commit to regular street-based sessions.)

### **Conclusion**

With your support we will help young people to build their social networks and take part in free youth activities, reducing pressure on family budgets. We will contribute towards reduced antisocial behaviour, improved health and wellbeing, improved personal development, skills, and aspirations. Together, we will contribute to making Edenbridge a better place to live, work and visit. Thank you for your consideration.

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