



THE ROYAL
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND

Supporting Rural Communities

FAQs

WHAT DO YOU FUND? WHAT DON'T YOU FUND?

This funding is available to rural **community organisations**, not individuals or private businesses. You can apply if your organisation has an income of less than £500,000 a year and is a:

- constituted voluntary or community organisation
- registered, exempt or excepted charity
- charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- not-for-profit company limited by guarantee - you must be a registered charity or have a not-for-profit 'asset lock' clause in your articles of association
- community interest company (CIC)
- community benefit society
- co-operative society - you must have a not-for-profit 'asset lock' clause in your society rules and also be registered with the Financial Conduct Authority

If you're an unincorporated group

It might be appropriate for you to become a company or other type of incorporated organisation. We suggest you look into this and think about how it might work for your organisation.

You need at least 2 board or committee members who are not related

Related can mean:

- related by marriage
- in a civil partnership with each other
- in a long-term relationship with each other
- related through a long-term partner
- living together at the same address
- related by blood.

All companies who apply must have at least two directors who are not related in any of these ways. This also applies to companies that are also registered as charities.

Types of organisation that we are unable to fund:

These include (but are not limited to):

- Care Farms or similar activities where the beneficiaries are drawn from a larger area than just the local community.
- Local Authorities, including Town and Parish Councils.

- Hospitals and Schools.
- Private companies and individuals.
- Youth clubs.
- Uniformed groups such as scouts, guides and sea cadets.
- Sports clubs and associations.

What we don't support:

We are unable to fund:

- Activities which involve capital work to buy or build, refurbish, extend or alter a property or other construction-related works.
This includes:
 - refurbishment
 - retro-fitting
 - extending buildings
 - purchasing land or buildings
 - creating a new building
 - developing an external space like a community garden.
- Rent costs
- Purchase of buildings or land.
- Planning permission/building regulations.
- Activities taking place in a location where the purchase/rent agreement is not complete.
- Statutory requirements.
- Landscape-scale or nature recovery type projects
- Technical energy activities where a specialist funder might be more appropriate.
- Activities that replace government funding
- Activities that benefit individuals, rather than the wider community
- Lobbying activities
- Things you've spent money on in the past and are looking to claim for now (retrospective costs)
- The topping up of organisation reserves.
- Activities where our contribution makes up less than 10% of the total cost of the activity.
- Activities that aim to promote a religion (we can fund religious organisations if their activity benefits the wider community and does not include religious content).
- Consumables including fuel, food or refreshments.
- Political activity/campaigning
- Working capital - the liquid funds available to meet your daily business expenses.
- Loans.
- Activities where there may be other, more appropriate funders with a better understanding of the issue. For example, those dealing with:
 - domestic violence
 - migration
 - dementia or elderly care
 - healthcare or mental healthcare provision.
- We want to ensure that resources are optimally allocated in line with national funding priorities. The Government recently announced a new smaller grants element to the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund and an additional £5 million support for village halls made by the Chancellor in the budget in March this year. We will therefore not be considering applications for village hall and other community asset renovation activities

through this scheme, and instead would like to guide applicants interested in these types of activities towards these new funding opportunities.

RURALITY & POPULATION SIZE

While the RCF does not impose strict limits on population size, we focus our support on isolated rural areas, where the project is required due to a lack of alternative services in that locality. Therefore, applications from small villages and towns, or rurally dispersed areas, will likely be prioritised over those from larger towns, which may be better served.

COMMUNITY NEED AND DEPRIVATION

As a rural funder, the RCF recognises that deprivation is often hard to quantify through the usual statistical measures. However, we want to direct funding where it is needed most. Therefore, applications from areas of deprivation, or those that can show how the project will benefit those most in need within an area of wealth disparity, will likely be prioritised over those from more affluent areas.

IF MY PROJECT REQUIRES PERMISSIONS SUCH AS PLANNING CONSENT, DO YOU NEED TO SEE PROOF THAT IT HAS BEEN SECURED?

We will need to see evidence of relevant permissions if you are invited to submit a full proposal to us. We do not accept projects where planning permission has not already been secured.

CAN I APPLY IF I ALREADY HAVE AN ACTIVE AGREEMENT?

You may have two active agreements at once. However, there should be no adverse risks relating to the delivery of the first project. You will need to be able to demonstrate this when asked. We cannot fund organisations applying to more than one of our funds for the same project over the same period. This is because you cannot get duplicate funding for something we're already funding you to do.

HOW SOON CAN I REAPPLY?

We do not insist on a gap between applications from the same organisation.

DO YOU HAVE APPLICATION DEADLINES?

Yes, our window for submission of expressions of interest is six weeks and closes at midday on Thursday 26th September 2024. Check our website to keep up to date with announcements.

CAN I DISCUSS AN APPLICATION WITH YOU BEFORE I APPLY?

Yes, we are happy to talk through your activity beforehand. However, we ask that you have an activity ready to discuss, rather than contacting us to help you come up with a suitable idea. We also recommend reading the guidance document before contacting us about your proposal.

You can get in touch with us via email at grants@countrysidedefund.org.uk. Please note, we are a small team and so may not be able to respond to your emails straight away.

DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM IN ONE SITTING?

No, once you have started your application you will be able to make changes until you are ready to click submit. Just remember to save your application before you leave the page. We also recommend drafting your application on a separate document, just in case.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT MY APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED?

Once your application is submitted, you will be redirected to a page confirming submission and explaining the next steps.

CAN I EDIT MY APPLICATION ONCE IT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED?

We are very sorry but we are unable to amend applications once they have been submitted. Please check your application thoroughly prior to submission. Once submitted, you will no longer be able to view your application, so please save a copy for your records.

CAN I SEE EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS THAT HAVE RECEIVED FUNDING?

You can find examples of past and present beneficiaries on our [website](#) and in the guidance document.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AS AN APPLICANT AND HOW DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS?

We prioritise those that fit most closely with the programmes aim to enhance the viability and sustainability of rural communities. We look for applicants that make a credible case for need and demand in their proposed rural locality, demonstrate their ability to achieve the outcomes intended, and that the activity represents value for money.

You must demonstrate demand for the project from the community it will be serving if asked to submit a full proposal. Applications are heavily assessed on this factor, so if you cannot demonstrate this effectively, we recommend spending time gathering this information before applying. Applications which cannot evidence widespread community support will not be progressed.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by an initial panel, at which point a shortlist will be selected and invited to submit a full proposal. Following submission of the full proposal, applicants will be invited to do a short presentation on their project to our panel. Our panel will then make a final decision and we'll be in touch to let you know if we're going to fund your proposal or not.

We will let you know as soon as possible if we decide not to progress your application.