Supporting Rural Communities

Guidance

THE ROYAL
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND

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THE ROYAL COUNTRYSIDE FUND

How to apply for funding

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1. **Read the guidance:** Read the guidance to decide whether your activities align with the programme objectives

2. **Expression of Interest:** Once you have completed the above step, you will need to send a short video and complete a simple 'Expression of Interest' form via our website. **The deadline to submit your expression of interest is Friday 21st February 2025 at midday.** The outcome of this first stage of the application process will be announced in **March 2025.**

3. **Full proposal:** If we feel that your Expression of Interest is a good fit with our programme, we'll invite you to take your proposal to the next stage, by sending us in some more details. You will have 4 weeks to complete this. We'll ask for more detail about the activity – evidence of need, how many people it will impact on, actions and outcomes. Along with the extra information above, we will also ask for the following:
   – Evidence of relevant permissions/agreements if applicable
   – Evidence of a competitive tender process to buy goods or services, or to buy or develop intellectual property, costing more than £10,000 (if applicable)
   – A bank statement dated in the last three months to check account details
   – Confirmation that you will hold the funding in a UK based account or building society account, which is in the legal name of the organisation that is applying for funding
   – Confirmation you have at least two board or committee members who are not related
   – A copy of your latest approved annual report and accounts OR a set of draft accounts covering the last financial year if your annual accounts are more than 14 months old
   – A copy of your safeguarding policy

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI): Once you've submitted your full proposal, you will be asked to fill in a DEI monitoring form about your organisation. We want to use the information we gather to help us identify and address structural inequity, and ensure that the reach of our funding and our funding practices are fair and just.

4. Panel and Final Decision: Following submission of your full proposal, 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. **Final decisions will be made in late May 2025.**

Programme Overview

Our mission is to empower rural communities to develop community-led solutions that increase their resilience and sustainability. The aim is to "power up, not prop up" communities, to inspire change and encourage economic vibrancy.

We want to support work that falls under four key themes:

1. **Keeping young people in the countryside:** We will support projects which increase access to skills training and employment opportunities in rural communities.

2. **Powering up rural communities:** We will support projects which aim to provide financial benefits to the locality, addressing local needs.

3. **Environmental sustainability:** We will support community-driven projects which aim to increase the environmental sustainability of their community through reducing emissions/environmental impact, creating positive benefits for the community and improving the quality of the local environment.

4. **Building emergency resilience in rural areas:** We will support communities to develop preventative measures and plans to respond to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, helping them to be better prepared to cope with and recover from emergencies.

Communities are invited to bid for money that will create tangible change.

For example, it could be a project to generate a new income stream for the local community, or the creation of learning or skills opportunities.

It might be ideas that have environmental benefit, for example projects which reduce negative environmental impacts in the community or help to increase community awareness and engagement in the local environment.

We are particularly seeking **innovative** solutions to the challenges facing rural areas. Is there a project that hasn't been done before that specifically addresses a local need?

Programme Overview

Where?

We are open to applications from across the UK and particularly encourage applications from Wales and Northern Ireland. However, applications will be assessed on their own merit. Please note, **applications from Cumbria and Northumberland** will not be accepted in this round due to our recent joint programme focused on these counties.

How long?

We will be awarding funding for projects for up to two years' duration. Projects must start within 6 months of the agreement start date and all projects must be completed by **June 2027**.

When will the grants be awarded?

Applicants which have been successful in the first stage of the application process will be invited to submit a full proposal in March 2025. Final decisions on which grants have been awarded will then be made in late May 2025.

When will the grant be paid?

All grants will be paid in two instalments, generally equating to half the amount in each, with the first instalment paid at the end of May/early June 2025 (depending on the applicant returning the grant agreement and all other requirements being in place). Please consider how this might impact your project if there is a large amount of early-stage expenditure.

For all grants, we will require an interim progress report and a final report.

How much?

You should apply for as much as you need to complete your project, to a maximum of **£25,000**, to be spent over a period of up to **24 months.**

We can fund:

- **direct costs** to deliver activities in the community – such as project staff, materials, equipment, room hire, volunteer expenses and project evaluations

- **organisational development** – such as such as business planning, testing new ways of working, staff training and development, developing governance and leadership, tech or IT purchases or upgrades, developing and sharing impact and learning, and increasing capacity to support collaboration and partnership working

- **core or fixed costs** to support the day-to-day running of organisations - such as core salaries, utilities, equipment

- Please note, we are **unable** to fund through this programme:

Activities which involve capital work to buy or build, refurbish, extend or alter a property or other construction-related works.

    This includes:
        o   refurbishment
        o   retro-fitting
        o   extending buildings
        o   purchasing land or buildings
        o   creating a new building
        o   developing an external space like a community garden.

If you want to buy a vehicle we'll ask you to look into the best option for your activity and the planet. You'll only have to do this if we want to take your proposal further.

If any part of the funding is used to buy goods or services, or to buy or develop intellectual property, costing more than £10,000 you must carry out a competitive tender for the goods and/or services and comply with UK and EU procurement rules if applicable to you.

Who can apply

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

- community interest company (CIC)

- community benefit society

- co-operative society

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.

Rurality

Support will be focused on **isolated rural areas** with populations usually less than 4,000, where the activity is required due to a lack of alternative services in that locality.

Applications from small villages and towns, or rurally dispersed areas, will be prioritised over those from larger towns, which may be better served.

However, we appreciate that some larger towns (over 4,000 people) may still be underserved and distant from urban and peri-urban hubs so we will assess these applications on a case-by-case basis. If your community falls into this category, we recommend contacting the grants team to discuss prior to starting an application.

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.

Types of organisation we are unable to fund

RCF is only able to fund up to 15% of grant applications made to us in each funding round. We recognise that our strength lies in funding specific projects in rural areas for which we have the specialist knowledge and understanding to make informed funding decisions. We want to be the most appropriate funder for our projects and be able to provide support to our recipients where required.

With this in mind, there are certain types of organisations and project costs we are unable to fund.

Organisation types we are unable to fund 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, sole traders and individuals.

- Youth clubs.

- Organisations that look to make profits and share these profits out privately - including companies limited by shares, organisations without the right asset locks, or organisations that can pay profits to directors or shareholders.

- 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. It's OK to apply to another programme if you've already had an unsuccessful decision though.

- Uniformed groups such as scouts, guides and sea cadets.

- Sports clubs and associations.

Projects and costs we are unable to fund:

- Projects taking place in Cumbria and Northumberland
- Rent costs
- 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.
- Landscape-scale or nature recovery type projects
- Planning permission/building regulations.
- Insurance costs
- Activities taking place in a location where the purchase/rent agreement is not complete.
- Statutory requirements.
- Technical energy activities where a specialist funder might be more appropriate.
- Consumables including food, fuel or refreshments.
- 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).
- 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.

Key organisation characteristics we are looking for

Community-Led

We want organisations to demonstrate that the need and demand for their activity is coming from the community themselves and that they actively listen to and understand the needs of their community.

You must demonstrate demand for the project from the community it will be serving. You will need to provide evidence of this using data relating directly to your target community and project if you are invited to submit a full proposal to us. Grants are heavily assessed on this factor, so if you cannot currently demonstrate this effectively, we recommend spending time gathering this information and applying in the next funding round. **Applications which cannot evidence widespread community support, will not be progressed.** We would also like applications to demonstrate how community leadership is driving projects forward.

You might want to think about:
- If you actively engage and have spoken to the people in your community e.g. regular community consultation, surveys
- If your activity has been developed in response to what people have told you they need and is important to them

You could demonstrate the need and demand for your project through the following:
- Survey data where respondents have been asked whether they want the project (ensure you include the sample size e.g. we surveyed 100 people from the community and 85% stated they supported XZY project).
- Survey data where respondents have been asked how much they value and use the community asset for which you are fundraising.
- Testimonials from a wide range of community members, groups or organisations stating the need and support for the project.
- Examples of previous, similar projects you have run and the impact these had on the local community.
- Remember to ensure the evidence relates to your specific project and the need for it, not just your organisation or the issue at hand.

Key organisation characteristics we are looking for

We are also looking for organisations to demonstrate how they are meeting **one** or more of the below key characteristics:

1. Working towards a long term vision

We want organisations to be sustainable long-term, with a clear vision or goal for their organisation and community.

You might want to think about:

- If you have a clear long-term vision or goal for your organisation and how you are working towards this e.g. a business plan
- If the activity is likely to lead to further opportunities for your organisation or its beneficiaries e.g. your activity will help to generate an income, enabling further investment in the community

2. Facilitating collaboration and connectedness

We want to support organisations that are inclusive, accessible and collaborative. We are keen to understand how you work with other community groups and organisations, do you share resources or learning and ideas? This is an opportunity to demonstrate how you are connected with others to deliver collective change.

You might want to think about:
- If you currently share skills/resources with other organisations, or how this activity will help you to do that.
- What relationships your organisation has with external partners, stakeholders and funders.

3. Demonstrating innovation
We want to support activities that are creating innovative and replicable solutions to the challenges facing their community

You might want to think about:

- What makes your activity innovative? Is this a bespoke solution you have developed to an identified challenge in your community?
- What unmet need or gap in provision this activity addresses
- If your activity has the potential for scale. Is there scope to share learning and/or replicate elsewhere?

What might success look like?

1. Help provide financial benefits to the local area – rural community becomes more economically vibrant

- Generation of a new, or support to build an existing, income stream for the community, helping to secure long-term viability and reduce reliance on external funding

- Creation of a circular economy within the community e.g. products are produced which can be circulated within the local economy, focused on local production for local use, retaining more of the value and economic activity locally, for local benefit while at the same time reducing carbon footprints

- Local organisations address local needs and improve service provision

- Skills/resources are shared with other organisations, and local partnerships are developed which drive economic growth

- An essential resource is provided or developed that is currently inaccessible to the community, helping to improve economic resilience

- Organisations have a clear long term strategy to improve self-sufficiency and financial resilience

- There is improved knowledge/skills/resource sharing in the local economy

What might success look like?

2. Improve environmental sustainability and emergency resilience in rural areas

- Solutions are developed which reduce negative impacts on the local environment.

- Projects identify local vulnerabilities in the local area and make action plan to address emergency resilience.

- There is increased knowledge and interest from the community in the local environment and environmental initiatives

- Community organisations work towards offering sustainable local solutions.

- The community are more aware of and engaged in their local environment.

- Waste is reduced and resource efficiency initiatives are developed.

- *Please note, we aren't accepting nature recovery or landscape scale regeneration type projects through this grant programme.*

3. Create an innovative and replicable approach addressing an unmet need within the rural area.

- Unmet needs or gaps in provision, existing or emerging issues or priorities within the community are identified and addressed through innovative solutions.

- Organisations work with their community to explore ideas and test solutions to local issues.

- Solutions developed are shared with other local communities, helping to expand the scale of change in rural communities.

What might success look like?

4. Young people have greater incentive to stay, live and work in the countryside

- Organisations develop economic and social opportunities that meet the needs of young people within the community

- Skills within the community are built, helping to encourage growth e.g. local employment opportunities are created, training opportunities developed

- Young people feel more connected and engaged with local community

5. Build Stronger, Connected, and Resilient Rural Communities

- Community leadership and planning approaches are developed

- Community-led solutions are developed that bring people together around local issues

- Project helps community to develop a long-term plan for their future and sustained change beyond the lifetime of the funding, increasing confidence levels

- Organisations develop connections with likeminded community projects to facilitate replication.

Assessing Applications

The following criteria will be considered when awarding our grants:

- Does the project meet the programme aims as outlined in the programme overview?

- What is the need for this project, and are the community engaged and supportive of it?

- Is there significant demand from the local community?

- Is the evidence provided directly related to the project being proposed?

- Who will benefit from this project? And is it accessible to all in your community?

- Is your proposal clear, realistic, and achievable within the timescale stated?

- Does your project offer value for money?

How we make funding decisions

RCF staff experienced in assessing and awarding grants will consider the applications as they arrive with us and will ascertain whether the application is eligible.

All eligible applications are assessed twice against a set of scoring criteria, using the information provided in your application. The top-scoring applications will then be considered by our Grants Sub-committee, which is comprised of RCF trustees, independent members, and the Executive Director. They will make the final decision on which projects will proceed to the next stage.

Guidance for completing the Expression of Interest Form and Video Submission

The first stage of applying is to complete a simple expression of interest form on our website **and** submit a short video to us. When the round opens on **10th January 2025**, a link to the application form will be on available on the website.

You can save your application as you go along, before you submit and we strongly recommend doing so. **We also suggest drafting your answers in a separate document offline just in case something goes wrong.** There is a PDF version of the questions available on the website to help you do this.
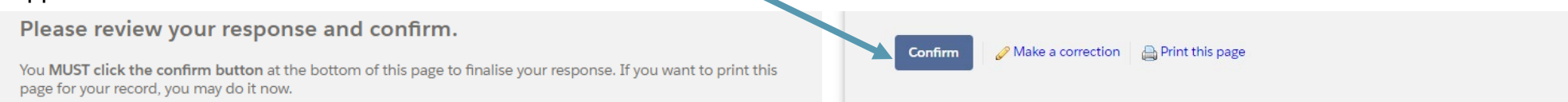
How to fill in the Expression of Interest form:

1. **Eligibility Quiz:** Fill in the quiz to check you are eligible to apply for funding.

2. **Section 1: Applicant Details:** This section is to collect all the relevant information about your organisation, the senior contact who will be legally responsible for the funding and the main contact who will be our day-to-day contact for the project.

3. **Section 2 Activity Overview:** This section is your opportunity to tell us all about your project, including the outcomes, and how you will deliver it.

4. **Review & Submit:** Once you are happy with all your responses, please press 'Review & Submit'. Please note, your application will **not be submitted** when you press 'Review & Submit'. You must review your application and submit on the next page.

> Once you are happy with all your responses, please press 'review & submit'. This will take you to a page where you can review your entire application and save a copy by pressing 'print' at the bottom.
>
> Please note, your application will not be saved or submitted when you press 'review & submit' below. You must review and submit on the next page.
>
> **Previous Page**   **Review & Submit**
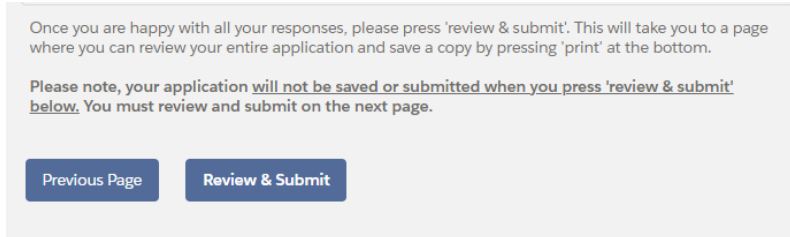
5. You will be alerted if any questions have been missed. You will then be taken to a page where you can review your entire application and save a copy by pressing 'print' at the bottom.

6. On the 'Review your Response' page you **MUST click the 'confirm'** button at the bottom of this page to finalise your response, otherwise your application will not be submitted.

> **Please review your response and confirm.**
>
> You **MUST click the confirm button** at the bottom of this page to finalise your response. If you want to print this page for your record, you may do it now.

> **Confirm**   ✏ Make a correction   🖨 Print this page

7. You will receive a notification on screen and an email once your application has been received (please check your spam/ junk folder)

Guidance for completing the Expression of Interest Form

Applications close on Friday 21ˢᵗ February 2025 at midday.

The online form will be taken down at **midday** on the closing date. We are unable to accept applications in any other format. We therefore recommend you get your application in as soon as possible.

Please answer all questions on the application form as openly as possible. We are expecting a great deal of interest and will rely on the information you've given us. Please do not send us any supplementary information other than that which is requested in the online application form, as this will not be considered.

You may save the application as you go along and come back to it, however, we **recommend drafting your responses offline** just in case. If you choose to save your application, you will be asked to enter your email and create a password. A link will then be sent to your email which you can use to log back in. Please ensure you have filled out your Organisation Name, Postcode, and Contact email before you click Save.

1) Click here to save your form

THE ROYAL COUNTRYSIDE FUND

2) Enter your details as shown. **Please make a note of the password** chosen as you will need this to access the form

Expression of Interest Form

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☐ Save my progress and resume later |

Resume Later

In order to be able to resume this form later, please enter your email and choose a password.
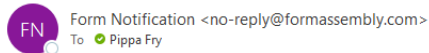
Your Email:

A Password:

Confirm Password:

Save

3) Go to your email to resume your form. You may need to check your junk, in case the email has gone into there

Your response to Supporting Rural Communities UK EOI has been saved.

FN Form Notification <no-reply@formassembly.com>
To ● Pippa Fry

Thank you. Your response to Supporting Rural Communities UK EOI has been saved.

You can resume this form at any time by going to https://app.formassembly.com/forms/resume/5152503.

IMPORTANT: Your submission is considered incomplete until you resume it and press the submit button.

Guidance for completing your video submission

Ask a colleague or friend to film you

What to include

Please submit a short video with your application. We want to hear your story – who you are, what your organisation does, what the project is you'd like us to support. It would be great to hear more about:

- *where you are based*
- *the main activities and objectives of your organisation*
- *what you'd like to do*

How to make your video
The video can be taken on a phone/tablet - the quality of the video will not be taken into consideration. The video must:

- Be between 1 to 3 minutes long
- Please note, if you submit a video longer than 3 minutes, **only the first 3 minutes will be assessed**
- Be uploaded to a hosting website e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive or YouTube or sent via whatsapp to 07825165340. If sending via whatsapp, make sure to send your name, organisation name and email address with your video.
- Videos can be portrait or landscape. Please only submit **one** video, not multiple. Don't worry too much about the style or editing of the video. We just need the sound to be clear and be able to hear what you're saying.
- Avoid filming in places with too much background noise like outdoors, in a busy café or office. A quiet empty room's a good place to film in.
- Please enter the full website address (URL) for your video in **question 2.1** on your Expression of Interest form. Make sure the website address is correct so we can watch your video. The full website address will include all the letters and symbols at the beginning of the URL. This includes the http:// or https:// at the start. If you're using YouTube, choose an unlisted YouTube video, as this will not be seen publicly

Or you could film yourself

Consent
If you're going to take videos of people taking part in your project, make sure you get their consent first. You'd normally do this with a consent form. Find information about consent from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).
You can view an example video we have filmed on our website.
Please note, if you aren't able to upload a video, or have trouble with this part of your submission, please contact us with your name, email and phone number on grants@countrysidefund.org.uk and we can assist you with this.
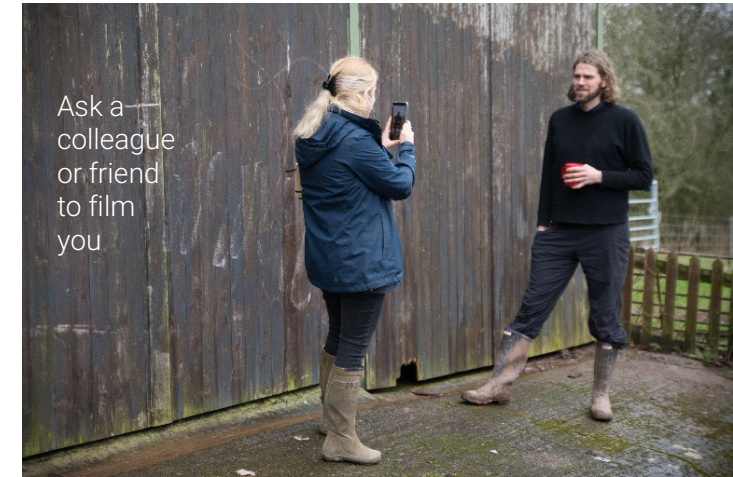
Guidance for completing the full proposal

If we feel that your EOI is a good fit with our programme, we'll invite you to take your proposal to the next stage, by sending us in some more details in a full proposal form. More guidance on what we will be looking for in the full proposal can be found in the 'full proposal guidance' on our website.

However, in summary, we will be looking for:

- Project postcode

- Start and end Dates

- Evidence of need from the community the project will be serving e.g. survey data, testimonials, research you have conducted, examples of previous, similar projects you have run

- Number of beneficiaries

- Your actions and outcomes to bring the project to completion

- How your project addresses our target impacts

- Finances – a detailed budget

- Long term vision – how you will ensure the project is sustainable in the future

- Collaboration – whether you currently collaborate with other local organisations

- Risks

- Referees: Contact details for two referees that are happy to be contacted to provide a reference for your application

- Evidence – see page 3 for more information on evidence required.

Following submission of your full proposal, 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. Final decisions will be made in late **May 2025.**

What we expect from you

If successful, you will be expected to:

- Have an initial 'kick-off' meeting with our team to talk through next steps and finalise details for project delivery

- Host some of our team for a visit to your project during the agreement period

- Submit a report halfway through the project outlining
  - **Spend**
  - **Impact** - tell us how you have made progress towards the intended impact for the project
  - **Learning** - tell us more about what you have learnt, what changes you have made
  - **Partnerships** - tell us more about your connection to stakeholders locally – what is working well or not, and if the project has joined or created any networks.
  - Tell us about any **issues, challenges or risks** identified during the delivery of your activities.
  - If anything has changed

- Submit an end of project report outlining:
  - **Spend**
  - **Overall impact**
  - **Learning**
  - **Partnerships**

- Keep us up to date throughout the project with emails/general correspondences

- Actively participate in marketing the award – through interviews, media content and social media contributions

- Attend any events, stakeholder meetings or open days related to the award.

What you can expect from us

- **Open communication** and support from our team with any queries you may have

- **Support** in promoting your project and news of the funding

- The opportunity to join our **Confident Rural Communities Network** - aimed at enabling rural community organisations supported through our programmes to network, exchange ideas and share solutions. A space where communities can thrive by learning from each other, working collaboratively to tackle challenges and identify opportunities to increase self-sufficiency and long-term viability.

- Invitations to events and meetings

Talk to us about your project

- We know it can be helpful to discuss your project before applying. To arrange a call, please submit your details via the online form on our website. We do ask that you use the form to contact us rather than emailing or phoning. This will allow us to provide you with better, more informed guidance.

- Please note that we are a small team, so may not be able to respond to you immediately. If you contact us via email or phone to discuss your project, you will be re-directed to the online form.

- Once you have submitted your application, you may not hear from us until the end of our assessment process. Please try to refrain from phoning or emailing to check on your application – we will get back to all applicants as soon as the grants have been agreed. You may also need to check your spam/ junk email folder, as unfortunately emails from our grant management system sometimes end up here.

- We will let you know the outcome of the first stage of this application process in March 2025. Successful applicants will receive a phone call.

Previous projects we have supported:

Grizedale Arts and The Farmer's Arms: in collaboration with the community, turned an old pub into a rural hub, creating a local space for creative and business projects to run, as well as hosting training events and volunteer placements for local people.

What we liked about it: This project reached a larger number of local people and demonstrated their impact through strong quantitative and qualitative evidence like survey results and testimonials from local people. They went beyond simply purchasing the pub and, with the support and involvement of the community, turned it into a hub providing a vital range of services for local people.

Previous projects we have supported:

Blackhall Mill Community Association, Tyne and Wear

This project developed a 'how-to' guide and model for setting up their community electric vehicle car club, called a 'car club in a box', so that other communities can create their own.

What we liked about it:

- *They created a model that can be replicated and shared with other rural communities and is highly innovative.*

- *As well as improving access to transport in their isolated community, the project is generating an income stream for the community through the sale of their model, ensuring the future long-term viability of the car club, helping to decarbonize transport and reducing isolation and loneliness through their voluntary driver scheme.*

Previous projects we have supported:

Black Mountains College, Brecon Beacons

Black Mountains College is an innovative education institution based on Troed yr Harn Farm in Talgarth in the Brecon Beacons. Their work centres around climate action and adaptation, using nature as the classroom. The idea for the college arose from concerns around the impact of climate change on every community, including rural semi-isolated communities such as Talgarth. The RCF grant went towards a course coordinator, to deliver community-based vocational training and short courses, work with local organisations to strengthen community provision and create new community spaces which are accessible to everyone.

What we liked about it: BMC carried out wide consultation to determine which courses were most needed and works closely with other local organisations to strengthen community provision and facilitate economic clustering. Through their courses they also create new community spaces (orchards, woodlands, gardens, meadows) which are accessible to everyone and are aiming to establish a model circular economy which could be replicated in other communities across the UK.

Previous projects we have supported:

Countryside Learning Scotland

Countryside Learning Scotland (CLS) are an education charity formed in 2003 to meet the need for outdoor learning in secondary schools.

The RCF awarded CLS £12,500 in Spring 2023 for their project 'Pathways to Rural Work' which aimed to increase career awareness and opportunities for young people in Gairloch, Kinlochbervie and Ullapool highschools.

This project sought to address the issue of a severe shortage of job candidates across rural businesses, affecting business operational hours. A lack of awareness of job opportunities amongst young people and a disconnect between them and their local environment meant young people were leaving rural areas for urban settlements. CLS wanted to build relationships between secondary schools and local businesses to enable pathways to work.

Their delivery plan was based on a programme of awareness raising, specialist courses linked to the curriculum and local industries, hands on skills and work placements and training for local businesses to enable them to support young people in the workplace. They also delivered CPD training to teachers to equip them to teach/develop rural skills.

What we liked about it: A really innovative project that aimed to address the disconnect between businesses, young people and the local environment. This project not only benefitted the young people involved, but also the local economy and community. It had clear scalability and replicability and a multi-faceted approach to addressing an identified need in the local community.

Previous projects we have supported:

Holy Island 2050: Long Term Vision & Strategy

This project addressed the significant issues facing the Holy Island community by bringing together local residents to develop a strategy and long term vision for the area. Led by and for local people, this set out a plan for creating a sustainable and positive future where the community and island could thrive.

What we liked about it: The project involved setting up working group meetings for the community to get to know each other, helping create the building blocks for active governance and strengthening community cohesion. Information and evidence documented by the report has since led to successful applications for further funding to explore the feasibility and need for a community housing project and has provided a clear agenda for the island to decide on priority projects to implement and action, helping to secure their long-term sustainability.

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