

The Prince's Countryside Fund – Autumn 2021 Grant Programme: Supporting Rural Communities

Introduction

The Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF) was established in 2010 and for over a decade has been awarding grants to community-led projects supporting the UK's rural communities. This forms one of the PCF's strategic aims of [Building Confident Rural Communities](#):

"Too often, rural communities are without access to transport, jobs, housing, shops and community spaces. The Prince's Countryside Fund powers community-led solutions through our grants and resources to ensure that they flourish – now and in the future."

Our ambition is to:

- Increase our help to those rural communities across the UK that wish to become more self-sufficient and viable, by focusing our support on community-led solutions, and illuminating their success so that others can follow.
- Invest at least £500,000 each year through our grant programmes for rural communities to make projects happen, particularly in hamlets, villages and small towns.
- Build a stronger relationship with those rural community organisations that we already support, evaluating the impact of our investment in their work, and promoting collective community effort which addresses local needs.
- Endeavour to make rural communities affected by emergencies more resilient, while also continuing to help in times of crisis when the need is greatest

Supporting Rural Communities

The PCF is inviting applications for grants of up to £25,000 over two years, for innovative projects that will create a long-term difference in remote rural areas of the UK.

This funding forms part of a new programme of larger, flexible grants which focus on innovative and longer-term strategic projects that support people in rural areas to resolve existing and emerging community issues, circumstances and priorities.

Through this new programme, we are seeking applications from community-led projects that are pursuing innovative and strategic solutions to the challenges facing their rural area and improving the long-term viability and resilience of their community.

Successful projects will do one or more of the following:

- Support people to resolve existing and emerging community issues, circumstances, and priorities
- Build rural community resilience
- Develop innovative and replicable projects

- Enable leadership and community planning.

The outcomes PCF seek to achieve through this project include:

- Reinvigoration of community networks
- Improving the health and well-being of socially isolated people
- Creating a legacy of support and community spirit
- Developing successful models of community support that can be promulgated widely to rural communities through PCF's communications and wider networks.

We are particularly interested in supporting fledgeling ideas and projects, so do please engage with us through our grant surgeries to discuss your proposal.

For inspiration, and to see some examples of the fantastic projects we have previously supported, please visit our website www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk. Our [Village Survival Guide](#) contains some brilliant case studies too and is an invaluable tool for community organisations to use when planning projects.

We are extremely grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery for their continued support, which has enabled us to offer this funding.



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 two years.

For what?

We want to hear as many interesting ideas and proposals as possible so there are no strict criteria on what you can apply for. However, successful projects will demonstrate how they are addressing one of more of the following objectives:

- Improving the economic or social resilience of a UK rural community
- Reducing isolation for people living in rural areas through improving service provision
- Creating a rural community fit for the future.

We would also like applications to demonstrate how community leadership is driving projects forward, **but please note we cannot retrospectively fund activity that has already taken place.**

The following criteria will be considered when awarding our grants:

- Does the project meet the objectives of The Prince's Countryside Fund and this specific funding round?
- What is the need for this project, and are the community engaged and supportive of it?
- Who will benefit from this project?
- Is your proposal clear, realistic and achievable?
- Does your project offer value for money?

Please note that there are some things we cannot fund (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Purchase of buildings or land
- Planning permission/building regulations
- Statutory requirements.

While we can consider applications for village hall renovation projects, there would have to be a 'special' element, so that it's not just a basic renovation. This could include projects such as remodelling or renovating a space to allow for a community café, shop, meeting space or activity area.

Who?

Applications are encouraged from properly constituted, community-led organisations with a turnover under £500,000 per year, which can demonstrate how beneficiaries will be drawn directly from the local rural community.

There are some types of organisation that we are unable to fund. They include (but are not limited to):

- Care Farms, Community Farms, or similar projects 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.

Where?

We are open to applications from across the UK and are particularly keen to encourage applications from East Anglia, the North East, Wales and Northern Ireland.

How long?

We will be awarding funding for projects for up to two years' duration. Projects do not have to start immediately, but all projects must be completed by **31 March 2024**.

When will the grant be paid?

All grants under £8,000 will be paid up front in one instalment. Grants of more than this will be paid in two instalments. For all grants, we will require an interim progress report and a final report.

Hints and tips for writing your application

Answer all questions on the application form as openly as possible. We are expecting a great deal of interest and will need to 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.

Completing this application form doesn't guarantee that your project will be funded. We usually receive many more applications than we can fund, and so you should be aware of the competition.

Section 1: Applicant Details

This section is to collect all the relevant information about your organisation and the named person who will be responsible for the project.

Section 2: Project Overview

This section is your opportunity to tell us all about your project, including how you have identified that it's needed, and how you will deliver it.

Section 3: Project Finances

Total cost of project: please include here the total cost of the project (even if you are applying to PCF to part fund your activity). If you are applying for core costs for the overall delivery of your organisation, please include your annual turnover in this field.

Itemised breakdown: it is really important that you clearly state what you want the PCF to fund, item by item, as this is what will be included in your grant agreement should your application be successful.

You will need to send us a copy of your organisation's latest accounts – we won't be able to consider your application otherwise. If you are a new organisation, we will accept a set of management accounts or budgets from your accountant.

Section 4: Long Term vision

How have you ensured that the project is sustainable in the future: it is important to PCF that once our funding has concluded, your project or organisation is able to continue to thrive and support the needs of your local community.

We are keen to understand how you work with other community groups/organisations in your local area, do you share resources or learning and ideas? This is an opportunity to demonstrate how you are connected with others in your rural community.

Section 5: Project Risks

All projects have risks, and we will expect you to have identified these and considered how you will mitigate them. This will demonstrate good project management and will indicate that your organisation understands what's needed and what could possibly prevent your project from being successful.

The environmental impact may not be relevant for all applications, but there is usually some way in which a project can be managed to reduce its environmental impact.

Section 6: References

Please provide the details of two referees who would be happy to be contacted regarding your application. These should be people who know and understand your organisation, but are not directly involved in it.

Section 7: Declaration

Please make sure that you include the details of two signatories from your organisation.

How to submit your application

The link to the application form is on the website: www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/grants and you can save your application as you go along, before you submit it. Once you have opened the link on our website, you will see an eligibility quiz which, once completed, will take you to the application form.

You have the option to save your application and come back to it later, in which case you will be asked for your email address and to create a password (please keep a note of your password). You will then be sent a link to your application form via email. **Please re-access the form via the link in your email, rather than from the website.**

Once you have completed the application form please click 'submit' at the bottom of the final page. You will be alerted if any questions have been missed and you will receive an email once your application has been received (please check your spam folder).

Applications close on 17 September 2021 at midday.

Talk to us about your project

We know it can be helpful to discuss your project proposal before submitting an application to us, so we have organised a series of PCF grant surgeries, which you can book onto and speak to a member of our team. Please note that we are a small team so may not be able to respond to you immediately if you contact us outside of these allotted times for our surgeries.

Once you have submitted your application, you may not hear from us until the end of the 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. We are committing to letting everyone know the outcome of their applications by **Tuesday 30 November 2021**.

How we make funding decisions

PCF staff experienced in assessing and awarding grants will consider the applications as they arrive to 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 comprises PCF trustees, independent members, and the Executive Director. They will make the final decision.

We will write to all applicants by **Tuesday 30 November 2021** to let them know the outcome of their application.