

The Prince's Countryside Fund – Spring 2022 Grant Programme: Supporting Rural Communities

The PCF is inviting applications for grants of up to £25,000 over two years that have a long-lasting impact on rural communities in the UK. We particularly welcome applications from groups and organisations with projects in hamlets, villages and small market towns.

We are seeking applications from community-led projects pursuing solutions that improve the viability and resilience of their community

Successful projects will achieve one or more of the following programme aims:

- Support people to resolve existing and emerging community issues, circumstances, and priorities in their locality
- Build rural community resilience
- Develop innovative and replicable projects
- Enable leadership and community planning
- Improve the economic or social resilience of a rural community
- Reduce isolation for people living in rural areas through improving service provision
- Create a self-sufficient rural community fit for the future.

The outcomes PCF seek to achieve through our grant programme include:

- Reinvigorating or developing community networks
- Improving the health and well-being of socially isolated people
- Creating a legacy of support and promoting community spirit and cohesion
- Communities supporting one another through volunteering opportunities
- Promoting a greener economy by encouraging people to travel less and utilise locally grown and crafted products.

We are particularly interested in supporting fledgeling ideas and projects, so do please engage with us through the form on our [website](#).

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 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 know that the challenges faced by rural communities are wide ranging, so there are no strict criteria on what you can apply for. However, **you must demonstrate demand for the project from the community it will be serving**. 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, 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 programme aims, as stated above?
- What is the need for this project, and are the community engaged and supportive of it?
- Is there significant demand from the local community? Have you demonstrated this?
- 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 below?
- 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
- Technical energy projects where a specialist funder might be more appropriate
- Projects where our contribution makes up less than 10% of the total cost of the project
- The purchase of food.

While we can consider applications for village hall and other community asset renovation projects, you will need to clearly demonstrate why this project is needed; that there is no similar provision provided by other assets in your community; and that there is demand from the local community to have this work done. The evidence required here must be from the wider community, not just from the applicant themselves.

Who?

Applications are encouraged from properly constituted, community-led organisations with a turnover under £500,000 per year, that 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 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 June 2024**.

When will the grant be paid?

All grants under £10,000 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.

Important 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 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 the application form will not 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. If you are unsure whether your project meets the criteria, please contact us first via the form on the website.

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.

We are looking for projects that can demonstrate there is need and demand for their project within the local community. You will **need to provide evidence** of this using data relating directly to your target community. Please do not use generalised statistics or reports, for example, those talking about the rise in social isolation in the UK. **We want to know about your community.**

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
- 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.

Projects that benefit the whole community rather than a small sub-section are preferable. If your project only reaches a small number of people, tell us about the depth of the project and the impact it will have on the lives of participants. Consider how this may affect the wider community. Are there secondary benefits to them that might not be immediately apparent?

We are looking for all projects to demonstrate '**additional benefits.**' You can think about these in terms of direct beneficiaries e.g., those taking part in the proposed activity and secondary beneficiaries e.g., those who live in the community who may benefit from the activity taking place.

For example:

Direct beneficiaries: a training programme where 10 people from a low-income group are offered horticultural skills and qualifications. This training increases their ability to find work and play a more active part in the local economy.

Secondary beneficiaries: as part of their training, the group reinvigorate the local common which was previously in an unusable state; because of this, other community groups can now utilise the space and an annual summer fête will take place, increasing community cohesion.

Section 3: Your Project Activities and Outcomes

Activity – When you are planning a project, one of the main steps is to define the activities required to bring that project to the point of completion. You can do this by creating a list of the activities. For example, if you were planning a training event you might:

- Appoint a project lead
- Agree training content
- Recruit 20 volunteers to support delivery
- Create and disseminate 200 promotional materials
- Reach out to the local community to attract potential participants
- Run 10 training sessions for 50 participants
- Evaluate and report

Desired Outcome – key to understanding outcomes is to focus on the benefits to your beneficiaries that come from the activity, service or project, not items that will be purchased. Think about what will happen because of the activity? What benefits or changes will there be?

Types of outcomes could include:

- 40 local children have a better understanding of rural issues
- 70% of participants have a greater knowledge of traditional wood carving techniques
- 100 people from the local community met someone new

Date of completion – When will this activity be completed by?

When telling us about your activities and outcomes, try to use numbers as much as possible, as in the examples above.

Section 4: Project Finances

Total cost of project: please include 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.

If the cost of your project is more than the amount requested from PCF, you'll need to tell us where the rest of the funding is coming from. Please tell us the amount, the name of the funder, and the date you expect the outcome (if not already secured).

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 5: 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 can continue to thrive and support the needs of your local community. Tell us how your project will be financially secure in the long-term.

We are keen to understand how you work with other community groups and 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 6: 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 7: 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 8: 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

You can save your application as you go along, before you submit it. However, we suggest drafting your answers in a separate document just in case something goes wrong.

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 / junk folder).

Applications close on Tuesday 12th April 2022 at midday.

Talk to us about your project

We know it can be helpful to discuss your project proposal before submitting an application, so we have an area on our [website](#) where you can submit an overview of your project and a member of the team will respond to arrange a call.

Please note that we are a small team, so may not be able to respond to you immediately. If you contact us via email to discuss your project, you will be 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 there.

We will let everyone know the outcome of their application by the **week commencing Monday 20th June 2022**.

How we make funding decisions

PCF 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 comprises PCF trustees, independent members, and the Executive Director. They will make the final decision.

We will write to all applicants by the **week commencing Monday 20th June 2022** to let them know the outcome of their application. Please keep an eye on your junk/spam folders during this time.