

**Rural Community Facilities Fund – Application Guide**

The Rural Facilities Fund from Wyre Council is funded by the UK Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund.  As a Local Authority we are keen to encourage all community projects to deliver activities and services that enhance local health and wellbeing and keep people connected in their community.  We are keen to encourage applications that specifically support the communities of rural east and west Wyre\*.

The aim of this fund is to develop and improve rural community facilities, promoting further use of community assets/hubs and encouraging provision of additional activities. Facilities that work to bring people together, address isolation and promote community engagement.  We define community facilities as physical spaces and places provided by a range of organisations. These include village halls and community centres.

This fund provides grants for CAPITAL expenditure only. To be spent on a scheme that will significantly upgrade and enhance the community facilities which will help to generate venue hire, commercial use or reduce running costs. Please note - the fund is not for repair and maintenance work as that would be classed as revenue/running costs

**Two stage application process – Expression of Interest and Full Application**

**Step 1** –Complete the Expression of Interest (EOI).  Please include key information regarding the precise amount needed to complete your project.  EOI must include a timescale regarding how quickly the project can be completed once this fund money is received.

**To complete the EOI FORM -** [**CLICK HERE**](https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90590090/Rural-Community-Facilities-Fund-EOI)

The application process for EOI will open on Wednesday 19th July 2023 and close on Sunday 6th August 2023.

**Step 2** – Applicants will be invited to complete the full Application Form – where they meet the fund requirements.

We require full details about your organisation, one lead applicant contact details, full project detail, and estimated/quoted costs.  We also require details regarding the venue that will benefit from the grant and the people that will subsequently benefit from the fixed/improved/enhanced venue.  This information will be used to check against publicly available information about your organisation.

The details in the application will help the grant panel make decisions as to which project will get funding.  All decisions will be made using the content/detail of the application alongside the eligibility criteria for this fund.

The application process dates will be confirmed when you are invited to make an application.

**Rural Facilities Fund** – there is £40,000 available, and projects need to be completed, invoices received and paid by the end of February 2024, to ensure that our government reporting deadlines are met.

Therefore, we envisage that applicants will be at an advanced stage with their capital project planning.  We encourage applicants to apply for the amount they need.  Please note - we can fund up to 100% of project costs however, secured match funding is welcomed and will be considered favourably by the assessment panel.

**Eligible Areas**

For the purposes of REPF rural areas are defined as:

* Towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
* Certain market or ‘hub towns’ with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services.

\* Scoring of projects will be weighted towards community hub organisations that operate in towns, villages and hamlets in Wyre's Rural West i.e. Over Wyre and Great Eccleston, and Rural East i.e. Garstang and surrounding areas that have a population of 10,000 or less serving the wider countryside.

**Eligible organisations**

Any not-for-profit organisation with a formal/registered legal status.

* Registered charities\*\*
* Parish and Town Councils
* Social Enterprises (e.g. CIC’s) \*\*
* Schools or Academies\*\*\*

\*\* Scanned copies of governing documents will be required or a registered number to verify the organisation with public records.

\*\*\* Projects delivered by these organisations must be for whole/wider community access and benefit (we will request evidence of this).

**What can this grant be used for?**

* Equipment
* Building costs
* Contractor costs directly evidenced to the project build works

You must use REPF funding on capital projects. This means you must spend grants on assets such as a building or equipment which are expected to be used for a period of at least one year. This may include enhancements to existing assets which:

* Significantly lengthen the life of the asset.
* Significantly increase the value of the asset.
* Significantly increase usefulness of the asset.

**What this grant CANNOT be spent on**

* Money already spent/committed before receiving a grant (known as retrospective funding)
* Revenue / running / repair costs
* Promotion of any religion
* VAT if your organisation can reclaim it
* Support to lobbying or campaign groups
* Anything that will bring the Council into disrepute
* Anything party political, including supporting political organisations
* Anything contrary to the Council’s financial regulations, policies or strategies
* Anything that an organisation or local authority has a statutory obligation to deliver
* Projects based/operating outside of Wyre Council boundary unless the organisation can provide

evidence of significant benefit to communities within Wyre Council

* Anything illegal

**Grant Criteria**

* The project must be delivered within the Wyre Council boundary or be able to demonstrate
* significant benefits to Wyre Council residents
* The project must support the development and/or improvement of a multi-use community facility or asset
* The project must demonstrate strong community benefit
* The project must not contravene any of our core policies, procedures, or strategies
* The project must be able to demonstrate that other funding has already been secured (in regard to match funding)
* All grants will be a one-off grant with no on-going funding commitment
* Grant spend and the project completion must meet February 2024 deadline

**Positive outcomes**

The main aim of this fund is to help support community facilities. All applicants must provide information about the positive outcomes that will be delivered for local communities and people.  Please consider how you will be able to measure/demonstrate that the improvements made have had a positive impact.

Here are some examples of outcomes your project could achieve and how they might be measured:

* Improved usage/perception of the village hall / community space – before and after survey
* Improved access and opportunities to engage in arts, culture or heritage – before and after count of

bookings by attendees

* Improved access and opportunities to deliver health and well-being activities - before and after count of the

number of organisations using the facilities

* Improved sustainability of a community facility with reduced environmental or carbon impact
* Increase in volunteers - before and after count of participants
* Skills development – case studies

**Applicant Requirements** – organisations will undergo due diligence checks regarding status/paperwork and matching bank account (bank accounts require a minimum of two unrelated signatories).

* Constitution or similar governing documents (excluding Parish/Town Councils)
* Bank account in the same name as the organisation
* Evidence of financial accounting (e.g. Annual accounts)
* Safeguarding policies (for projects involving children and vulnerable people)
* Any required insurance policies (e.g. Public Liability Insurance)
* Freehold ownership or a lease of at least 15 years

Please note: It is essential that you do not begin spending against your project until you have a fully signed Grant Agreement.  Any prior spend would mean that your application is in retrospect – this would disqualify your application.   Successful applicants will be required to sign Terms and Conditions.

**Freedom of Information Act**

All grants that we make are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subsequent amendments. Therefore, any information regarding a grant we award may be provided to any individuals or organisations requesting information under the requirement of this Act.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is an important part of any grant funding scheme. It enables us as an organisation spending public funds to ensure a project is achieving best value and delivering results for the local community. It also enables you to learn what has worked well and where there have been challenges.

All successful projects will be required to complete quarterly updates on progress and an end of project evaluation form. We use this information to highlight the importance of funding community projects and the value of volunteers.

We will work with you on monitoring and evaluating your grant to:

* Demonstrate the change your project has made to the community and people’s lives
* Approve that the project or activities have been delivered in the way described in the application

and other requested documentation

* Collect feedback, including publicity, user comments, case studies, survey information, photographs,

and video

* Highlight project successes
* Demonstrate how your project has ensured inclusion and accessibility for all in the community
* Understand more about what you learned and what skills you developed as individuals and as an

organisation

**How we make decisions**

We will check your completed application against our eligibility criteria and review your request using the following process:

Phase 1 – Eligibility Check. We check eligibility of your project against the grant criteria of this fund

Phase 2 – Application Scoring. We score your application against our set funding criteria for this fund

Phase 3 – Panel Review. Our panel for this grant fund makes a final decision on whether to offer funding

**Updates to these Guidance Notes**

These Guidance Notes were adopted July 2023.