



Eligibility Criteria

Applications are welcomed from properly constituted, not-for-profit and community-led organisations with a turnover under £500,000 per year, operating in remote rural areas, that can demonstrate how beneficiaries will be drawn directly from the local community.

Each round we receive many more applications than we can fund. We appreciate the time and energy it takes to write grant applications, so we are working hard to improve our guidance and support. 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. With this in mind, we have the following eligibility requirements.

Project types and items we don't fund

- Purchase of buildings or land.
- Planning permission/ building regulations (including the cost of design and planning consultants)
- Building projects where planning permission is not yet in place
- Projects taking place in a location where the purchase/ rent agreement is not complete.
- 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
- Projects that aim to promote a religion
- The purchase of food or refreshments
- Working capital - the liquid funds available to meet your daily business expenses
- Re-granting – where the funds will be transferred from you to other organisations or individuals.
- Loans
- Projects 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.

Organisation types we don't fund

- 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
- Youth clubs
- Uniformed groups such as scouts, guides and sea cadets
- Sports clubs and associations.

Community need & 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.

Population & Rurality

While the RCF does not impose strict limits on population size, we focus our support on remote 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.

We appreciate that some larger towns (over 4,000 people) may still be underserved and distant from urban and per-urban hubs. If your community falls into this category, we recommend contacting the Grants team to discuss prior to starting an application.

Village halls & community hub renovation

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.

Projects on council owned land

If you are applying for funding for an asset on council owned land, you will need to demonstrate support from the council for the project and a commitment from them to provide long-term maintenance. If your project is successful in receiving funding, we will request a letter from the council evidencing this.

Other projects

As part of our evaluation process, we assess the extent to which each project aligns with our programme outcomes in comparison to other applications received. To assist you in determining whether or not to apply, we have provided examples of project types that, while technically eligible, typically have a lower likelihood of success. These include:

- Minor improvements works, such as adding gates, updating signage, pathways, and other access to buildings, sites and scenic areas
- Crafting, sewing and knitting groups
- General tree planting projects
- Solar panels projects where the applicant hasn't demonstrated exactly how the installation will help save money and improve efficiency. To demonstrate this you need to include a calculation of the current energy demand based on the building and the people in it, along with the projected power produced by the solar panels. This ideally needs to be completed by a specialist.
- Heritage projects where the primary focus is on heritage and visitors, rather than providing for the immediate, local community
- Literary fairs and other events of this nature
- Projects where the focus is on improving provision for tourists.

If your project type is listed above and you would still like to submit an application, we recommend completing an enquiry form and speaking to the team.

Evidence

Applicants must evidence that there is need and demand for their project within the local community. Data needs to relate directly to the target community and project. We don't accept generalised statistics or reports, for example, those talking about the rise in social isolation in the UK.

Applicants who cannot provide evidence will not be considered. Therefore, we recommend taking the time to build a strong evidence case before applying. More information on how to do this is available in the guidance notes.