

Rural Community Circular Economy Fund – Application Guide

The Rural Circular Economy 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. Projects must be in a rural area. For Rural Fund purposes, rural areas are towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside, and 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. We are keen to encourage applications that specifically support the communities of rural west and east Wyre*.

The aim of this fund is to support projects that use and develop local skills in rural areas. A circular economy is defined as an approach to life and business where everything has a value and nothing is wasted with the mantra of 'make, use, remake,' with minimal/no waste produced¹.

Although not exhaustive, circular initiatives may include setting up or enhancement of rural community-led repair cafes or mend workshops. This grant includes provision of premises/ tools or equipment to support the circular economy project. The overarching aim of the fund is to strengthen our social fabric and foster a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural, and social ties and amenities. This includes community infrastructure, green spaces, and community led projects².

This fund provides grants for CAPITAL expenditure only.

* 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.

Application process – Informal expression of Interest and Full Application

Step 1 – Applicants should register an informal expression of interest by contacting Alisa Wilson, Senior Community Engagement and Research Officer (alisa.wilson@wyre.gov.uk) Please provide details of your organisation, a brief overview of project and a contact telephone number.

If applicants demonstrate potential eligibility, they will be invited to complete a project application form, where they will demonstrate how they will meet the fund requirements.

We require full details about your organisation, one lead applicant contact details, full project detail, and estimated/quoted costs. This information will be used to check against publicly available information about your organisation.

¹ Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2024) [Circular neighbourhoods: Benefits to communities \(ellenmacarthurfoundation.org\)](https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org)

² HM Government (2024)

[Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions objectives outputs and outcomes list.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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

Applications open on 25th March 2024 and close on 28th April 2024

Rural Circular Economy Fund – the whole fund has £20,000 available. Note: all monies must be spent by 31st March 2025.

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 from other sources is encouraged, and will be viewed favourably by the assessment panel.

Eligible organisations

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

- Registered charities**
- Parish and Town Councils (these can also apply on behalf of a community group/s) Schools /Academies*
- Social Enterprises e.g. Community Interest Companies, operating on a non-profit-distributing basis**.

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

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

Further: –applying organisations will be required to provide

- Bank account details in the same name as the organisation with a minimum of two unrelated signatories.
- 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, employee liability insurance)
- Freehold ownership or a lease of at least 10 or more years would be preferred, however if this is not the case, please contact us to discuss your project.

Successful applicants will be required to sign Terms and Conditions.

What can this grant be used for?

- Tools /equipment
- Provision of premises.
- Green space

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 rural Wyre Council residents.
- The project must support the development and/or improvement of circular economy project.
- 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 (regarding match funding)
- All grants will be a one-off grant with no on-going funding commitment.
- Grant spends and the project completion must meet March 2025 deadline.

Positive outcomes

Applicants must be able to **demonstrate achieved results throughout the project. This includes, but is not limited to, Government assigned measures (otherwise referred to as outputs and outcomes) from the list below:**

- Number of people reached (e.g. that attend an event following targeted media campaign)
- Improved number of people engaging/interacting with the service
- Improved perception of the local facilities or amenities – before and after survey
- Increased users of the local facilities or amenities
- Number of community-led programmes created / delivered because of support.
- Improved sustainability of a community circular economy service with increased use of recycled / reused products.
- Increase in volunteers - before and after count of participants.
- Skills development – case studies

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are 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 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: will make their recommendation to the UKSPF Programme Board who will make the final decision. .