

RURAL FUNDING DIGEST

April 2021

*A monthly bulletin facilitated by your membership of the **Rural Services Network** highlighting a selection of current funding opportunities*

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme – Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

The Government is providing up to £210m worth of voucher funding as immediate help for people suffering from slow broadband speeds in rural areas.

Vouchers worth up to £1,500 for homes and £3,500 for businesses help to cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband to people's doorsteps.

The new UK Gigabit Voucher will launch on Thursday 8th April 2021 and is only available through a supplier who is registered with the scheme.

From 8th April you will be able to check whether your premises is eligible for a voucher, find a list of registered suppliers, and see those who are active in your area.

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

Levelling Up and Community Investments – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The UK government has launched three new investment programmes to support communities across the country. These new investment programmes are:

- The UK Community Renewal Fund – £220 million funding to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022. This Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.
- The Levelling Up Fund – £4.8 billion funding for investment in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.
- The Community Ownership Fund – £150 million funding to help ensure that communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them.

Details of all funds including guidance and bidding details are available on the government's website.

[New levelling up and community investments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments)

Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme – Department for Transport

The ZEBRA scheme will provide up to £120 million for local transport authorities to support the introduction of zero-emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them. This funding aims to support the introduction of the 4000 zero-emission buses announced by the Prime Minister in February 2020.

This fund has 2 application processes and local transport authorities may apply either for the:

- fast track process, closing at 5pm 21 May 2021
- standard process, closing at 5pm 25 June 2021

[Apply for the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas \(ZEBRA\) scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-the-zero-emission-bus-regional-areas-zebra-scheme)

Local Data Accelerator Fund – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

The Local Data Accelerator Fund aims to improve the use of data to support children and families. It is a two-year funding stream of £7.9m split over two years.

MHCLG invites bids from partnerships of local authorities and other local agencies that will improve outcomes for families. The core components for the bids which MHCLG are looking for are:

1. Exemplar data projects - Bids should include an exemplar data project which involves using data from different agencies to improve services. Guidance is set out under data functions heading. The projects should provide real world benefits, i.e. better targeted, earlier and more effective interventions to support vulnerable children and families. Projects should be innovative, sustainable and scalable i.e. appropriate for adoption by other local areas.
2. Sharing skills and good practice - Projects that improve the data maturity of the project partners i.e.: getting more advanced areas to share skills and learning with less other areas.
3. Partnerships of local authorities and other agencies, including universities - Bids should be from a partnership of local authorities and other local services including a mix of agencies with different levels of data maturity.

The deadline for applications is 30 April 2021.

[Local Data Accelerator Fund for children and families - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Apprentice incentive payments – HM Government

The government has increased the incentive payment for hiring a new apprentice. The incentive payment is in addition to the £1,000 employers already receive for hiring an apprentice:

For new apprentices who joined your organisation between 1 August 2020 and 31 March 2021 aged:

- 16 to 24, employers will receive £2,000
- 25 and over, employers will receive £1,500

You must apply for these apprentices before 31 May 2021.

Employers will receive £3,000 for new employees of any age who start their apprenticeship from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021. You can apply for incentive payments for these apprentices from 1 June 2021.

Full details are available on the government's website.

[Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Force for Change programme – The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

This programme will award grants of up to £10,000 for community projects that reduce isolation and promote integration; supporting post-Covid recovery in local Armed Forces communities affected by isolation.

One-year grants are available of up to £10,000 to support ideas that need small amounts of funding to deliver nimble and focused local projects to Armed Forces communities. Or they'll make small grants to support services, projects and activities that are used by Armed Forces communities, but which are struggling as a result of the impact of the Covid pandemic.

The deadline for applications to round one is 12 April 2021. The deadline for round two is 2 August 2021.

[Armed Forces Covenant Fund: Force for Change programme : The Armed Forces Covenant Trust](https://www.armedforcescovenanttrust.org.uk)

Sustaining Support for Armed Forces Communities – The Armed Forces Covenant Fund

The £6 million Sustaining Support for Armed Forces Communities programme will open in April.

This programme will provide funding for existing charitable projects that give help to Armed Forces communities, but which need short term support to continue, as a result of the impact of Covid on charitable income.

Armed Forces charities, and charities that have an existing track record of providing support for Armed Forces communities, will be able to apply for a grant of up to £100,000 for up to one year. Organisations applying for a grant will need to show that they provide support to people from Armed Forces communities, and that it would have a negative effect, particularly on veterans and Armed Forces families, if this work could not be continued. Support for core costs will be available for Armed Forces charities.

[New funding programmes opening in April 2021 : The Armed Forces Covenant Trust \(covenantfund.org.uk\)](https://covenantfund.org.uk)

Community Business Renewal scheme – Power to Change

Power to Change has launched the Community Business Renewal Initiative, a package of support for community businesses, in response to the covid-19 crisis. The support package contains a number of elements including:

- *Community Business Crowdfunder*. This helps communities to develop, test or grow your community business. The fund is designed to help you raise funds to cover key costs, help you build your network of supporters and provide match funding. Working with Crowdfunder, Power to Change will offer an investment, up to £10,000, to match the amount raised by your supporters.
- *Community Business ReBoost Fund*. This provides grant funding to support the development of a community share offer and achieve the standard mark, as well as match equity investment. The investments will be up to £25,000 of match funding, providing that the minimum share target is achieved. ReBoost Fund is designed to support community businesses to launch their first community share offer and is run by Power to Change in partnership with Cooperatives UK.

You can find more details on all elements of the Community Business Renewal scheme on the Power to Change website.

[Community Business Renewal Initiative - Power to Change](#)

Theatre Improvement Scheme – Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust's Theatre Improvement Scheme, in association with the Wolfson Foundation, offers capital funding for theatres.

The theme for the fund for the next three years is Improving Environmental Sustainability as this is an urgent priority for the sector.

Theatre operators can apply for grants of up to £20,000 towards their building or equipment as part of the scheme.

It is hoped that these grants will support a range of projects that consider different ways theatre buildings can reduce their environmental impact. From sedum roofs to new windows, building management systems to more efficient water heaters, funding will be given to projects that demonstrate how a small intervention can have a big impact. The deadline for applications is 6 September 2021.

[Wolfson/Theatres Trust Theatre Improvement Scheme | How We Help | Theatres Trust](#)

The Eco Fund – DPD

The Eco Fund is funded by DPD's circular economy initiative to protect the environment. The plastic shrink wrap used in their operation is broken down, and then recycled to create new plastic shrink wrap. DPD also re-use and recycle the wooden pallets used in their depots and the money generated from both these initiatives goes straight into the Eco Fund.

Anyone can apply for funding from the DPD Eco Fund, although they particularly encourage schools and educational facilities across the UK working on green projects with their students and start-up companies working on developing environmentally friendly products to apply.

Grants up to £2000 are available.

[DPD UK | The UK's Most Sustainable Delivery Company](#)

Grants for Heritage – National Lottery Heritage Fund

Applications are open for National Lottery Grants for Heritage from £3,000 up to £5million. They will prioritise projects that contribute to recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

Between April 2021 to March 2022, when making funding decisions, they will prioritise heritage projects that:

- boost the local economy
- encourage skills development and job creation
- support wellbeing
- create better places to live, work and visit
- improve the resilience of organisations working in heritage

Their inclusion outcome – a wider range of people will be involved in heritage – remains mandatory for all projects funded.

In addition, all projects must demonstrate they are environmentally responsible and are integrating environmental measures into their projects.

You can read more on the Fund's website:

[National Lottery Grants for Heritage 2021-22 | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

Green Recovery Challenge Fund – National Lottery Heritage Fund

The second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund supports nature projects across England with funding worth up to £40m. The Fund is still open for applications between £50,000 and £250,000. The deadline 12noon on 14 April 2021.

- £250,000 to £2m. Deadline for Expressions of Interest 12noon 22 March 2021

Projects must deliver against at least one of the fund's three themes:

1. Nature conservation and restoration, including ecosystem restoration and species recovery;
2. Nature-based solutions, particularly for climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
3. Connecting people with nature.

The fund has been developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies, including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, and the Environment Agency. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is distributing and monitoring this government money.

[Application guidance: Green Recovery Challenge Fund round 2 | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

The Climate Action Fund – The National Lottery Community Fund

The Climate Action Fund (CAF) is supporting communities across the UK to take action on climate change. These communities will demonstrate what's possible when people lead in this work. With National Lottery funding, they'll work together, share their learning and be active participants in a broader movement of change.

CAF is part of The National Lottery Community Fund's Environment Strategy. This second round will focus on supporting medium scale to large-scale projects addressing waste and consumption. The focus remains on place-based, community-led partnerships that will make the changes in their community they believe will have the biggest impact on climate change.

At this initial application stage, they're interested in hearing about your project, the long-term vision and aims, and how your community has been involved in shaping and

deciding what you'll do. This application should come from one lead partner, which should be one of the eligible types of organisation listed.

Two types of funding are available in this round

- development funding – maximum £150,000
- full awards – maximum £1.5 million.

Around £8 million to 10 million is available for this second round of funding. They expect to make 12 to 15 awards in total in this round, and to award more development grants than full awards.

The application deadline is 8 April 2021 for your initial idea. If you get to the next stage, they expect the rest of the application process to take six to eight months.

[Climate Action Fund - round 2 | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://climateactionfund.org.uk/round-2)

Lloyds Bank Foundation

The Foundation fund small and local charities, investing in their work helping people overcome complex social issues across England and Wales. They support charities with an annual income of £25,000 to £1 million with a proven track record of helping people on a journey of positive change through in-depth, holistic and person-centred support. The Foundation offer unrestricted funding, including around core costs, and tailored development support to help your charity be more effective.

The priority complex social issues are:

- Addiction and dependency
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Care leavers
- Domestic abuse
- Homeless and vulnerably housed
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health
- Offending, prison or community service
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Young parents

[We Fund \(lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk)

Coalfields Recovery & Resilience Fund – The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

The Fund offers awards of up to £10,000 that can address local needs in coalfield communities. Priority will be given to organisations that are delivering support services or have significantly adapted their services in order to respond to the current issues/challenges in their community and support vulnerable people.

Key application criteria are:

- You will need to demonstrate how your organisation is addressing the current issues/challenges in your community and how additional funding will sustain, extend or help you to adapt service delivery.
- If your application is successful, the project must be able to start immediately.
- The funding must be used to deliver activities/services for a minimum of 2 months and a maximum 12.

The next eligibility survey for applicants opens on 6 April 2021 and closes on 4 June with an application deadline of 18 June 2021.

[Coalfields Recovery & Resilience Fund · Coalfields Regeneration Trust \(coalfields-regen.org.uk\)](https://coalfields-regen.org.uk)

Charity & community project grants – People's Postcode Lottery

The aim of the organisations listed below is to support smaller charities and good causes in different parts of the country to make a difference to their community for the benefit of people and planet.

Players of People's Postcode Lottery have funded good causes in every postcode area in Britain.

The different organisations are:

- [People's Postcode Trust](#)
- [Postcode Community Trust](#)
- [Postcode Local Trust](#)
- [Postcode Neighbourhood Trust](#)
- [Postcode Places Trust](#)
- [Postcode Society Trust](#)
- [Postcode Dream Fund](#)

Funding rounds are held throughout the year. Click on each of the above links to see which might be applicable to your organisation.

Fund A – Youth Music Network

Grants of £2,000 to £30,000 are available from the Youth Music Network to support music-making and music-making related activities for children and young people (aged 0-25) facing barriers.

Projects criteria include:

- Offer a music-related programme for children or young people facing barriers in England.
- Meet one or more of Youth Music's priority areas (Early Years, Disabled young people, Young adults, Youth justice system, Young people facing barriers and Organisations and the workforce).
- Be co-designed by children/young people.

The next deadline for applications is 30 July 2021.

[Fund A | Youth Music Network](#)

Transforming Places through Heritage Grants – Architectural Heritage Fund

This programme supports projects that will contribute to the transformation of high streets and town centres in England helping them become thriving places, strengthening local communities and encouraging local economies to prosper. It is part of a wider initiative to revive heritage high streets in England, alongside Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zones.

This programme is for individual heritage buildings in, or transferring to, community ownership. They will support charities and social enterprises to develop projects with the potential to bring new life to high streets by creating alternative uses for redundant or underused historic buildings in town centres.

A range of grants are available:

- Project Viability Grants: up to £15,000, for early viability and feasibility work, open now for applications.
- Project Development Grants: up to £100,000, for capital project development costs, open now for applications.
- Crowdfunding Challenge Grants: up to £25,000, to match fund crowdfunding campaigns, open now for applications.
- Transformational Project Grants: up to £350,000 for the repair, restoration and adaptation of a building to bring it into use, up to 80% of the cost of work involved.
- Community Shares Booster Grants: supporting community share offers with development grants and matched investment.

<http://ahfund.org.uk/england>

Awards for All, Reaching Communities and Partnerships – The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund is open to all applications that meet their criteria, including support during COVID-19. With the COVID-19 pandemic still with us, they'll continue to support people and communities most adversely impacted by COVID-19.

They can support you to:

- continue to deliver activity, whether you're supporting your existing users, responding to the immediate crisis or undertaking recovery activity
- change and adapt, becoming more resilient in order to respond to new and future challenges.

In order to support communities to thrive, they aim to:

- build strong relationships in and across communities
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities
- help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.

The Awards for All programme can provide between £300 and £10,000 for up to one year. The Reaching Communities programme offers larger amounts of funding (over £10,000) for up to 5 years. The Partnerships programme also offers a larger amount of funding (over £10,000) for organisations that work together with a shared set of goals to help their community thrive – whether that's a community living in the same area, or people with similar interests or life experiences.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/covid-19/learn-about-applying-for-emergency-funding-in-england>

Growing Great Ideas – The National Lottery Community Fund

This is a UK Portfolio funding programme aimed at supporting transformational, long-term change.

The UK Portfolio is where The Fund explores new approaches, experiment with how to do things differently, and look to fund work that is more future focussed.

The Growing Great Ideas programme has a focus on supporting transformational and long-term change. They are looking for visionary initiatives that go beyond individual organisations, and instead focus on ecologies, platforms, ecosystems, assemblages, networks and constellations. They expect these initiatives to be generating an infrastructure through which many things are possible.

They are looking to invest in different combinations of people, communities, networks and organisations that demonstrate an ability to seed and grow alternative systems, accelerate the deep transition of 21st-century civil society, and to learn and adapt as they go.

The minimum grant size is £150,000 and the minimum length is two years.

[Growing Great Ideas | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

Seafarers UK Grants

Seafarers UK is a leading provider of grants to maritime charities and charitable maritime projects, working to help serving and ex-serving seafarers and their families who are experiencing hardship. Funding is available for charities working to improve the outcomes for seafarers and fishers in the following areas:

- Enhanced financial resilience
- Better working lives at sea
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Raised safety standards and practices
- Increased social justice

Applications can be submitted at any time of year.

[Seafarers UK: Grant funding](#)

Small Grants Scheme – Foyle Foundation

This Small Grants Scheme is designed to support charities registered and operating in the United Kingdom, especially those working at grass roots and local community level, in any field, across a wide range of activities.

Online applications can be accepted from charities that have an annual turnover of less than £150,000 per annum. Larger or national charities will normally not be considered under this scheme.

The focus will be to make one-year grants only to cover core costs or essential equipment, to enable ongoing service provision, homeworking, or delivery of online digital services to charities that can show financial stability.

The priority will be to support local charities still active in their communities which are currently delivering services to the young, vulnerable, elderly, disadvantaged or the general community either directly or through online support if possible.

Grants are available between £1000 and £10,000.

[Small Grants Scheme - \(foylefoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Return to Play Fund – Sport England

There are three parts to this new fund. Two have been adapted from pre-coronavirus funds, with one extended, and all three will now focus on supporting a safe return to play.

- Return to Play: Small Grants – makes awards of between £300 and £10,000, from a total pot of £10m, to help sport and activity groups, clubs and organisations respond to the immediate challenges of returning to play in a coronavirus-safe way. Following national restrictions in November, it also offers up to £2,000 awards towards the running costs of organisations supporting the most deprived communities.
- Return to Play: Community Asset Fund – makes awards of between £10,001 to £50,000, from a pot of £5m, to help local sports clubs and organisations adapt and open important places and spaces to help their local community return to play safely.
- Return to Play: Active Together – is a crowdfunding initiative that can match fund, up to £10,000, successful Crowdfunder campaigns from a pot of £1.5m. The partnership with Crowdfunder also includes advice, guidance and training to help create a successful campaign.

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/funding-innovation-and-flexibility>

Surplus with Purpose Fund - FareShare

Businesses could be eligible for £50,000 funding to help them reduce their food waste.

The Surplus With Purpose fund is open to companies seeking to unlock new or hard to reach surplus (or 'waste') food, as well as those that haven't previously worked with FareShare.

Businesses could be eligible for up to £50,000 worth of funding (greater sums can be negotiated where appropriate for high volumes of surplus food).

FareShare will safely divert edible surplus food via their UK-wide network of almost 11,000 frontline charities and community groups.

More information for businesses interested is available on the scheme's website.

<https://fareshare.org.uk/giving-food/>

National Lottery Project Grants – Arts Council England

The Arts Council has reopened this fund with a budget of £59.8 million available until April 2021. They have prioritised reopening this programme to help fund independent organisations, creative practitioners and freelancers as quickly as possible. Grants of between £1000 and £100,000 are available.

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants>

Grant schemes for electric vehicle charging infrastructure – Office for Low Emission Vehicles

The government offers grants to support the wider use of electric and hybrid vehicles via the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). This includes:

- The Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (EVHS) provides grant funding of up to 75% towards the cost of installing electric vehicle chargepoints at domestic properties across the UK.
- The Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) is a voucher-based scheme that provides support towards the up-front costs of the purchase and installation of electric vehicle charge-points, for eligible businesses, charities and public sector organisations.
- The On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) provides grant funding for local authorities towards the cost of installing on-street residential chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles.

For more information visit the website below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-grants-for-low-emission-vehicles>

Financial support for businesses during coronavirus – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Public Health England

You can find out more details about the government's support for businesses through this website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Neighbourhood Planning Grant Funding – Locality

You can apply for three types of grant funding if you are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan:

- Basic Grant Funding: All groups undertaking a neighbourhood plan are eligible to apply for up to £10,000 in basic grant. As well as applying for a basic grant, you can also apply for technical support (provided you meet the eligibility criteria) to help you with your neighbourhood plan.
- Additional Grant Funding: Groups meeting the eligibility criteria are able to apply for additional grant of up to £8,000 (in addition to the basic grant). This will take the total amount of grant available to you to £18,000.
- Affordable Housing for Sale Grant Funding: This is a new element to the programme, and it is running as a pilot scheme. The pilot began in 2019-20 and will continue in 2020-21. If you are wishing to bring forward affordable housing for sale you may be eligible for further grant funding of up to £10,000 to help develop these ideas.

All grants are now open.

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/grant-funding/#affordablehousing>

Rural Community Energy Fund – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) is a £10 million programme which supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects, which provide economic and social benefits to the community.

RCEF provides support to rural communities in 2 stages:

- stage 1: grants of up to £40,000 for a feasibility study for a renewable energy project
- stage 2: grants of up to £100,000 for business development and planning of feasible schemes

RCEF is being run by 5 regional Local Energy Hubs. If you would like to register your interest for the scheme, or would like further information, please contact the relevant hub for your area.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-community-energy-fund>

Cornerstone, Gateway & Foundation Grants – National Churches Trust

The National Churches Trust has three grant programmes currently open:

- Cornerstone grants. The Cornerstone Grant Programme offers grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 towards the cost of urgent structural repair projects costed at more than £100,000 including VAT. The Trust will also consider projects that introduce kitchens and accessible toilets to enable increased community use, costed at more than £30,000 including VAT. Grants will never exceed 50% of the project cost. The next deadline for applications is 5 July 2021.
- Gateway grants. The Gateway Grant Programme offers grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 towards project development and investigative work up to RIBA planning stage 1, to support churches preparing for a major project, and in developing their project to the point at which they can approach a major grant funder. Grants will never exceed 50% of the project costs for this phase. The next deadline for applications is 13 May 2021.
- Foundation grants. The Foundation Grant Programme will offer grants of between £500 and £5,000 towards urgent maintenance works and small repairs identified as high priority within a recent Quinquennial Inspection or Survey Report. Also, small investigative works and surveys. Project costs should not exceed £10,000. Applications can be submitted and decisions will take place on a rolling basis from January 2021.
- Preventative maintenance micro grants. If the cost of booking maintenance services is a problem, the National Churches Trust, with its partner the Pilgrim Trust, can offer grants towards the cost of a building's maintenance services. You could receive up to 50% of the cost of works (excl. VAT) up to a maximum grant of £500. The cost of your service must not exceed £1,000 (excl VAT).

<http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/our-grants>

Energy Redress Scheme – Energy Saving Trust

Energy Saving Trust has been appointed by Ofgem to distribute payments from energy companies who may have breached rules. The funds can pay for anything from making a home more energy efficient, to providing advice that helps consumers keep on top of their bills.

Energy Saving Trust has developed an open application process for charities seeking funding from the Energy Redress Scheme. Successful projects will be selected with input from an independent panel of experts and could cover a range of locations across England, Scotland and Wales.

The amount of funding available through the scheme varies throughout the year and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in October, January, April and July. Eligible charities that have registered interest in the scheme will be notified when funds become available.

The minimum grant that can be requested is £20,000 and the maximum amount is the lesser of £2 million or the total value of the current fund.

The scheme can fund projects lasting up to two years, can fund 100 per cent of the project cost and can cover revenue and capital measures.

<https://energyredress.org.uk/apply-funding>

Comic Relief Community Fund (England) – Groundwork UK

The Comic Relief Community Fund (England) is offering grants to grassroots community organisations with an income of less than £250,000.

There are two types of grants available to organisations whose work delivers on one of Comic Relief's four strategic themes:

- *Children Survive & Thrive*: projects that support children under the age of 11 to reach their potential and have the best start in life.
- *Fighting for Gender Justice*: projects that improve equality for women, girls and the LGBTIQ+ community and initiatives that help people affected by domestic violence, abuse or exploitation due to their gender.
- *A Safe Place to Be*: projects that support people who are rebuilding their lives because of homelessness or forced migration.
- *Mental Health Matters*: projects that support good mental health in communities, improve access to support and tackle stigma and discrimination.

Funding is available to help you develop your organisation through a Capacity Building Grant (up to £1000).

Administration of the local funding is being managed by community charity, Groundwork, which specialises in transforming communities and the local environment for the better.

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/national-grants/comic-relief-community-grants/>

Veterans' Foundation grants

Many armed forces charities struggle to raise sufficient funding to support serving and former members of the British Armed Forces' and sometimes their dependants who are in need. The Veterans' Foundation has been created to establish a new and nationwide source of funding to help these charities. It acquires its funds through the Veterans' Lottery and donations.

The trustees of the Veterans' Foundation will disburse funds to Armed Forces charities and charitable activities.

They will support projects that:

- Reduce homelessness
- Increase employment
- Provide welfare and medical support
- Increase confidence and social integration
- Reduce dependence on drugs and alcohol
- Support other charitable activities that may be needed

You can apply for grants of any sum up to a maximum of £30K. Trustees will also consider a bid for a spread grant, i.e. £30K as £10K for each of the next three years. Please note that the trustees are likely to award more small grants than large grants. They will consider a range of factors including the service or item being applied for, the number of beneficiaries, the importance of the grant to the applicant charity and the needs of the beneficiaries.

<https://www.veteransfoundation.org.uk/>

Church Conservation Grants – Morris Fund

Grants between £500 and £5000 are awarded to churches, chapels and other places of worship in the United Kingdom for the conservation of decorative features and monuments, but not for structural repairs.

Grants will be awarded to support smaller programmes of work concerned with the conservation of decorative or non-structural features such as:

- stained glass windows
- sculpture
- furniture
- internal monuments and tombs
- wall paintings

The decorative feature, monument, etc must date from no later than 1896 (the year of William Morris's death). The next deadline for applications is 31 August 2021.

<https://www.sal.org.uk/grants/morris-fund-conservation-grants/>

Heritage Impact Fund – Architectural Heritage Fund

The HIF offers tailored finance for charities, social enterprises and community businesses across the UK to develop sustainable heritage at the very heart of vibrant local economies.

Loans from £25,000 to £500,000 are available for up to three years with tailored terms and both flexible and incentivised interest rates for impactful projects. These could include both capital and interest repayment holidays. HIF supports applicants across the UK who are undertaking a capital project or are looking to build upon or scale-up an existing enterprise.

The HIF is a joint initiative with contributions from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Cadw and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

<http://ahfund.org.uk/hif>

First Steps Enterprise Fund – Asda Foundation

First Steps Enterprise Fund (FSEF) is a £300,000 pilot fund to support community organisations. The Social Investment Business manage this fund on behalf of the Asda Foundation.

Funding is available for community organisations (charities and social enterprises) based in England that are looking to take on their first loan to help them grow and become more sustainable. Particular preference is given to organisations that work in the following areas:

- Older people
- Health and wellbeing
- Employment for young people

Funding packages of up to £30,000 are available (90% loan and 10% grant). The loan element is charged at 5% (fixed) to be repaid over a period of 4 years with an optional capital holiday for the first year. Up to £50,000 is available for exceptional cases.

<https://www.sibgroup.org.uk/firststeps>

Emergency Essentials Programme – BBC Children in Need

Family Fund Business Services are working in collaboration with BBC Children in Need to deliver the Emergency Essentials programme supporting children and young people living with severe poverty as well as additional pressures such as domestic violence, disability or poor health in the family.

The programme can deliver or fund critical items such as:

- Gas or electric cookers
- Essential household items
- Furniture and kitchen equipment
- Children's beds and bedding
- Washing machines
- Fridges and freezers
- Baby equipment

- Clothing in exceptional or emergency situations.

Applications must be completed by a registered referrer who is part of an organisation that is supporting the family or young person and capable of assessing their needs.

<https://www.familyfundserves.co.uk/emergency-essentials/>

HS2 Community and Business Funds – Groundwork UK

Two funds are available to local communities to help with the disruption that will be caused by the construction of Phase one of HS2 between London and the West Midlands; the Community and Environment Fund and the Business and Local Economy Fund. The objective of these funds is to add benefit, over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation, to communities and local economies along the route.

The administration of these funds is managed on behalf of HS2 Ltd by the charity Groundwork who will ensure both funds remain available for applications throughout the construction of Phase One.

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/hs2funds>

BlueSpark Foundation grants

Schools, colleges and community groups in England can apply for grants to Blue Spark Foundation for a wide range of projects. The Foundation value academic, vocational, artistic and sporting endeavour in equal measure but are particularly keen to support projects which will help enhance the self-confidence, team working skills and future employability of children and young people.

Many grants will be under £2,000 and none are more than £5,000.

Projects which could be supported include drama, music, sport, art and design, debating, public speaking, academic education, vocational training, community projects, enterprise projects and educational excursions. This list is illustrative and not exclusive as to the types of project that the Foundation support.

<http://bluesparkfoundation.org.uk/>

Family Fund – The Family Fund Trust for families with severely disabled children.

The Family Fund helps families across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under. You can apply to Family Fund subject to a number of criteria which include that you are the parent or carer of a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under and that you have evidence of entitlement to one of the following: Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Pension Credit.

See the website for more details.

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

Landfill Communities Fund – SUEZ Communities Trust

SUEZ Communities Trust (formerly SITA) provides funding awards of up to £50,000 to not-for-profit organisations to undertake work that is eligible under the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). Applications are considered for three areas of work which qualify for funding through the LCF. These include:

- Public Amenities
- Historic Buildings, Structures or Sites
- Biodiversity

Projects can be supported that make physical improvements at sites located in any of 100 funding zones around qualifying sites owned by SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK.

<http://www.suezcommunitiestrust.org.uk/>

Help the Homeless grants

Help the Homeless makes grants to charitable organisations with the aim of helping homeless people return to the community and enabling them to resume a normal life. Grants are available to small and medium-sized charitable organisations to fund the capital costs of projects with grants of up to £5,000. The quarterly deadlines for grant applications each year are: 15 March, 15 June, 15 September and 15 December.

<http://www.help-the-homeless.org.uk/>

Grants to support repair and conservation of war memorials – War Memorials Trust

War Memorials Trust grants support repair and conservation works undertaken following best conservation practice. Almost all war memorials are eligible for support and custodians/owners can find information about eligibility and processes on the website.

Grants are available between 25% and 75% of eligible costs and are likely to be considered up to a maximum grant of £5,000 for non-freestanding war memorials while freestanding, non-beneficiary war memorials may be considered up to a maximum grant of £30,000. There is no minimum award.

War Memorials Trust seeks to help all war memorial custodians, whatever the nature and size of their war memorial by facilitating repair and conservation projects. Details on current eligibility and deadline dates as well as how to apply can be found at the web address below.

<http://www.warmemorials.org/grants/>

Football Foundation grants

The Football Foundation provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing rooms, 3G pitches, fencing, portable floodlights, pitch improvements and clubhouse refurbishment. The Fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations and gives grants for projects that:

- Improve facilities for football and other sport in local communities.
- Sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background age, or ability.
- Help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport.

Grants are available for between £10,000 and £500,000.

<http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/funding-schemes/premier-league-the-fa-facilities-fund/>

Prepared by Andy Dean, Assistant Director at the Rural Services Network

Email: andy.dean@sparse.gov.uk

The Rural Services Network is an organisation comprising 150 local authorities and 100 other public service providers seeking to establish links across public service, identifying and broadcasting best practice, and making representations on rural service issues. For details please go to our website rsnonline.org.uk