

Efficiency East Midlands Foundation Community Spaces Fund



About the Fund

Community spaces are at the heart of local life. They bring people together, reduce isolation and provide safe, welcoming places where people can learn, connect, celebrate and access support.

The Efficiency East Midlands Foundation's Community Spaces Fund has been established to help community venues across Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland become more sustainable, accessible and resilient for the future. The fund is being managed by Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation.

With a total fund of £100,000, we expect to fund 22 organisations, with grants of up to £5,000 available to support projects that improve the long-term sustainability of community spaces.

The fund recognises that while many organisations are facing increasing financial pressures, investing in the future of community buildings can help ensure they continue serving local people for years to come.

What can be funded?

We welcome applications for projects that improve the sustainability and long-term future of community spaces, including:

1. Decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvements (for example insulation, heating upgrades, solar panels or LED lighting)
2. Accessibility improvements that enable more people to use the building
3. Building improvements or adaptations that increase inclusion and help the venue better meet community needs
4. Capital works or equipment that strengthen the long-term sustainability of the venue

Projects should demonstrate how the proposed improvements will benefit the wider community and help the organisation remain viable into the future.

We are unlikely to fund

This fund is not intended to support day-to-day operating costs. We will therefore not fund:

- Activity or running costs
- Unrestricted funding
- Projects that have already been completed

Timeline

Stage	Date
Applications open	9am Monday 14 th September 2026
Applicant webinar	1pm Tuesday 29 th September 2026. Book here
Applications close	9am Monday 19 th October 2026
Assessment panel	Week commencing 16 November 2026
Applicants notified	By Monday 23 rd November 2026
Projects may begin	From 1 st January 2027

Our approach to grant making

This fund follows the principles of IVAR's Open and Trusting grant making. We will:

- Offer support through webinars, surgeries and responding to your queries.
- Only ask for information we need to make a decision. A £5,000 grant shouldn't require a long proposal – simply tell us what you want to do, what difference it will make and how much it will cost. If it costs more than £5,000 tell us how you will fund the extra cost.
- Keep the application process as straightforward as possible. You don't need technical language or lengthy applications.
- Be open about our grant criteria and assessment processes (see page 4 below)
- Treat applicants with fairness, respect and transparency.
- Provide details of monitoring requirements in advance (see page 5 below)
- Communicate clearly throughout the process.
- Let you know if we need any additional information rather than rejecting an application because something is unclear.
- Recognise that every organisation is different, and we'll think about your organisation's situation when we assess your application.
- Give tailored individual feedback to all unsuccessful applicants.

Who can apply?

Applications are welcomed from charitable organisations that manage community spaces within Derbyshire, Leicestershire or Nottinghamshire, including:

- Village halls
- Community centres
- Football clubs, sports pavilions etc
- Youth centres, including Scout Huts or similar
- Church or faith halls (where the building provides wider community benefit)
- Working men's clubs operating on a charitable or not-for-profit basis
- Other charitable organisations managing community venues

We will not fund for profit organisations.

If you need help or have a question email grants@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Applicants must:

- Be a registered charity, CIC, CIO, co-operative, charitable incorporated organisation or other not-for-profit organisation with charitable purposes
- Have a minimum of three unrelated Trustees/Directors/Committee members, none of whom have 50%+ significant control (voting, financial or decision-making power)
- Have an organisational bank account in the name of their organisation with a minimum of two unrelated signatories
- Own the venue or have a long-term lease of at least 10 years
- Be responsible for managing the community venue
- Be based within, or delivering benefit to communities in, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire or Rutland

Match funding

Match funding is not required.

However, if your organisation has secured additional funding or is making its own contribution towards the project, this may strengthen your application by demonstrating wider support.

Making an application

Applications to be made online – [click here from 14th September to apply.](#)

Application questions include:

1. Organisation name
2. Main contact (name, role, telephone, email)
3. Organisation address
4. Tell us about your organisation, your community space and its users
5. How much are you applying for? (grant requested and total project cost if different)
6. Use this space to tell us about any match funding, fundraising plans etc. (optional)
7. Tell us about your project.
8. What difference will this project make?
9. Why is this project needed now?
10. How will you deliver the project? (when will the work take place, who will carry it out, whether you've obtained quotations or any permissions needed for the work)
11. Is there anything else you'd like the Grants Panel to know? *Optional.*

If you need support or have any questions, please contact grants@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

What makes a strong application?

We're looking for applications that clearly explain:

- Why your community space is important to local people.
- What challenge or opportunity your project will address.
- How the proposed improvements will help your venue become more sustainable, accessible or inclusive.
- Who will benefit from the project and the difference it will make.
- How you've arrived at the project costs.

You don't need to use technical language or write a lengthy application. We want to understand your organisation, your community and how this investment will help secure the future of your community space. If you're unsure whether your project is suitable, please contact us at grants@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk before applying. We're happy to discuss your ideas.

How applications will be assessed

We will consider:

- The importance of the community space to local people.
- The need for the proposed improvements.
- The longer-term impact on the sustainability of the venue.
- How the project will improve accessibility, inclusion or environmental sustainability.
- Whether the costs are realistic and represent good value.
- The organisation's ability to deliver the project.

Assessment Scoring Matrix

Each eligible application will be independently assessed against the criteria below. Scores will be used to support recommendations to the Grants Panel, alongside consideration of the overall balance of the grant programme.

Scoring Guide

Score Description

- 0 =** Does not meet the criterion or insufficient information provided.
- 1 =** Very weak evidence. Significant concerns remain.
- 2 =** Some evidence provided, but weaknesses or uncertainties reduce confidence.
- 3 =** Good evidence that the criterion is met. A sound application with minor weaknesses.
- 4 =** Strong evidence that the criterion is well met. The project is likely to deliver significant benefits.
- 5 =** Outstanding evidence. The application fully meets the criterion and demonstrates exceptional potential for lasting impact.

If you need help or have a question email grants@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Assessment Criteria	Score Available	What we are looking for
1. Fit with the Fund	0–5	How well does the project meet the aims of the Community Spaces Fund? Does it support the long-term sustainability, accessibility, inclusion or environmental sustainability of a community space?
2. Community Benefit	0–5	How important is the venue to the local community? How many people will benefit? Does the project respond to a clear local need and improve opportunities for people to connect, learn or participate?
3. Sustainable Impact	0–5	Will the project create lasting benefits beyond the life of the grant? Will it strengthen the long-term resilience of the building through improved accessibility, reduced energy costs, increased use or greater financial sustainability?
4. Project Viability and Organisational Capacity	0–5	Is the project well planned with realistic costs and timescales? Does the organisation have the experience, governance and capacity to successfully deliver the project and manage the grant?

The Grants Panel will use assessment scores to guide funding recommendations. However, scores alone will not determine which applications are funded. When making final decisions, the Panel will also seek to:

- achieve a fair geographical spread of grants across Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland;
- support a diverse range of community spaces, recognising the different roles they play within their local communities;
- ensure the overall grants programme reflects the aims of the fund and delivers the greatest possible benefit across the region.

The Panel are less likely to fund organisation that have an active grant from Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation grant for capital activity or running costs.

Where applications receive similar assessment scores, these wider considerations may influence the final funding decisions.

Monitoring and reporting

We want our reporting requirements to be proportionate to the size of the grant. Once your project has been completed and the grant has been spent, we'll ask you to submit a short end-of-grant report.

The report will ask you to:

- Summarise the activities or improvements funded by the grant.
- Tell us about any significant changes to the agreed budget.
- Explain the difference the funding has made to your organisation and the wider community.

Where possible, we'd also love you to share a photograph of your completed project and a short case study. These help us celebrate the impact of the fund and demonstrate to our donors how their support is making a difference to communities.

Need help?

If you are unsure whether your project is eligible, we encourage you to contact us before applying. Contact grants@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

We are happy to discuss your proposal and answer any questions before the deadline.