



COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND

Guidance notes for applicants

The Low Carbon Hub is championing community-owned energy across Oxfordshire. Our Community Grant Fund offers financial support for community energy activities across the County.

These notes are to help applicants. If you have any questions, or require further assistance with your application, please contact info@lowcarbonhub.org or 01865 246099.

Applying to the Community Grant Fund

Who can apply?

All Community Shareholders of the Low Carbon Hub CIC (the Hub Family) are eligible to apply for funding. You can either apply singly, or in consortia with other Community shareholders.

Please note: If you are part of a low carbon community group based in Oxfordshire, that is not yet a member of the Low Carbon Hub CIC, please contact us to find out how to join.

We welcome applications that support partnerships between our Community Shareholders and other organisations based in their community.

How much can I apply for?

- **Small community grants – up to £500**
All Hub family members can apply for up to £500 in any financial year. So long as we have sufficient funds in the pot, it is our aim to fund all qualifying applications.
- **Large community grants – up to £5000**
Hub family members can apply for one of a small number of grants up to £5,000 that will be awarded each year, in a competitive process.

Joint applications

We welcome joint applications from consortia of two or more Hub family members. In which case, the maximum funding that can be applied for would be:

- £500 per Hub family member in the consortia for small community grants
- £5,000 per Hub family member in the consortia for large community grants, up to the maximum funding available in the fund for that financial year.



For example, if £12,000 is in the large community grant pot, a joint proposal from two groups can be for a maximum of £10,000, a joint proposal from three groups, for a maximum of £12,000.

When should I apply?

- **Small community grants**
Small grants can be awarded throughout the year. Check the website for this year's deadlines.
- **Large community grants**
These will be offered once a year. The application will be a two-stage process. Check the website for this year's deadlines.

When will I know if my application has been successful?

We will let you know if your application has been successful within 30 days of the deadline.

What can you apply for?

The grants can be used to fund activities that contribute to the Hub's aim: to cut Oxfordshire's carbon footprint and contribute to the creation of a decentralised and locally owned renewable energy system. We welcome applications for activities that encourage the reduction of energy use and fossil fuel consumption by:

- 'powering up': increasing renewable heat or electricity generation
- 'powering down': improved energy efficiency in homes and buildings
- supporting the shift to a low carbon transport system.

What type of activity is eligible for funding?

We will consider applications for any activity, so long as a case can be made that it contributes towards this aim and fit with the spirit of the Hub's Community Benefit Guiding Principles.

Community Benefit Guiding Principles

Our aim: To cut Oxfordshire's carbon footprint and contribute to the creation of a decentralised and locally owned renewable energy system.

Our ethos: Community focused; inclusive; collaborative.

Our impact: Achieves leverage; tangible outcomes; visible; replicable; scalable; lasting.

Activities we will support

We invite applications relating to activity that helps encourage the reduction of energy use and fossil fuel consumption in Oxfordshire.

The work can be carried out directly by the CIC Community Shareholder, used to buy in expertise, or passed on to a local third-party organisation to deliver the activity. The activities a grant can be used to fund include, but are not restricted to:



Skilling up	Mentoring and training, including facilitating learning from other groups. Buying-in technical expertise.
Third party grants	Groups may champion a funding need of a local organisation or individuals who need funding to carry out low carbon activities. We are particularly keen to support energy efficiency measures.
Kit and support	Paid hours to deliver projects e.g. small energy efficiency measures.
Engagement	Awareness events, so long as they have clear relevant long term objectives. Community surveys.
Policy and lobbying	Lobbying and campaigning, so long as the issue has direct local relevance. Research on energy issues with a direct local relevance.

What type of activity will the grant not fund?

We are unable to fund:

- broader environmental activity such as public green spaces or biodiversity.
- activities relating to food or waste.

Although we are happy to cover some staff time as part of any grant applications, where funding requested is primarily to cover consultant or project management costs you are unlikely to be successful.

We do not support organisations that adopt a partisan political stance or activities that are party political.

We will not provide retrospective funding for activities that have already taken place.

How to apply

Complete and return the relevant forms to the Low Carbon Hub, preferably by email to info@lowcarbonhub.org

Small community grants

- Small Grants Application Form
- Small Grants Finance Form

If you are applying in consortia with other members of the Hub Family, please ensure each organisation completes a Small Grants Finance Form.

Large community grants

Applying for a large community grant is a two-stage process. Communities are invited to submit an initial project outline. A shortlist of projects will then be invited to submit a full application.

Stage 1: Outline proposals:

- Groups should submit a large community grants outline proposal form



Stage 2: Detailed application

Should your proposal be selected to go through to full application stage, you will then be given the opportunity to submit:

- Large community grant full application form
- Budget summary form
- Large Grant Finance Form

There are guidance notes to help you complete the forms, and if you have any questions or need assistance with your application, please contact info@lowcarbonhub.org or call 01865 246099.

How is our application assessed?

Once an application is submitted it is checked by the Hub team to ensure it meets the criteria set out in this guidance. If we need any further information or clarity on any point, we will contact you, and you will have an opportunity to amend your application. All applications that meet the criteria will be circulated to the Community Grants Committee for formal agreement.

What happens if we are offered a grant?

We'll let you know within 30 days of the deadline whether your application has been successful. You then have twelve months in which to carry out the agreed activity.

Conditions

In order to receive a grant, your organisation needs to

- Have a UK-based bank account in the name of your organisation and financial procedures that require at least two people who are unrelated to sign cheques or make a withdrawal.

By accepting a grant, you undertake to:

- Use it for the activities set out in your application. Should circumstances arise such that the original purpose for the funds is no longer possible, please contact the Hub to discuss any alternative activities you would like to propose for the grant.
- Keep receipts to provide evidence of expenditure.
- Notify us of any underspend, and unless an alternative use for the funds are agreed with the Low Carbon Hub, repay it.
- Complete and return the Grant Report Form within 12 months of receipt of the grant.

We'd like to make our grant application process as simple as possible for applicants. If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve this process, please let us know.



FAQs

Where does the Community Grant Fund get its funding?

The Low Carbon Hub IPS owns a portfolio of community renewables that create an income. A proportion of the profits are donated to the Low Carbon CIC for community benefit. We use this income to support a range of low carbon community energy activities activity that cut Oxfordshire's carbon footprint and contribute to the creation of a decentralised and locally owned renewable energy system.

Up to 25% of this funding has been earmarked to set up the Community Grant Fund. Through this we are offering grant funding to our CIC Community shareholder groups to support their work.

How were the Grant Programme criteria arrived at?

The network of Low Carbon Community Groups across Oxfordshire represents a phenomenal network of dedicated volunteers, working on local projects to help tackle the global issue of climate change. We wanted to create a grant programme that supports the work that they identify as relevant to their community. We developed the grant criteria and structure in consultation with our CIC Community shareholders. We hope we have found a balance between creating a light touch and flexible application process with providing tangible evidence of the difference the support our funding has made.

Why do you only accept applications from the Low Carbon Hub family?

With only limited funding available we have decided to limit eligibility to the Low Carbon Hub CIC Community Shareholders, the Hub family. These are Oxfordshire based voluntary organisations, with a track record in delivering low carbon activity within their communities. The growth and development of the Hub has been in large part due to the support of the Hub family. We are delighted that we are now able to use our income to support their activities and continue our partnership in tackling climate change.

How do I become part of the Low Carbon Hub family?

Any Oxfordshire group whose primary objective is that of reducing its community's carbon footprint or low carbon group can apply for a nominal £1 share to become a Low Carbon Hub CIC Community Shareholder. To find out more please contact us.

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