

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 groups who are members of Low Carbon Hub's network are eligible to apply for funding. You can either apply singly, or in consortia with other community groups.

Please note: If you are part of a low carbon community group based in Oxfordshire, that is not yet part of the Low Carbon Hub community network, we would love to hear from you and please contact us to find out how to join.

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

How much can I apply for?

- **Small community grants – up to £750** - All Low Carbon Hub community groups can apply for a small grant of up to £750 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 £5,000** - All Low Carbon Hub community groups can apply for one of a small number of grants of up to £5,000 that will be awarded each year, in a competitive process.

Joint applications

We welcome joint applications from a combination of two or more community groups. In which case, the maximum funding that can be applied for would be:

- £750 per group in the consortia for small community grants
- £5,000 per group 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.

GUIDANCE NOTES

When should I apply?

- **Small community grants** - small grants can be applied for throughout the year up to 31 January of the relevant financial year. Check our website for this year's deadlines.
- **Large community grants** - the large grants can be applied for once a year in a two-stage process. Applications for the Outline Proposals stage usually open in the Autumn. Check the website for this year's dates and 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 I apply for?

The grants can be used to fund activities that contribute to the Low Carbon 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 more sustainable practices, for example:

- Increasing renewable heat or electricity generation
- Improving energy efficiency in homes and buildings
- Supporting the shift to a low carbon transport system

Our small grants can include any activity that will benefit community groups and help them to thrive.

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 activities that help to encourage the reduction of energy use and fossil fuel consumption in Oxfordshire.

The work can be carried out directly by a community group, 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.

GUIDANCE NOTES

THRIVING COMMUNITY GROUPS

Our small grants can be used for any activity that is beneficial to community groups and helps them to thrive.

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 & ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT

Paid hours to deliver projects e.g. small energy efficiency measures. 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?

Although we are happy to cover some staff time as part of any grant application, 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

Small community grants:

- Please complete the online combined Small Grants application form and Finance form, available to download as a Word doc if you prefer.

If you are applying in consortia with other members of Low Carbon Hub community network, please ensure each organisation completes a Small Grants application form.

Large community grants:

Applying for a large community grant is a two-stage process. Groups are invited to first submit an Outline Proposal application. A shortlist of projects will then be invited to submit a Detailed application.

Stage 1: Outline proposals

Groups should submit a large community grants Outline proposal form in the Autumn of each year.

Stage 2: Detailed application

Should your application progress, you will then receive a Detailed application form and a Large Grant Finance form.

GUIDANCE NOTES

How is our application assessed?

Once an application is submitted, it is checked by the Low Carbon 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 reviewed by the Impact Committee for approval.

What happens if your organisation is offered a grant?

We will let you know within 30 days of the deadline whether your application has been successful. You then have 12 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 Low Carbon 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, you may need to repay the underspent funds.
- 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the Community Grant Fund get its funding?

The Low Carbon Hub owns a portfolio of community renewables that create an income that is used for community benefit. We use this income to support a range of low carbon community energy activities 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 community group network to support their work.

GUIDANCE NOTES

How were the Grant Programme criteria arrived at?

The network of Low Carbon community groups across Oxfordshire represents a phenomenal system 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 Low Carbon Hub community groups network. 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 community group network?

With only limited funding available we have decided to limit eligibility to the Low Carbon Hub community group network. These are Oxfordshire-based voluntary organisations, with a track record in delivering low carbon activity within their communities. The growth and development of the Low Carbon Hub has been in large part due to the support of this network. 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 community network?

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 IPS Community Shareholder. To find out more please contact us at info@lowcarbonhub.org.

Still have a question about our grant funding?

Get in touch with us at info@lowcarbonhub.org and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.