

## Community Infrastructure Capital Grant Scheme Cotswold District Council

### Grant scheme is now open for applications

In September 2022, the local authority district of Cotswold was identified by DEFRA as eligible for Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). REPF aims to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. Follow this link to the REPF fund guidance/prospectus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus/rural-england-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

The REPF is linked with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This intervention corresponds to the UKSPF intervention E11. Follow this link to the UKSPF fund guidance/prospectus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

Cotswold District Council has been awarded an allocation of capital funding that will be available from April 2023-March 2025 but considered as an individual year grant programme.

### Community Infrastructure Capital Grant scheme - Cotswold District

Cotswold District Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The REPF funding allocated is intending to support works to create new sustainable community infrastructure and to safeguard existing facilities to serve the local community into the future.

With this in mind, Cotswold District Council has introduced a new capital grant scheme aimed at village halls and community buildings. We are particularly keen to support projects to promote decarbonisation, improve energy efficiency and enable renewable energy installations or to help improve digital connectivity.

The following funding amount has been allocated to projects relating to village halls and community buildings within the grant period of October 2023 - March 2025.

The first round, Year 1 of grant expenditure – Apr 2023 - Mar 2024

Total Capital Grant Funding available	
Total grant funding available 2023-2024 – Year 1	£51,073 REPF (capital)
Total grant funding available 2024-2025 – Year 2	£53,219 REPF (capital)

Capital grants will be awarded in the range of:

	Grant Range	Match Funding Needed
Cotswold District Council	£2,000 - £10,000	20%

### Deadline for applications:

Year 1 grant allocation 2023-2024	<b>Deadline – 12noon Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>
Year 2 grant allocation 2024-2025	<b>Deadline – 12noon Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b>

Applications in Year 2 can be submitted at any time but the final deadline for all applications is as above.

Applications will be assessed by a grants panel composed of representatives appointed by Cotswold District Council.

All funding awarded will need to be spent and invoices submitted by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 for each financial year.

## Eligibility

The projects must be in a rural area as defined as:

- towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
- 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

The project must be aimed at addressing either or both of the following:

- Digital infrastructure installations – broadband, wi-fi and mobile phone signal solutions.
- Addressing measures to contribute towards Cotswold District Council climate emergency, such as installation of renewable energy installations

The grant will be open to:

- Community Interest Companies
- Community Benefit Organisations
- Charities and other non-profit making community and voluntary sector organisations
- Town and Parish Councils
- Village Hall and Community Halls
- Amateur Sports Clubs and Associations providing that they have a legal entity in place such as company status etc.

Unfortunately, we are not able to support applications with no legal entity in place, such as formally or informally constituted groups. This is because of the rules set by central government in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

You must use funding on capital projects. This means you must spend grants on lasting assets such as a building or equipment, for example:

- installation of items such as renewable heat generators e.g., Air or Ground Source Heat Pumps;
- additional or improved wall, floor and ceiling insulation to conserve heat;
- installation of double glazing to conserve heat;
- changing light fittings to upgrade to LED lighting etc to address energy saving measures;
- installation of solar panels;
- installation of wi-fi or fibre to premises broadband, where permitted;
- installation of rain water harvesting systems;
- installation of green roof systems;
- other capital improvements such as installation of disabled access

Grants must be for community purposes. You cannot use grants to fund domestic property improvements or to buy private vehicles.

Three (3) quotes are needed for all capital items over £2,499.

Quotes will need to be sent at the same time as submitting your application.

You cannot spend grants on revenue costs such as running costs or promotional activities, survey / feasibility costs.

Grants in year 1 can only fund capital projects that will be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

If work on a project has started, then it is ineligible for financial support. An application for investment must be submitted and an offer made before work on the project is started. "Start of work" means either the start of

construction work or the first legally binding commitment to order equipment, excluding preliminary feasibility studies, whichever is earlier.

There is a limit of one grant award per organisation / project and only for existing venues that operate in Cotswold District.

Match funding is required of 20%. In addition, all remaining monies must be in place to meet total project cost by January 2024. Applicants must be able to evidence that (applicant) match funding is in place to deliver the project and the source(s) of this funding at the time of submitting your application. This will be required as supporting documentation.

In addition, where planning consents are a requisite element of the project proposal, these must be in place (approved) before an application is made.

We cannot support projects that have received funding from other Defra schemes. This includes [The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](#) - grant funding over 3 years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, covering extending buildings and modernising facilities.

We cannot support projects or costs where there is a statutory duty to provide them.

All applications must comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and Equalities & Diversity requirements within the REPF/UKSPF Prospectus so capture this data from all applicants:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control-7>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-reporting-and-performance-management-3>

All grant funding will be paid retrospectively in arrears upon proof of expenditure by Cotswold District Council. You should be aware of how you will manage your cashflow until the grant payment can be processed to your project / organisation bank account.

## Applications

Application forms can be obtained from Cotswold District Council via <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/repf> or [www.grcc.org.uk](http://www.grcc.org.uk) by email [info@grcc.org.uk](mailto:info@grcc.org.uk) or by post 01452 528491. GRCC has been appointed as the administering body to manage the grant applications.

If a project requires additional support in order to complete an application, please contact GRCC using the contact details above so we can source and supply assistance for this.

You must download the application form and, once completed, submit this via email to [info@grcc.org.uk](mailto:info@grcc.org.uk). You must also submit all your supporting documents in the same email.

### **Each application will need to provide:**

- The number of quotes for the capital spend will need to be provided for capital works
- VAT registration details where applicable
- Evidence of match funding of 20% of the total project cost (all match funding will need to be evidenced at the time of submitting, alongside your grant application clearly identifying whether this comes from the business' own capital or other sources.)

A quote may be either: an official written quote from a supplier; or a screen grab from a website; or an image from a current catalogue. All must clearly evidence the date of when the information is obtained.

Quotations / screenshots must be clearly identifiable to the supplier and include the supplier's name, a date, price per item to be purchased / procured, if the amount is inclusive or exclusive of VAT, and (where possible) the supplier letterhead / logo with VAT number / registration details.

Applicants are expected to progress the 'best value quote' which ensures deriving the best value on the market and justification why you have selected a specific supplier and how they contribute value for money.

Applicants should ensure that there is no conflict of interest when selecting potential suppliers of goods and services. Conflict of interest refers to situations in which personal interest (which may include financial interests) may compromise, or have the appearance of, or potential for, compromising the selection of a supplier.

All quotes must: come from different, independent suppliers who are not linked to each other, or to the applicant business through shared ownership or control; and be sourced independently by the applicant or any Agents acting on the applicant's behalf. A supplier cannot source quotes from other suppliers on the applicant's behalf.

The minimum value for any item of expenditure is £250.

All quotes should be 'like for like'. This means that they are comparable with each other in terms of quality, size, quantity, units, and specification for each item. Wherever possible, the items should be for the same specification, or make and model and have been obtained within the last 3 months and still be valid until end of February 2024. If the time on the quote expires before this your application will not be eligible.

Applicants should not undertake to make any commitments to suppliers prior to funding being awarded and confirmed. Any costs that have been committed to prior to the date of grant approval and award will not be eligible

Any grants above £10,000 will be subject to the local authority grant applicant credit check.

**All applicants will also need at the same time as submitting your application:**

- A bank account in situ with 2 signatures or more needed to authorise expenditure
- To include a copy of the most recent bank statement to the date of their application
- To provide a copy of their constitution, governing document, charity or CIC registration number
- To provide an up-to-date copy of their Accounts
- To supply three quotes for capital works over £2,499
- To provide copies of any legal permissions such as planning permission or
- To provide consent from landlord if Lease in place
- 4 x photographs to help illustrate your project (optional)

Applications which are submitted after the deadlines will not be considered.

An initial check will be made by the Grant Administrator to ensure that all questions have been completed on the application form, that the eligibility criteria is met, and that the required accompanying paperwork has been received. Once this has been done, they will be in touch to confirm that the application will be considered at the next grant panel meeting.

Cotswold District Council reserves the right to reject businesses that have not completed the grant application form(s) correctly.

## The Grant Assessment

A grant panel of representatives appointed by Cotswold District Council will assess each application. Applications will score higher when:

- demonstrating a clear need

- clearly meeting the objectives as outlined in the REPF grant profiles.
- demonstrating value for money
- demonstrating additionality
- demonstrating a greater contribution to Cotswold District net zero objectives.

### **The assessment process**

Applications will be assessed based on the following scoring system.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Points to consider/cover</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Grant project proposal and delivery	Outline the proposed project. What does the project aim to achieve? How it will benefit the organisation Track record/experience in delivery	0 -100	20%
What is the need for the proposed project?	The need for the project How the need has been assessed Would the project be run without grant investment or at a smaller scale?	0-100	30%
How does the project meet the objectives, outputs and outcomes of the REPF Intervention	How the project meets the objectives of the intervention How the project meets the outputs and outcomes of the Intervention	0-100	20%
Contribution to Net Zero Objectives	The Cotswold District commitment to cut Greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030.	0-100	10%
Value for money	How the project provides value for money? How this grant investment would provide added value? What would happen without the grant investment?	0-100	20%

Assessors will be scoring based on how comprehensive the answers are as follows:

#### **Score Comment**

- 100 Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.
- 70 Good - Response is relevant and good. The response demonstrates a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.
- 50 Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements.
- 20 Poor - Response is partially relevant and/or poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirements but contains insufficient / limited detail.
- 0 Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. Failed to provide confidence that the proposal will meet the requirements. An unacceptable response with serious reservations.

An applicant found to unduly influence a panel member but contacting them to discuss the application will be removed from the process. Application must be processed and awarded in a fair and transparent way and no applicant has an advantage over any other.

All grants are made at the discretion of the grant panel and are subject to available funds. It is not advisable to only consider submitting an application to meet the final deadlines of submission.

The decision of the Grant Panel and Council is final and reserves the right to vary the level of grant or reject and application.

## The Grant Offer

The Grant Offer will last for 7 days after the date it is issued to the applicant via email. Grant Offers will be sent to successful applicants via email, along with a Grant Agreement, therefore it is important that you share the right email address on your application.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Grant Offer and Agreement is signed and returned to [info@grcc.org.uk](mailto:info@grcc.org.uk) within the deadline. It MUST be signed by a current Trustee or someone who is authorised to sign by the organisation/ project.

The grant is approved only for the purposes stated in the Grant Funding Agreement.

Your project and all payments must be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and you must submit a completed claim form (to be supplied) by 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 & 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025, subject to review and compliance checks. Reimbursement is based on actual defrayed expenditure.

If your approved expenditure is less than anticipated the grant will reduce. If your project includes a contribution from you then the grant will be reduced in proportion to the overall reduction in expenditure.

If you experience difficulties in achieving the outcomes as outlined in the Grant Funding Agreement, please contact us urgently so that we can understand and discuss the options in relation to the grant payment. This may include:

- change of supplier
- change of completion date
- change to the project value
- expected project outcomes
- cancellation of your project

Please note that we reserve the right to claim the grant funding back from you if you do not achieve the outcomes.

### **Condition of Grant Offer**

You will be required to maintain an asset register of all purchases of items over £5,000. We may ask to see this register at any time and may also visit your premises to verify the purchase(s) and record identification details. If you dispose of any of the items before they are fully depreciated, the council reserves the right to reclaim a proportion of the grant.

The register will need to provide the following details for each asset:

- Date of acquisition
- Asset name and description and approved use
- Purchase price (net of recoverable VAT)
- Location of the asset (including postcode)
- Serial or identification numbers
- Location of the title deeds (where relevant)
- Method of depreciation
- Date of depreciation
- Date and proceeds (net of VAT) of any disposal

We may require photographic evidence of assets to show to auditors. If this is necessary, we will contact you and confirm what images we need.

### **VAT**

VAT may be an eligible cost under this grant scheme; however, this will vary on a case-by-case basis and the council cannot give VAT advice to applicants.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that VAT is correctly treated within any grant project. Incorrect VAT treatment could lead to penalties from HMRC and the applicant having to repay the VAT element of the grant that should not have been claimed.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to include VAT if an applicant needs to claim it. If you do not include eligible VAT at the time of application, the grant will be awarded based on net costs and VAT cannot be claimed.

### **Procurement**

We require a formal quote for each item of service included within the project and justification why you have selected a specific supplier and how they contribute value for money.

Quotes must be provided for all items of expenditure, including those funded by your 20% match funding contribution.

If the required number of quotes cannot be identified, the applicant should provide sound justification to explain why this has not been possible. Grants will only be approved for items with less than the required number of quotes in exceptional circumstances.

If your total project costs are higher than £24,999, and you believe that a single supplier contract will be over £24,999, then you must discuss this prior to submitting your application. Please email [info@grcc.org.uk](mailto:info@grcc.org.uk)

### **GDPR Statement**

GRCC is managing this grant programme and will need to retain the grant applications for records, including the personal contact details listed on the application forms. For information on how GRCC manages and stores personal information, please visit <https://www.grcc.org.uk/about-us/privacy-policy>.

The grant applications will be shared with the Cotswold District Council as the grant programme evolves and, once the grant programme has closed handed over. Please visit Cotswold District Council - <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-data-and-access-to-information/data-protection/#:~:text=You%20must%20report%20data%20breaches,delay%20and%20within%2072%20hours>.

Grant applications may also be shared with the government department responsible for the distribution of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund for auditing purposes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-privacy-notice/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-privacy-notice>

The grant application forms, accompanying documentation and contact details will not be shared with a third party.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**There is a limit to the size of grant that is available, but is there a limit on the size of an overall project cost?**

No, there is no limit to the overall project cost.

**How long before we will hear whether our grant application is successful?**

We will inform all applicants that are considered by the grant panel with 2 weeks.

**Can we submit an application at any time?**

Yes.

**What can we use the capital grant for?**

Grants must be for capital items and expenditure for community purposes. The fund cannot support promotional activities or revenue costs.

**What is the latest date that applications can be submitted?**

Year 1 - Nov 2023 - end of Mar 2024     9am Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Year 2 – Apr 2024 – end of Mar 2025     9am Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**If my grant application is submitted in Year 1 grant allocation and the budget available has been spent, can this application be rolled over to the next grant round, Year 2, for consideration?**

This will be at the discretion of the grant panel.

**If my grant application is not successful on its first attempt, can we re-submit?**

This will be at the discretion of the grant panel.

**Where can I find out more about the grant and if possible, speak to the Grant Administrator in person?**

GRCC has been appointed to administer this grant programme on behalf of Cotswold District Council. Grant Guidelines and applications forms will be posted on Cotswold District Council and GRCC websites, social media pages and in news articles.

**Are there any groups, projects or organisations that would not be eligible to apply?**

Due to the rules set out by central government in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund, we are not able to support applications with no legal entity in place, such as formally or informally constituted groups.

Other ineligible groups, projects, or organisations are:

- Church halls and Faith groups
- Political parties
- School halls
- Projects without a bank account. However, we will consider a third party receiving the grant funding on the project or organisation’s behalf, providing that the commitment to do this is in writing.

If your group, project or organisation is ineligible for the grant scheme, please do contact the Grant Administrator who will endeavour to signpost you to other grant sources and help.