

Solihull Community Buildings Fund

Introduction

As part of the UK Government's investment in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), Solihull Council is seeking to award a minimum of five capital grants to improve access and use of independently owned community buildings in the borough. This can include community and youth centres, village halls, as well as faith and school buildings that can provide regular community access and use.

Fund Aims

The fund aims to improve public access to community buildings in Solihull, particularly in areas where there is a scarcity of facilities such as community centres.

We aim to improve at least five community buildings to either increase access and use by the community in general, or for specific groups such as children and adults with special educational needs or disabilities.

Only capital expenditure can be supported, but we can support projects that might do any of the following:

- Expand the time during the week that communities can access existing buildings;
- Expand the existing offer, through the addition of new facilities or storage;
- Expand the capacity of a building, including through the addition of an extension or more toilet facilities;
- Adapt buildings to make them more accessible to people with sensory needs or disabilities.

Closing date for applications is 31st July 2024.

All projects must be delivered by 28th February 2025 and your final monitoring report must be returned by 21 March 2025.

Available Funding

There is a total fund of £250,000 with a minimum of five grants to be awarded. There is no maximum or minimum amount that organisations can apply for, but projects must demonstrate value for money.

Match funding is not a requirement, and the fund will cover 100% of the project costs. However, if match funding is required to complete the project, then this must be secured and evidenced prior to the award being made.

Priority Area

Grants are only available for community buildings, which are in the following Wards:

- Chelmsley Wood
- Elmdon
- Lyndon
- Olton
- Shirley
- Meriden

This reflects areas where there is an identified lack of accessible community buildings, and/or where there isn't investment already planned through the UK SPF.

We Will Fund

We can only fund capital expenditure on community buildings. This can consist of any of the following:

- New construction, e.g. an extension to an existing building.
- Conversion of buildings, e.g. converting a building to enable community use.
- Renovation activity, e.g. refurbishment of an existing building or remodelling to improve access, capacity and use.
- Addition of new facilities, e.g. toilets or kitchen, to be able to expand the offer.
- Some types of equipment, such as storage containers or sensory equipment – must have a shelf life of at least 5 years

We can only fund projects that can be completed by the 28th February 2025.

We are not able to fund

- Purchase of land or the purchase of buildings
- Capital works that solely improve the energy efficiency of buildings such as windows, heating systems and solar panel unless it impacts community access and use
- Overheads, running and maintenance costs
- Playgrounds and outdoor play equipment
- Salary costs or consultant fees
- Projects which have already been completed prior to the award
- Repayment of loans
- Websites or promotional materials

Reporting requirements

An online monitoring form should be completed by 21/03/2025 to include client feedback, pictures of the completed work and evidence of marketing promoting new facilities (if any). A word version of the form will be sent to successful providers together with their grant agreements.

Eligibility

We will accept applications from:

- Registered charity
- Constituted Community groups
- Companies Limited by Guarantee with charitable aims
- Community Interest Companies

- Co-operatives - registered Community Benefit Societies and
- Registered Industrial and Provident Societies
- Social Enterprises
- Schools, Churches and Parish Councils – where community benefit is demonstrated

Please note, we are unable to fund the following:

- Individuals or sole traders
- Companies Limited by Shares
- Direct replacement of statutory obligations and public funding
- Promotion of religious or political activities
- Groups with significant financial free reserves
- Retrospective grants
- Organisations or charities which are set up solely to promote any particular religion
- Organisations who have indicated poor management of any previous grants or who present poor financial health
- Contribution to endowment fund, payment of deficit funding or repayment of loans
- Animal welfare, unless the project benefits people (e.g. disabled riding schemes)
- Statutory work in educational institutions
- Overseas travel or expeditions
- Medical research and equipment for statutory or private healthcare
- General appeals
- Pure sponsorship purposes or funding purely for costs of fund-raising events.
- Schools, Churches, Parish Councils or PTA's unless community benefit is demonstrated

Additional Supporting Information

To be eligible to apply you must be able to provide proof of:

- Either a copy of the Lease Agreement with at least a minimum term of 5 years is required, or confirmation of freehold ownership of the building/land
- Leaseholders will also require written permission from the Landlord
- Planning permission, listed building consent and building regulations consent (and any other applicable consent) required for the building work must be granted or evidence that these are not required.
- All other match funding to complete the project is secured

You will need to submit the following with your application:

- List of management committee / board of trustees / board of directors with at least 3 unrelated people as members, a list of those directors will be required showing who has bank authorisation
- A written constitution / articles / set of rules
- A copy of your most recent annual accounts or financial records showing your organisation's balance of funds, income and reserves
- A bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated signatories
- A bank statement from the last 3 months
- Risk assessments for venues and activities
- Copies of your safeguarding/policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Quotes for capital items over £300 to demonstrate value for money

- Project plan