Communities Grant

Now open for applications!

Application deadline
5pm 30 November 2026

The Communities Grant is an award of £500 to charities and non-profit organisations that support young people aged 11-19 years (or up to 25 years old for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) from underserved communities to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature.

This current round of funding is a place-based offer focusing on specific geographical areas defined by postcodes. The Communities Grant is therefore only available to organisations located within the following postcode prefixes:

- **Cumbria: CA & LA5-LA23**
- **Glos/Wilts/Avon: GL, SN, BS**



> **"The grant didn't just buy equipment, it helped create moments of connection between children, parents, and the land that many told us they rarely find elsewhere."**
>
> Hazelnut Community Farm

Grants are available for the following options:

Nature & Nurture

To enable young people to be connected to nature and the recognised benefits that this has to their wellbeing; this grant is available to enhance 'nature on the doorstep' through improvements to areas within their local community. The ambition is to see projects that provide for outdoor learning and improvements to biodiversity which could for example, include wildflower meadows, creation of raised beds, allotment gardens, ponds, woodland areas or sensory gardens.

The grant can also be used for the purchase of outdoor learning resources that engage young people with the environment such as bird boxes, nature id charts and natural craft equipment and materials. The grant cannot be used to fund capital infrastructure such as playground equipment or storage sheds.

Transport & Travel

Being outdoors benefits the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone. Research commissioned by the Ernest Cook Trust has identified that transport costs are a key barrier to accessing outdoor learning. We are also aware that the cost of living crisis has highlighted inequalities in people's ability to access the outdoors.

We believe that all young people should have the opportunity to create lasting, meaningful connections with nature. Therefore, this grant supports travel and transport costs to any centre or provider that can facilitate these ambitions, including: Ernest Cook Trust outdoor learning sites, outdoor learning centres, forest schools, countryside parks, woodlands, national parks, farm parks, farms (including city farms), coastal areas and beaches. Trips to outdoor adventure centres for outdoor activities (such as kayaking and climbing) may be considered, but nature connection and environmental learning must be the primary focus.

Wellies & Waterproofs

The cost of living crisis has highlighted inequalities in people's abilities to access the outdoors. Being unable to access appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment has been identified as a key barrier to engaging in outdoor learning. This grant helps to fund outdoor clothing to enable young people to learn outdoors.

What the Communities Grant can fund

- **Non-Profit Organisations:** UK registered Charities, Community Interest Companies, non-profit organisations or Charitable Incorporated organisations whose vision is aligned with the Ernest Cook Trust that are located within the specific postcode areas.
- **Young People:** The organisation must work with young people aged 11-19 years (or up to 25 years old for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities).
- **Disadvantage:** We will prioritise organisations that focus on support for young people who are from underserved communities. This could include disadvantage for social, physical, economic or community reasons.
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion:** It is vital that applicants consider equity, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of their work.
- **Safeguarding Policy:** Organisations must have an up to date Safeguarding Policy.
- **Governance:** Organisations will need to have a bank account in the organisation's name, a constitution or memorandum of association and a board or management committee of at least three unrelated people.

What the Communities Grant can't fund

- Schools – schools, nurseries, pre-schools, colleges or universities
- Applications from outside the stated UK postcodes
- Individuals
- Retrospectively
- Local Authorities
- Political Campaigns
- Organisations based outside the UK
- Sole Traders
- Anyone who is applying on behalf of another organisation
- Organisations without at least three unrelated people on the board or committee
- Organisations that are aimed at generating profits for private distribution
- The promotion of religion – Faith Organisations may apply, as long as there is a clear benefit to the local community and not just to those of a particular faith

> **"The most valuable outcome was decreasing social isolation and improving community spaces. Spending time in the garden allowed young people to be outside and witness the effects of nature on wellbeing. It also empowered them to be a part of a project that was improving their local community spaces."** Communities Grant recipient

Application process

The Communities Grant opens once per year and remains open until all the funding has been allocated.

There is a total of 40 grants available for 2026/2027 financial year.

Applications are made via this link:

Communities Grant Application form

Contact us

Application deadline
5pm 30 November 2026

Evaluation

Successful applicants will have one year to spend the Grant and then a short monitoring report will be sent out to receive feedback and information on the impact of the funding.



Image: Black2Nature



