

# Guidance, Application Process and Conditions of Funding: Coronation Community Orchard Fund

Please read these guidance notes carefully and refer to them when completing the application form

## 1 Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council has launched a new grant fund of £50,000 to support community groups, charities, schools and community spaces to establish community orchards in their local area. One of Westmorland and Furness Council's key values is to be ecologically aware and be responsible for protecting and enhancing our natural environment. An important priority of the Council Plan is to make sure customers are at the heart of everything we do. There are clear benefits to nature by planting orchards, but there are also wider benefits to our residents. For example, health and wellbeing, access to green space and access to fresh, local produce.

## 2 Aim of this fund

The Coronation Community Orchard Fund aims to support community tree planting and community growing, by providing financial capacity funding to collectively support nature and biodiversity.

## 3 What can be funded?

The fund is designed to support community groups, charities, schools and community spaces in establishing community orchards. The fund will support the capital costs of establishing a community orchard, including:

- Ground preparation;
- Tree planting and tree costs;
- Protection;
- Fencing; and
- Irrigation.

Please note that the maximum grant allocation is £10,000.

The groups receiving the grant must own or operate the land or have landowners' permission. Proof of landownership or landowner permission must be provided with your application to be considered for funding.

If your project is planted on land that is leased from someone else, you need to demonstrate that you have a reasonable amount of time left on your lease. Your current lease should be at least as long as the expected lifespan of equipment purchased.

## 4 What will not be funded?

The Coronation Community Orchard Fund will not support:

- Community orchards planted outside the boundary of Westmorland and Furness
- Activities that are for private gain.
- General tree planting
- Orchards planted where landowner permission is not granted.
- Orchards with no form of public access.
- Work or equipment already purchased or events which have already taken place.
- Ordinary expenditure of the organisation including, but not limited to, operational running costs, maintenance costs or ongoing staffing costs. For the avoidance of doubt, these are costs that would be incurred regardless of whether the project was delivered or not.
- Activities and costs that fall out of scope including revenue and tree maintenance costs.



## 5 Criteria for funding

The groups and organisations applying, must:

- ✓ Have clear governance in operation;(e.g. have a constitution document, MoU)
- ✓ Be non-profit making from your orchard;
- ✓ Have audited accounts and financial transparency; and
- ✓ A bank or building society account in the name of your group or organisation with at least two unrelated signatories.
- ✓ Proof of land ownership or agreement.

The groups eligible to apply for this funding are:

- ✓ Town and Parish Councils
- ✓ Voluntary and community groups
- ✓ Registered charitable organisations
- ✓ Farming groups
- ✓ Landowners
- ✓ Businesses
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Non-governmental organisations.

We do not accept applications from:

- ✗ Individuals
- ✗ Families
- ✗ Groups that have no formal constitutions.

It is unlikely that the partnership fund will be able to provide grants for all potentially eligible applications. Therefore, an organisation can only make one application and we reserve the right to prioritise applications that achieve the best value for money and community benefits. We also reserve the right to decline applications which do not meet the stated criteria.

## 6 How your application is dealt with

On receipt of your application, we will make an initial assessment to check that your organisation and project are eligible, and that all required supporting documentation has been



provided. We may contact you to obtain missing information, documentation or for clarification.

We aim to acknowledge receipt of your application within five working days. This will be by email.

You may be contacted by an officer for further details and clarification if you have a large cash reserve that is not being used for the project.

Eligible applications which are accompanied by the required supporting documentation will be scored against the scoring criteria and forwarded to the Community Orchard Fund Grant Panel for consideration. The Grant Panel, made up of key officers within the Council, will assess and make recommendations to the Assistant Director for Climate and Natural Environments and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity. The Community Orchard Grant Panel may request a site visit where appropriate.

The Community Orchard Grant Panel's recommendation may be to approve or reject the grant award. If a recommendation to award is made, this will include a recommended grant amount.

Applicants will be informed by email of the recommendation within five working days of the meeting taking place.

Westmorland and Furness Council, the Executive, will consider recommendations from the Community Orchard Grant Panel and will either agree or refuse applications. The Executive may also amend the level of the grant.

Decisions taken by the Executive are subject to a 'Scrutiny call-in' period of five working days from the decision notice being issued during which time a decision regarding an award could potentially be challenged. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm an award until the Scrutiny call-in period has ended.

Westmorland and Furness Council's Executive decision is final and cannot be changed (no appeals or discussions will be entered into).

We will aim to inform you of the outcome of your application within five working days of the Scrutiny call-in period ending. This will be by letter and if your application has been successful, we will arrange for the funds to be released.

Applicants who are unsuccessful will be notified by letter within two weeks of the end of the Scrutiny call-in period.

A Project Completion Form will be completed and submitted by the applicant on completion of the project in order to draw down the final 25% payment.



## 7 Condition of funding

Payment of funding is subject to completion of such legal agreement as may be required by the Council, which may include specific terms relating to your project and / or the following general terms.

Grants awarded must be spent on the purpose stated in the application. If for any reason your circumstances change or you wish to vary the way in which you spend your grant, you are required to contact us to request written permission to do so.

In the event of a group or organisation ceasing to operate or failing to undertake or complete the project or event for which the grant was offered, or breaching these terms and conditions, Westmorland and Furness Council reserves the right to withhold payment, to reduce an award or seek its recovery.

The financial support provided by Westmorland and Furness Council should be acknowledged in all relevant printed publicity, on websites and in information given to the press. Relevant guidance will be provided to applicants at the time of a grant offer being made.

Your organisation must ensure that its project operated within the requirements of all legislation.

Your organisation should ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in the delivery of its project. Your commitment to this should be clearly identified in a written policy or statement that takes into account current legislation and good practice.

You will be required to inform the Council when your project has been completed and to submit a Project Completion Form within three months of completion (we will provide you with a template). You may also need to provide relevant invoices and a bank statement showing payments made. Organisations who do not complete and return a satisfactory Project Completion Form may be required to return their funding and will not be considered for future funding.

The Council is under a legal obligation to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Decisions of the Council may be challenged by judicial review if the subsidy control rules are not followed or not followed completely. Grants may be suspended, and orders for damages or recovery of any unlawful subsidy made. The Council (and the grant recipient) may suffer reputational damage if an unlawful subsidy is made. As part of the application process, the Council may request from your organisation information about the levels of subsidies, including grant funding, that your organisation has received in recent years.

You will cooperate with the Council so as to allow the Council to discharge its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR") and the Local Government Transparency Code ("Codes of Practice") under section 45 and 46 of the FOIA.



Westmorland and Furness Council accepts no liability for any consequences, whether direct or indirect, that may come about from your use of the Grant or from the Council's withdrawal of the Grant in accordance with these terms and conditions.

## 8 Delivery

By submitting an application to Westmorland and Furness Council, the organisation names in the applications agrees (if awarded a grant) to:

- Use the grant only for the activities described in the application and only for expenditure made after the date of the offer letter.
- Provide information and regular communication about their progress over the period of funding and its benefit on the natural environment and / or sustainability (every 3 months until end of the funding period and one final report at the end.
- Notify the Council within three (3) months of a change in land use or change in ownership.
- Maintain and manage the trees for a minimum of 10 years.
- Act lawfully throughout in relation with best practices and guidance from any relevant regulators and follow any guidelines issued requiring a minimum of two signatories.
- Hold the grant in a UK based bank account or building society account.

## 9 Subsidy Control

The organisation will comply with all rules under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the UK-EU TCA (the Subsidy Control Rules), these are:

- Not take any action or fail to take any action that will cause the Council to be in breach of its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules;
- Provide such reasonable assistance as is requested by the Council to enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules; and
- Ensure the Grant is spent only to further the delivery of the project and return to the Council any unspent part of the Grant upon completion of the project.

Westmorland and Furness Council may withhold and/or require repayment of all or any part of the Grant from the date of payment if variation, repayment or recovery is required under or by virtue of the Subsidy Control Rules or by any court of relevant jurisdiction.



## Contact Us

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