

Mercia Park Community Fund

Eligibility and Guidance Notes

The Aims of the Fund

The Mercia Park Community Fund will give grants to projects that:

1. Help strengthen local communities (particularly their quality of life and life chances) within proximity or affected by the Mercia Park Development at Junction 11 M42.
2. Improve the natural environment within proximity or affected by the Mercia Park Development at Junction 11 M42.

The Mercia Park Community Fund is not intended to benefit just one or two individuals.

Who can Apply for a Grant?

Applications are welcome from any of the following, if they are within proximity or affected by the Mercia Park Development.

- Registered charities
- Constituted Community or voluntary 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.
- Friends organisations and Parish Councils (so long as proposed projects do not overlap with statutory/principle authority responsibilities.)

***Funding to Community Interest Companies and other non-charities may include conditions to restrict funding to charitable objectives only.*

Size of Grants

You can apply for:

- Up to £2,000 to £5,000 for a 12-month project.
- Groups already successfully working to improve local communities or the natural environment in the area are welcome to apply for £3,000 towards operating costs for **up to three years IF** they can clearly demonstrate how the organisation will thrive in future years, once the grant has finished.

- In exceptional circumstances, larger grant amounts of up to £10,000 may be considered, for a project that clearly could not be completed without a higher budget. We would highly recommend that you call the grants team to discuss your project before completing an application for a higher amount.

How to Apply

Just complete an online application form via the website . There is a phone number to call if you need any help.

What Happens Next

In order to make decisions as fair as possible, all applications for grants go through the same process:

- The same application form is completed by each group or organisation.
- Each application is assessed against the criteria above, and essential documents (bank accounts, safeguarding policy etc) checked
- Each decision to fund is made by a panel which includes local people from parishes affected by the site.
- Each successful applicant signs a grant agreement agreeing to spend the money as stated in their application.
- Each group is then sent the grant direct to their organisation's bank account to begin their work.

The first funding round and applications will be:

Round 1: Open: June 1st

Closed: 17th August

Decisions made and grants funded: 8 weeks thereafter

Please note the following are not eligible:

- Individuals or sole traders
- Statutory organisations like schools, colleges, county, city or district councils.
- National charities (except independent local branches)
- Promotion of religious or political activities. ***(but applications are welcomed from faith-based organisations, for projects that deliver services that are advertised and are clearly open to/encourage the whole community)***
- Organisations who have indicated poor management of any previous grants or who present poor financial health
- Payment of deficit funding or repayment of loans
- Animal welfare, unless the project benefits people (e.g. disabled riding schemes)
- Pure sponsorship purposes or funding purely for costs of fund-raising events
- Capital Builds
- Retrospective funding (projects that will have started before an application can be processed or repayment of money you have already spent)
- Trips abroad

Additional advice information and guidance

The Application Form (what the panel will look for)

- Clear evidence of need and the difference your project will make: this could be as simple as the length of time you have already delivered your project, or it could include research or results of consultation you have carried out; support for your work from people in the community; showing us how you work in partnership with other similar groups nearby.
- Strength and relevant experience, whether your proposed work is well planned and realistic
- That your proposed budget is realistic and accurate. Provide a full project breakdown for funding you request and include costs associated with the entire project if you are only applying to us for part of it.
- Sustainability: consider what will happen once the funding has ended.
- Applications for continued funding will be considered: if good impact and need is shown.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Successful organisations will be required to complete one monitoring report at the end of the project, and will be required to engage with the Foundation regarding an initial press release to announce the project and how grant funding will be used.
- We will be asking how the grant was spent, the difference the project has made, what was achieved, any key issues and lessons learnt.
- All grant applicants will be expected to supply at least one case study and agree to engage to a relevant degree with IM Properties staff. For example, by providing quotes and images about the project to be shared on social media, alongside internal IM Properties reports.

Please contact a member of the grants team if you have any queries or need help at any stage of the application process. We are always happy to help in any way we can.