Green Shoots Fund webinar held on 21st April 2021

Questions and answers

Q. How will Warwickshire County Council score the responses i.e. how are the requirements weighted?

A. Based on the criteria the council has put forward - that will be used to take account of the applications the funder wishes to take forward.

Q. If a group of us is in a partnership and one is applying, can that applicant hire another partner to do the work as an eligible cost?

A. This is a community fund and the council expects community members to do a lot of the work involved in a project, but if expertise/infrastructure is needed to carry out a project then that is accepted. In terms of partners, it might be that a partner such as a business required to carry out the project may benefit from the allocation of work. To be clear, businesses cannot apply but could be a partner if necessary to undertake the project.

Q. For a small bid - under £2,000 how long would it take to be considered?

A. WCC will make an offer to successful applicants around ten weeks after the closing date. For small grants they will try to make an offer in less time if possible.

Q. If the fund can be used for feasibility of several small projects where detailed costs are not yet known but will be determined as part of the feasibility work that’s undertaken?

A. There is a risk with feasibility funding that the projects won’t go ahead. Not seeking to fund feasibility.

Q. Would a GP surgery be eligible to apply?

A. Looking to support not for profit community organisations, so surgery would have to fall into that bracket or be working with a group that meets the eligibility as a lead for the project

Q. Could you clarify the rules on total funding across a parish? If several bids go in from one village that are not connected are they all aggregated to assess total cost is under £25,000?

A. The funder wouldn’t aggregate the separate applications together. However, if a parish council is overseeing a number of applications from small unconstituted groups, the £25,000 application limit would apply to the parish (if applying groups are constituted then this doesn’t apply).

Q. A group works with the local authority on a site that is owned by the local authority. Is the group able to apply for funding separately and match with any funds that the local authority may have? The work needing to be done includes tree and shrub planting and this can only be realistically undertaken between November and March. Will the funder recognise this?

A. The funder encourages applications where the applicant is looking to match fund, whether it’s with their local council or another source. Happy for the Green Shoots fund to be used as a seed fund/launch pad. If there are limitations as to when the applicant can spend the money (such as between November and March, for example), that needs to be clear in the application and the funder will try to support that.

Q. A Parish Council planning to replace all street lights that aren’t LED in the parish have secured an 80% loan for most of the cost. Can they apply to this fund for some or all of the remaining 20%? They won’t have completed their ITT by the closing date, so will an estimated cost plus or minus 5% be acceptable?

A. Yes, but the limit of £25,000 still stands.

Q. What's the chance that all the money will be allocated in this round/will there be a second round? Three weeks isn’t long to get a bid together.

A. Difficult to know at this stage whether all the money will be allocated in this round, the council haven’t received a lot of applications to date but are expecting a last minute rush. Groups are reminded there is a significant amount of money to spend and are urged to send applications in. Also advised that there can be a dialogue with the applicant if the application doesn’t quite suit in this first phase, so that the application may be resubmitted in any future phase of funding.

Q. From when will the actual funding be awarded to successful projects?

A. Ten weeks after the deadline of 17th May.

Q. If we apply for funding during this round of funding can we make another bid when the next round is opened up for a different project?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a priority order in the criteria against which applications will be assessed?

A. See presentation. The funder has not set a specific order of priority criteria but want to look at a range of projects that offer best value and will look to fund as appropriate.

Q. Is a social enterprise eligible to apply where any profits are routed to community benefit?

A. Funder will look at what the benefit is to the community. Encouraged to apply if eligible.

Q. Can a group apply for a smaller grant in the first round and then, if need be, apply for a larger amount for the same project (but to cover different expenses)?

A. Technically that could be allowed, but the fund is not for feasibility. So for example, a three stage project with distinct phases and not requesting funding for feasibility would be considered.

Q. Is the £25,000 application limit per application window/application date or for all future applications?

A. Per application window

Q. What involvement do you expect from the county Councillor in the project as per "how have you involved your county councillor”?

A. The funder would encourage your county, district and/or borough councillor to be a good advocate for your project and to invest in it if possible. Adds weight to your application to have their support.

Q. Is there a date for the second round of funding?

A. There is currently no news on a second round. The funder would need to be clear on the commitment made to the first round before they could announce another.

Q. Can the fund be used to support a plan for an organisation's venue to become carbon neutral?

A. Warwickshire County Council expects applications for improvements to community buildings and these are within the criteria, bearing in mind the £25,000 limit.

Q. If a project is accepted/approved and the implementation is not until later in the year, will the funds be held over till then?

A. Yes, funds will be held until the work commences. Applicants should be clear in their application that an award cannot be spent until a particular time and that will be taken into account by the funder.

Q. If we are unsuccessful, will we get any feedback to improve future applications?

A. Yes

Q. Can you upload links to other documents on the electronic application form?

A. These links/documents need to be sent separately by email to the Green Shoots email address

Q. Any advice on what makes a strong application?

A. What you’re trying to achieve and what the benefit is in a climate change context should be absolutely clear from your application. The funder is looking for things that can be done quickly and can make a difference in your local community, adding to the quality of life. Although it’s not necessarily about scale, the funder hopes to see lots of people benefitting from projects. Including evidence of community support for the project in your application is encouraged.