**A monthly bulletin facilitated by your membership of the Rural Services Network highlighting a selection of current funding opportunities - February 2019**

**Heritage Project Grants – Heritage Lottery Fund**

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funds projects which focus on heritage.  HLF state that heritage can mean different things to different people. It can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations. As a guide, this could include:

* oral history
* cultural traditions
* nature
* natural and designed landscapes
* community archaeology
* historic buildings, monuments and environments
* collections of objects, books or documents in museums, libraries or archives
* histories of people and communities or places and events
* the heritage of languages and dialects
* places and objects linked to our industrial, maritime and transport history

Different grant bands have different criteria and the amounts available depend on the type of organisation applying as follows:

* Non-profits and partnerships led by non-profit organisations:  £3,000 to £5million
* Private owners of heritage: up to £100,000
* Partnerships led by commercial organisations (for the purposes of achieving economic growth): £250,000 - £5m

A new funding portfolio was launched in January 2019. For information on all HLF programmes visit the website.

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

**Prince’s Countryside Fund**

The Prince’s Countryside Fund has grants of up to £50,000 available for projects that will provide a long-term positive impact to the individuals and communities they seek to benefit.

They provide funding towards projects affecting areas of greatest need in rural England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Grants aim to sustain rural communities, improve the prospects of viability for farm and rural businesses, and support aid delivery in an emergency and build resilience. Applications close on 21 February 2019.

<http://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/grant-giving-programme/grant-programme>

**Better Broadband Voucher Scheme – Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport**

The Government has made a commitment to provide every home and business in the UK with access to a basic broadband service so that browsing the web and keeping in touch with families and friends is easier.

The Better Broadband Scheme has been extended for a further year until 31st December 2019, ensuring that a subsidised basic broadband installation remains available to eligible applicants.

If you currently experience broadband speeds of less than 2 Megabits per second (Mbps), the Better Broadband Voucher Scheme may be able to help you access a basic broadband service that will offer download speeds of at least 10 Mbps.

The Better Broadband Voucher Scheme, developed by the UK government, provides a voucher worth up to £350 for basic broadband installation to homes and businesses that will not benefit from superfast broadband.

<https://basicbroadband.culture.gov.uk/>

**Veterans’ Community Centres – Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**

This is a £3 million funding programme to fund renovations and improvements to veterans’ community centres.

Grants of up to £30,000 are available. A small number of grants of up to £150,000 will be made to more complex projects.

The Veterans’ Community Centres Programme is a specialist pot of funding. Applicants must be Armed Forces charities with an existing building that requires refurbishment.

Most grants will be for £30,000 or less. There will be three rounds of funding. Grants of up to £150,000 will only be made in the final application round. Applicants seeking between £30,000 and £150,000 must have a mandatory conversation with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust before submitting an application.

Applications for the first round need to be received by 11 March 2019.

<http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/veterans-community-centres/>

**Community grants – Postcode Community Trust**

Postcode Community Trust provides funding for projects in Great Britain up to 12 months in length relating to the following themes:

* Improving community health and wellbeing
* Arts and physical recreation
* Reducing isolation

Grants are available between £500 and £20,000. There are two funding rounds a year during which eligible organisations can apply. Those successful at Stage 1 progress to Stage 2. If successful at Stage 2, the organisation will receive the total funds requested in their application.

The first round of applications will be open between 6 and 20 February 2019. The second round of applications will be open between 31 July and 14 August 2019.

<http://www.postcodecommunitytrust.org.uk/>

**Rural Community Energy Fund**

The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects which provide economic and social benefits to the community.  The fund will provide up to approximately £150,000 of funding for feasibility and pre-planning development work to help projects become investment ready. RCEF provides support in two stages:

* Stage 1 provides a grant of up to approximately £20,000 to pay for an initial investigation into the feasibility of a renewable energy project.
* Stage 2 provides an unsecured loan of up to approximately £130,000 to support planning applications and develop a robust business case to attract further investment.

Following a review, responsibility for delivery of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) is to transfer to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Government has thanked WRAP for the work done over the past five years in successfully delivering the fund.

For enquiries regarding future funding opportunities through RCEF please contact the Local Energy Team at BEIS [**localenergy@beis.gov.uk**](http://www.wrap.org.uk/localenergy%40beis.gov.uk)

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/rural-community-energy-fund>

**NFU Mutual Charitable Trust**

The NFU Mutual Charitable Trust was set up in 1998, to promote and support charities in the United Kingdom working in agriculture, rural development and insurance.

The Trust focuses on providing funding to larger initiatives, which would have a significant impact on the rural community. The Trustees are particularly interested in initiatives in the areas of education of young people in rural areas and relief of poverty within rural areas. Grants are available between £1000 and £50,000.

The Trustees meet twice a year to consider applications received. These meetings are currently held in June and November. Applications for the June meeting must be submitted by 31st May 2019 and for the November meeting they must be submitted by 1st November 2019.

<https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/about-us/charitable-trust/>

**Local Grants Fund – Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**

Under the Armed Forces Covenant Local Grants programme, grants of up to £20,000 are available for local projects that support community integration or local delivery of services.

Community Integration projects should create strong local links between the Armed Forces community, who are current and former members of their armed forces and their families) and civilian communities; and be able to clearly demonstrate how they will have impact in overcoming barriers to better integration; and improving perceptions, attitudes and understanding. For the project to be truly effective in achieving community integration there should be shared development, delivery and benefits for both communities.

Delivery of Local Services projects should be local projects which offer financial advice, housing, mental and physical health, employability or social support for serving armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families. Projects must be well connected, both to their beneficiaries and to other relevant organisations, and be able to demonstrate how the services they provide will be well-publicised, accessible and joined up.

Applications can be made up to 2 December 2019, although this will be reviewed quarterly.

<http://www.covenantfund.org.uk/local-grants-and-digital-development-programme/>

**Business Improvement Districts Loan Fund – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**

Communities across the country can bid for up to £50,000 to help make local areas more attractive for business.

The latest round of the £500,000 British Improvement Districts (BIDs) Loan Fund will support business owners and local leaders to set-up a BID, which allow communities to come together to deliver additional local services and upgrade commercial areas for the benefit of business.

There is up to £95,000 available for this latest round of funding, which it is estimated will be able to provide funding for up to 4 prospective BIDs. Successful applicants to the fund can receive up to £50,000. The average received by successful applicants has been £33,000.

Expressions of Interest in the Loan Fund are to be received by 8 March 2019, with completed applications by 10 May 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-business-improvement-districts-loan-fund>

**Leaders with lived experience pilot programme – National Lottery Community Fund**

Leaders with Lived Experience is a pilot programme providing National Lottery grants of between £20,000 and £50,000 to support lived experience leadership. A lived experience leader is someone who uses their first-hand experience of a social issue to create positive change for, and with, communities and people they share those experiences with. At this stage it is expected that between 15-20 grants will be awarded.

The deadline for applications is 25 February 2019.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/leaders-with-lived-experience>

**Coalfields Community Investment Programme – Coalfields Regeneration Trust**

The Coalfields Community Investment Programme (England) Funding Support element is a £500,000 fund created to support activities that tackle some of the key challenges that still remain in coalfield communities.

The fund is open to projects that deliver in the top 30% most deprived coalfield communities and that will make a positive difference in addressing the following themes:

* Skills: Growing the skills of people in order to increase their opportunities
* Employment: Developing pathways to increase the number of people in work
* Health: Supporting projects that increase participation in activities/services that improve the health and wellbeing of people in former coalfield communities.

The total fund value of £500,000 will be committed over the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 at four decision making Committees which will take place quarterly (£125,000 allocated to each Committee).

Demand is envisaged to be highly competitive and based on the 2017/18 programme, the number of successful awards was 22% of all applications received.

The next eligibility survey closes on 8 March and the deadline for applications is 15 March 2019.

<https://www.coalfields-regen.org.uk/funding>

**Future High Streets Fund – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government**

The Future High Streets Fund provides £675 million co-funding towards capital projects that bring transformative change. Government want to see the regeneration of town centres through innovative proposals around transport, housing delivery and our public services. Up to £55 million of the Fund has also been allocated to support the regeneration of ‘heritage high streets’. More details of this will be announced in due course.

There will be two rounds of the Future High Streets Fund and the first is now open for proposals to co-fund projects and places that have already started to formulate a vision for the future of their town centres. The date of the second round, along with assessment criteria, will be published in due course but it will not open before 2020.

Government will expect an element of co-funding, either on a project basis or to delivery a local area’s wider strategy for the high street.  This co-funding could either be public (e.g. from local areas’ own budgets) or private finance (e.g. co-financing housing infrastructure). The Fund will contribute up to a maximum of £25 million to each successful place. However, they expect to see a range of project sizes coming forward, many of which are in the region of £5-10 million per town centre.

Local authorities are recognised as best-placed to bid for the funding and develop and deliver proposals. Government expect bidding local authorities to put forward a single, transformative submission covering one high street or town centre in their area. This may comprise of more than one intervention, but that will need to be subject to a strong business case. For example, a local authority may wish to consolidate its town centre offer across a number of high streets to provide additional residential or commercial space. In that case government would consider applications which saw interventions across the network of high streets assuming there was a sufficiently robust strategic business case.

The deadline for submission of expressions of interest is 22 March 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>

**VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2019 to 2020 – Department of Health & Social Care**

Applications are invited from existing schemes to trial a new approach to helping children and young people with their mental health.

Projects should:

* adopt community and person-centred approaches to improving the mental health of children and young people aged 0 to 25 years
* particularly support children and young people through life-changing events
* have strong local connections already in place
* be delivered by the VCSE sector
* be co-produced with service users and stakeholders

Through this programme, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and Public Health England are working with VCSE organisations to promote equality, address health inequalities and support the wellbeing of people, families and communities.

Up to £510,000 is available per applicant over a 3 year period. The deadline for applications is midday on Friday 15 February 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vcse-health-and-wellbeing-fund-2019-to-2020-how-to-apply>

**Improving community spaces loans – Co-op Foundation**

Interest free loans are available for enterprising ideas to improve community spaces.

Places and spaces for people to come together and enjoy shared interests are vitally important for building stronger communities. Venues such as parks and community centres need regular income so they can continue to meet the needs of people who use them, love them, and rely on them for local services and social contact.

If your community organisation is thinking about growing its trading activities to generate more sustainable income, the Co-op Foundation might be able to help your plans take off. They offer:

* Interest-free loans of up to £50,000 towards viable business ideas that will benefit the whole community – particularly those facing greater challenges.
* No repayments for the first year, while your trading activities are developing
* If you are based in a more deprived area, or your work mainly benefits more disadvantaged members of the community, we might also be able to offer some grant funding alongside a loan

<https://blog.coopfoundation.org.uk/index.php/2018/05/17/community-is-everybodys-business/>

**First Steps Enterprise Fund – Asda Foundation**

First Steps Enterprise Fund (FSEF) is a £300,000 pilot fund to support community organisations. The Social Investment Business manage this fund on behalf of the Asda Foundation.

Funding is available for community organisations (charities and social enterprises) based in England that are looking to take on their first loan to help them grow and become more sustainable. Particular preference is given to organisations that work in the following areas:

* Older people
* Health and wellbeing
* Employment for young people

Funding packages of up to £30,000 are available (90% loan and 10% grant). The loan element is charged at 5% (fixed) to be repaid over a period of 4 years with an optional capital holiday for the first year. Up to £50,000 is available for exceptional cases.

<https://www.sibgroup.org.uk/firststeps>

**Women First Fund – Smallwood Trus**t

The Smallwood Trust have received funds from the Tampon Tax Fund to provide grants to projects which enable women on low incomes to access new skills, training, confidence building and employment opportunities. Tampon Tax funding is matched with Smallwood Trust funding.

The objective of the fund is to identify and document good practice that is achieving outcomes for women on low incomes by building their skills, confidence and aspirations to enable them to enter into employment. They will fund existing projects and ongoing work. Projects should be proven and able to evidence impact and good practice. This includes interventions that are not currently documented extensively or are being implemented in a new context.

In this grant round they expect to award funds to 10 - 15 projects at an average size of £10,000 - £15,000. In this funding round they are prioritising applications from:

* Greater Manchester
* Newcastle, Teesside and other parts of the North East
* Hull and Humberside
* Leeds and Bradford
* Sheffield
* Merseyside
* Rural communities in Kent, Cornwall, Cumbria, Dorset and Norfolk

The deadline for applications is 4 March 2019.

<https://www.smallwoodtrust.org.uk/women-first>

**Rural Community Fund – Calor**

Calor offer rural off grid communities the chance to gain funding for projects that will improve local life. Projects supported could be anything from redecorating your community centre or village hall; to new equipment for youth clubs, sports teams or scout groups. Calor additionally state that “we’re open to your ideas.”

They offer grants of up to £5,000 for projects that will provide an on-going service for local communities. Whether you want to support a youth club or start a class for older members of your community, the fund is there to help.

Rural communities with projects off the mains gas grid can submit their projects for funding. The projects that receive the most votes will be shortlisted and then reviewed by a panel of judges, who will select the winning projects for funding.

The fund will open for project submissions on 20 March and close on 21 May 2019. Interested groups should register their details on the fund website to receive updates.

<https://www.calor.co.uk/communityfund/>

**Cornerstone, Gateway & Foundation Grants – National Churches Trust**

The National Churches Trust has three grant programmes currently open:

* Cornerstone grants. The Cornerstone Grant Programme offers grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 towards the cost of urgent structural repair projects costed at more than £100,000 including VAT. The Trust will also consider projects that introduce kitchens and accessible toilets to enable increased community use, costed at more than £30,000 including VAT. Grants will never exceed 50% of the project cost. The next deadline for applications is 4 March 2019.
* Gateway grants. The Gateway Grant Programme offers grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 towards project development and investigative work up to RIBA planning stage 1, to support churches preparing for a major project, and in developing their project to the point at which they can approach a major grant funder. Grants will never exceed 50% of the project costs for this phase. The next deadline for applications is 9 May 2019.
* Foundation grants. The Foundation Grant Programme will offer grants of between £500 and £3,000 towards urgent maintenance works and small repairs identified as high priority within a recent Quinquennial Inspection or Survey Report. Also, small investigative works and surveys. Project costs should not exceed £10,000. Check the website for the next deadline for grant applications.

<http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/our-grants>