

GRANTS SCHEME GUIDANCE NOTES

These notes provide an explanation to the overall Main Grants Scheme. There is useful text throughout the application form which is designed to help you answer the questions. Before making an application, we advise that you take time to read these guidance notes fully, taking care to ensure that your project meets our criteria. An application will not be processed without all the required information; incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and put on hold until all information has been received.

The Board expects that a project should be in a position to start work as soon as a Formal Offer Agreement has been issued and a first claim must be submitted within three months of signing the Formal Offer acceptance.

ELIGIBILITY

Biffa Award's Main Grants Scheme is aimed at groups that need funding to improve the quality of life in their community. We provide funding for site-based capital expenditure to create or improve a community amenity or habitat for biodiversity. Between £10,000 and £75,000 can be awarded for Recreation and Community Buildings projects that are within 5 miles of a significant Biffa Group Limited operation or 10 miles of an active Biffa Landfill site. However, if you're applying under the Rebuilding Biodiversity theme, the radius of the Biffa operation or landfill site is extended to within 15 miles. In addition, all projects must also be within 10 miles of a landfill site (not necessarily owned by Biffa Group Limited) in England and Northern Ireland. All projects must fit within one of the three themes listed below, and the total cost of the project must be less than £200,000 including VAT.

In common with most funders, Biffa Award receives far more applications than we are able to fund. We strongly recommend that you only apply when the project is in a position to start quickly - we will give preference to projects that apply for their total costs, or projects that have already secured the majority of match funding needed to deliver the project. The Board may delay a decision or reject the application outright if it feels that an application is premature.

Please note you **cannot re-apply** for funding on the same site of a previous Biffa Award grant, within one year of receiving your final payment. In addition, we will only accept a **maximum of two full applications** per financial year from any one organisation, and only one application per organisation will be considered at any Board meeting.

We require that a project has started and can make their first financial claim within three months of a formal funding offer. All projects are expected to complete and submit their final claim within 10 months of formal offer for Recreation and Community Buildings projects, and within 12 months of formal offer for Rebuilding Biodiversity projects. No extensions to these timescales can be given.

We do not fund:

The following list is not exhaustive but contains important details about what we do not fund. We strongly advise that you check that your project meets our criteria and is eligible for funding **before** you submit your application.

- Individuals, profit-making or local government organisations (including Community Councils) and organisations that are not able to register as an Environmental Body with the regulator ENTRUST (please visit the ENTRUST website for details on eligibility www.entrust.org.uk or call the helpline on 01926 488 300)
- Projects on sites that are owned and or maintained by borough, county, city, district, parish or town councils, unless a formal lease, with a minimum term of no less than 10 years, is in place with the applicant
- Projects where no formal lease, with less than 10 years remaining, is in place
- Projects more than 5 miles from a significant Biffa Group Limited operation (15 miles for Rebuilding Biodiversity projects)
- Recreation and Community Building projects more than 10 miles from an active Biffa Group Limited landfill site
- Projects more than 10 miles from a licensed landfill site (owned by any company)
- Core costs of an organisation, office equipment and furniture or, elements that directly benefit staff
- Projects with a total cost of more than £200,000 including VAT
- Improvements to car parks, offices or services
- Alterations to buildings in order to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements
- Items of personal kit or equipment, e.g. sports shirts, cricket gloves
- Portable items that will not be permanently kept at the address listed as your project location
- Projects in school buildings or on school grounds, on the premises of hospitals, hospices, medical centres, day-care centres, charity offices, or for allotments
- Sports related projects e.g. floodlighting, pitches, changing rooms, cricket nets
- Projects which are for fencing
- Events, excursions, CDs and websites, publications and marketing materials
- Purely church fabric repairs, e.g. to bell towers and church spires
- Storage containers or storage facilities
- Feasibility studies, tender costs, building consents or recruitment costs
- Enhancement of town or village centres, e.g. signage, seating, dog waste bins and seasonal bulbs
- Energy saving or green technology-based projects which have a derived income, e.g. solar panels
- Retrospective funding – work that has already taken place before any grant has been awarded

If necessary, we may revise the amount of funding available and make changes to our published criteria, as well as updating the list of significant Biffa operations. As soon as any changes are known, we will post them on our website and other social media platforms, or be in touch with you directly if you have an application that is being considered by us. We aim to give three months' notice about any changes where possible.

THEMES

Community Buildings

The Community Buildings theme aims to improve community buildings such as village halls, community centres and church halls to act as mechanisms for community involvement. Priority is given to projects that enhance, maintain or introduce real community led social, economic or environmental improvements. Projects which fall within this description will be registered under the ENTRUST category D.

Examples of project costs that can be funded under this category include building refurbishment and internal fit-out costs, kitchen replacement (including white goods), internal furniture, window and door replacement, central heating systems and roof replacement.

Applications for repair or maintenance of churches must be able to demonstrate wider community use and benefit.

Rebuilding Biodiversity

The Rebuilding Biodiversity theme supports a variety of living things and includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems (or habitats) that support them. It is important that they are protected and that the environment can adapt to threats such as climate change. We will ask you to submit a list of habitat types and species being conserved or protected through project delivery and projects must be working to [Biodiversity 2020](#): A strategy for England's Wildlife and ecosystem services Section 3; its successor, as agreed in the 25 year plan; or a Local Biodiversity Action Plan target. Research will not be funded. Projects which fall within this description will be registered under the ENTRUST category DA.

We will give preference to projects under this theme that have a strong element of public access or inclusion, such as volunteer involvement.

Examples of project costs that can be funded under this category include habitat improvement works, tree surgery, scrub removal and the purchase of plants, seed and trees. Reasonable salary costs for staff directly involved in project delivery and or supervising volunteers in delivery can be funded. Projects must lead to a direct improvement to a habitat or species; projects that are for research will not be funded. Management costs must not exceed 7.5 per cent of the total amount of direct delivery costs your organisation is applying for.

Recreation

The Recreation theme generally covers projects which will benefit people within their free time. Many projects under this theme also have elements of the other two themes within them; we receive more applications under this theme than any other. Projects which fall within this description will be registered under the ENTRUST category D.

Examples of project costs that can be funded under this category include: play equipment; landscaping including boardwalks, trees and shrubs; skateparks; woodland walks; nature trails; outdoor gym and building work within wider community areas of sporting clubhouses e.g. communal space, kitchen and toilets.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN AN APPLICATION

Creativity, innovation and sustainability

We want to see exciting, innovative and creative solutions incorporated into your project ideas. Your application should outline how you intend to ensure the project is sustainable following completion. It is essential that you outline how you will maintain, publicise and develop the project following completion of the improvements.

Established Need - For Community Buildings and Recreation projects

We like to see evidence of wider community consultation and involvement in an application. This could be in the form of letters of support, consultation from community open days or a questionnaire, a village design statement, or parish plan. Community involvement should be widespread and include the full diversity of possible beneficiaries. Providing evidence of how you have investigated the needs of the people who will benefit from the project will make your application stronger.

Established Need - For Rebuilding Biodiversity projects

A site survey and management plan, photos of the site's condition and a clear rationale for the habitat management techniques, employed to fulfil the project's aim and outcomes, should be included within your application. The project should meet with Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and ecosystem services Section 3; its successor, as agreed in the 25-year plan; or a Local Biodiversity Action Plan target. All projects must report into its Local Environmental Centre.

Where applicable, we would like to see how you have established the needs of the people who will benefit from the project and provide details of any community consultation carried out. This could be in the form of letters of support, evidence from a community open day or a questionnaire. The evidence should include consultation and analysis of the results as well as priorities for improvement in the community. Community involvement should be widespread and include the full diversity of possible beneficiaries.

IF SUCCESSFUL...

We love to receive photographs, tweets, Facebook posts and any other communication about how your project is progressing. Sending regular updates of your progress will keep us informed and allow us to maximise any publicity opportunities as well as help with any hurdles that you come across along the way. At the end of your project you will produce a short film showcasing the difference our funding has made to your community and/or the natural environment.

Your Formal Offer Agreement will set out a timescale for claiming your grant. If for any reason you are unable to meet this timescale or your project delivery is delayed, it is important to keep us informed.

One condition of the grant will be to acknowledge our funding on site, we expect to see our funding celebrated and widely promoted through social and print media. Brand recognition must be clearly visible on site. This can be via a plaque, banner or including our logo on your own interpretation or signage boards. You will need to check with us before you use our logo. Biffa Award plaques are available to purchase and can be included as part of your project costs.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

- Ensure that you have answered all the application questions
- Your answers must be within any stated word limit
- Answer all questions in full, do not simply refer to a business plan, another document or section within the supporting documentation

Expression of Interest Applications

We will give you a decision within five days of submitting your Expression of Interest application. If successful, you will be invited to submit a Full Stage Application, which must be received by us within the timescale provided on our Invitation to Full Application email. Your application will then be assessed and considered at the next appropriate Board meeting, held three times annually. Two themes will be reviewed at each meeting; February – Rebuilding Biodiversity and Recreation; June – Recreation and Community Buildings; and October – Community Buildings and Rebuilding Biodiversity. Please bear in mind that we continue to receive a large number of eligible applications and competition for funds is very fierce.

Full Application Supporting Information

Ensure that you have read the checklist and provided all supporting documentation required.

You must provide the following information as part of your application. These documents should be uploaded to your application form (size limit for each attachment is 15mb). Your project application may be rejected if it does not meet the first stage checks.

All Project applications must include:

- Your organisation's **signed** constitution/governing document
- **Signed** copies of your organisation's accounts for the last two financial years
- Signed letters of support from existing and regular weekly users and groups
- Letters of intent from wider weekly community groups, expressing their wish to use the facilities upon completion (for projects that currently have no wider usage)
- A copy of your organisation's environmental policy
- Detailed and project relevant photographs to evidence need
- Three recent quotations for any single item/works costing more than £1,000

- Proof of any shortfall/match funding required to deliver your project
- A milestone and payment schedule for the project
- A copy of your planning permission approval documentation
- If you are using the services of a fronting Environmental Body, a letter from them agreeing to do so

All Community Building and Recreation applications must also include:

- Lease agreement (minimum 10 years and **signed** by both parties) for the land or buildings where the project will take place (if applicable)
- At least three recent and signed letters of support from direct beneficiaries
- Further evidence of community consultation i.e. results of other consultations or surveys
- Schedule of occupancy to include existing regular weekly, fortnightly, monthly and ad-hoc groups using the facility, average user numbers per group and frequency of each activity
- Detailed and project relevant photographs to evidence need
- Site plans or drawings of the facility
- A business plan (if it's a new build project)

All Rebuilding Biodiversity applications must also include:

- Copies of all **signed** formal landowner agreements agreeing to access for a minimum of eight years post completion of the project
- Signed letter of support from your lead partner (if applicable)
- Management plan for the site/s
- Job descriptions for any posts to be funded

The following information is not mandatory at application stage but will be required as a condition of your grant if you are successful under any theme.

- Your organisation's Entrust Environmental Body registration letter and certificate
- Entrust project detail submission (Form 2)
- Entrust project registration confirmation letter
- Proof of all shortfall or match funding

STEP BY STEP GUIDE AND TIMESCALES

1. Submit your completed online Expression of Interest Form.

2. Your Expression of Interest will be acknowledged automatically upon submission. You will be informed, by email, within five working days if you have been invited to submit a Full Application.

3. Submit your completed Full Application form, with supporting information on or before the deadline date shown on your invitation email or any subsequent correspondence from us.

4. Your application will be acknowledged automatically upon submission. First stage checks will be completed by the grants team. If the application has passed all checks, a Grants Officer will be assigned to assess your project and will contact you if any further information is required.

5. Your application will be assessed and considered at the next appropriate Board meeting. Two themes will be reviewed at each meeting; February – Rebuilding Biodiversity and Recreation; June – Recreation and Community Buildings; and October – Community Buildings and Rebuilding Biodiversity. Please allow up to six months after submitting your Full Application for a decision. We will let you know of the Board's decision within 14 working days of the meeting. If successful, you will be sent a Conditional Offer Letter.

6. You will have a maximum of two months to meet all conditions set out in the Conditional Offer Letter. Once all conditions have been met, a Formal Offer Agreement will be sent to you.

7. You must submit your first Claim Report Form, with evidence of expenditure and photographs of project progress within three months of formal offer. All payments are made in arrears.

8. Upon completion of your project, you will need to send an End of Grant Claim Report Form, evidence of expenditure, completed customer care survey, a project film and photographs of the completed works, any assets that have been funded and the Biffa Award plaque or logo in place.

GLOSSARY

RSWT

Biffa Award is managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. As well as operating as an umbrella group for the 46 local Wildlife Trusts that have been formed across the UK, RSWT has a dedicated grants team that manages several different funds, covering broad environmental themes. The team does this on behalf of organisations, such as Biffa Group Limited, European Union, The Peoples Postcode Lottery, Big Lottery Fund and Network Rail.

ENTRUST and Environmental Body

Biffa Award's money comes from landfill tax credits, reclaimed from the Government through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). The LCF regulator, ENTRUST, ensures that landfill tax credits are awarded and managed according to the Government's regulations. To be able to be awarded, and receive landfill tax credits, applicant organisations must enrol with ENTRUST as an Environmental Body (EB). A small administration fee (currently £100) is payable to ENTRUST for this. Biffa Award requires all grantees under its Main Grants Scheme to enrol as an EB, and also register the project for which funding is sought, to ensure organisational and project compliancy. Confirmation of these registrations will be required as a condition of any grant offered after Biffa Award Board approval. For further information on registration and to ascertain whether your organisation will be required to change its constitution before being able to register, please access the ENTRUST [website](#) or call the helpline on 01926 488300.

Third Party Contributor

Under LCF regulations, only 90 per cent of a grant can be paid by us using landfill tax credits. The remaining 10 per cent needs to come from another source. Therefore, you need to find someone (an individual or another organisation) who is willing to contribute the remaining 10 per cent. This cannot come from your organisation's own funds or general reserves. The 10 per cent is then paid to Biffa Group Limited, which allows us to release 100 per cent of the grant to you. Third Party Contributions are completely separate from match funding. Further details about this can be found on the ENTRUST [website](#).