



Building communities. Transforming lives.

Main Grants Scheme Guidance Notes



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Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guidance. It contains important information that you will need to help you decide whether your organisation and project are eligible and suitable for our Main Grants Scheme funding.

The Main Grants Scheme is aimed at not-for-profit groups and organisations, close to landfill sites, that need funding to improve the quality of life in their community or to protect and conserve nature's recovery.

There are four themes: Community Buildings, Recreation, Cultural Facilities and Nature Recovery.

Between £10,000 and £75,000 can be awarded to projects that have a total cost of less than £200,000 including VAT. Unfortunately, standalone elements of a larger project that can be delivered for less than £200,000 including VAT cannot be funded. This includes but is not limited to new extensions and fit out of a new build separated into smaller phases like heating, kitchen and toilet installation. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Before submitting an Expression of Interest, please take time to read these Guidance Notes to ensure your project meets our strict criteria. Due to limited funding and oversubscription, not all eligible applications can progress to Full Application. Only those applications that demonstrate the greatest need to ensure spaces remain open and fully accessible to the communities they serve will be considered. Even if your submission qualifies for funding, it may still be rejected if others are considered to demonstrate a greater need, based on our strict criteria and against other submissions received. As with most funders, we receive more applications that we are able to fund.

Please make sure your Full Application (if you are invited to submit one) includes all the information we ask for because we cannot process your application without it. You can find the list of information we need in this [section](#).

This is a rolling programme so there are no deadlines to submit an Expression of Interest. We accept applications at any time.

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 at any time. Where possible we aim to give three months' notice.

Our Themes

Our Main Grants Scheme funds projects under four different themes: Community Buildings, Recreation, Cultural Facilities and Nature Recovery.

Under these themes we provide funding to create or improve community amenities and protect nature. For example, upgrading kitchens, meeting rooms and toilets in village halls and community facilities; creating new playparks; installing new lighting and exhibitions within theatres and museums; or establishing and/or improving land to protect nature's recovery.

Community Buildings

Our Community Buildings theme aims to improve buildings at the heart of their communities, such as village halls, community centres and church halls.

Examples of costs that we can fund include renovations of community rooms, refurbishments of toilet facilities and kitchens, replacement doors and windows, extensions to create additional space that will benefit community groups, replacement of damaged floors and roofs, and new central heating systems.

If you are looking for funding for a new heating system, we prefer to fund systems that utilise renewable energy but understand that this may not be appropriate for all community spaces. The Centre for Sustainable Energy's [website](#) contains information about energy saving in community spaces.

Priority is given to projects that demonstrate wider community benefit and need. We expect your building to be used by many groups regularly each week, benefiting people of different ages and demographics.

Applications for projects in places of worship must show that they serve the wider community, similar to a village hall or community centre attracting significant wider weekly group use. Funding will not cover fabric repairs or repairs to church windows, spires, steeples, bell towers or any areas not publicly available as a community space.

Please note: If you are applying for a project in a sporting clubhouse, you should apply under our Recreation theme.



Cultural Facilities

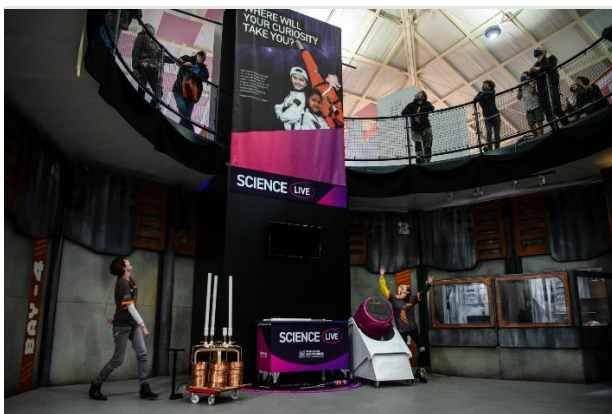
Our Cultural Facilities theme aims to improve recreation, interest and education. The project could be based within a theatre, gallery, museum, concert hall, arts or heritage centre. It must be open to the general public for published periods of at least 104 days each year and must attract tourists or day visitors.

Examples of costs that can be funded through this theme include exhibition and interpretation improvements, interactive displays, outdoor amphitheatre spaces and auditorium seating.



The facility should be inclusive and inspire and promote learning, creativity and participation.

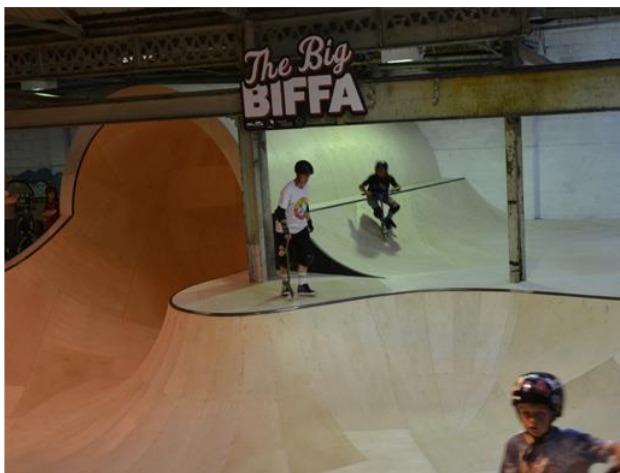
Local communities should be able to enjoy, benefit and engage with collections, exhibits or performances taking place within such institutions as often as possible.



Recreation

Our Recreation theme covers projects which will benefit people in their free time, but also includes renovations of sporting clubhouses which demonstrate they serve the wider community, similar to a village hall or community centre attracting significant wider weekly group use, outside of sporting activities.

Examples of costs that can be funded through this theme include playparks, boardwalks, skateparks, woodland walks, nature trails and outdoor gyms. We can fund building work in sporting clubhouses only if the improvements will directly benefit wider community groups, not just members of the club.



We are unable to fund sports kits, repairs to pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens, cricket nets, flood lighting, pitch drainage or spaces that are used only by players, including changing rooms, showers and toilets.

Nature Recovery

Our Nature Recovery theme covers a variety of living things and includes all species of plants and animals, along with the habitats and natural processes that support them. It is important that species and habitats are protected and restored, that there are functioning natural processes, and that the environment can adapt to threats such as climate change.

Examples of costs that can be funded through this theme include habitat improvement works, the creation of wetlands, restoration of peatland, planting of trees and hedgerows, and sustainable management of woodlands to include tree surgery, scrub removal and the purchase of plants and seed. Day rate equivalent costs for staff undertaking direct delivery work or supervising volunteers in delivery can be funded, but only if this demonstrates better value for money than using an external contractor to deliver the same work.

We can also fund work to help nature reserves and natural spaces adapt to climate change. Examples include habitat management to improve fire breaks and access for fire services to tackle wildfires; installing dams to manage water flow; and providing shade for wildlife.

We will give preference to projects that have public access or inclusion, such as volunteer involvement.

Projects must directly reintroduce or improve a habitat or species. Applicants will need to submit a detailed biodiversity management plan with their Expression of Interest. This plan should specify the habitats and species being restored or protected, and explain how the project aligns with delivering of commitments within your country's [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), legally-binding targets from the Environment Act 2021, or priorities identified within Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Habitat improvement work will not be funded on land where the applicant plans to sell biodiversity units. We are also unable to fund research.



Am I eligible?

Your organisation must be a fully constituted, charitable or not-for-profit organisation with no share capital.

Applications from local authorities, councils, hospices, hospitals, day-care centres, nurseries, food banks, rehabilitation units, residential care facilities, activity centres schools and colleges are not eligible for Biffa Award funding.

We cannot accept applications for projects on the grounds of any of the above or on allotments.

The project must be eligible for registration with the Landfill Communities Fund scheme regulator, Entrust.

The project must meet the following criteria:

- Application value must be between £10,000 and £75,000
- Total project costs or its phases must not exceed £200,000 including VAT. Standalone elements of a wider project costing less than £200,000 are also excluded
- The project site must be within five miles of a significant Biffa Operation or within 10 miles if this is an active Biffa Landfill Site (15 miles for Nature Recovery projects). Please refer to the postcode checker on the Biffa Award website and save the address as you will need this should you make an application
- The project must **also** be within 10 miles of a licensed landfill site (contact the scheme regulator, Entrust to check landfill eligibility on: 01926 488300 and save the address as you will need this to make an application)
- A Third Party Contributor should be identified to fund 10% of the application value (this could come from your own reserves if you are not a registered EB)
- The project must not cross over different themes
- 75% of any shortfall funding must be secured if Biffa Award is not being asked to fully fund the project
- Minimum of 104 days of published and full public access each year
- If the organisation does not own the project site, a fully signed lease between the landowner and the applicant, with at least 10 years remaining must be in place for Nature Recovery, Community Buildings, Cultural Facilities and Recreation projects. We cannot accept any other forms of agreement, including but not limited to, draft agreements, letters of intent, heads of terms or underleases. For Nature Recovery projects, a signed landowner agreement with at least 10 years remaining must be in place if the applicant does not own or lease the project site
- If planning permission is required, it must have been granted before you submit an Expression of Interest

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 can only accept a maximum of two Full Applications per financial year from any one organisation.

Only one application per organisation will be considered at any Board meeting.

Third Party Contribution

You can apply to Biffa Award for up to 100% of the project costs. However, under LCF regulations, only 90% of any grant can be paid by us using Landfill Tax Credits. The remaining 10% needs to be provided by another source, either from your own general reserves (if you are not a registered Environmental Body) or from an independent source (if you are a registered Environmental Body). 10% will be paid directly to Biffa Group Limited, on request, if your Full Application is successful.

Third Party Contributions are different to match or shortfall funding and are non-refundable.

If you are already enrolled with Entrust as an Environmental Body, you must follow specific rules around the Contributing Third Party which can be found on the Entrust website at: www.entrust.org.uk.

What we look for in an application

We strongly recommend that you only submit an Expression of Interest when your project is in a position to start work as we will expect the project to start once a Formal Offer Agreement has been issued.

We also expect that at least 75% of any additional funding needed to deliver your project over the amount you are requesting from us will have been secured before you submit an Expression of Interest. We may delay a decision or reject an application outright if we consider it to be premature.

Your application should showcase creativity, innovation and environmental sustainability. Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate the greatest need and incorporate these qualities. Projects focused solely on cost-cutting or energy-saving will not be funded. This is your opportunity to sell your project, make sure that you emphasise its need and demonstrate how it benefits the wider community.

If you are applying under the Community Buildings, Cultural Facilities or Recreation themes, at Full Application stage we want to see evidence of wider community consultation and involvement. This could be in the form of letters of support, letters of intent to use the premises, consultation from community open days or a questionnaire, village design statement or parish plan.

Community involvement should be broad and inclusive, representing the full diversity of potential beneficiaries. You should provide evidence of how you have assessed the needs of the people who will benefit from the project, as this will strengthen your application.

If you are applying under the Nature Recovery theme you will need to include a detailed biodiversity management plan, photographs of the site's condition and a clear rationale for the species and habitat management techniques you will use to fulfil the aim and outcomes outlined in your Full Application.

Your Full Application should also 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 funded work.

Additional scoring will be given for projects located close to Biffa landfill sites as well as projects located in neighbourhoods that are ranked in the top 20% most deprived areas, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Work that we cannot fund

Unfortunately, we are unable to fund some items. This is a list of some of the most common things that we receive requests for but which we must decline. The list is not exhaustive, so if you are in doubt, please contact us at biffa-award@wildlifetrusts.org so that we can advise you.

- ⊗ Purely church fabric repairs, e.g. to bell towers, windows and church spires
- ⊗ Enhancement of town or village centres, for example signage, seating, waste bins and seasonal bulbs
- ⊗ Core costs of an organisation, office equipment and furniture or elements that directly benefit staff or volunteers
- ⊗ Car parks and vehicle charging points
- ⊗ Project Management or staff time to procure goods and services
- ⊗ Offices
- ⊗ New supplies including gas, water and electricity
- ⊗ Elements to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements
- ⊗ Changing Places facilities
- ⊗ Portable items that will not be permanently kept at the address listed as your project location
- ⊗ Changing rooms/showers, flood lighting, tennis courts, bowling greens, cricket nets or pitch resurfacing
- ⊗ Items of personal kit or equipment including kit, gloves or balls
- ⊗ Fencing (unless part of a Nature Recovery project)
- ⊗ Events, excursions and workshops
- ⊗ Websites, publications, publicity or marketing materials
- ⊗ Storage facilities or containers
- ⊗ Feasibility studies, research, surveys, tender costs, building consents, planning applications or preliminaries
- ⊗ Recruitment costs
- ⊗ Energy-saving or green technology-based projects which could have a derived income
- ⊗ Purchase and installation of solar panels
- ⊗ Work that has already taken place
- ⊗ Baseline surveys (Nature Recovery)
- ⊗ Habitat improvement work on any land on which the applicant intends to sell biodiversity units

Application Process and Timescales

The purpose of the Expression of Interest (stage one) is to allow an initial assessment of your project.

As the completion of a Full Application (stage two) requires a significant commitment in terms of resource and effort, we do not wish to encourage organisations to make that commitment where the application is unlikely to be successful.

Each Expression of Interest is assessed against our criteria and the priorities of the scheme, to enable identification of those projects that are most likely to be funded.

Submitting your Expression of Interest

There are no deadlines for submitting an Expression of Interest to our Main Grants Scheme, we accept submissions at any time.

Before submitting your Expression of Interest ensure that you have answered all the application questions within any stated word limit.

Answer all questions in full, do not simply refer to another document or section within the supporting documentation.

You should receive an outcome within five working days of submitting your Expression of Interest. If successful, you will be invited to submit a Full Application, which must be submitted within six weeks of the invitation being made.

If you have been unsuccessful, you will receive a letter by email informing you of this. You will be unable to re-submit your application for six months after the date of your letter, or three months in the case of an issue with a lease.

Submitting your Full Application

As with your Expression of Interest, ensure that you have answered all the application questions in full and within any stated word limit. Do not simply refer to another document or section within the supporting documentation.

There is useful text throughout the application form which is designed to help you answer the questions. Be concise but provide as much relevant detail as you can for all sections of the form.

The Biffa Award team is available to help with any questions you may have when completing your Full Application. You can contact the team by emailing biffa-award@wildlifetrusts.org.

You must provide the following information as part of your Full Application. It will be delayed if it does not include all the information and documents we require.

- Your organisation's signed constitution or governing document
- Your organisation's signed accounts for the last two financial years
- Your organisation's environmental policy, an example of which can be emailed upon request

All Community Buildings, Cultural Facilities and Recreation applications must also include:

- A formal lease with a minimum of 10 years remaining signed by the landowner and the applicant, if the organisation does not own the project site
- At least **five** signed letters of support from regular weekly users and groups
- At least **two** signed letters of intent from prospective users (*we may specifically ask for more than two letters, depending on the type of project*)
- Evidence of community consultations or surveys
- Timetable of use for all regular weekly, fortnightly and monthly groups
- Clear, project relevant photographs to evidence the need for your project
- At least one recent quotation for all items costing up to £1,000; three recent quotations for any single item or works costing more than £1,000 and up to £25,000; and evidence of competitive tendering and three responses/quotations for any single item or works costing more than £25,000
- Proof of any shortfall or match funding required to deliver your project
- A milestone and payment schedule for the project, an example of which can be emailed upon request
- Results of planning application if the project requires planning permission
- Site drawings or plans for new kitchens, reconfiguration of spaces or extensions

All Nature Recovery applications must also include:

- Signed landowner agreement for at least 8 years, if the organisation does not own the project site
- Clear, project relevant photographs to evidence the need for your project
- At least one recent quotation for all items costing up to £1,000; three recent quotations for any single item or works costing more than £1,000 and up to £25,000; and evidence of competitive tendering and three responses/quotations for any single item or works costing more than £25,000
- Proof of any shortfall or match funding required to deliver your project
- A milestone and payment schedule for the project, an example of which can be emailed upon request
- Results of planning application if the project requires planning permission
- A management plan for each site
- A signed, headed letter of support from your lead partner if applicable
- Day rate costs for staff undertaking direct delivery work or supervising contractors and volunteers, to include: the number of days to be worked and tasks to be fulfilled

When you have submitted your application the Biffa Award team will contact you if we require any further information.

Once you have supplied everything listed above, your application will be considered at the next appropriate quarterly Board meeting. Allow at least four months from when you submit your application for a decision.

Decisions and timings

Following the Board meeting the Biffa Award team will contact you to let you know the outcome.

If you are unsuccessful, and want to reapply, you must wait for six months before a new Expression of Interest can be submitted.

If you are successful, you will receive a Conditional Offer Letter and will have one month to meet any conditions of funding.

Once all conditions have been met, you will then receive a Formal Offer. Work must start and a first claim must be submitted within three months of a Formal Offer being made.

If you are already enrolled as an Environmental Body with Entrust, we will need a copy of the following documents as a condition of your grant if you are successful under any theme:

- A copy of your Entrust Environmental Body certificate
- A copy of your Entrust Project Detail submission
- A copy of your Entrust project registration confirmation letter

All Community Buildings, Cultural Facilities and Recreation projects are expected to complete, and submit their final claim within 10 months of a Formal Offer.

All Nature Recovery projects are expected to complete, and submit their final claim within 18 months of a Formal Offer.

Extensions may only be offered in extenuating circumstances.

Previously funded projects: Community Buildings



The windows at **Peace Memorial Hall-Herstmonceux** had deteriorated and had started to let in the wind and the rain. Biffa Award granted £27,930 to replace the village hall windows.

The local community welcomed the huge improvements which also had the added benefit of heat retention, reducing electricity costs and allowing the hire charges to remain at a low cost.

The kitchen at **St Stephen's Church** had served its community in South Shields well since its installation in the 1970's. But after years of use, it was time for an upgrade.

A £23,876 grant provided the funds needed to overhaul the lighting, install new kitchen units and anti-slip flooring. Now the kitchen can be enjoyed by its community for many more years to come.



Clifton Campville Village Hall was in urgent need of significant investment due to a lack of suitable heating, a leaking roof, damp and outdated facilities.

£75,000 of funding enabled the creation of internal walls to make better use of the space available and the installation of new windows, heating, flooring, plumbing and electrical work.

Previously funded projects: Recreation

Since 1982, **Lancashire Wildlife Trust** has managed the 42-acre **Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve**. It is a mixture of dry heath, woodland, wetland and sandy wet meadows and is a haven to an array of bird, mammal, plant and fungus species. Visitors can enjoy walking trails around a series of ponds and a visitor centre.

Much of the infrastructure was installed over 30 years ago. Narrow paths and ageing footbridges limited opportunities to use the reserve and restricted access for its ongoing upkeep. Funds were desperately needed for this essential work.

A £75,000 Biffa Award grant was used to build eight culverts, create 35 metres of aggregate paths, build a hide and create a circular walk. The improvements have made the reserve accessible to everyone.



In 2017 the wooden play equipment at **Swannington Play Area** was deemed to have come to the end of its life and most items were removed leaving just a slide, roundabout and football goal.

£58,486 of Biffa Award funding enabled the creation of a new play area including six pieces of equipment, permanent picnic tables and safety surfacing.

Previously funded projects: Cultural Facilities

There was a lack of interactives and historical interpretation at Samlesbury Hall. Stories that were told verbally were received with great interest by visitors; the hall has some fascinating and often a very brutal history. Biffa Award granted **Samlesbury Hall Trust** £68,736 to improve interpretation to enhance visitor experience.

The funding enabled the building to open two new rooms to the public for first time in 700 years.



The Lowry is a cultural hotspot situated on Salford Quays in Manchester.

After 25 years of constant use, the seats had suffered significant wear.

A grant of £74,816.00 saw all 480 seats reupholstered and refurbished, creating a comfortable, and welcoming space for many years to come.

The trustees of Dereham Windmill worked with members to create a new detached community hall next to the popular **Dereham Windmill Exhibition Centre**.

£50,000 of funding enabled the construction and fit out of the building. This included installation of a central heating system and a new kitchen facility.



Previously funded projects: Nature Recovery

Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the **Blacka Moor Nature Reserve** spans 181 hectares within the Eastern Peak District Moors. It constitutes a variety of habitats including heathland, upland woodland, wet woodland, wetland and grassland providing a seasonal home to willow warblers, black caps, cuckoos, wheatears, pied flycatcher and stone chats as well as red listed whinchats.

There is a small population of whinchat on the reserve and the project aimed to increase their numbers by improving and protecting their habitats. **Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust** was awarded £29,645 to rebuild dry stone walls, remove invasive rhododendron, install gates and stockproof fencing, scallop woodland edge, carry out scrub control and restore heathland giving nature a helping hand.



RSPB's Old Moor Nature Reserve is an important wetland located in the Dearne Valley SSSI. The site is a vital stronghold for many species, including the amber-listed bittern, and red-listed lapwing and black-tailed godwit.

A grant of £71,809 allowed RSPB to reprofile and improve wetland, expand the reedbed and install hydrological infrastructure to improve water management. These works provided a greater feeding area for the priority wading species found on site.

About us



Biffa Award is managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). 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 a number of broad environmental themes.



Biffa Award money comes from Landfill Tax Credits, reclaimed from the Government through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). The scheme is regulated by Entrust, which ensures that the tax credit is awarded and managed according to Government regulations.



Entrust is the HMRC appointed regulator of the Landfill Communities Fund. All projects are registered with the regulator to ensure funding is spent in line with Government approved objects. All projects, except for some existing Environmental Bodies (EB), are registered by RSWT.