**Herefordshire Council**

**Community Spaces Capital Grant**

**Grant Information Leaflet**

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| **Introduction** |

The Community Spaces Capital Grant Scheme aims to develop and enhance the Talk Community hub model across Herefordshire. The scheme encourages an all ages, whole-family approach, enabling residents to access services closer to home.

The goal is to build resilience in communities by supporting new and existing hubs to offer a range of services that reflect local needs. This scheme encourages an all-ages, whole-family approach, enabling residents to access services closer to home.

We are seeking Expressions of Interest (EoI’s) which are community led. By this we mean that the lead applicant must usually be a community or voluntary sector organisation. For example, a community group, a registered charity or a social enterprise. We are also keen to encourage partnership and collaborative working.

Projects don’t need to meet all of the aims and outcomes listed but should be able to meet the core criteria.

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| **Aims of the Grant** |

The grant scheme focuses on supporting projects that:

* Bring services closer to communities.
* Improve the wellbeing of residents.
* Increase access to integrated services, especially in disadvantaged communities.
* Connect communities through all-age, family-centred support.
* Transform and utilize existing or unused buildings.
* Reduce reliance on formal health and care services.
* Support children, young people, and families.
* Address health inequalities.
* Build cohesive, resilient communities.
* Promote community-led regeneration.

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| **Rationale** |

Due to geographical barriers in Herefordshire, residents often face challenges accessing services. This grant supports community-led initiatives that improve local access, aiming to address these challenges and reduce inequalities.

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| **What is the vision for the funding?** |

* Community Spaces will aim to provide a ‘one stop shop’ with an all-ages approach to support local residents to access local services within their local communities. Building on the success of the Talk Community model to enhance and increase the community offer.
* Community led and driven with a focus on individual community need, allowing communities to design, own and deliver a community space that meets the needs of their community.
* To place quality, innovation, productivity and prevention at the heart of community development

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| **What can the grant be used for?** |

The Community Spaces Capital Grant Scheme is a **capital** only scheme. Capital means physical works and professional fees directly related to the physical works (including non-recoverable VAT) Capital grants cover a wide range of activities which could include for example:

* Equipment, furnishing, and other major material purchases\*
* Renovations, refurbishment and remodelling for outdated facilities
* Construction of new facilities
* Land purchases
* Professional fees (such as legal, architect and engineers’ fees) \*

\*The purchase of equipment is sometimes eligible, for example where a project includes the fitting out of a new facility such as a kitchen or IT suite.

\*Please note that professional fees associated with obtaining planning permission are NOT eligible

For projects where ongoing external support is procured for example support of ICT hardware the initial upfront costs could potentially be capitalised however regular periodic payments would not be covered as would fall under revenue costs.

The grant can cover all capital project related costs as long as these are clearly substantiated, linked to your project and included within your original proposal.

**What costs are NOT eligible?**

The grant will not fund the following items / activities:

* The scheme does not provide grants for Revenue costs including the costs associated with developing a business case or applying for planning permission
* Projects that do not benefit people living in Herefordshire.
* Venues that are not within the county of Herefordshire
* Administration and general overhead costs
* Training staff to use a new asset.
* Costs of moving equipment/resources from one location to another
* Costs of renting alternative accommodation during building works

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| **Outcomes of the Project** |

* Residents have improved access to services and feel more confident managing their health and wellbeing, reducing the need for higher levels of support.
* Local community-based organisations are empowered to collaborate and support residents effectively.
* Residents and organisations build stronger connections, fostering relationships that reduce loneliness and social isolation.
* Children, young people, and families are supported to access appropriate health and wellbeing services, ensuring the best start in life.
* Residents feel confident accessing mental health and early intervention support, preventing issues from escalating.
* Increased independence and reduced reliance on long-term public services through improved skills, digital inclusion, and volunteering opportunities.
* Residents are supported to address financial challenges, such as debt and money management.
* Increasing numbers of residents and community organisations are implementing or supporting initiatives that help Herefordshire achieve its net zero carbon and nature-rich ambitions.

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| **Core Criteria** |

As a minimum we would expect your project to offer the below:

* Provide a simple and clear way for residents to access local help and support through a welcoming hub model, open to all ages and needs.
* Offer a physical space where residents can speak with trained staff or volunteers for information, advice, and signposting on a range of issues.
* Tailor services to local community needs, including outreach sites where appropriate, with spaces accessible to all, including seldom-heard groups and those with protected characteristics.
* Include IT facilities to enable co-location of professionals and seamless service delivery.
* Conduct resident engagement and collect feedback data to ensure the hub meets local needs and demand.
* Support children, youth, and families with activities or facilities designed for their needs, ensuring inclusive family working.

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| **How much can we apply for?** |

* Between £15,000 - £250,000

Applicants successful at EOI stage will be invited to submit a Full Application.

The maximum amount of grant that can be applied for is £250,000 during the lifetime of the scheme. The scheme is open for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to be electronically submitted between 6 January 2025 and 6 March 2025.

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| **Who can apply?** |

* Voluntary and community organisations
* Constituted groups or clubs.
* Registered charities
* Charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs)
* Not-for-profit organisations
* Community interest companies (CIC’s)
* State and independent schools (as long as your project benefits and involves the community and does not deliver activities that are part of the standard curriculum)
* Town and parish councils
* Community benefit societies
* Community Amateur Sports Clubs
* Religious organisations – as long as the project or activity benefits the wider community and does not include religious content.

All applicants must demonstrate their organisational status and have a bank account in the same name.

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| **Application Process** |

The application is a 2-stage process:

**Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)**

The EOI is designed to identify projects that align closely with the aims and criteria of the grant scheme before committing resources to a full application. The short application form will be used to:

* Assess the eligibility of the lead organisation.
* Evaluate the project's alignment with the grant scheme's objectives.
* Ensure meaningful community engagement is underway.

The EOI will be scored against the assessment areas listed in the guidance. Only the EOIs that demonstrate strong potential will be invited to proceed to the next stage.

**Stage 2: Full Application (If invited):**

Organisations shortlisted at the EOI stage will be invited to submit a detailed application, accompanied by a project plan.

The project plan must contain cash-flow projections for at least three years. This will allow us to assess the sustainability of the application in the medium to long term.

* By a project plan we mean a document which:
* Sets out the case for funding.
* Establishes who is involved, in what capacity and how they have been engaged.
* Establishes the costs of the whole project (revenue and capital) and shows how these costs will be covered.
* Includes up to date cash-flow projections for at least the next three financial years.

As well as submitting a Full Application and Project plan, you will be required to submit the following documents to support your application.

* Evidence of need
* Appendix A- Project costs
* Appendix B- Risk Assessment
* 3 quotes for each project cost
* 3 years accounts
* Copy of your Governance Structure
* Copy of your Equality Policy
* Copy of a recent bank statement

**If applicable**

* Copy of landlord’s permission
* Copy of your lease agreement
* Evidence of any other match funding required.
* Any other consents/permission/ licences required.

**Planning Permission**

If your project requires planning permission and you have not yet obtained it, your full application will still be appraised but your grant offer will be subject to obtaining the relevant planning permissions required. Please note that the planning process can take up to 3 months to complete.

**Procurement Requirements**

You will need to provide 3 competitive quotes for each project cost regardless of price and the quotes MUST include the following:

* come from different, independent suppliers who are not linked to each other or to your business through shared ownership or control;
* include a detailed and itemised breakdown of costs;
* include the supplier’s business name, address (including postcode) and telephone number;
* be comparable with each other in terms of quality, size, quantity, units and specification for every item;
* have been obtained within the last 9 months and still be valid; and
* Be addressed to the applicant (containing the organisations name, business or project address, if different, and postcode). If the quote is addressed to your agent, it must clearly reference the project and its location.

If using an online catalogue quote, please include the web link as well as a screen shot of the item with the price clearly visible.

If a quote is created on a word document, you must forward on the email with the quote attached from each supplier.

**Evaluation of the Full Application**
Full Applications will be assessed against several key criteria, which include but are not limited to:

* Alignment with Council Priorities: How well the project supports Herefordshire Council’s priorities and services.
* Evidence of Need: Demonstration of the community need for the project and how it avoids duplicating existing services.
* Project Sustainability & Longevity: The long-term feasibility of the project, including plans for continued funding and operational management.
* Value for Money: The cost-effectiveness of the project, ensuring a high impact relative to the investment.

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| **How to apply** |

Details can be found on the website below.

<https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/capital-community-fund>

Or contact us for a form:

Email: CommunitySpaceImprovementGrant@herefordshire.gov.uk

Please email the completed form to the address above clearly stating in the subject heading Community Spaces Capital Grant Expression of interest

When we receive your application, we will acknowledge receipt.

**Deadline for applications**

Expressions of Interest will be open from the 6 January 2025 until 6 March 2025.

You can submit your completed EOI form at any time within this time frame. It will then be assessed by the panel after the closing date.

Help with your application.

If you need some help with developing your project ideas or any technical issues e.g. formatting of the application form or spreadsheet you can contact the Talk Community Team via email: talkcommunityenquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk

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| **What happens next?** |

Once your EOI is received, Herefordshire Council will acknowledge receipt of the document. This will then be assessed by an appraisal panel who will make recommendations either for the EOI to progress to the next stage of the application process or be declined. The panel may ask for further information before a decision can be made.

Grant applications are assessed on their individual merit by an independent panel against the grant funding eligibility criteria, the impact the project will have on the local community and that it demonstrates value for money. All applications are subject to funding availability.

Based on your EOI and any further information you may have been asked to provide, we will advise you of the decision to either:

* Approve the EOI and request a full application.
* Reject the EOI detailing the reasons why the application was not accepted.

If your EOI is successful you may be invited to submit a full application. On receipt of the completed application form Herefordshire Council will acknowledge receipt of the application. The Application will be reviewed by the project panel who will make recommendations either for the application to be approved or rejected, or the panel may ask for further information before a decision is made.

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| **When can I start my project?** |

Work should not start prior to the grant agreement being signed by both parties. Any works carried out prior to this will be at your own risk and the council will not be responsible for funding any of these works. If your application meets the eligibility criteria and you are offered a grant, you will receive an offer letter for grants under £25K or a grant agreement for grants over £25K setting out how much grant has been approved and detailing any specific terms and conditions. If you are happy to accept the grant offer and associated conditions, you will need to return a signed copy within 10 working days.

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| **Grant Offer Terms & Conditions** |

If you are offered a grant, you will be sent terms and conditions specific to your project.

Key points to consider are:

* You should not start your project until you have signed the grant offer/ agreement and returned it to the Projects Team. Any expenditure incurred before the date of your grant offer/agreement will be deemed ineligible.
* You need to keep all paperwork relating to your project. I.e. all invoices, receipts and bank statements as they will need to be submitted as evidence with your claims.
* Items purchased using cash will not be eligible for grant payment.
* Information relating to user feedback and progress towards the outputs of your project should also be kept.
* The grant will only be paid on invoices or receipts that have been paid and are dated after the offer letter has been agreed by all parties.
* Other specific conditions of grant will be included within your offer letter.
* As part of the full application, we will ask you to confirm that you do not have any undisclosed loans secured on the capital assets. You will not take out any loans secured on any capital assets funded or part-funded by the capital grant unless you receive our agreement in writing first. Our agreement may be subject to conditions.
* If the building is leasehold as part of the full application, we will require evidence of the lease length including details of any break clauses and landlords’ consent to carry out works.
* We will continue to monitor the use of capital assets paid for by the grant funding after the capital project is over. You will be asked to supply information about and allow us to inspect the capital assets in accordance with our standard procedures for following applicable periods:
* For capital grant of up to £100,000 for building work (on freehold owned by your organisation or leasehold properties already in place with your organisation) applicants will be required to use the building for the purposes as agreed in the grant offer letter/agreement for a minimum of 5 years
* For capital grant of more than £100,000 but less than £300,000 for building work (on freehold owned by your organisation or leasehold agreements already in place with your organisation) applicants will be required to use the building for the purposes as agreed in the grant agreement for a minimum of 10 years.
* If you do not meet the objectives of the scheme, Herefordshire Council may claw back some of the funding. Reason for claw back will be detailed within your offer letter/grant agreement.

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| **What happened if my project/ budget changes?** |

* The Council won’t be able to give you more grant money if your costs increase but will consider variations within the agreed budget if these are approved in advance in writing.
* You need to notify the Project team in writing as soon as you realise that you may need to make some changes to your project or budget to deliver your project.

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| **How do I submit my claim for payment?** |

Claiming and payments schedule will be discussed and agreed at offer stage as it will depend upon the nature and scale of the project.

All grant funded work must be completed, and claims submitted by the deadline date specified in your offer letter/grant agreement. The claim form will be sent to you with your offer letter/grant agreement.

Grant payments are made in arrears i.e. you must have completed and paid for the work before making a grant claim. Stage payments may be made where relevant to do so. Please speak to a member of the project team if this is not possible for your organisation and alternative payments arrangements can be made.

Grant payment will be made directly into the applicant’s organisations bank account via BACS within 30 days.

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| **When do I need to submit my report?** |

Depending on the nature and length of your project, you will need to complete either an interim, or a final report within six months of claiming your full grant summarising what your project has achieved. If you are successful, your offer letter will set out the information that you need to collect and provide to the Council.

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| **Keeping in Touch & Additional Support** |

We would really like to hear about your projects as they develop and love sharing your good news with the community. If you have a story you would like us to share please contact the Talk Community Engagement team on: Talkcommunityenquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk

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| **Useful information** |

* Translation and interpreting services are available locally via the Herefordshire Language Network which is co-ordinated by Herefordshire Council: [Translation and interpreting services – Herefordshire Council](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/business-1/translation-interpreting-services)
* If you want to promote your project you can use the Talk Community Directory: [Directory Search - Talk Community Directory](https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/directory-search/?searchTab=content-pages&searchContext=1087&sortOption=0&pageNumber=1&pageSize=10)

## **Help us improve.**

Please help us to help future applicants, by telling us if you have any queries which aren’t answered in this document.



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please contact the Talk Community team at: talkcommunityenquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk