



## Pots of Possibility: Community Pots

### Information & Guidance

#### What is Closing Loops?

Closing Loops is a five-year £1.5 million project launched in 2022 and led by FoodFutures, North Lancashire's sustainable food partnership. The project is delivered by six local organisations (LESS, Lancaster District CVS, Eggcup, Global Link, Shared Future CIC and Scientists For Global Responsibility), and is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, it is supporting community-led action and local initiatives to transform waste into a valuable resource. It aims to stimulate a zero-waste, circular and regenerative local economy.

The Closing Loops project is part of the wider work of FoodFutures in creating a thriving local food system that is healthy, resilient and fair.

The Closing Loops project will:

- create a composting academy including a network of demonstration sites across the district;
- coordinate a gleaning network to rescue food that is currently going to waste on farms, in orchards, gardens and from local business;
- co-create North Lancashire recipes that focus on local, seasonal and sustainably produced produce;
- develop a network of citizen journalists to collect and share local stories of change and positive action through our community food magazine THRIVE;
- and run seasonal markets in Lancaster that celebrate local food, crafts, music and more.

The project goes beyond food and is looking to support a transition to a more regenerative economy where people, the environment, materials and resources are valued. In a regenerative economy local enterprises, organisations and people are actively contributing to the health and wellbeing of their communities and the environment. It puts life, health and wellbeing at the heart of every decision.

The aim of Closing Loops is to support local people, enterprises and initiatives to put social and environmental regeneration at the core of what they do. To do this, the REconomy element of the Closing Loops project will:

- support access to training, mentoring and skills development around regenerative enterprise,
- undertake feasibility work to provide evidence to support new ideas,
- and provide funding to enable local people to take forward and grow ideas that contribute to a regenerative economy through the Pots of Possibility fund.

#### *What is REconomy and regenerative enterprise?*

The Closing Loops project aims to create the conditions that allow for a REconomy to emerge in North Lancashire – one that is zero-waste, more circular and regenerative. REconomy is built around the idea that we can and should design our economies so that

they restore the health of ecosystems and societies (rather than degrade them). It looks to move beyond a focus on sustainability to one of regeneration. To regenerate the environment and our societies means to repair, restore and revive rather than simply maintain or sustain them as they are. A REconomy will involve a diverse range of regenerative enterprises that operate in a way that increases the wellbeing and health of communities, ecosystems and networks. These enterprises may be community initiatives or groups, charities, social entrepreneurs and other types of not-for-profit businesses.

The idea of REconomy and regenerative enterprise [is explored in the Spring 2023 edition of THRIVE: North Lancashire's community food magazine](#). For inspiration, please have a look at some of the REconomy and regenerative enterprise ideas [shared by local residents at the Closing Loops World Cafes](#).

### **The 'Pots of Possibility' Fund**

The 'Pots of Possibility' fund will distribute up to £300,000 over the next four years to enable community groups, organisations and social enterprises in North Lancashire develop creative ideas that help communities and the environment to flourish.

The fund will offer two different granting opportunities.

- Community Pots with grants of up to £5,000 to support pilot projects, test the feasibility of new ideas and support community projects
- REconomy Pots with grants of up to £10,000 awarded to grow ideas and scale up pilots that contribute to an ecosystem of regenerative initiatives and enterprises locally.

This guidance document relates to the Community Pots element which will distribute £100,000 over five rounds. Funding applications will be assessed by a panel composed of FoodFutures Partnership members and external independent representatives from different sectors and communities within Lancaster District. There will be two rounds of Community Pots in 2023 and one round held annually in 2024-26.

### ***What kind of projects can receive funding?***

The Community Pots fund will offer grants of between £1,000 to £5,000 to test the feasibility of new ideas and provide seed funding for projects that support the Closing Loops aim of creating a thriving, regenerative economy here in North Lancashire.

These include ideas in any of the following themes:

- Growing, cooking and eating local, seasonal and sustainable food.
- Initiatives that inspire people around sustainable consumption and zero waste practices
- Initiatives around composting
- Regenerative enterprises or initiatives for materials currently going to waste (for instance food, textiles, packaging, electronics and more)- with a focus on reducing consumption or reusing and repurposing of materials.
- Regenerative enterprises or initiatives that enable the sharing and repurposing of resources (tools, materials, spaces and skills) within our communities.

Organisations may only submit one application per year.

We can fund a wide range of activities within your project, including:

- Putting on events or taking part in other people's events
- Publishing content like websites, videos, podcasts or books
- Providing training or education
- Purchasing and using equipment and services
- Improving land or buildings
- Paying staff or consultants
- Working with volunteers and paying their expenses

There are some things we can't fund, which are:

- Activities which have already taken place or you have already spent money on
- Alcohol
- Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
- Payment to some else to write your application
- Profit-making or fundraising activity
- VAT that the organisation can reclaim
- Religious activities (religious organisations can be funded for projects that benefit the wider community)
- Statutory activities (activities that statutory organisations are required to deliver)
- Activities that improve educational attainment
- Overseas travel
- Projects that take place outside the Lancaster District (defined by the Lancaster City Council area)
- Political activities

We are looking to support organisations that are serious about taking action to reduce their, and our District's carbon footprint whilst building local ability to cope with and respond to climate change. As such, money awarded will not be channelled towards work that undermines this core aim of this work.

We will not fund organisations or projects involved in destructive environmental and social practices. Although organisations farming animals will not be excluded, priority will be given to organisations which encourage alternatives to animal consumption.

### *Who can apply?*

Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations are all eligible to apply. Your organisation must be at least one of the below:

- Unregistered voluntary or community organisation
- Constituted group or sports club
- Registered charity
- Charitable incorporated organisation
- Not-for-profit company
- Community interest company
- School, College or University (as long as the project provides wider community benefits)
- Statutory body
- Faith-based group

We can't accept applications from individuals, or from limited companies that are not also charities. We will need to see your group or organisation's constitution or set of rules.

If you're a community group without any kind of governing document, we can work with you to find an organisation that is eligible to apply and willing to work in partnership with you to deliver your project. The partner organisation will need to pass all our normal due diligence checks, and will sign our grant agreement - so they will be legally responsible for the project and its finance.

The funded organisation also needs:

- To have at least two unconnected people on the board or committee, that is not a relation by blood, marriage, civil partnership, in a long-term relationship or people living together at the same address.
- To have a UK bank or building society account, in the legal name of your organisation, with at least two unrelated people able to manage it.
- To produce annual accounts, or plan to if your organisation is less than 15 months old. Accounts should be produced by a method and in a format relevant to the size of your organisation.

### *How do we apply?*

Apply by creating an account at <https://morecambabay.grantplatform.com>

This secure service allows you to work on your application, saving and returning to it as many times as you like before submitting. It is also where we will record information we create regarding your application and anything else you send us while you are delivering your project.

If you need a reference copy of the application form to use offline while planning your application, [it's available to download and print](#).

In the application form, you will answer a few brief eligibility questions related to the criteria above, and then briefly tell us about your project, answering these questions:

- Why is your project needed?
- What would you like to do?
- Who will be involved?
- When and where will your project take place?
- How will your project make a difference?
- How much will your project cost? (including an indicative budget)

You don't have to use all the words available or be certain about costs.

You'll will need to tell us some information about your organisation, and provide the name and contact details of two people we can discuss the application with.

We will ask you to upload some documents. They are optional at this stage, but we'll need to see them before we can issue a grant agreement so providing them at the time of application will speed up our process. The documents are:

- A bank statement, showing the following:
  - Your organisation's legal name
  - The address the statements are sent to
  - The bank name and/or logo
  - Account number
  - Sort code
  - Date (must be within last 3 months)

- For bank accounts opened within the last three months, we can accept a bank welcome letter. This must confirm the date your account was opened, account name, account number and sort code.
- If you're a school using a local authority bank account, we'll need a letter from the local authority dated within the last 3 months. It should show:
  - Your school name
  - The bank account name
  - Account number
  - Sort code
- Your most recent accounts
- Your organisation's memorandum and articles of association, certificate of incorporation, constitution, or rules.
- If your project works with children, young people or adults at risk of harm, provide your safeguarding policy which explains how they'll be safe.
- If your project includes activities which require public liability insurance and you already have this, provide the certificate of insurance.
- If your project requires people in your organisation who are running activities to have special qualifications, memberships or affiliations, and these are already in place, please provide evidence.
- If your project benefits the public through changes to land or buildings, such as starting a farm or garden or conducting a refurbishment, you will need to provide one of the following:
  - proof that your organisation owns the property;
  - proof that your organisation has a lease on the property that cannot be ended for at least five years;
  - or a letter from the owner of the property showing they intend to provide such a lease.

Finally, you will be asked to agree our terms and conditions for the Closing Loops Fund (which are also at the end of this document), and confirm that you are authorised to make the application, that all the information you've provided is accurate, and that you understand how we will use your data.

### ***What happens next?***

After you've submitted your application, your nominated contacts will receive an email receipt from us. We'll then check your application, looking at your answers to the eligibility questions and that the rest of the form is filled in properly, before beginning our due diligence checks using any documents you uploaded at this stage. If your application doesn't pass these initial checks, we'll get in touch with you to discuss how to resolve them.

Applications passing initial checks will then be assessed by a panel composed of FoodFutures Partnership members and external independent representatives from

different sectors and communities within Lancaster District. The panel will assess your application against the fund criteria and the other applications received.

We will tell you about the panel's decision as soon as possible after the meeting and provide feedback. If successful, we will ask you for any further documents we need to complete our due diligence checks, and once those are complete your grant agreement will be issued.

### *Getting help*

Contact LDCVS by email at [hello@lancastercvcs.org.uk](mailto:hello@lancastercvcs.org.uk) or by telephone on 01524 555900 for support on questions about the online application process, eligibility, documentation, and timescales. We also provide advice to grant holders about their grant agreement, payments, and the monitoring and evaluation process.

Contact Rachel Marshall, Closing Loops Project Coordinator by email at [rachel\\_cl@lessuk.org](mailto:rachel_cl@lessuk.org) to get advice about Closing Loops themes, discuss project ideas, and find out more about the fund's approach to zero-waste and regenerative enterprises.



## **Terms & Conditions**

### **1. By submitting an application to Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions (LDCVS), the organisation named in the application (referred to as "you" in these Terms and Conditions) agrees, if awarded a grant, to:**

1.1. hold the grant on trust for LDCVS (referred to as 'we' or 'us') and use it only for your project as described in your application or otherwise agreed with us, and only for expenditure incurred after the date of your grant award;

1.2. provide us promptly with any information and reports we require about the project and its impact, both during and after the end of the project. These include, but are not limited to the following: at the beginning of your project, a basic equality and diversity monitoring form; half-way through your project, a monitoring report and/or interview; at the end of your project, a final report due within one month;

1.3. act lawfully in carrying out your project in accordance with best practice and guidance from your regulators, and follow any guidelines issued by us about the project or use of the grant and let us know promptly about any fraud, other impropriety, mismanagement or misuse in relation to the grant;

1.4. acknowledge Closing Loops and National Lottery funding using our logos in accordance with the relevant guidelines for recognising your grant, which will be supplied to you by email;

1.5. hold the grant in a UK based bank account or building society account, which is in the legal name of the organisation that is applying for funding;

1.6. adhere to our guidance on financial controls and banking arrangements, ensuring that no single individual has sole responsibility for any single transaction from authorisation to review and completion and that the account is managed by at least two unrelated and authorised individuals in your organisation;

1.7 maintain a register of assets purchased using Closing Loops Funding and share it with us during monitoring and evaluation meetings, maintain insurance covering these assets, depreciate these assets correctly according to your accounting practices, and tell us if you intend to sell an asset within five years of the end of the project. For the purpose of this clause 1.7, an asset is any piece of equipment or machinery costing over £500, or the purchase or refurbishment of any land or building costing over £500.

1.8 immediately return any part of the grant that is not used for your project or which constitutes an unlawful subsidy;

1.9. comply with The National Lottery Community Fund's safeguarding policy for grant holders, which will be supplied to you by email;

1.10 We may commission research into and/or evaluation of your funding. You confirm that you will co-operate with any research or evaluation-related activities which we carry out and further confirm that we may use any part of your application and/or project information for research or evaluation purposes.

1.11 comply with data protection laws and obtain the consent of your beneficiaries for us and you to receive and process their personal information and contact them;

1.12. keep accurate and comprehensive records about your project both during the project and for seven years afterwards and provide us on request with copies of those records and evidence of expenditure of the grant, such as original paper or electronic receipts, invoices, and bank statements;

1.13 allow us, representatives of The National Lottery Community Fund and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General reasonable access to your premises and systems to inspect project and grant records; and

1.14 LDCVS, FoodFutures, the Closing Loops Partnership and/or The National Lottery Community Fund publicising and sharing information about you and your project including your name and images of project activities. You hereby grant us a royalty free licence to reproduce and publish any project information you give us. You will let us know when you provide the information if you don't have permission for us to use it in this way.

**2. You acknowledge that we are entitled to suspend or terminate the grant and/or require you to repay all or any of the grant in any of the following situations. You must let us know if any of these situations have occurred or are likely to occur.**

2.1. You use the grant in any way other than as approved by us or fail to comply with any of these Terms and Conditions.

2.2. You fail to make good progress with your project or are unlikely in our view to complete the project or achieve the objectives agreed with us.

2.3. You have match funding for the project withdrawn or receive or fail to declare any duplicate funding for the same project costs as funded by the grant.

2.4. You provide us with false or misleading information either on application or after award of the grant, act dishonestly or are under investigation by us, a regulatory body or the police, or if we consider for any other reason that public funds are at risk or you do anything to bring us or the organisations we work with and receive funding from into disrepute.



2.5. You enter into, or in our view are likely to enter into, administration, liquidation, receivership, or dissolution.

2.6. You receive any grant money incorrectly either as a result of an administrative error or otherwise. This includes where You are paid in error before You have complied with your obligations under these terms and conditions and Offer Letter. Any sum, which falls due under this paragraph 2.6, shall fall due immediately. If you fail to repay the due sum immediately, or as otherwise agreed with us, the sum will be recoverable summarily as a civil debt.

### **3. You acknowledge that:**

3.1. the grant is for your use only and we may require you to pay us a share of any proceeds from disposal of assets purchased or enhanced with the grant;

3.2. we will not increase the grant if you spend more than the agreed budget and we can only guarantee the grant as long as The National Lottery continues to operate and we receive sufficient funds from it;

3.3. the grant is not consideration for any taxable supply for VAT purposes;

3.4. we have no liability for any costs or consequences incurred by you or third parties that arise directly or indirectly from the project, nor from non-payment or withdrawal of the grant, save to the extent required by law;

3.5. these Terms and Conditions will continue to apply for one year after the grant is paid or until the project has been completed, whichever is later. Clauses 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 3.4 and 3.5 shall survive expiry of these Terms and Conditions; and

3.6. if the application and grant award are made electronically, the agreement between us shall be deemed to be in writing and your online acceptance of these Terms and Conditions shall be deemed to be the equivalent of your signature on that agreement.