



Pots of Possibility: Community Pots Information & Guidance

Context

What is Closing Loops?

Closing Loops is a five-year £1.5 million project led by FoodFutures, North Lancashire's sustainable food partnership. The scheme 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.

The Closing Loops project supports community-led action and local initiatives to create a zero-waste, circular and regenerative local economy in Lancaster District. £300,000 in small grants will be available through the Pots of Possibility fund for community groups, organisations and social enterprises to develop creative ideas that enable people and the environment to thrive.

Find out more about Closing Loops, and what it aims to achieve at <https://foodfutures.org.uk/closing-loops/>

What is a Regenerative Economy?

The Closing Loops project aims to create a regenerative economy in North Lancashire. A regenerative economy is a network of local people, organisations and businesses who live and work in a way that protects and restores the environment, builds healthier communities and improves people's wellbeing.

A regenerative economy is made up of different regenerative enterprises. These could be community initiatives or groups, charities, social entrepreneurs and other types of not-for-profit business.

Some examples might include:

- A market garden that grows and distributes seasonal, organic veg locally and trains new growers who want to produce local food
- A village stall for swapping surplus veg, plants and seeds
- A community enterprise that makes use of a material currently going to waste (food, textiles, plastic, etc)
- Workshops to learn about refurbishing, fixing and repairing
- Using an empty building for a pop-up repair café

These ideas are explored in the [Spring 2023 edition of THRIVE](#). For inspiration, have a look at some of the ideas [shared by local residents at the Closing Loops World Cafes](#).

The 'Pots of Possibility' Fund

The 'Pots of Possibility' fund is distributing up to £300,000 over the 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 pilots, test the feasibility of new ideas and support community projects
- 'Your Pots' are grants of between £5,000 and £10,000, awarded to grow ideas and scale up pilots that contribute to an ecosystem of regenerative initiatives and community enterprises locally.

Community Pots

This guidance document relates to the third round of the 'Community Pots' opportunity. The fund opens on 17 March 2025, and applications must be submitted by 11.59pm on 30 April 2025.

Applications will be assessed by a panel composed of FoodFutures Partnership members and external independent representatives from different sectors and communities within Lancaster District.

What should we do if we want help or advice?

If you'd like to talk to us in person about this opportunity or your idea, feel free to come along to one of our drop-in sessions:

- Mon 31 March 9.30–11.30: The Link, 11-13 West Street, Morecambe LA3 1RB
- Wed 2 April 14.00–16.00: The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster LA1 1PX

- Mon 7 April 10:00–12.00: Brief Encounter Bistro, Carnforth Railway Station, Warton Rd, Carnforth LA5 9TR

Alternatively, contact LDCVS by email at hello@lancastercvs.org.uk or by telephone on 01524 555900 for support on questions about the online application process, eligibility, documentation, and timescales. LDCVS will also provide advice to grant holders about their grant agreement, payments, and the monitoring and evaluation process.

Contact Jo Stocking, Closing Loops Pots of Possibility Coordinator, by email at jo_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.

Eligibility

What kind of projects can receive 'Community Pots' funding?

Regenerative economy

The 'Community Pots' fund provides grants of up to £5,000 for social enterprises, charities and other not-for-profit groups or organisations to support pilots, test the feasibility of new ideas and support projects that will help our community and environment to flourish.

Projects funded by 'Community Pots' must support the Closing Loops aim of creating a thriving, regenerative economy here in North Lancashire. These include ideas in any of the following themes:

- *Repair*: Reusing, repurposing and repairing materials currently going to waste (e.g. textiles, electronics, packaging, surplus food, etc)
- *Shared Resources & Community Space*: Sharing resources (e.g. tools, materials, skills, etc) or repurposing unused space for community benefit
- *Communications, Arts & Festivals*: Inspiring people to use and buy things more sustainably and to produce less waste
- *Food Related Projects*: Growing, cooking and eating food that's local, seasonal and sustainably produced.

New ideas and new places

We want this funding to make a difference across the whole of the Lancaster City Council district, from Silverdale in the north to Wennington in the east and Dolphinholme in the south, and for a wide range of regenerative ideas.

We accept applications for projects that take place or involve people across the entire district, or in specific neighbourhoods, villages or towns. We welcome all applications but are also keen to see ideas from areas that haven't yet received funding for a place-based project, including Carnforth and rural communities.

We're also keen to see ideas relating to some kinds of regenerative activities that haven't yet been funded. These include community-led sustainable housing, energy or transport initiatives and repurposing unused space for community benefit.

Activities we can fund

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
- Reusing or repurposing equipment or resources (we recommend avoiding using funds to buy new equipment unless it has not been possible to source second-hand or shared community resources)
- Improving land or buildings
- Paying staff or consultants
- Working with volunteers and paying their expenses

Activities we can't fund

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 for 'Your Pots' funding?

Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations are all eligible to apply. Applicants 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)
- Faith-based groups

Your 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 less than 15 months old. Accounts should be produced by a method and in a format relevant to the size of your organisation.

Organisations can only submit one application per round. If you applied previously but were unsuccessful, you are welcome to apply again for the same project or with a new idea.

If your organisation has had a Pots of Possibility grant in a previous round you are also able to apply again, however you must have completed your project and your End of Grant Return before submitting a new application.

What about funding for individuals or private business, or an unconstituted organisation?

In general, we can't fund applications from individuals, or from businesses or limited companies that are not also charities or social enterprises. To meet the rules of the National Lottery Community Fund, who have provided this funding to Closing Loops, we will need to see and check your group or organisation's constitution or set of rules.

If you're an individual, business or community group without any kind of acceptable governing document, we might be able to 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.

Applying

How do we apply?

Create an account and access the form

Apply by creating an account at 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](#). You cannot apply using the paper reference copy.

Answer our questions

In the application form, you will answer a few brief eligibility checks before telling us more about your project across three groups of questions:

Why is your project needed?

- What problems or issues will your project tackle?
- What motivated your ideas for this project?

What will your project do?

- Which of the Closing Loops themes does your project fit?
- What would you like to do?
- Who will be involved?
- When and where will your project take place?
- Have you identified any risks associated with your project? How will you minimise the risk of them occurring, or deal with them if they do?
- What could happen in the future?
- Tell us about outcomes and outputs of your project in numerical terms.
- Tell us the costs you'd like us to fund

How does your project protect and restore the environment, build healthier communities and improve people's wellbeing?

- How will your project support the regeneration of the natural resources it depends on?
- How will your project support social regeneration?
- How will you share the key learning, skills and resources of your project with others?

- Are there other kinds of support your project or organisation would benefit from?

Most questions are limited to 100 or 200 words. You don't have to use all the words available or be completely certain about costs.

You will also 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.

Upload some documents

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) 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
- b) Your most recent accounts
 - c) Your organisation's memorandum and articles of association, certificate of incorporation, constitution, or rules.
 - d) If your project works with children, young people or adults at risk of harm, a copy of your safeguarding policy which explains how they'll be safe.
 - e) If your project includes activities which require public liability insurance and you already have this, a copy of the certificate of insurance.
 - f) 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, evidence of these.

- g) If your project benefits the public through changes to land or buildings, such as starting a farm or garden or conducting a refurbishment, 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.

Agree our terms and conditions

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?

We'll check your application

After you've submitted your application, your nominated contact 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.

The panel will review your application and make decisions

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.

To help the decision-making process, panel members will be asked to review your application in relation to whether your project fulfils a need, the feasibility of what you'd like to do, and your project's potential for environmental and social regeneration. They will use your answers from the corresponding parts of the application to inform their conclusions.

We'll tell you about the decision and any next steps

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.

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 the 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. 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 project partners 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.