



Let's Connect Communities

Guidance notes to applicants

- **Introduction**

All organisations face challenging times now especially when it comes to funding activities. So, Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) has set up a fund called 'Let's Connect Communities' to help with this. This fund will support projects that in some way link to using public transport and especially the local rail network across East Lancashire. You may want to take a group on a special trip, work on a sustainable travel project, develop a walking programme, improve your local rail station or produce artwork for display at your station promoting active travel and the local railway.

Through 'Let's Connect Communities' we are looking for imaginative projects that will have a high impact, that help bring communities together and enable new friendships to be made.

This guidance note sets out the criteria about how to apply for a grant and the timescales for delivering the project. We are looking for all projects to be completed by the end of October 2023 but if you need longer than this then put this in your application.

In some cases, members of the CRL team may be able to help support your project especially if rail travel or schools form part of your proposed project. The CRL team may also be able to help with match funding.

- **So who are CRL and CEL?**

If you have not heard of either Community Rail Lancashire or Connecting East Lancashire, then go to our respective websites to find out more. You can access them by clicking on the links below:

[Community Rail Lancashire](#)

[Connecting East Lancashire](#)

- **How much funding is there?**

The total funding available is £16,000 and each organisation/community group can apply for up to £3,000 each. We want to help as many organisations as possible and it is amazing what can be done with just a small grant.

- **Is match funding required?**

No match funding is required but if you are able to use the grant to contribute towards a bigger project then just keep in mind the timescales set out in this guidance note for when projects should be completed and the grant spent.

- **Who can apply?**

Any community organisation, community rail partnership, Friends of Stations, local charity, CIC or group that has a bank account and is based in Blackburn with Darwen, Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale can apply.

Individuals, businesses and statutory bodies cannot apply, and neither can national charities. Religious organisations can apply as long as the funding is not used to promote a particular faith or belief system. Applicants do not have to be registered charities, but they must be a constituted group with a bank account.

- **How can the funding be used?**

The funding criteria is deliberately non-specific so that a wide range of activities can be considered. As long as the group can demonstrate the impact on the community and how the funding will help promote sustainable travel, access or wayfinding to and from local train stations.

The funding can be used to deliver projects like youth work, mental health services, art projects, support for the elderly, BAME projects, LGBTQ+ groups, education, disability support, local empowerment, for example. The funding cannot be used for running costs including staff, bills, rent or maintenance.

- **How will the applications be assessed?**

Since there is a finite amount of money, applications will be assessed using a scoring system after the deadline, and if there are more suitable applications than funding available then applications with the higher scores will be prioritised. Organisations should not apply for more than is needed so that the funds can be made available for as many groups as possible. A properly costed application will increase the likelihood of success.

- **Timescales**

The following are the timescales for the Let's Connect Communities project:

Date	Activity deadlines
Monday 6 th February 2023	Launch of Fund
Friday 17 th March 2023	Deadline for Applications
March 2023	Applications assessment
By 21 st April	Groups notified of outcome
27 th October 2023	Project end date
By end November 2023	Project feedback, photos, videos, media coverage (if applicable) and evaluation. Evidence of impact the project has had.

- **What sort of monitoring is needed?**

If you are successful in getting funding, a few monitoring requirements are required. Most important of these are:

1. **A written report about your project.** This will describe what its aim and objectives were; what you did; how it went; any issues you encountered; its impact including the number of people involved, gender split, age range and ethnicity and any feedback you received from them.
2. **Evidence of the expenditure incurred** including a balance sheet showing how the grant was spent, any match funding received and how any funds remaining at the end of the project will be used. Copies of all receipts will be required.

- **Publicity**

CRL and CEL will want to publicise the positive impact of the fund on various media platforms for example, social media, press and websites. Photos will be welcomed. If the photograph includes young people, then you will need to have gained the written permission of the parent/guardian beforehand. CRL and CEL will use photos in their own publicity and reports about the project and may require evidence that where applicable relevant permissions have been obtained. Case studies are encouraged as part of this project. If there are legitimate reasons not to publicise the use of the funding, the reasons should be clearly stated in the 'Additional Comments' section of the application form.

- **Logos**

It is a condition of any grant awarded that the CRL and CEL logos will be included on any publicity material produced and referred to in any media releases or on social media. Copies of the two logos will be supplied to all successful applicants.

- **Where do I send the application?**

Applications should be sent:

By email to: communityrail Lancashire I@gmail.com .

By post to: Community Rail Lancashire, c/o Accrington Railway Station. Eagle Street, Accrington, Bb5 1LJ. Head the envelop: Let's Connect Communities.

We will acknowledge receipt by post or email and notify you of the outcome of your application.

If you have any further questions, please direct these to communityrail Lancashire I@gmail.com. If you want a call back please include your telephone number in your email.

LASTLY: good luck. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving your applications.