

# THE COMMUNITY SHOPS FUND



## OVERVIEW

The Community Shops Fund, administered by the Haltwhistle Partnership, provides two distinct funding streams designed to support charitable activities that reflect our core objectives.

These objectives include the relief of poverty, the advancement of education (including vocational training), and initiatives that improve the social and economic well-being of residents in Haltwhistle and the ten surrounding parishes.

We also consider projects with a faith-based element, provided they demonstrate a clear benefit to the wider community. Overall, the fund aims to strengthen local resilience, opportunity, and inclusion through targeted support for voluntary and community-led initiatives.

Approximately £40,000 is available each year through the Community Shops Fund, distributed across two funding rounds held in the Spring and Autumn.

Each round offers support through two funding streams:

- **Project Fund – grants of up to £10,000**
- **Young Person’s Fund – grants of up to £500**

While these streams provide a general framework, the division of funds between them may vary depending on the number and nature of applications received, allowing for flexibility in how grants are allocated.

## PROJECT FUND (up to £10,000)

### Purpose:

The Project Fund is designed to support community groups, clubs, not-for-profit, and voluntary organisations delivering projects or initiatives that address one or more of the charity’s core objectives within Haltwhistle and the surrounding district.

It enables smaller organisations to test ideas, develop grassroots projects, and access funding more easily. In addition to providing direct financial support, the Project Fund can also help attract match or additional funding, increasing the potential for long-term impact and lasting community benefit.

### Eligible Funding Areas May Include:

- Programs relieving poverty
- Educational, creative, and skills-based initiatives,
- Capital expenditure (equipment, materials)
- Revenue Costs (operational and project costs)
- Projects improving social inclusion, mental health, environmental, spiritual and economic well-being

### **Funding Details:**

- Time-limited funding with clear, measurable outcomes
- Demonstrably clear community benefit and sustainability potential

### **Application and Reporting:**

- Formal application process with supporting documentation
- Regular monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure accountability and impact

### **YOUNG PERSON'S FUND (up to £500)**

#### **Purpose:**

The Young Person's Fund provides small grants to support individuals aged up to 25 years living in Haltwhistle and the surrounding district. The aim is to help young people access opportunities that promote their education, training, personal growth, and creative development.

Grants may be awarded for a wide range of activities, such as courses, workshops, equipment, travel costs for educational or developmental purposes, or other initiatives that support their aspirations. While projects with a spiritual dimension may be considered, the primary focus is on enabling young people to explore their potential, build confidence, and access experiences that might otherwise be financially out of reach.

By investing in young people at a formative stage, the Young Person's Fund seeks to contribute to long-term individual and community well-being.

#### **Eligible Uses May Include:**

Grants from the Young Person's Fund can be used to support a wide range of activities and needs, including but not limited to:

- **Vocational and Educational Support** – such as course fees, training programmes, educational materials, or essential equipment and resources.
- **Cultural Participation** – including the cost of attending cultural events, workshops, or performances that contribute to personal or creative development.
- **Personal Development and Opportunity Access** – funding for activities or experiences that enhance social and economic well-being, build confidence, and help reduce barriers to opportunity.

These grants are intended to empower young people to pursue meaningful experiences that may otherwise be financially inaccessible.

### **Funding Details:**

- Smaller, individual grants tailored to personal development needs
- Simplified application process designed to be accessible to young people or their advocates
- Funding awarded based on individual merit and alignment with the charity's objectives

### **Application and Reporting:**

- Short application form with clear guidance
- Simple reporting or feedback to demonstrate outcomes

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

#### **Geographic Area**

The applicant and/or the project or activity must benefit the residents of the community of Haltwhistle and Districts in the County of Northumberland (the defined area of benefit).

#### **Purpose Alignment**

The application must support one or more of the charity's objectives. Please refer to the Community Shops Fund Policy for further information.

The applicant must be a member of the Haltwhistle Partnership or be willing to become one.

#### **Applicant Type**

Eligible applicants may include:

- Community groups,
- Social and/or sporting clubs
- Other not-for-profit organisations or groups delivering charitable activities within the area of benefit.
- Young Haltwhistle and District residents, up to the age of 25 years.

#### **Use of Funds**

Grant funds must be used solely for the purposes described in the application and consistent with the charity's objectives.

#### **Financial Accountability**

Applicants must provide evidence of sound financial management and agree to provide reports on the use of funds and project outcomes as required by the charity.

#### **Projects Not Supported**

The Community Shops Fund will **not** support projects or activities that:

- Primarily benefit individuals outside the defined area of benefit (Haltwhistle and District).
- Are for political or party-political activities or campaigns.
- Promote discrimination or intolerance on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age.
- Are primarily for religious proselytising or activities that do not align with the charity's inclusive values.
- Are for commercial or for-profit ventures.
- Duplicate services or activities already provided by statutory bodies without clear added value.

- Are for fundraising events or activities aimed at raising money for other organisations.
- Lack clear charitable purposes or do not align with the charity's objectives of relieving poverty, advancing education, religion, or social and economic well-being with Haltwhistle and its Districts.
- Have inadequate or no safeguarding measures for projects involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- Are projects with insufficient information, unrealistic budgets, or unclear outcomes.
- Conflict with statutory and legal requirements outlined in the Community Shops Fund Policy.

Please refer to Specific Application Guidance for further information.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The organisation aims to make the grant application process straightforward, transparent, and accessible to all eligible applicants.

### **Application Submission**

- Applicants must complete and submit the official grant application form by the specified deadline.
- Application forms and guidance notes are available on the organisation's website, the Community Shop and Community Bookshop, and the Haltwhistle Partnership office.
- All applications must include:
  - A clear description of the project or activity,
  - How it aligns with the charity's objectives,
  - A detailed budget,
  - Evidence of eligibility (e.g., organisational status, area of benefit),
  - Any supporting documents as requested.

### **Initial Eligibility Check**

- Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Incomplete or ineligible applications may be rejected or returned for further information.

### **Assessment**

- Eligible applications will be assessed against a specific scoring criteria,
- Reviewed and discussed by the Community Shops Fund Grants Panel,
- Designated for approval by the Board of Trustees
  - Please note: Additional information or clarification from applicants may be requested at this stage.

### **Decision Making**

- Funding decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees, in line with the Partnership's governance procedures.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome within an agreed timeframe.

- Feedback may be provided upon request.

### **Grant Agreement**

- Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding agreement outlining terms and conditions, reporting requirements, and responsibilities.

Further information regarding the application process can be found in the Community Shops Fund Application Guidance and the Community Shops Fund Policy.

## **ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS**

### **Assessment Process**

- All eligible applications will be evaluated fairly, transparently, and consistently in line with the charity's objectives and scoring criteria.
- Applications will be reviewed by the Shops Fund Administrator, the Community Shops Fund Grants Panel, and the Haltwhistle Partnership Board of Trustees.
- The assessment will consider:
  - Alignment with the charity's objectives,
  - Community benefit within the area of Haltwhistle and Districts,
  - Project feasibility and potential impact,
  - Financial viability and value for money,
  - Applicant's capacity to deliver the project successfully.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- Panel members or staff involved in assessment must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and abstain from decision-making where appropriate, in line with the Partnership's Conflict of Interest Policy.

### **Decision Making**

- Recommendations on grant awards will be made by the Community Shops Fund's Grants Panel.
- Final approval will rest with the Board of Trustees.
- Decisions will be based on the assessment scores and overall alignment with the organisation's priorities and available budget.

### **Notification**

- Applicants will be informed of the outcome in writing, including any conditions attached to the grant or reasons for rejection.
- Constructive feedback will be offered upon request to support applicants in future applications.

### **Record Keeping**

- Detailed records of assessments, scores, and decisions will be maintained securely for accountability and audit purposes.

## **GRANT CONDITIONS**

All grants awarded by the Haltwhistle Partnership through the Community Shops Fund, are subject to the following conditions to ensure funds are used appropriately and objectives are met:

### **Use of Funds**

- Grant funds must be used solely for the purpose(s) specified in the application and agreed in the funding agreement.
- Any changes to the use of funds must be approved in writing by the Haltwhistle Partnership's Board of Trustees before implementation.

### **Compliance**

- The grant recipient must comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and the Haltwhistle Partnership's policies, including safeguarding where applicable.
- The recipient must ensure ethical standards and good governance throughout the funded activity.

### **Reporting**

- Recipients are required to submit monitoring and financial reports as outlined in the funding agreement, demonstrating how funds have been used and what outcomes have been achieved.
- Reports must be submitted on time and in the prescribed format.

### **Publicity**

- The Haltwhistle Community Shops Fund must be acknowledged in any publicity and marketing materials using the words 'supported by the Haltwhistle Community Shops Fund, and/or the logo.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Recipients agree to participate in any monitoring, evaluation, or audit processes related to the grant.
- Site visits or meetings may be arranged to discuss progress.

### **Repayment of Funds**

- The Haltwhistle Partnership reserves the right to request repayment of funds if:
  - Funds are used for purposes other than those agreed,
  - Required reports are not submitted,
  - There is evidence of mismanagement or misuse of funds.

### **Duration and Extensions**

- Grants are awarded for a specified period as stated in the funding agreement.
- Any request for extension must be submitted in writing before the grant period ends and is subject to approval by the Haltwhistle Partnership Board of Trustees.

## **Termination**

- The Haltwhistle Partnership may terminate the grant agreement if conditions are breached or the project ceases to operate.

## **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

Effective monitoring and reporting are essential to ensure that grant funds are used appropriately, deliver the intended outcomes, and support the Haltwhistle Partnership's charitable objectives. This section outlines the expectations for both the Haltwhistle Partnership in administering the Community Shops Fund, and grant recipients.

### **Purpose of Monitoring**

- To confirm that funds are used for the agreed purpose.
- To track the progress and outcomes of funded projects or activities.
- To assess the impact and effectiveness of the grant.
- To identify and respond to any risks, delays, or issues.
- To inform future grant-making decisions and organisational learning.

### **Monitoring Responsibilities**

Grant Recipients must:

- Comply with all reporting requirements outlined in the funding agreement.
- Submit progress and/or final reports, including:
  - Financial reports detailing how the funds were spent.
  - Narrative reports summarising activities, outputs, and outcomes.
- Notify the organisation of any significant changes to the project, including delays, underspending, or changes in leadership or delivery plans.
- Cooperate with any site visits, audits, or evaluation exercises requested by the organisation.

The Haltwhistle Partnership will:

- Clearly communicate reporting expectations at the time of award.
- Provide templates or guidance to support recipients in their reporting.
- Monitor grants proportionately, based on size, duration, and risk.
- Review submitted reports and follow up on any concerns or issues.
- Document and store all monitoring data securely in line with data protection policies.
- Use monitoring information to evaluate the overall impact and effectiveness of the grant programme.

### **Failure to Report or Misuse of Funds**

Failure to submit required reports or evidence of misused funds may result in:

- Suspension or termination of the grant.
- A request for repayment of part or all of the funding.
- Ineligibility for future grants.
- Reporting to relevant authorities if appropriate (e.g. Charity Commission).

## **Evaluation and Learning**

The Haltwhistle Partnership may conduct or commission periodic evaluations to assess:

- The impact of its Community Shops Fund activities.
- Lessons learned from funded projects.
- How grants contribute to strategic goals and charitable impact.

Grant recipients may be asked to participate in interviews, surveys, or case studies to support this process.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Use of Grant**

- The Grant Acceptance Form, confirming agreement to the terms and conditions and terms of payment, must be completed and returned by the specified deadline.
- If the Grant Acceptance Form is not received by the specified deadline, it will be assumed that the grant is no longer required, and the offer will be withdrawn.
- The grant must be used solely for the purpose(s) outlined in the application and approved by the Community Shops Funds Grants Panel, and Haltwhistle Partnership Board of Trustees.
- Any changes to the project or use of funds must be approved in writing by the Haltwhistle Partnership.

### **Grant Amount and Payment**

- The grant amount awarded is final and cannot be increased.
- Funds will be disbursed following receipt of the signed Grant Acceptance Form and any required supporting documentation.

### **Accountability and Reporting**

- Recipients must keep accurate records of how the grant is spent.
- Financial receipts, invoices, and proof of expenditure must be submitted as part of reporting requirements.
- Progress and final reports must be submitted by the agreed deadlines.

### **Surplus Needs**

- Any unspent grant funds must be returned to the Haltwhistle Partnership unless prior written consent is given for retention or reallocation.
- Equipment and assets purchased with the grant funds must not be sold or disposed of for individual profit.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The Haltwhistle Partnership reserves the right to monitor and evaluate the use and impact of the grant, including site visits and requests for additional information.

## **Publicity and Acknowledgment**

- Grant recipients agree to acknowledge the Community Shops Fund's support in any publicity materials, events, or communications related to the funded project.
- Grant recipients agree that progress reports and images can be used to publicise or promote the Fund (subject to GDPR protections)

## **Compliance**

- Applicants are expected to act in good faith, provide accurate and truthful information, and use the grant solely for the purposes outlined in the approved project proposal.
- Recipients must comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and safeguarding policies.
- Grant recipient must ensure they have performed risk assessment and have adequate insurance coverage during project delivery.
- Where possible, local suppliers and services should be used.
- Grants must not be used for political or religious proselytising, or activities that discriminate or contravene the Haltwhistle Partnership's values, or legal and statutory regulations and requirements.

## **Confidentiality**

- Personal and sensitive information related to the grant must be handled confidentially and in line with data protection laws.

## **Withdrawal of Funding**

- The Haltwhistle Partnership reserves the right to withdraw or reclaim the grant if funds are misused, conditions breached, or if the project is not delivered as agreed.

## **Conflict of Interest**

- Recipients must disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to the grant.

## **Disputes**

- Any disputes arising from the grant award or its use will be addressed through the Haltwhistle Partnership's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

