

countryside communities

'Ensuring that England's rural communities receive their fair share of funding.'

Wondering how Lottery money can help your rural community?



Take a look at our Countryside Communities initiative.

**COMMUNITY
FUND**
Lottery money making a difference

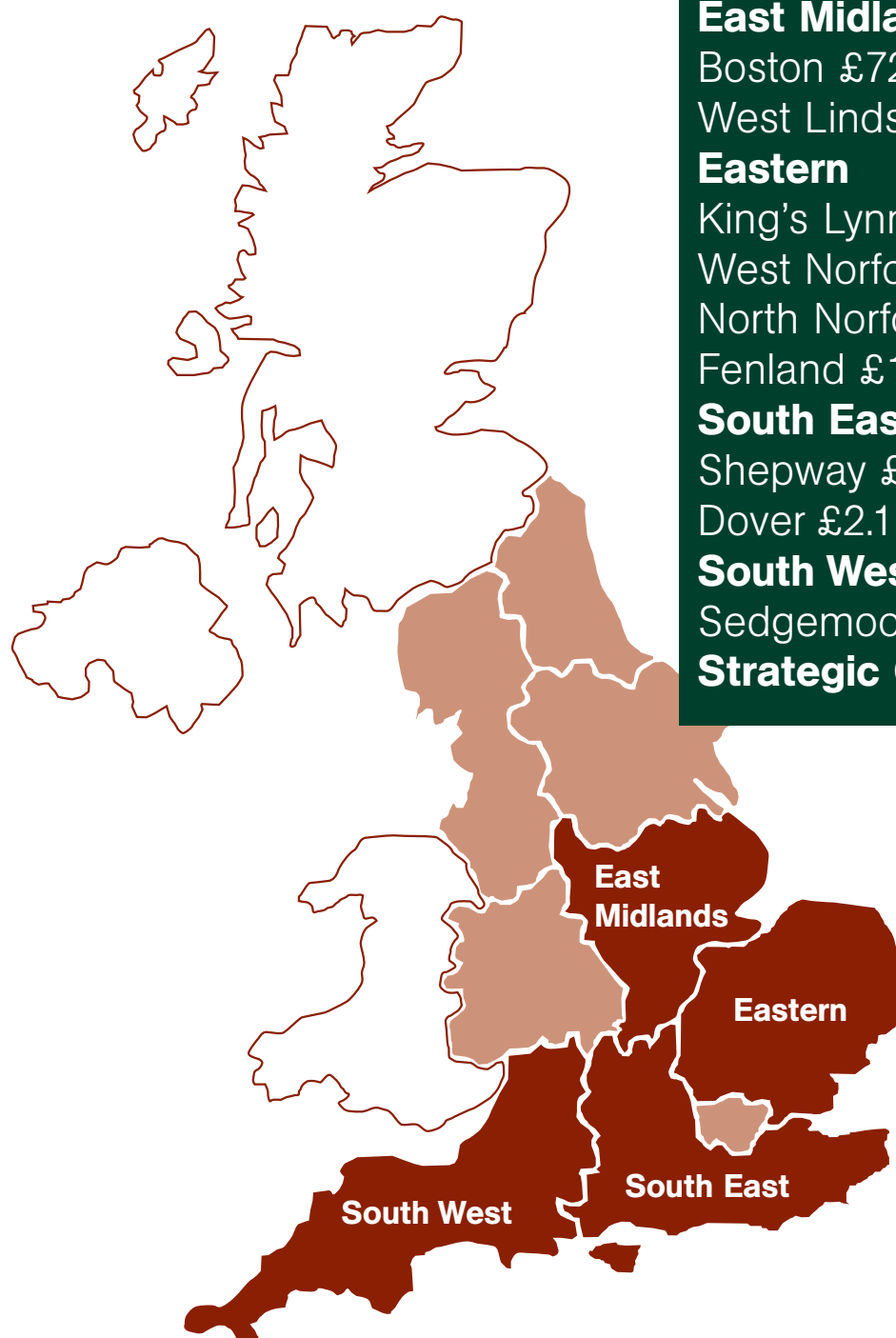
 The
Countryside
Agency

The eight Countryside Communities areas

Countryside Communities is one of several initiatives to get Lottery money to where it is needed most. The eight local authority areas covered by the Countryside Communities initiative include 300 villages in England. These figures tell you

how much money is still available in your area.

As well as local projects in these areas, £2.2 million is being allocated to projects that will make a wider impact on rural communities right across the country under the Community Fund's Strategic Grants programme.



East Midlands

Boston £720,000

West Lindsey £1 million

Eastern

King's Lynn and

West Norfolk £1.8 million

North Norfolk £1.7 million

Fenland £1 million

South East

Shepway £1.9 million

Dover £2.1 million

South West

Sedgemoor £1.8 million

Strategic Grants £2.2million

How a Countryside Communities grant could help improve life in your community

Do you have a project that will benefit the people in your village or neighbourhood? A project that will make a real difference to their lives? If so, why not apply for a Countryside Communities grant? £16.2 million of Lottery funding has been earmarked by the Countryside Communities initiative for voluntary organisations and groups like yours in the eight England areas listed opposite. By applying you can help ensure your area gets its fair share of Lottery funding.

The areas on our map are not only some of the most deprived rural areas in the country; they're also those that have received less Lottery money than other, similar places. That is why the Community Fund and Countryside Agency joined forces last year to form Countryside Communities with the aim of turning that situation around.

Between them the two organisations are ensuring that Lottery money is directed into projects that will improve the lives of people living and working in some of our poorest rural areas.

In the last year Community Fund has given £17 million to help people disadvantaged by rural isolation across the UK

We are one year into this five-year initiative and it is already proving a success. We have awarded some excellent grants and we are looking forward to making many more. There is still £14.6 million left to give away. So why not apply - and join the growing number of Countryside Communities success stories? This booklet describes some of these stories.

It's not just money

It is not just about money, of course. Working together, the Community Fund and Countryside Agency have forged a strong and enthusiastic partnership. We work closely with local organisations, voluntary groups and charities, helping them to develop their plans; anything from a pensioners' lunch club to mental health services or a village playgroup. We help them to exploit every funding avenue, including the programmes we manage ourselves, and work out how these could best benefit their community. By concentrating our efforts on outreach and development work we are seeing a growing number of applications succeeding first time.

There are other practical, long-term ways in which Countryside Communities is helping. We are helping people to learn new skills or enhance the skills they already have.

We are helping to develop a new generation of community leaders, so helping communities to help themselves. We are helping to preserve and expand the services and buildings that are the heart and soul of rural community life – the village halls, the village post offices, the community transport and voluntary services.

But without your idea, your initiative, your planning and your application for a grant how much of this would be achieved? Not a lot!

We have Lottery money available to help projects like yours. We are doing our best to get that message out. If you need advice and help in getting your project off the ground, a member of our staff will talk to you about it personally.

Hyde Housing Association, Shepway, Kent Awarded £88,747

Thanks to a Countryside Communities grant of £88,747 the Shepway Care and Repair Agency can give special advice and support to people in their homes – improving their security arrangements, putting in small adaptations that make people’s homes safer and carrying out minor repairs that make houses more comfortable to live in.

Hyde Housing’s Philip Cross explains: ‘People generally wish to stay in their own homes, even when they get older or if they are disabled. By improving people’s living conditions the Agency enhances their quality of life and enables them to remain in their own home in greater comfort and security.’



**Older people and their carers
have benefited from £32
million of Community Fund
money over the past year**

‘This service is seen as a vital part of community care and housing strategies, giving them freedom and independence to live and participate in their local communities.’

‘Making the application for funding was quite hard,’ he says, ‘but Community Fund staff offered help and guidance. This help continued after the group was awarded a grant, with Community Fund staff advising on the best ways to monitor and review the progress of the project.’

The organisation asks people if they are pleased with the service through ‘satisfaction forms’. The overwhelming feedback is that the service has made a positive difference to many people’s lives.

Somerset Rural Youth Project, Sedgemoor Awarded £156,887

Somerset Rural Youth Project gets young people involved in tackling crime in their area. Young people who may be at risk of falling into petty crime now have the chance to train as peer educators, raising awareness among other young people of the way crime affects rural communities.

The project is working closely with other agencies, such as the police and Sedgemoor District Council and builds on the current programme which encourages young people to take a more active role in their communities.

Community Fund has awarded children and young people over £55 million in the last year



Community Programme Manager John Stow believes the grant is great news. “Young people in rural areas are often blamed for petty crime and anti-social behaviour. Through the peer education work which this grant funds we hope that instead of being seen as part of the problem young people can take responsibility for becoming part of the solution.”

A full-time project worker joined the project this autumn, working mainly in the smaller rural parishes, where, according to John Stow, “young people can easily feel bored and left out.”

Boston Citizens' Advice Bureau, Lincolnshire Awarded £173,067

In January 2003 Countryside Communities awarded Boston Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) £173,067 to employ two project caseworkers for three years. These advisors raise awareness of the benefits that are available and help people successfully apply for them. They offer home visiting and outreach services to those unable to visit the CAB itself either because of mobility problems or rural isolation.

In the first three months since the grant was awarded the CAB was able to make a vital difference to the 227 people they advised - individuals, carers and families. The average weekly income of older people they have helped has increased by nearly £64.

Seven per cent of rural villages have access to affordable broadband internet connections, compared with 95 per cent of the urban population



As one client said: 'The help received in completing the forms was enormous. Without it I feel the end result would have been very different. I am blind as well as disabled and rely on my neighbours to do everything. Now I can pay for help.'

The project also provides briefings and training to key local agencies and organisations to ensure elderly or disabled people they work with are referred to the CAB when appropriate, and is strengthening contacts with community groups as a way of contacting otherwise hard-to-reach clients.

The Countryside Agency – providing a range of support for rural communities

As well as being a partner in Countryside Communities the Countryside Agency manages a range of other initiatives and programmes which support rural communities. These include:

Vital Villages

The Vital Villages programme puts decision-making in the hands of the people who live there, and gives grants to make things happen. Vital Villages helps rural communities to help themselves.

Parish Plan

A Parish Plan is a vision of how you would like your town or village to be. For many communities it is a stepping-stone to influencing local authorities and other service providers. It can also lead to applications for other grants such as those for transport and community services. Up to £5,000 is available to meet up to 75 per cent of the cost of preparing the plan.

Community Services Grants

This Grant Scheme aims to help smaller rural communities improve and keep the services they need. This might include a community shop, childcare, a doctor's surgery in the church hall or cash machine in the village hall. Between £500 - £25,000 is available, providing up to 75 per cent of the total cost.

Parish Transport Grants

The Parish Transport Grant scheme helps people in rural communities to meet their own local transport needs. These might include car clubs, vouchers for taxis, funding a local bus company to divert an existing service through the village, buying cars, mopeds or minibuses for community use. Up to £10,000 is available through an application from the parish or town council, to meet up to 75 per cent of the cost of the project.

Sandringham and West Newton Village Hall, Norfolk Awarded £23,328

Rural Transport Grants

This scheme gives grants to community-based transport projects in rural areas. A wide range of projects are eligible, such as: services on demand ('dial-a-rides'), taxi vouchers, walking and cycling projects, car share schemes, extensions to bus routes. Up to £250,000 is available for each project to meet up to 75 per cent of the total costs. Local RTPs can also apply for £35,000 each year (over three years) to support operational costs.

See page 12 for how to apply to the Countryside Agency.

The focus on Countryside Communities areas has enabled the Sandringham and West Newton Village Hall to successfully apply for £23,328 from the Countryside Agency. Saving a 90-year-old archaic village hall from closure has put the spirit back into the community, according to Keith Staley, the treasurer of the village hall management committee.

The grant has paid for substantial repairs and decoration, a new heating system, modernised toilets and new disabled toilet facilities. Says Keith: 'The hall is the vibrant hub of the community, something we are all very proud of, quite frankly.'

The hall has gone from strength to strength. It now hosts a pioneering community luncheon club when once a month around 40 villagers sit down to lunch alongside children from the primary school. The children serve and act as hosts, so both young and old benefit from the contact.

Community Fund – getting the money to where it's needed

The Community Fund's grant-making is two pronged. We give grants, which help improve voluntary sector capacity, and we give grants to fund projects aimed at addressing the need of those most disadvantaged in society and improve the quality of life in the community.

We are serious about getting Lottery money to where it's needed most. That's why we are inviting local organisations that can deliver specific local projects to apply for cash. The Community Fund distributes money raised by the National Lottery to charities, voluntary and community groups. Out of every £1 spent on the National Lottery the Community Fund receives 4.7 pence.

If you have a project in mind and think that Countryside Communities could help here are some of the things you should be thinking about.

What is a project?

A project is a piece of work that you want to carry out which is on top of the usual day-to-day activity of your organisation. We won't normally fund what your organisation does on a daily basis, but we will consider applications to fund an organisation that has been set up especially to run a project or carry out a piece of additional work.

Planning your project

We recommend that you write a project plan listing the main things you will need to do to make your project happen and to achieve your main aims. A good project plan covers everything from the activities and tasks that will get the project started to the long-term difference you expect your project to make.

Show us the need for your project

You must show us that there is a need for your project and that this project will meet that need.

Ask yourself: What needs do our community or users have? How do we know they have these needs? How will our project meet those needs?

Costing your project

You will need to work out how much your project will cost and justify the amount of money you have asked for.

Managing your project

You must be able to deliver the project. Your management committee should have close contact with your users or your community and the skills to handle the activities involved in delivering your project. For building projects, such as building or refurbishing a village hall, you will need to get some professional advice.

It is important that you have established procedures for handling your organisation's finances. We will also look at your policies on health and safety and employment.

How your project will make a difference

We want our grants to contribute to a long term improvement in the lives of the people who will benefit from your project.

Funding priorities

If your project is based in one of our Countryside Communities areas then you are off to an excellent start. We want to fund projects in these areas, but we have other funding priorities as well, depending on which region your project is based in. You can find details in the Our Aims and Priorities booklet for your local region. We will help a project that does not necessarily meet our funding priorities, but there is a better chance of getting a grant if it does.

Find out what we want

Applying for a Community Fund grant is time-consuming and there is a lot of competition for the money. Only the strongest applications succeed. Before you send us your application it is a

Contact us

good idea to find out what we expect from a good application. That doesn't just mean reading the application pack from cover-to-cover but reading some of our other booklets as well.

Don't give up!
Don't be put off by the paperwork. We are here to help and advise you every step of the way.

Community Fund

To find out the contact details of your regional Community Fund office call the application line on 08457 91 91 91.

Countryside Agency

To find out the contact details of your local Countryside Agency office call the information line on 01242 521 381.

Our websites

You can download the Countryside Communities booklet from the Community Fund website at: www.community-fund.org.uk or the Countryside Agency website at: www.countryside.gov.uk Both websites give full details about applying for grants.

In the first place we advise you to look at our websites for information. If you don't have access to the Internet or you have any questions that you can't find answers to on our websites, please call your local Community Fund office or Countryside Agency office. Our staff will also be able to point you in the right direction for advice and help in applying for a grant, such as your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), Rural Community Council or Local Authority Lottery officer.