

Criteria and guidelines for completing the Stage 1 Application Form

Deadlines

Defra has awarded ACRE £3m to distribute for capital works to village halls.

The Fund will be open for Stage 1 applications from 20 December 2022 until 11.59pm on 20 January 2023 when it will close whilst the applications are assessed. If your Stage 1 application is successful you will receive information about how to complete Stage 2 of the process. Your Stage 2 application will have a short window to prepare for the first meeting of the award panel in March 2023.

The Fund will re-open for Stage 1 applications on 20th February 2023. Demand on the Fund will then dictate how long ACRE is able to accept Stage 1 applications. Successful applications from February onwards will go to an award panel meeting later in 2023.

It is intended that the first batch of Stage 2 applications will go before an Award Panel at the end of March 2023. You will have 6 months within which to drawdown your grant from the date of the award.

All project work must be completed before the end of March 2025.

Criteria

The aim of the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund is to support the modernisation and improvement of village halls so that they are fit for purpose and can provide activities which seek to achieve one or more of the following outcomes for their communities:

- improved health and/or wellbeing and/or reduction in rural loneliness,
- positive impact on the local environment, contributes towards net zero,
- support for the local rural economy,
- promotion of community cohesion.

The Fund shall be available to support **capital improvements only**, where projects aim to:

- Upgrade facilities
- Extend facilities
- Improve facilities
- Purchase capital items

The Fund **shall not** be available for projects that solely seek to:

- Repair
- Maintain
- Renew

Grants will not be available where hall committees received a grant from the Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund.

You can apply for a grant between £7,500 and £75,000 which will be 20% of eligible project costs. The total project cost can be more than £375,000 but the maximum grant available is £75,000.

Your village hall must be a charity owned and managed by the community. The town or village in which it is situated must have a population of 10,000 or less.

Please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document for further detail on eligibility and a wide range of additional information.

Completing the Stage 1 Application Form

You must answer all questions. This will help us to determine your eligibility and suitability for the fund assessed against the criteria.

We strongly recommend you download a copy of the survey form before submitting your application. The form should not take long to complete if you are prepared. You can save and return to your application at any time using the facility provided. Once you have submitted your application you will be able to download a copy of it.

Top tips

- If your project is ineligible the online form will reject your application and you will not be able to continue.
- Download and complete the costs and funding form as this will assist you in completing the Stage 1 form. Approximate figures are acceptable but detailed information will be required at Stage 2.
- Make sure all information is to hand before you complete the Stage 1 application form.
- We recommend that you save your application so if you are interrupted whilst completing it you will be able to get back into the application at the point at which you saved it.
- You will be able to Save and Print your application on completion of your application.
- Don't use the back button in your Browser, you will be thrown out of the survey and may have to start again!

Eligibility

The application starts by asking your organisation's name, the County it is based in and the Postcode. You will be asked to provide details about the constitutional structure of your hall charity, whether its freehold or leasehold, the Charity Registration Number and the population of your town or parish.

Proposed Project

You will be asked the title of your project and to describe it including the type of work i.e. extension, damp proofing. You will need to have considered how your project meets the aims of the Fund and to describe the positive difference the project will make to the community. We will ask if you have carried out any community consultation and how your Parish Council has engaged with the project.

Your hall and its local area

You will need to provide the year your hall was built, the different spaces your hall offers, its capacity and the activities that take place in it. Also, the size of the population and other meeting spaces in the community as well as facilities such as a School, Shop or broadband and whether new housing is likely to be built in your community.

Costs and funding

You will be asked to enter some financial details into the online form. You will need to complete the costs and funding form so that you have figures to input into the online form. Please provide contact details of the member of the committee handling the application.

If you have any queries email villagehallsfund@acre.org.uk