

Village Halls Improvement Grant Fund Guidelines and Eligibility Criteria

Introduction

The Autumn 2018 budget announced that, to mark the centenary of the Armistice, government would support several initiatives, including making available grant funding to support improvement projects for village halls.

This is in recognition of the important role that village halls play in underpinning local community life, enabling activities to prevent loneliness among people living in rural areas and to create stronger communities. It is recognised that raising funds for major repairs and improvements is a challenge for trustees of village halls and that the 20% VAT payable on such work can be a significant sum which, in most cases, cannot be recovered, in contrast to halls run by parish and town councils, which can recover VAT.

The aim of this grant funding is the updating and refurbishment of village halls so that they are fit for purpose and provide activities which seek to achieve one or more of the following outcomes for their communities:

- Improved health and wellbeing/reduction in loneliness
- Demonstrates a positive impact on the environment
- Supports the local rural economy

There will be greater emphasis given to applications who have already secured most of the funding.

The grant funding will be managed by ACRE on behalf of Defra with support from the ACRE Network.

How much funding is available and how much can be applied for?

£3 million has been made available to ACRE to fund this grant scheme. The scheme will fund up to 20% of eligible costs, with a minimum grant of £10,000 and a maximum grant of £75,000 payable. This means overall scheme costs would be between £50,000 and £375,000.

When can we apply?

The application process is via the ACRE Website and can be found at www.acre.org.uk. It is a two-stage application process. The first stage is completion of an online application form and costings. The second stage is the submission of a full application at any time before March 31st, 2020 or until it is announced that the Fund is fully committed.

Who can apply for funding?

Applications from the following legal entities will be eligible:

- Registered Charities
- Charitable Trusts
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations
- Community Associations which are registered Charities
- Multi-purpose Church Halls and Scout and Guide buildings are also eligible where they are open for the whole community, there is no alternative village hall in situ, they are not single use and they are clearly advertised as multi- purpose
- Charitable Companies

Applications from the following legal entities will not be eligible:

- Parish and Town Councils
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Companies – Industrial and Provident Societies, Co-Operatives or Community Associations where no charity registration is in place
- Sports Pavilions with amateur sports club status
- School Halls
- Any organisation, charitable or otherwise, which is VAT registered



Other eligibility criteria

- Halls in towns or villages of under 10,000 population
- Applicants should have a freehold or leasehold interest in the hall in place. If there is a lease in place there must be at least 21 years left to run on the lease

What will be funded?

The following are examples of items of expenditure that could form part of your project. It is not an exhaustive list:

- Extensions
- Internal reconfigurations
- New roof and roof refurbishment which includes insulation
- Improvements which help to increase energy efficiency
- Refurbishment of toilets and kitchens
- Damp proofing
- Installation of Wi-Fi
- Guttering, repointing and drainage
- Replacement of external and/or internal doors

We cannot fund:

- New builds; most new charitable village and community halls are eligible for 0% VAT and therefore will not be eligible for this fund
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) works or any build which is zero rated for HMRC purposes e.g. an annex with its own separate entrance and exit
- Building projects which have already started
- Routine maintenance, defined as simple, small-scale activities (usually requiring only minimal skills or training) associated with regular and general (daily, weekly, monthly) upkeep of a building, or equipment, machine, plant, or system against normal wear and tear
- Projects which do not show a clear outcome other than updating a building
- Any improvements to car parks, parking areas, adjacent recreational areas, landscaping
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Buildings where the ownership is not established or where there is a lease in place of 21 years or under
- Capital expenditure which is not to do with the physical improvements of the hall such as fixtures and fittings
- Architects, surveyors and specialist survey fees
- Costs for feasibility studies or planning applications or project managers' fees

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20th - 26th January 2020

