

Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Autumn 2026 Criteria

The Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund supports culture and sport projects in the community with the aim of improving the health, wellbeing, and cultural experience of Lancashire residents.

This is a funding programme focused on encouraging community involvement within Lancashire. Projects raise money on [Spacehive](#), the crowdfunding platform, through pledges of financial support. The Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund (LCSF) can support eligible projects with a pledge of **up to 40%** of their target. To receive funding from the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund, projects need to demonstrate broad community support by attracting multiple individual pledges onto their campaign.

The scope of the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund is to support:

- cultural activity including art, music, literature, poetry, heritage, dance, theatre, craft, photography, film, design, museums, archives, and community arts festivals
- sporting activity including increasing engagement with community-based sports clubs, outdoor pursuits, creating competitions and events, walking and gentle exercise

Projects must deliver public benefit and not be for the purpose of profit-making activity.

*The Autumn 2026 funding round **opens on Thursday 2nd July and closes on Thursday 17th September**. Pledges will be communicated in October. Crowdfunding campaigns are expected to finish no later than 31st January 2027. No project activity can be delivered before your crowdfunding campaign has been completed.*

About the fund

The Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund will have two funding rounds per year. A round is the period when campaigns are 'live' and actively seeking pledges. Each round will be up to 3 months. Applicants or Project creators may have no more than 1 live project per year and cannot apply to consecutive funding rounds.

Please note: in previous rounds, many projects have pitched to the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund with some projects receiving less than the maximum LCSF pledge and in some cases no pledge at all. Pledges are awarded based on those projects that most strongly meet the priorities of the fund. Not all projects fundraising on Crowdfund Lancashire have received a pledge from LCSF.

All projects supported through the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund will be required to submit monitoring and evaluation information to Lancashire County Council, which will be used for promotional purposes and to produce annual reports ensuring full accountability and transparency. Project creators with completed projects that have not returned the required monitoring and evaluation documentation will not be considered for support in future rounds. Likewise, project creators with completed projects who do not correctly use the LCC branding and wording during their crowdfunding campaign and project delivery.

Lancashire County Council wants to see projects coming forward from all parts of the county and from all communities. All projects must be inclusive and welcome new members. Projects that apply for funding for a closed group with no opportunity for new participants are ineligible.

District councils cannot directly apply for funding but can officially partner with a local community group or parish/town council who would apply for the funding. The district council can offer support and can be involved in the delivery of the project, but the organisation, parish/town councillor individual/business must lead on the project and be the accountable body.

Friends of Lancashire County Council's Libraries, Museums and Archives – please contact lcsf@lancashire.gov.uk to check your project's eligibility.

Who can apply

Organisations, parish/town councils, and individuals can apply and, providing certain criteria is met, Lancashire County Council will provide financial support with a pledge of **up to 40%** of a project's target.

There are three strands to the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund. These are:

- *Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Not-for-profit organisations*: for constituted groups and organisations supporting up to 40% of a project target with a maximum contribution of £15,000. See below for eligibility requirements.
- *Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Parish/Town Councils and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)*: for parish/town councils and BIDs supporting up to 40% of a project target with a maximum contribution of £5,000.
- *Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Individuals/businesses*: for individuals or businesses running projects which are to provide a cultural or sport activity to a community on a not-for-profit basis supporting up to 40% of a project target with a maximum contribution of £1,500.

To apply for funding from the *Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Not-for-profit organisations* strand, your group must be constituted, have a group bank account (requiring two signatures) and be a not-for-profit organisation designed to deliver benefit to the community (and not designed to create a profit/dividends for shareholders). CICs (Community Interest Companies) and CIO (Community Interest Organisations) are deemed eligible as their activities generate revenue, which in turn fund activities that deliver community benefit. Please note: organisations with an annual turnover of more than £500,000 are ineligible to apply in this round.

Projects should contribute to at least one of the county council's ambitions:

- **Better lives for all**
- **Economic ambition**
- **Stronger communities**
- **Thinking differently**

For more information, see [Council Plan 2025-2030 | Building a better Lancashire - Lancashire County Council](#)

All projects must be appropriately planned and managed and adhere to all legal obligations, health and safety, risk assessment, public liability, and safeguarding requirements, and have obtained relevant permissions. All projects must ensure quality of experience and all practitioners should be paid in line with sector standards.

Priorities for the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund

- Priority will be given to projects that improve access to culture and sport, contribute to the county council's Corporate Priorities and to projects that enable free or low-cost activity for public benefit.
- Priority will be given to Lancashire led organisations/individuals.
- Free access events with direct benefit to participants may receive a higher percentage pledge from LCC than paid for events or festivals where there may not be any direct participation benefit.
- A higher percentage pledge may be considered if a project is delivering in an area with identified need for cultural or sporting activity.
- Capital projects which will help widen participation and allow more people to access cultural activity are a higher priority than restoration projects or improvements to facilities, which do not directly improve access.
- Where there are several similar projects from the same locality, it is likely that projects which best meet the criteria will be prioritised.
- If you have received a pledge in a previous round, you may be a lower priority in future rounds.
- Projects that identify new users, audience and/or participants that have no or little opportunity to experience culture and sport activity.
- Projects that have follow on activity e.g. options for project participants to continue participation for free or low cost will be a higher priority
- Events should focus on arts engagement, and opportunities for community performance / talent development. Fees for celebrity appearances / entertainment are not eligible. Infrastructure costs are not a priority element for this funding, e.g. barriers, crowd control.
- Training, coaching and development courses as part of project delivery

Priorities for Autumn 2026 funding round

Priority will be given to cultural and sports projects that demonstrate contribution to the county council's priorities for 2026/27, as outlined in the 'Moving the dial on our priorities' document. This is viewable here:

<https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s277246/Appendix%20A.pdf>

These include the following priorities:

- Civic pride in the communities of Lancashire
- Improvement in services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Living Better Lives in Lancashire: strengthening prevention and early intervention

Lancashire County Council reserves the right to review all project costs and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

If a funding round is over-subscribed, Lancashire County Council reserves the right to reduce the maximum amount allocated for funding.

What we can fund

To be eligible for funding, projects must meet the below criteria:

- Projects must be based in, and benefit residents within the Lancashire County Council administrative area (explained below).
- Projects must contribute to community based cultural or sporting activity.
- Projects must benefit the wider community and be open to all.
- Projects must contribute to improving places, spaces, or residents' quality of life.
- Projects must involve the public as audience or participants.
- Projects involving activities or events must be free or low-cost to all. Events and/or activities that are free of charge may be prioritised.
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) who are limited companies may apply, however will be considered for a maximum pledge of £5,000.
- Projects must have a specific purpose and not be requesting funding towards overall organisational costs.
- If the funding is for a capital purchase, it must be for the benefit of the public and have significant impact on culture and/or health and wellbeing.
- Installation and/or replacement of capital works and equipment e.g. heating, roofs, lighting, playing areas, pitches or grounds are eligible, however they are less of a priority than sports engagement projects.
- Projects must start within 12 months from the date funding is received. One-off events or festivals must take place no later than 6 months after receiving funds.

What we cannot fund:

- Projects from organisations with an annual turnover of more than £500,000.
- Activities which have already taken place or are underway.
- Projects put forward for schools (unless administered by the Parent Teachers Association which is classed as a Not-for-profit organisation – see above under 'For the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund – Organisations').
- Any projects that take place outside the administrative borders of Lancashire County Council.
- Projects supporting private interests or profit-making.
- Projects taking place to specifically raise funds for charity campaigns, or which will raise money for future non-profit activity/projects.
- Projects that are part of a campaign to promote particular religions, faiths, or political ideologies. Religious groups are able to apply for projects providing public benefit, however this should focus arts and creative engagement activity.
- Projects which fund or backfill statutory provision, local authority teams or district councils.
- The purchase of property or land. We can, however, make contributions to adaptations and improvements to properties once purchased or built, where there is a tangible community benefit from the proposed improvements.

- Capital purchases must clearly demonstrate how they improve access to culture or sport. Capital purchases must do more than improve the quality of experience. They must offer direct cultural impact and/or impact to physical activity to the project's audience and/or participants.
- Installation and/or replacement of capital works and equipment e.g. heating, roofs, lighting, playing areas, pitches or grounds
- Refurbishments of historical venues unless the project also includes a programme of activity that improves access to culture and/or sport and the refurbishment costs are minimal
- The building of play areas or the purchase of children's play equipment.
- The installing or upkeep of footpaths.
- Grounds works and preparation for capital works in open spaces is ineligible. Projects must demonstrate direct access to culture and/or sports.
- Minibus purchase, hire and/or drivers' fees
- Feasibility studies or scoping exercises for capital projects
- Project evaluation, surveys and documentations. Projects are expected to evaluate impact of the project as part of the Crowdfund Lancashire programme.
- Festivals and events with no lasting impact on the community and no tangible cultural or creative benefit to visitors e.g. Christmas Light Switch Ons
- Events should focus on arts engagement, and opportunities for community performance / talent development. Fees for celebrity appearances / entertainment are not eligible.
- The creation or hosting of websites
- Projects that are for the improvement of an individual or group's cultural or sporting practice. Projects must offer benefit to the wider community.
- Tours or attendance at events outside of Lancashire.
- Alternative school provision that happens during term time e.g. home schooling