



Ours to Share Grant Scheme

Guidance Notes

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Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100009 Company Limited Guarantee No. NI31418

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1. Overview

“Heritage illuminates history. It includes buildings and landscapes, museums and memories, objects and species, but we do not define or limit its scope. While our work is informed by experts, we ask people to decide what they value from the past and wish to hand on to the future. That is the heritage we support.”

Luff, P, Chair of the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Rural communities have a strong sense of belonging, connection to land, place and history. The ‘Ours to Share’ project aims to explore this diverse heritage of rural communities in Northern Ireland. The project provides opportunities and support for rural communities to learn from one another, network and share ideas and challenges faced in exploring rural heritage. It is proudly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This grant scheme is not just about having new faces at the table of existing groups, but an opportunity to develop heritage projects which will explore difficult and often side-lined issues like the role of women in building peace locally, the arrival of BAME communities to these shores, the story of disability in rural regions, and their contributions to local life etc.

We aim to encourage the animation of groups who haven't explored heritage or history before to think about it as a catalyst for the opening of new relationships and experiences within their settings. We want people taking part to have new skills, new connections, new friendships, new partnerships, and greater collaboration as a result of their engagement in this scheme.

2. What is heritage?

The Ours to Share project defines heritage as ‘our past, present and future’. It represents many traditions and stories that are worth exploring, sharing, and saving.

We are keen that projects respond to the heritage of the local people and area in which they take place. Heritage can mean something different to each and every one of us.

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The Rural Community Network's definition of heritage* includes the following:

- **Tangible** - historical buildings, monuments, artefacts, and archives.
- **Intangible** - our traditions and stories, sports, music, dance, folklore, crafts, skills, and knowledge.
- **Natural** - our landscapes, woodlands, uplands, bogs, rivers, insects, plants, trees, birds and animals.

* Heritage Council of Ireland's definition of heritage.

3. What is Rural?

Rural Community Network defines heritage in response to NISRA (Northern Ireland Strategic and Research Agency) who have advised that for Northern Ireland the default rural definition is 'areas with a population density of 5,000 or less'. For the purpose of this grant, we will allow applications from groups based in larger settlements but who can prove that a minimum of 75% of their beneficiaries will come from rural regions.

4. The Scheme and funding available

This grant scheme has been created to help support rural communities in developing and delivering heritage projects that will enhance rural communities through bringing people together to celebrate our diverse heritage.

There are two tiers of funding:

- Small grants of up to £1000 for groups/organisations/unconstituted groups that are new to heritage and would like to explore and test out an idea for a heritage project.
- Larger grants of up to £5000 are reserved for constituted groups/organisations that may need more support in developing their project idea.

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5. Aims and Objective of the fund

Our key objective for the scheme is to support projects that **can encourage engagement of a diverse and inclusive range of participants** and **one** or more of the following aims:

- **Celebrate local heritage and culture to bring people together**
- **Preserve rural heritage by recording and conserving for future generations**
- **Address barriers to wider and broader inclusion in local communities through the engagement of local heritage**
- **Promote a deeper understanding of the local area celebrating the many stories, identities, histories and cultures of the area**

This funding is to empower and support rural communities to explore heritage in meaningful and inclusive ways with the wider community. The rural areas are full of stories, legends, places, people and traditions that have the potential to enhance a community's wellbeing and everyday lives.

6. What can be funded?

Here are examples of what can be funded through this grant scheme.

- Materials and Equipment costs.
- Transport costs if applicant can demonstrate that it is an integral part of the project
- Programmes/projects that develop heritage and culture at a local level and make them more accessible.
- Volunteer expenses
- Resources such as publications, exhibitions, trails, digital resources
- Training and skills development programmes
- Activity costs
- Marketing and promotion/signage
- Refurbishment work
- Accessibility/room hire/refreshments
- Specialist costs – single tender action/curation
- Facilitator/tutor costs

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7. What cannot be funded?

Here are examples of what the scheme cannot fund.

- Individuals
- Running costs (i.e not project specific)
- Projects or activity that promote or advance religion
- Promotion of religion, political activities including any flags and emblems associated with current conflict or paramilitary activity.
- Organisations which adopt a partisan political stance or activities which are party political. We will not support organisations that advocate the use of violence to campaign or influence public opinion
- Use of funding to top up reserves of your group
- Costs for projects that have started or services/items that have already been obtained or paid for
- Costs that are not suitable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system.
- Alcohol costs
- Gratuities, gifts, and prizes
- Groups working outside Northern Ireland.

8. Who can apply?

The following groups are eligible to apply for this scheme.

- Constituted and Ad hoc groups who are coming together to explore cultural heritage. (RCN can support group with support and finance)
- VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) groups
- Other organisations involved in heritage or culture development work
- Cultural arts and heritage groups e.g. drama groups, historical societies, craft and art collectives

Groups that meet these criteria must demonstrate that:

- They represent/engage with rural communities
- Be committed to inclusivity and open to the whole community.
- Be non-party political and open to the full range of local opinion.
- Ensure that all group activities abide by the law
- If there is an existing group, they must demonstrate that they will widen and broaden representation in their group.
- to be based in Northern Ireland.

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9. What we will look for in your application

- The need for the project and how you have identified the need for the local community
- If your project responds to the objectives and aims of the fund
- You can show that you have, or can outsource, the skills necessary to make your project successful
- We may take into consideration the location of your project to make sure our funding is fairly distributed across Northern Ireland
- We will not accept applications completed by a 3rd party (professional consultant/fundraiser) on behalf of your group/organisation.

10. What happens if your project is funded?

- We will be asking for receipts and records of expenditure to make sure you have spent the grant as described in the application
- We may also call you or visit to see how the project is progressing
- We ask you take pictures/videos to track your projects progression so we can highlight the great work happening with the grants scheme.
- You will be expected to take part in networking activities with other groups and to share your learnings.
- We ask that you acknowledge both the Rural Community Network and the National Lottery Heritage Fund when publicising your project.

11. Supporting documents to be submitted

- A copy of your governing document e.g. constitution or rules of association*
- A copy of your organisations most recent accounts or financial statement.
- A copy of your relevant safeguarding policies e.g. child protection/vulnerable adults policy
- A current account bank statement dated within the last three months
- Relevant insurances

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12. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is never too early to think about how you will evaluate your project. Think about the information you will collect and any associated costs and receipts.

- You are expected to retain all information relating to the grant, including financial records.
- You will be required to complete an evaluation form highlighting the impact of the grant
- You may receive a visit from the Project Coordinator on the 'Ours to Share' project.

Evaluation will help you demonstrate the impact of your project and should inform future projects, as well as supporting your case for future funding.