Waterway Community Fund Proposal

**About the Waterway Community Fund (2025 to 2026)**

**Overview**

The Waterway Community Fund supports grassroots projects that care for canals, rivers, docks, and reservoirs across England and Wales. We know that spending time by water improves wellbeing, and that community groups, charities, and volunteers play a vital role in making our waterways welcoming, accessible, and alive with activity.

Since the pilot phase (2023 to 2025), the Fund has proven the big difference small grants can make, from recruiting and training volunteers to removing barriers, improving towpaths, and creating greener, healthier spaces.

Both the pilot phase and this year’s fund has been made possible thanks to players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

**Purpose**

The Fund provides financial support for high-quality, community-led projects that:

* Improve the waterway environment.
* Attract more people to spend time by water.
* Overcome practical barriers for groups and volunteers.
* Deliver visible, lasting change for local communities.

This work supports the Canal & River Trust’s ambition for every mile of waterway to be cared for by local communities.

**Why it matters**

Many smaller charities and volunteer groups face financial and practical challenges that prevent them from delivering their ideas. The Waterway Community Fund offers accessible, targeted support without unnecessary admin to help groups:

* Recruit and retain volunteers.
* Achieve long-held ambitions.
* Improve safety, accessibility, and enjoyment for all users.
* Enhance the environment for families, cyclists, mobility scooter users, and more.

**Who can apply**

The Fund is open to:

* Local community groups
* Small charities
* Community Interest Companies

Applicants must:

* Be identified or supported by a Canal & River Trust colleague within the region.
* Have a constitution, bank account, and ability to deliver activities safely.
* Hold £10 million public liability insurance or be willing to secure it.

We can also work with smaller or less formal groups to develop applications and deliver projects in partnership, with funding held in Trust budgets.

**Funding available**

* Grants: up to £5,000. Exceptional cases may exceed this.
* Total fund: £32,000 (Thanks to Postcode Lottery players).
* Projects must be delivered on Trust-managed waterways.
* All activities and spend must be completed by **31 March 2026**.
* Deadline for form submissions end of November

**What we fund**

We can fund:

* **Physical improvements** such as habitat creation, seating, planters, and towpath access.
* **Community participation** such as guided walks, volunteer training, and arts projects by the water.
* **Essential equipment and materials** such as safety gear, tools, wildlife homes, plants, and bulbs.

We cannot fund salaries or day-to-day running costs.

**Application process**

1. Submit your proposal using the application form.
2. Eligibility check and regional review.
3. Final decision by the Project Manager.
4. Notification of outcome.
5. Send invoice for approved funding amount

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Funded projects must record:

* Volunteer hours
* Enhancements delivered
* Numbers of people engaged

A short final report and case study interview will be required to help us share good practice and improve future funding.

**Benefits of the Fund**

* Empowers communities to care for waterways.
* Supports priority areas and disadvantaged communities.
* Improves visibility, accessibility, and enjoyment of waterways.
* Builds lasting relationships between the Trust, volunteers, and partners.
* Leaves a positive, tangible legacy.

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| Your Project Title |  |
| Grant Request - Funding applications are expected to range from £1000 to £5,000, deliverable by 31st March 2026.  Deadline for form submissions end of November  Exceptional projects of greater value may be considered |  |
| Name of your organisation |  |
| Main project contact |  |
| Position held within organisation |  |
| Main contact Tel. No. (mobile number preferable) |  |
| Main contact Email (please supply an individual and not a general email) |  |
| Organisation website/social media page (if applicable) |  |
| Organisation address (*including postcode)* |  |
| Address where the activities will take place (if the location doesn’t have a specific postcode, please provide us with one for a site nearby) |  |
| What kind of organisation are you (*Community Group, Charity, Social Enterprise, Community Interest Company*) |  |
| Who will be responsible for delivering your activities |  |
| Who will be responsible for managing your project |  |
| How do you currently work with the Canal & River Trust |  |
| Key contact at the Trust |  |
| Do you have public liability insurance? (*at least £10million cover*)  **If you currently do not have this level of cover,** **please commit to the increase, and build it into your application** |  |

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| **Section 1 – Description**  *(Please describe your project, providing an overview of the scope of your project. Include: name of project, type of activities, duration etc) – please supply any photographs if this will enhance your application.* |

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| **Section 2 – Why is your project needed?**  *(This is simply why you have been motivated to do this project. What is the local need of the area)* |

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| **Section 3 - What will you achieve through delivery of this project and how will you do it?**  *(This is about the difference your project will make. It will mean telling us more about how the project will benefit the waterway environment. You’ll describe what you want to do, who will you work with and how will this project meet the identified needs, including any expected outputs, outcomes and learning.)* |

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| **Section 4 - Project budget**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Amount you are requesting from this fund | £ |   Please provide details of the sources for partnership funding for your project (include any contribution from the Trust)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Budget Item | Amount | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | TOTAL |  |   Please return completed form to [waterwayfund@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:waterwayfund@canalrivertrust.org.uk) |