What are the WMCA Green Grants?

Access to green spaces is not equal across the West Midlands (WMCA: Levelling up through green space access - NEF Consulting).This became especially apparent during the Covid-19 lockdowns. It is important that opportunities to spend time in green spaces are increased for all. The fund seeks to support projects that will tackle green deprivation whilst also improving the local environment. The WMCA Board has committed £725,000 to support regional organisations and community groups in delivering projects associated with widening access to nature and green space.

The WMCA Green Grants Fund is seeking to fund projects that:

- Increase or improve green spaces close to where people live (e.g., within ten-minute walk)
- Connect people to nature, especially communities experiencing green deprivation
- Enhance the local environment (e.g., tree planting, increasing biodiversity)

The focus of this grant is to fund projects that increase access to Green Spaces in the WMCA area. Priority will be given to projects delivering in areas of multiple deprivation and communities where there is limited access to green space Greenspace Viewer - Public (tfwm.org.uk) . Applicants also need to demonstrate how planned activities have a positive impact on the environment.

How much can you apply for?

Small Grants £3000 to £25,000

Community groups and organisations will be encouraged to apply for small grants that connect local people to nature. The panel welcome creative ideas that meet the grant criteria, examples of potential projects are:

- Activities run at community gardens/ allotments for example tree planting, gardening, growing fruit and vegetables.
- Turning unused viable land into pocket parks.
- Nature playgroups that give children and families with no regular access to green space an opportunity to experience hands on activities.

Large Grants £25,000 to £100,000

For organisations with larger scale plans that will create significant sustainable projects that help people connect to nature and improve the local environment. Innovative ideas that meet the grant criteria are welcome, examples include:

- Development of green corridors linking parks/ community gardens/ other green spaces.
- Development of new community green spaces that increase local access.
- Projects that significantly improve the biodiversity of the area and promote behavioural change on accessing green spaces.

Who can apply?

This fund is for community and voluntary groups, charities and not for profit organisations with provable charitable aims. Eligible applicants must:

- Be based and deliver in the WMCA area
- Birmingham City Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- Coventry City Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Walsall Council

To be eligible to apply you must be able to provide proof of:

• Your organisation / company has a management committee / board of trustees / board of directors with at least 3 unrelated people as members, a list of those directors will be required showing who has bank authorisation.

• A written constitution / articles / set of rules.

• A copy of your most recent annual accounts or financial records showing your organisation's balance of funds, income and reserves.

• A bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated signatories.

• A bank statement from the last 3 months.

• Safeguarding policy.

• Equal opportunities policy.

• Quotes for capital items over £300.

- Land: Applicants need to own the land used for the project or have the correct legal permission. It is the applicant's responsibility to have the correct permissions in place and obtain any licences needed. Please include written evidence if relevant.

- Applications from Un-Constituted groups are welcome if working in partnership with an organisation that fulfils the required criteria.

Who can't apply?

- Individuals
- Groups that consist of one family
- Statutory bodies
- Profit making organisations
- Political groups

- Projects promoting a political or religious belief

What we will fund (in relation to direct project activity)

- Staff costs
- Volunteer costs
- Participant costs
- Capital costs (please include quotations for capital items or capital works over £300)
- Cost/hire of equipment directly related to project activity
- Publicity/ marketing
- Monitoring and evaluation activities
- Other direct costs related to project delivery

What we won't fund

- Recoverable VAT
- Activities that promote religious beliefs or political views
- Costs already covered through other funding
- Activities that have a negative impact on the local environment
- Costs that occur prior to the grant award
- Schools or colleges (unless project is accessible to the public)
- The cost of buying property or land

The Application Process

This is a rolling grant with applications being accepted throughout the life of the fund. Applications can be made online (insert link).

It is advisable before making a formal application to contact the Environment team for an informal conversation about your project CommunityGreenGrants@wmca.org.uk

Correctly completed applications that meet the grant requirements will be initially assessed by WMCA then the final approval will be made by a Grant Approval Panel.

Applications will be assessed and scored by the following criteria:

- Project Plan
- Evidence of need
- Increasing access to green/blue spaces
- Add to biodiversity
- Positive impact on environment
- Project legacy

In addition to scoring the priority criteria can be used to inform the final decision. This means that a high score alone will not automatically result in an award. The priority criteria are:

- The project is in an area of deprivation (according to Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and/or green deprivation where people are currently **not** accessing a green space.
- The project is creating a new green/blue space or significantly increasing access to green/blue space.
- The project is good value for money.

- Geography (to ensure even spread across the 7 combined authority areas as much a possible).

The Grants Assessment Panel will meet at the end of each quarter to assess applications. It can up to 12 weeks for applications to be assessed.

Projects must be completed within 1 year of the start date.

Application Guidance

Question 1: Project Location:

- Projects in areas of deprivation and/or areas with poor access to green/blue space will be prioritised.

Question 2: Project Description

- Describe the overall aim and purpose of the project.
- The project needs to fit with the CGG objectives of increasing access to green/ blue space and improving the environment.

The following six questions will be scored:

Question 3: Project activities. Please describe the project from start to finish. Give details of the activities and timeline of the project. What activities will take place and when? Who will be involved (staff/ volunteers) and what skills do they have to deliver successfully? Who will attend? What other organisations/ stakeholders are you working with? Please be specific (max 1000 words)

- Please use this section to describe your project in detail. This should be what you plan to achieve, how and when? What are the staff/ volunteer roles, what is the justification for these roles? Do the staff/ volunteer team have the relevant skills?
- Projected attendee numbers, who the project is aimed at and how it will benefit them.
- Please include in the description any justification for equipment/ materials included in the budget.
- Details of partnership working including Local Authority.
- Please note projects need to complete within 1 year of the start date.

Question 4: How have you identified the need for this project? Please include any details of consultation (max 500 words)

- How can you evidence the need for this project and the demand? Are you confident that the project will be well attended, and that local people are invested in the idea?
- If you have consulted with the local community, please include the evidence.
- Are you linked into services seeking to access green spaces, for example social prescribing and mental health support services?

Question 5: How will this project increase access to the green/blue spaces?

- Are you creating green space through techniques like urban greening?
- Are you using an existing green/blue space? How will your project increase access to this space?
- What are the barriers to access? How will your project help people to overcome these barriers?

Question 6: How will this project add to the biodiversity of the area or improve the natural environment?

- What will you be adding to the natural environment? For example, any planting/ growing / litter picking / clearing / habitat creation. What will you be doing that ensures nature (biodiversity) is enhanced and thrives as part of your project?

Question 7: How will you ensure your project will not have a negative effect on the local environment?

- The project needs to be of benefit to people and the environment. As well as improving green spaces what other ways will your project benefit the environment? For example, eliminating use of single use plastics, recycling, reducing the carbon footprint of the project, educating communities about food growing / waste.

Question 8: How will you ensure the sustainability of the work? What is the legacy?

- What is the ongoing legacy of the work? How will you ensure the project is maintained so it will be of lasting benefit to the community and the environment. Who will maintain the project once the period of funding has come to an end? Do you have enough influence to ensure an ongoing interest in the project beyond the life of the funding?

Question 9: Tree Planting

- This question is not scored but please include details of any trees planted and add them to the [WMCA Virtual Forest](#)

Question 10: Budget

Is the application for the whole project cost or do you have additional/ other sources of funding? Please give details.

- Are you applying to other funds to cover additional costs of your project? Are you applying to WMCA Community Green Grants for match funding?
- Make sure you are within the UK subsidy cap £300k.

What happens if you are successful?

- Successful projects will be informed in writing and asked to sign a funding agreement.
- Work should commence within 3 months of a successful application.
- Projects need to complete by the project end date (according to the application). All work must be finished within a year of the start date.
- All project publicity/marketing must include WMCA, Greener Together logo and HoECF logo.
- Projects will be expected to report fully on spend and provide relevant evidence.
- Projects will need to complete evaluation reports.

- Projects should be delivered accordingly to the approved timeline and project. Any changes should be discussed with the Green Grants Officer.

If unsuccessful

The decision of the Grants Assessment Panel is final and not open to appeal. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful projects upon request. Projects can apply again if advised. Complaints can be made through the WMCA complaints process.