



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -**

## **£9 Million Legacy Fund Launches, Uniting Communities Across West Midlands**

6th November 2023

Today marks a significant milestone in our commitment to building stronger, healthier, and more connected communities in the West Midlands. We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Inclusive Communities Fund, following months of careful design and development - that will see us distribute £9 million of Commonwealth Games legacy funding to grassroots projects. These projects will promote physical and mental well-being, foster community cohesion, and ensure that the positive legacy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games reverberates throughout our region.

This unprecedented fund, the largest of its kind, is now open for applications from community groups, charities, not-for-profit organisations, schools, and colleges. The Inclusive Communities Fund is a testament to our collective commitment to create a lasting positive impact across the region, that aims to improve the lives of local people and help them to thrive.

The Fund has become available through a collaboration between the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the Heart of England Community Foundation, and United By 2022, the Official Games Legacy Charity.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and WMCA Chair, emphasised the significance of the fund, stating: “With this new fund, we’re putting a significant amount of cash directly into the hands of local people in communities right across our region for them to decide exactly how to spend.

“Right from the moment the West Midlands was chosen to host the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, we were clear that the Games must leave a lasting legacy at grassroots level far beyond the summer of sporting spectacle. This money shows we’re delivering on that objective.

“This funding - combined with the £1million environment fund that we’ve also recently announced - means there is now £10million being put to work drawn from the Games Budget underspend that we negotiated with Government to be allowed to retain for the benefit of locally led projects that tangibly improve the lives of local people.

“Whether that’s better facilities in neighbourhoods, events that help forge new friendships, or activities that improve our collective health and wellbeing, I would encourage as many people as possible to step forward and bid for their share of this cash. I look forward to seeing lives changed for the better in the months and years ahead.”

Sports Minister Stuart Andrew said: “Last year’s Commonwealth Games were a huge success for the region, and we’ve committed to investing in the West Midlands long after the final medal was won.

“This £9 million Government funding will be spent on innovative projects to boost physical and mental health and wellbeing, supporting future generations.

“Our sports strategy sets out our plans to get 3.5 million children and adults active by 2030, and the Inclusive Communities Fund will go a long way towards making this happen.”

Cllr Kerrie Carmichael, the WMCA’s portfolio lead for inclusive communities, and leader of Sandwell Council, said: “The Inclusive Communities Fund is a one-off opportunity to make positive changes to our communities for the benefit of many generations.

“It will make a significant contribution to the combined authority’s commitment to addressing disparities and inequalities that sadly we know exist across the region by improving physical assets and fostering community connections that will ensure people have the best opportunity to thrive in the places where they live and work.”

Tina Costello, Chief Executive of the Heart of England Community Foundation, said: “We are thrilled to be delivering the Inclusive Communities Fund, working alongside the West Midlands Combined Authority and United By 2022 to make a real impact on our communities. This fund represents a fantastic opportunity to create positive, lasting change, and we look forward to supporting local organisations in their efforts to make a meaningful difference across the West Midlands and Warwickshire.”

Nicola Turner, Chief Executive of United By 2022, said: “As the official custodians of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games legacy, United By 2022 are excited to be partnered with the Heart of England Community Foundation and the West Midlands Combined Authority, to support local communities to access the new Inclusive Communities Fund.

“We want to offer communities that are traditionally overlooked and under-served, an opportunity to successfully apply for a slice of the £9 million Commonwealth Games Legacy funding.”

The Inclusive Communities Fund was inspired by the momentum generated by the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. It aims to strengthen the achievements prompted by the Games, offering community organisations access to new funding to make a difference for the people they work with. The Fund will serve as a catalyst to address inequalities, forge deeper connections between individuals and organisations, and continue the legacy of the Games.

Grants will be available for projects that contribute to the four core missions of bringing people together, improving health and well-being, helping the region to grow, and putting the region on the map. The fund encompasses three key themes: physical activity and sport, mental health and well-being, and arts, culture, and creativity.

The Inclusive Communities Fund is made possible by the UK Government through the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS). It will be overseen by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and administered by the Heart of England Community Foundation, the leading, independent grant-making body in the West Midlands and Warwickshire. United By 2022, the Games' Official Legacy Charity, will partner with the Community Foundation to deliver community engagement activities and support organisations in successfully applying to the Fund.

Applications are now open for four types of grants, ranging from Small Grants (£500 to £15,000) to Large Grants (£75,001 to £300,000), with all grants fully spent by December 2024. This fund represents an unprecedented opportunity for organisations and communities to make a positive and lasting impact in the West Midlands.

For more information about the Commonwealth Community Fund and how to apply, please visit our website at [heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund](https://heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund).

- ENDS -

**For media enquiries** contact Ryan Boyce [ryan@heartofenglandcf.co.uk](mailto:ryan@heartofenglandcf.co.uk)

**For fund enquiries and support applying** please contact our team:  
[commonwealth@heartofenglandcf.co.uk](mailto:commonwealth@heartofenglandcf.co.uk)

Social Media Assets, and Photos for the fund launch [can be found here](#)


## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

### Short Form: X (Formerly Twitter)

 Exciting news! The £9 Million Legacy Fund is now open for applications! Join us in creating a lasting positive impact in the West Midlands. Learn more at [heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund](https://heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund) #InclusiveCommunitiesFund #WestMidlands


Today marks a milestone for our region! The Inclusive Communities Fund is officially launched, distributing £9 million to grassroots projects. Together, we'll make the 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy live on. Apply now at [heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund](https://heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund) #WestMidlandsLegacy


Proud to announce the largest fund of its kind! £9 million available to community groups, schools, and more. Let's create positive change in the West Midlands. Apply for the Inclusive Communities Fund today at [heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund](https://heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund) #CommunityDevelopment

 The Inclusive Communities Fund is here! Thanks to the collaboration between WMCA, Heart of England Community Foundation, and United By 2022, we're making a difference. Apply now to bring your community project to life: [heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund](https://heartofenglandcf.co.uk/icfund) #WestMidlandsLegacy

Tagging: @WestMids\_CA, @HoECF, @UnitedBy2022, @DCMS

### Longer Form

The Inclusive Communities Fund is here! A groundbreaking opportunity for the West Midlands. Today marks a significant milestone as we announce the launch of the £9 million Commonwealth Games legacy funding for grassroots projects. Our mission is to promote physical and mental well-being, foster community cohesion, and ensure that the positive legacy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games reverberates throughout our region. 

This unprecedented fund, the largest of its kind, is open for applications from community groups, charities, schools, and colleges. It's a testament to our commitment to create a lasting positive impact, improving the lives of local people and helping them thrive. 

The Inclusive Communities Fund is made possible through a collaboration between the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the Heart of England Community Foundation, and United By 2022, the Official Games Legacy Charity. Mayor Andy Street and Sports Minister Stuart Andrew both emphasised the significance of the fund in their statements.

To learn more and apply, visit our website: [Link to the Inclusive Communities Fund](#)

Please adapt as required - If you require further information and support, please email us at [marketing@heartofenglandcf.co.uk](mailto:marketing@heartofenglandcf.co.uk)