

Community-led Projects Fund (CPF)

Local Panel Handbook

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Introduction

The Community-led Projects Fund (CPF) enables communities across North Carrick to decide how a proportion of NCCBC's annual funding is invested in local projects and activities. Each year, NCCBC allocates **£10,000** to each of the eight village communities and **£20,000** to Maybole. Decisions on how these funds are used are made locally by **Local Panels**, ensuring that funding reflects local priorities while meeting NCCBC's responsibilities as a Scottish charity.

Unlike NCCBC's Main Fund, CPF grants **do not require match funding**, although applicants are encouraged to secure additional funding where this increases the overall benefit of a project.

The purpose of the CPF is to:

- support community-led projects
- improve the quality of life across North Carrick
- encourage local decision-making
- make the greatest possible use of the funding available

Five Principles

Local Panels should use these principles to guide every funding decision:

Community-led

- Projects should reflect the priorities of local people.

Fair

- Everyone should have an opportunity to put forward ideas and applications should be considered consistently.

Transparent

- Funding decisions should be recorded and capable of being explained.

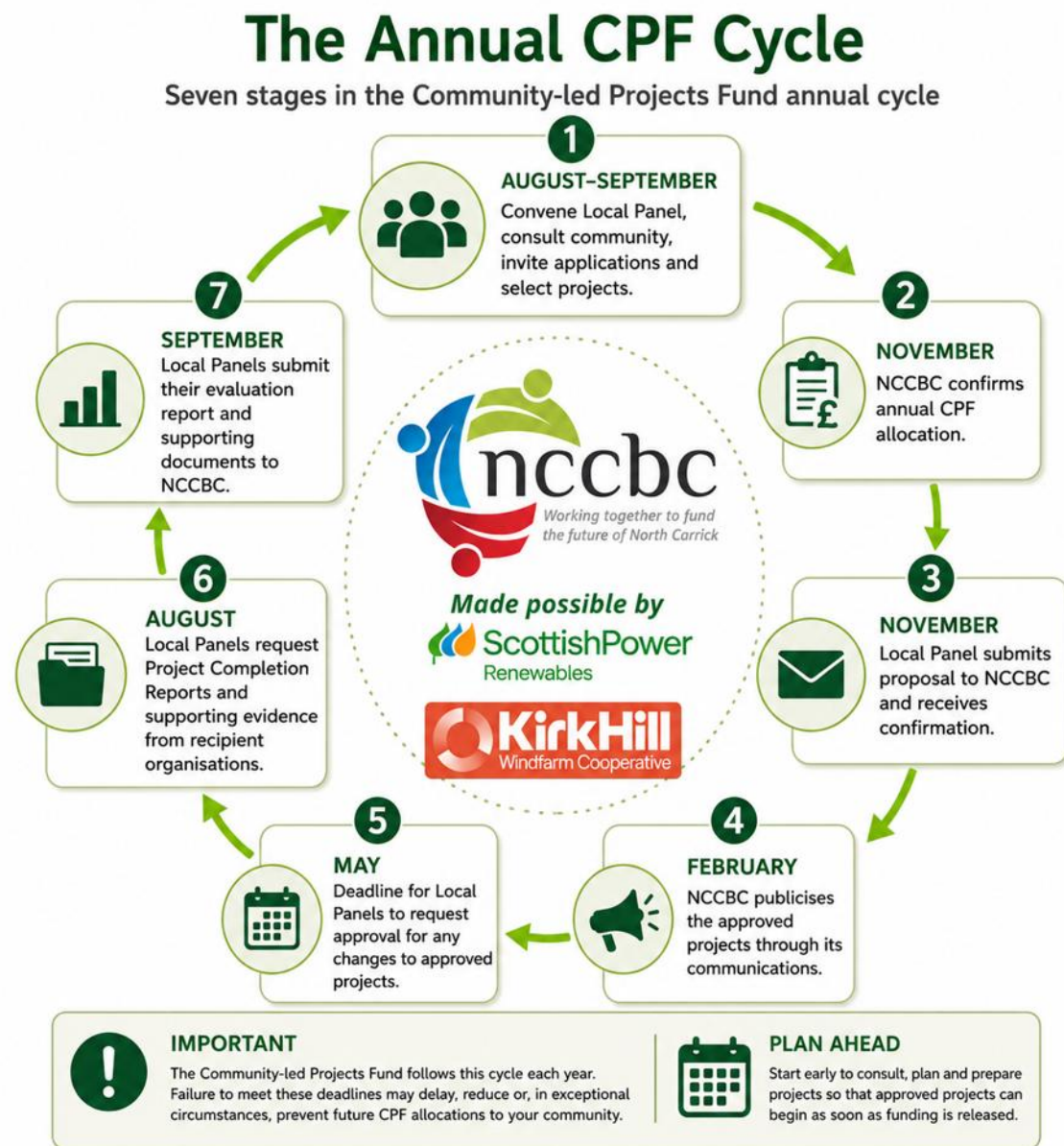
Community Benefit

- Projects should provide a clear benefit to the wider community rather than to individuals.

Value for Money

- Funding should be used wisely to achieve the greatest possible impact.

The Annual CPF Cycle



The diagram summarises the seven stages of the process, from community consultation and project selection through to evaluation and reporting. Local Panels should use it as a guide when planning their work during the year.

Important

Good planning is essential. Communities that begin identifying projects before funding is confirmed are more likely to deliver successful projects, meet reporting deadlines and maximise the benefits of their annual allocation.

Running a Local Panel

Local Panels manage the Community-led Projects Fund on behalf of NCCBC within their community. They are responsible for consulting local people, selecting projects, monitoring delivery and reporting outcomes to NCCBC.

Panel Membership

Each community should establish a Local Panel. Where appropriate, and with NCCBC's agreement, one Panel may represent more than one community.

Each Panel should normally:

- consist of **5–7 members**
- include at least **one NCCBC Director**
- include at least **one NCCBC Member**
- be coordinated by an NCCBC Director (who may appoint a deputy to assist with administration)
- include other members who bring useful experience or represent different sections of the community.

People co-opted onto a Panel do not have to live in the community but should have an active connection with it.

Consultation and Decision Making

Before selecting projects, the Local Panel must consult the community to identify local priorities.

Consultation should:

- reach as many people as reasonably possible
- use methods appropriate to the size of the community
- include groups that may not normally participate
- be recorded as evidence of community engagement.

Consultation may include:

Consultation method	Examples / notes
Community meetings	Open meetings, drop-in sessions or discussions with local groups.
Online or paper surveys	Questionnaires shared online, by post or at local venues.
Social media	Posts, polls and updates through community social media channels.
Local events	Engagement at galas, community days, school events or other gatherings.
Door-to-door engagement	Direct conversations with residents, especially those less likely to attend meetings.
Other appropriate methods	Any proportionate method suited to the size and needs of the community.

Using more than one method is encouraged and reasonable costs of consultation and publicity may be met from the CPF allocation.

Where funding requests exceed the available budget, the Panel should prioritise projects that deliver the greatest overall benefit to the community. Decisions may be made by the Panel itself or through another open and transparent process, such as participatory budgeting.

Conflicts of Interest

Panel members must declare any personal or organisational interest in an application.

Anyone with a direct interest must:

- declare the interest;
- leave the discussion while that application is considered; and
- take no part in the decision.

All declarations must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Record Keeping

The Local Panel should keep sufficient records to demonstrate that decisions have been made fairly and transparently.

These should include:

- consultation activities
- funding decisions
- publicity undertaken
- meeting minutes
- declarations of interest
- correspondence with NCCBC.

These records will support the Recommendations Report and the annual Evaluation Report.

Choosing Projects

The Community-led Projects Fund supports projects that improve life in North Carrick and reflect local priorities identified through community consultation.

Before recommending a project for funding, the Local Panel should be satisfied that it provides clear community benefit, represents good value for money and is ready to proceed.

Remember

The Community-led Projects Fund is intended for **small, community-led projects** that are ready to proceed. Larger or more complex projects should be referred to NCCBC's Main Fund.

Eligible Projects

Projects should:

- provide a clear benefit to the local community
- support NCCBC's funding priorities
- be capable of being delivered within the funding period
- have appropriate insurance where required
- reflect priorities identified through community consultation
- represent good value for money
- have all necessary permissions and consents in place before work begins
- be submitted using the CPF Application Form.

Applicant Organisations

Applicant organisations must:

- have a constitution (or other governing document) with an appropriate dissolution clause;
- have a bank account in the organisation's name; **OR**
- nominate a suitable sponsor organisation willing to receive and administer the grant on their behalf.

All grant payments and expenditure must be traceable through bank statements. Cash payments or cash reimbursements are not permitted.

Projects that Cannot Be Funded

CPF funding will **not support**:

Activities

- political, religious or sectarian activities
- campaigns opposing renewable energy
- statutory services that should be provided by another organisation.

Running Costs

- energy or utility bills
- room or hall hire where the applicant owns or leases the premises.

(Independent organisations hiring premises from others may include reasonable hire costs.)

Staffing

- staffing that does not comply with Scotland's Fair Work First principles.

Purchases and Events

- alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- facilities primarily supporting alcohol sales
- private hospitality events not open to the wider community.

Other Restrictions

- projects benefiting only an individual
- applications using South Ayrshire Council school accounts *(Parent Councils are eligible)*

If you are unsure whether a project is eligible, please contact NCCBC before making a recommendation.

Larger Projects

CPF grants should be **£3,000 or less**.

Projects requiring larger grants should usually apply to NCCBC's Main Fund.

Where a Local Panel believes a larger CPF award is justified because of exceptional community benefit, the recommendation must include a clear explanation.

When demand exceeds the budget

Where eligible applications exceed the available funding, the Local Panel should prioritise projects that:

- deliver the greatest community benefit
- provide good value for money
- respond to identified local priorities
- are ready to proceed.

Projects should not receive part-funding unless the applicant has confirmed how the remaining costs will be met.

Approval and Funding

Once the Local Panel has selected the projects it wishes to support, it should submit a single **Local Panel Recommendations Report** to NCCBC.

Funding cannot be released until the report has been approved and all required documentation has been received.

Step 1 – Submit the Recommendations Report

The Recommendations Report should include:

- how the Local Panel was formed
- the projects recommended for funding
- the reasons for each recommendation
- how the community was consulted
- the amount allocated to each project
- copies of the relevant meeting minutes.

NCCBC will provide a standard Recommendations Report template.

Step 2 – NCCBC Review

NCCBC will review the report to confirm that:

- the guidance has been followed
- funding recommendations are within the available budget
- projects are eligible
- appropriate supporting information has been provided

Where necessary, NCCBC may request additional information before confirming approval.

Step 3 – Offer Letters

Once the Recommendations Report has been approved:

- successful applicants should be notified
- each recipient organisation must sign and return an Offer Letter accepting the conditions of the grant
- signed Offer Letters should be returned to NCCBC before payment is made.

Step 4 – Payment

When all Offer Letters have been returned:

- NCCBC will release the approved CPF allocation

- the Local Panel will distribute grants in accordance with the approved recommendations.

No grant should be paid before NCCBC approval has been confirmed.

Publicity

Once grants have been awarded, Local Panels should publicise the successful projects within their community.

NCCBC will also promote approved projects through its newsletter, website and social media. Where possible, Local Panels should provide photographs and short project summaries to support publicity.

Delivering Projects

Once funding has been awarded, recipient organisations are responsible for delivering their approved projects.

Local Panels should maintain contact with recipients throughout the delivery period, providing support where needed and monitoring progress.

Recipient organisations must:

- use the grant only for the approved purpose
- maintain any permissions, licences or insurance required for the project
- retain invoices, receipts and other supporting evidence
- deliver the project within the agreed timescale
- keep accurate financial records

Projects should begin as soon as practicable after funding has been received.

Changes to Approved Projects

Occasionally circumstances change after funding has been awarded.

Where a recipient organisation wishes to:

- change the approved expenditure
- alter the scope of the project
- make any significant change to the approved activities

it must first contact the Local Panel.

If the Local Panel supports the proposed change, it should submit a request to NCCBC for approval. Requests for changes should be submitted no later than **May**. Changes made without prior approval may result in the expenditure being deemed ineligible.

Monitoring Progress

Local Panels should keep in regular contact with recipient organisations throughout the year to:

- monitor progress
- provide advice where appropriate
- identify any issues at an early stage
- help ensure projects are completed on time

Simple contact by email or telephone is usually enough. More complex projects may benefit from occasional site visits.

Preparing for Evaluation

During **August**, Local Panels should ask recipient organisations to submit:

- a Project Completion Report
- evidence of income and expenditure
- copies of bank statements showing CPF income and expenditure
- photographs suitable for publication
- any other information required to demonstrate the project's outcomes

Requesting this information early helps ensure that Local Panel Evaluation Reports can be submitted to NCCBC by the September deadline.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation demonstrate how Community-led Projects Fund money has been used and the difference it has made to the community. They also provide the evidence NCCBC requires to meet its responsibilities as a charitable funder.

Local Panels should encourage recipient organisations to keep records throughout the project rather than trying to gather everything at the end.

Responsibilities

Recipient Organisations	Local Panels
Deliver the approved project.	Monitor progress throughout the year.
Keep records of income and expenditure.	Support recipient organisations where required.
Retain invoices, receipts and other financial records.	Collect Project Completion Reports and supporting evidence.
Complete a Project Completion Report.	Check that reports and financial evidence are complete.
Provide bank statements showing CPF income and expenditure.	Prepare the Local Panel Evaluation Report.
Supply photographs with permission for publication.	Submit the Evaluation Report and supporting documents to NCCBC during September .

Project Completion Reports

Each recipient organisation must submit:

- a completed **Project Completion Report**
- bank statements showing receipt and expenditure of the CPF grant
- a brief summary of what the project achieved
- evidence of income and expenditure
- photographs (with permission for publication)

The Local Panel should review these before preparing its own Evaluation Report.

Local Panel Evaluation Report

The Local Panel must prepare a single report summarising:

- how the community was consulted
- how the CPF allocation was spent
- any significant lessons learned.
- the projects supported
- the benefits delivered

Supporting evidence from recipient organisations should be submitted with the report.

Unspent Funds

Any unspent grant must be returned to NCCBC unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing.

Where a recipient organisation fails to submit the required evaluation or supporting evidence, NCCBC may require repayment of the grant and may exclude the organisation from future CPF funding.

Failure by a Local Panel to submit its Evaluation Report may delay or affect future CPF allocations to that community.

General Conditions

The Community-led Projects Fund is a separate programme from NCCBC's Main Fund and has its own application process and assessment criteria.

The following conditions apply to all CPF grants:

Relationship with NCCBC's Main Fund

The simplified procedures used for the Community-led Projects Fund do not apply to NCCBC's Main Fund.

Projects that are more appropriate for the Main Fund should be directed to that programme. CPF grants cannot be used as match funding for applications to NCCBC's Main Fund. They may, however, be used as match funding for applications to external funders where this increases the overall benefit to the community.

Returning Funds

Any grant that:

- is no longer required
- cannot be supported by appropriate evidence
- is not used for its approved purpose
- is subject to an unapproved change

may be reclaimed by NCCBC.

Future Funding

The Community-led Projects Fund is intended to operate as an annual programme.

Continued allocations will depend upon:

- funding remaining available;
- Local Panels complying with this guidance; and
- submission of the required monitoring and evaluation reports.

Failure to submit the Local Panel Funding Recommendation Report or Local Panel Evaluation Report may delay or affect future allocations.

Publicity

Local Panels should publicise successful projects within their communities and encourage recipient organisations to provide short case studies and photographs (copyright-free and with appropriate permissions).

NCCBC will promote approved and completed projects through its website, newsletter and other communications.

Advice

Local Panels are encouraged to seek advice from NCCBC whenever they are uncertain about:

- project eligibility;
- interpretation of this guidance; or
- any other aspect of the Community-led Projects Fund.

Seeking advice before submitting a recommendation is usually quicker and easier than resolving issues after funding has been approved.

Submission Checklist

Before submitting your **Local Panel Funding Recommendation Report** to NCCBC, use this checklist to ensure that everything is complete. Spending a few minutes checking your submission will help avoid delays and requests for additional information.

1. Local Panel

- ☐ The Local Panel has been properly established.
- ☐ Panel membership meets the requirements of the CPF Guidance.
- ☐ Any conflicts of interest have been declared and recorded.
- ☐ Minutes have been kept for all relevant meetings.

2. Community Consultation

- ☐ The community has been consulted.
- ☐ Consultation has been appropriate to the size of the community.
- ☐ Consultation results have been recorded.

3. Project Selection

- ☐ All recommended projects meet the CPF eligibility criteria.
- ☐ Projects provide clear community benefit.
- ☐ Funding recommendations represent good value for money.
- ☐ Projects are ready to proceed.
- ☐ Necessary permissions and insurance have been confirmed where required.

4. Supporting Information

For each recommended project:

- ☐ A completed CPF Application Form has been received.
- ☐ The applicant has a suitable constitution (or sponsor organisation).
- ☐ A suitable bank account has been confirmed.
- ☐ All supporting documents have been checked.

5. Submission to NCCBC

- ☐ The Local Panel Funding Recommendation Report has been completed.
- ☐ Funding recommendations have been agreed by the Local Panel.
- ☐ The submission has been checked by the Panel Co-ordinator/NCCBC Director.
- ☐ The completed submission is ready to send to NCCBC.

Need Advice?

If you are unsure about any aspect of your submission, please contact NCCBC before sending your Funding Recommendation Report.

Email: admin@nccbc.org.uk

Website: www.nccbc.org.uk