

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

'Making a Difference in East Ayrshire Communities'



ALERT



11 September 2026

Austin and Hope and Pilkington Trust

The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust is offering grants for UK-registered charities working across the UK to help those most in need.

The Trust operates a three-year rotation system, with different fields of interest being funded each year. There are normally four application rounds per year, with applications accepted for one month only, usually in February, April, July, and September. Charities can apply for one round per calendar year.

Round 4 will focus on projects supporting unpaid carers. Focus will be given to projects that provide therapeutic support, including healthy eating and outdoor activities. Projects must focus exclusively on unpaid carers, without extending services to other groups.

In this round, grants of £5,000 are available for UK-registered charities with a minimum operating income of £1 million.

The deadline for applications is 30 September 2026.

[Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust](#)

Castle Studies Trust

The Castle Studies Trust is offering grants of up to £15,000 to support the production of new and discrete pieces of research that enhance the understanding and knowledge of castles. Grants will focus on new work on castles, such as architectural and geophysical surveys, radiocarbon dating, or projects that enhance the general public's understanding of castles.

Proposed projects should have a specific, achievable result that will help advance the field of castle studies. Types of work that can be funded include, but are not limited to:

- Site-based survey work (eg, geophysical, architectural, topographical, LiDAR).
- Excavations.

- Scientific tests on objects/materials from a castle site (eg, radiocarbon dating).
- Review of historical sources (only as part of a Castle Studies Trust funded project).
- Pieces of work, such as reconstruction drawings, which would help the public understanding of a castle site.

The fund will cover costs specific to carrying out research and site work. Funding can be used to co-fund large-scale projects.

The Trust's focus for projects is on sites not managed by major heritage bodies, but applications for sites managed by such organisations, especially free-to-access ones, may be considered, subject to meeting strict criteria available from the chair of trustees.

The deadline for applications is 1 December 2026.

[Castle Studies Trust](#)

Corra Foundation – Racial Equity Fund

The Corra Foundation is accepting applications to its Racial Equity Fund, which provides unrestricted grants to organisations led by and working with people from Black and racially minoritised communities in Scotland.

The fund is provided and administered by the Corra Foundation and forms part of its commitment to promoting racial equity and supporting groups that have historically been under-resourced.

Grants of up to £50,000 can be awarded over five years, with no more than £10,000 paid in any single year. Funding is unrestricted, allowing organisations to use grants to deliver any aspect of their work.

At least 75% of the Board of Trustees or Management Committee must be from these backgrounds and at least 50% of senior staff must be, where staff exist.

Eligible organisations must have at least 75% of their Board of Trustees or Management Committee, and at least 50% of senior staff where applicable, from the specified backgrounds. Applicants must have been operating for at least 12 months, have an annual income of no more than £250,000, and be based and registered in Scotland. Eligible organisations include charities registered with OSCR, community interest companies, and social enterprises registered with Companies House.

The deadline for applications is 15 October 2026.

[Corra Foundation – Racial Equity Fund](#)

Energy Saving Trust – Plugged-in Communities Grants

The grant provides up to £75,000 towards a new fully electric community transport vehicle. Additional support is available for accessibility adaptations and charging infrastructure, with a maximum total award of £95,000.

Awards can cover up to 100% of eligible costs for a new fully electric vehicle. Eligible vehicle types include cars, MPVs, minibuses and vans. Costs linked to accessibility adaptations and charging infrastructure can also be included within the overall award limit.

Applicants must be recognised community transport organisations or operators based in Scotland with a UK bank account. Groups must have been operating for at least 12 months and provide community transport services.

As part of the eligibility criteria, applicants are required to demonstrate a commitment to provide appropriate charging or powering infrastructure to support the running of the electric vehicle. This can include arrangements that rely on public or shared access. Applicants must also commit to providing quarterly monitoring reports to the Energy Saving Trust, detailing miles driven, number of journeys and customer numbers for the supported vehicle.

Applications can be submitted at any time while funding remains available.

[Energy Saving Trust – Plugged-in Communities Grants](#)

Foundation Scotland – Cockaigne Fund

Foundation Scotland is accepting applications to the Cockaigne Fund, which supports musicians working in classical and traditional music, as well as projects exploring connections between cultures and traditions, past and present.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available, although due to high demand, Foundation Scotland expects the average award in 2026 to be around £1,500. Bursaries up to £500 are considered for specialist, one-off courses or masterclasses.

The fund is open to charities, unincorporated organisations, community groups and individuals based in Scotland. Projects must either take place in Scotland or have a clear Scottish connection.

Supported projects should be creative and original and must include a public sharing or performance element. The fund can support work exploring musical traditions across time and place, including research, performance development and activities designed to broaden access to musical experiences within communities.

Eligible costs can include attendance at specialist courses, purchasing instruments, staging masterclasses, producing forgotten works and small-scale touring proposals.

The deadline for applications is 21 October 2026.

[Foundation Scotland – Cockaigne Fund](#)

Foundation Scotland – Volant Charitable Trust Large Grants Programme

The Volant Charitable Trust is currently accepting applications to its large grants programme which offers grants of up to £75,000 (£25,000 per year for up to three years). (This is an increase from previous rounds.)

Registered charities, community interest companies, community organisations and social enterprises with an annual income below £1 million and who are based and working in Scotland can apply.

Their project must address at least one of three areas of interest with priority given to poverty and deprivation:

- **Poverty and deprivation (with an emphasis on women, children, young people)**
 - Support for vulnerable families facing extreme poverty.
 - Food provision and promotion of healthy eating in areas of extreme deprivation.
 - Mental health projects for vulnerable groups living in poverty.
- **Women**
 - Support for isolated and lone mothers.
 - Community integration support for black and minority ethnic women and children and asylum seekers.
 - Support services for women prisoners and their families.
 - Support for victims of sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, and those working in the sex industry.
 - Provision of antenatal and postnatal care for young mothers or those affected by postnatal depression.
- **Children and young people:**
 - Counselling for vulnerable children.
 - Support services and outreach projects for those who are disadvantaged or deemed to be 'at risk' through neglect, emotional and physical abuse, alcohol, or drug misuse.

The funding can be used for core and salary costs.

The fund is administered by Foundation Scotland. There are two funding rounds per year. This is the final round for 2026.

There is a two-stage application process.

The deadline for stage one (an enquiry form) is 28 September 2026.

[Foundation Scotland – Volant Charitable Trust Large Grants Programme](#)

Gardening With Disabilities Trust

The Trust, which is entirely staffed by volunteers, provides financial support to enable individuals and groups to adapt gardens and access basic equipment. The aim is to help applicants return to gardening by addressing practical barriers that can arise from physical, mental or visual disabilities.

No upper or lower grant limit is stated. Awards are typically 'for hundreds of pounds'. A total of around £41,600 was awarded in small grants last year.

Applications are considered from individuals and groups across the UK. This includes people who need to reorganise gardens due to health issues and residents in long stay hospitals or nursing homes who share a garden. Preference is given to keen gardeners who can no longer garden as a result of physical disability. Applicants are required to join the Trust's Garden Club, with membership offered free of charge.

Support can cover adaptations to private gardens to meet specific needs, alongside help for special gardens in hospitals, centres and schools. Eligible costs include items such as tools, planting tables, raised beds, paving, wheelchair access, handrails and greenhouses. The Trust also provides information on garden aids and techniques.

Grants can be used for raised beds, poly tunnels, greenhouses, tools, small-scale adaptations such as access pathways, plants or shrubs and compost. The Trust usually pays suppliers directly once work is completed, or issues vouchers that can be redeemed at a retailer near the applicant.

Applications can be made at any time.

[Gardening With Disabilities Trust](#)

Michael Tippett Musical Foundation

Grants of between £500 and £3,000 for projects across the UK that support young musicians and composers, new music, and music education initiatives.

For 2026, the trustees welcome applications for grants for projects that support group music-making, especially those that involve young people in composing and the development of creative ideas.

Priority will be given to:

- Projects involving young people.
- Projects that deliver high-quality music-making.
- Projects taking place in or out of schools, colleges, universities, or in community settings.
- Projects that actively encourage and recruit a range of participants (ethnicity, gender, disability, socio-economic status, etc).
- Projects with strong artistic leadership.

Grants awarded will be made towards creative musical activity, not instruments or equipment. Funding can be awarded for first-time initiatives or the development of existing projects. All grants are awarded on a one-off basis.

The trustees typically hold one meeting per year to discuss applications.

The deadline for applications is 30 September 2026.

[Michael Tippett Musical Foundation](#)

Nuffield Foundation – Essential Employment Skills Fund

The Nuffield Foundation has launched the Essential Employment Skills Fund to build on its prior work on education-to-employment transitions, with a focus on youth unemployment and economic inactivity in the UK.

The initiative aims to strengthen evidence on what support helps young people aged 16-24 who face significant barriers to work develop essential employment skills and progress into good jobs. The Foundation is seeking applications that initiate or develop partnerships between stakeholders, including employers, educators, third sector providers and local and regional government, in order to sustain support for young people.

Projects must focus on young people living in the UK, either across the full 16-24 age range or a narrower group within it, such as 16–19-year-olds. Proposals should have a clear focus on those facing barriers to employment, which may include young people with low or no academic qualifications, persistent absence or exclusion from school, special educational needs and disabilities, mental health difficulties, experience of the care system, young parenthood, being a young carer, belonging to a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community or living in areas with higher youth unemployment.

Grants of up to £500,000 are available. The Foundation will accept bids from partnerships already established between frontline delivery organisations and independent evaluators. It also expects the support to encourage new collaborations involving employers, educators, charities, researchers and local government.

Eligible costs include work to evaluate UK-based provision, improve mechanisms for sharing learning and advance approaches to measuring essential employment skills, with the intention of informing wider scaling-up of effective practice.

The deadline for applications is 10 December 2026.

[Nuffield Foundation – Essential Employment Skills Fund](#)

Royal Society of Edinburgh – Healthy Planet, Healthy People

Community groups and organisations in Scotland can apply for grants to deliver research projects that promote health through environmental improvements, access to nutritious food and community wellbeing. The Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Catalyst Award is provided by the Williamson Trust and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE).

Funding is aimed at pilot-scale demonstrator projects that support community-led research and practical solutions. Projects should encourage inclusive participation, particularly from underserved groups, and generate approaches that can be scaled to address local challenges.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for projects lasting up to 12 months. Funding may be used for research, data collection, community engagement, practical interventions and dissemination activities. Eligible projects should focus on themes of climate, nature or food and may involve elevating community voices, analysing local issues or trialling place-based solutions.

Applications are open to individuals, incorporated and unincorporated organisations, including charities, community interest companies, social enterprises, educational institutions, co-operatives, cultural institutions and local authorities. Unincorporated groups may apply with a sponsor organisation. Academics may participate only where projects are community-led. Lead applicants must be based in Scotland.

In addition, this year there is also the new Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Change Award which is a £100,000 funding incentive to further support community-led research across Scotland. As this initiative is an expansion of the Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Catalyst Award, the Change Award is open to current and future holders of a Catalyst Award. Two standout projects will receive major funding to grow and scale their work: one grant of up to £75,000 and one grant of up to £25,000 are available.

The deadline for applications is 1 December 2026.

[Royal Society of Edinburgh – Healthy Planet, Healthy People](#)

Scops Arts Trust

Scops Art Trust is offering grants to registered charities and other constituted, not-for-profit organisations across the UK, to deliver projects and activities that help people to understand, participate in, and enjoy the arts, particularly the performing arts (music, drama, opera, and dance).

In 2026, the Trust will continue to focus on one area of performing arts in each grant round.

The third and final funding round of 2026 will support children's and young people's music education (choirs excluded). Funding is for programmes that give children and young people opportunities to learn, create, experience, and progress, with a particular interest in applications that concentrate on teaching instrumental playing.

Priority will be given to small- to medium-sized organisations. Most grants will be awarded for specific projects, but the Trust will also contribute towards the core costs of smaller organisations where a grant could make an impact. Both one-off and multi-year grants will be considered.

There is a two-stage application process. Groups must first complete an eligibility check before being invited to submit a Stage 1 application.

The next deadline for Stage 1 applications is 15 September 2026.

[Scops Arts Trust](#)

The Arts Society

Grants of up to £3,000 for registered charities with an annual turnover of less than £1 million across the UK to deliver arts and heritage projects and activities.

The theme of the Autumn 2026 funding round is 'Community Engagement'. Proposed projects should meet all of the following criteria:

- Focus on public arts or heritage events and festivals.
- Centre on community participation and cohesion.
- Bring the arts or heritage into shared public places.

Proposed projects will be assessed against how well they:

- Focus on public arts or heritage events, activities or festivals.
- Centre on community participation and cohesion.
- Bring the arts or heritage into shared public places.
- Provide access for people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to engage.
- Improve wellbeing, and/or reduce isolation, and/or remove access barriers.

All projects should provide access to arts and heritage for people who may not otherwise have opportunities to engage, particularly projects that improve wellbeing, reduce isolation, and remove access barriers. Eligible costs include venue hire, materials and equipment, and marketing and promotion.

The deadline for applications is 30 September 2026.

[The Arts Society](#)

Worshipful Company of Information Technologists Charity

The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists (WCIT) Charity offers grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 to UK registered charities for projects within the UK that improve digital

inclusion, accessibility and participation, particularly for people who face barriers to accessing or using technology.

The funding is for projects that use technology in a meaningful way and support one or more of the charity's priority areas:

- Education
- Inclusion
- Tech for charities
- Public understanding of technology.

There is particular interest in innovative projects involving areas such as AI, data and analytics, robotics, digital skills or accessibility technologies.

Projects are more likely to be successful if they:

- Have potential for lasting impact and wider adoption
- Demonstrate strong value for money and social impact
- Benefit at least 25 people in the UK
- Are innovative and not simply a business-as-usual activity
- Deliver clear and measurable outcomes.

UK registered charities that have been established for at least one year and that have both an annual income and unrestricted reserves below £1 million may apply.

The funding can cover 'all reasonable expenses' linked to the specific project and listed in the applicant's budget. Staff costs that are linked to the project and are not for the full amount of the grant will be considered. Pilot projects will also be considered.

A WCIT grant should represent at least 25% of the overall project budget.

Applications will open on 14 September 2026 and close on 3 November 2026 (or when a cap of 50 applications is reached).

[Worshipful Company of Information Technologists Charity](#)

East Ayrshire Council Community Grant

The next deadline for applications is 17 September 2026.

[East Ayrshire Council Community Grant](#)

Renewable Energy Fund

To check the next deadline for applications please contact Democratic Services at Council HQ on 01563 554400 or eacrenewableenergyfund@east-ayrshire.gov.uk .

[Renewable Energy Fund](#)

Tincornhill Quarry Fund

For further information on application criteria and deadline dates please go to:

[Tincornhill Quarry Fund](#)

East Ayrshire 4 Community

If you are looking for external funding for a particular project, then please remember to register **FREE** at East Ayrshire 4 Community by going to the following link:

[East Ayrshire 4 Community](#)