

## Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, your project must benefit communities that lie wholly within the Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) area. If you are unsure who your distribution network operator is, please check here:

<https://www.ssen.co.uk/about-ssen/who-is-my-distributor/>

## Key information

Who can I contact if I have any questions or need guidance?

**Colin McMillan (central southern England)**  
**Community Investment Manager**  
**01738 344360**  
[colin.mcmillan@sse.com](mailto:colin.mcmillan@sse.com)

**Carol Masheter (north of Scotland)**  
**Community Investment Manager**  
**01738 351576**  
[carol.masheter@sse.com](mailto:carol.masheter@sse.com)

Where does this money come from?

SSEN has established this fund to support communities in our power distribution network area to improve local resilience. This is shareholder funded and is designed to support communities in their transition towards net zero carbon emissions.

Who can apply?

- Community groups based within the SSEN distribution area.
- You don't need to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution (governing document or set of rules) and be set up on a not-for-profit basis. If you are unsure if your group is eligible, please contact us for advice.

How much can I apply for?

The fund will be managed as one fund between the north of Scotland and central southern England. In most cases, you can apply for funding from £1,000 up to a maximum of £15,000. In exceptional circumstances, multi-community area funding to a maximum of £40,000 can be considered. The panel will consider value for money and may award less than requested.

What is the timetable?

<b>Round opens</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025
<b>Deadline for applications</b>	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
<b>Awards made</b>	Late-September 2025

- Applications received after the deadline will not be eligible.
- Applicants can only receive one PCNZ grant award per round.

How are decisions made?

The SSEN Powering Communities to Net Zero Fund Panel will review applications and determine which projects should receive funding. The panel comprises representatives of the community, organisations with expertise in low carbon technology, community resilience planning, and supported by members of the SSEN management team.

What can grants be used for?

The fund will provide support for projects which create a stronger, coordinated resilience framework for local communities.

What are the criteria and priorities for the fund?

The fund will support projects that enhance community facilities, services and communication specifically to mitigate the impact of, or support the local response to a significant emergency such as extended power loss or severe weather events or climate change.

**Please note** - when assessing applications, *priority* will be given to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Projects which support communities who are particularly remote or isolated and have experienced emergency events due to poor weather in the past.</li> <li>b) Projects in areas affected by recent significant weather events, including storms and flooding, which resulted in extended power loss.</li> <li>c) Projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable community members.</li> <li>d) Projects which support areas which can be difficult for emergency services to respond to events in.</li> <li>e) Projects from communities which have been identified as having low resilience.</li> <li>f) Projects where communities work together towards local resilience planning.</li> <li>g) Projects that support communities make progress towards net zero ambitions.</li> </ul>
Project guidance & additional considerations	<p>The panel will review the application based on its relevance to the priority themes identified above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purchasing equipment:</b> consider how it will be stored and maintained.</li> <li>• <b>Quotations:</b> Please provide at least 1 quotation for all items over £250. For larger capital items of more than £2,500 in value we expect you to have sought at least two quotes, for such items of more than £10,000 in value we expect you to have sought at least three quotations. If this is not possible or appropriate, tell us why.</li> <li>• <b>Staff costs:</b> Ensure any staffing cost is provided at or above the living wage.</li> <li>• <b>Low Carbon alternatives</b> should be researched in line with net zero ambitions.</li> <li>• <b>Community plans and stakeholders:</b> Communities seeking funding of this nature would often have community emergency plans in place, having communicated with the local authority and / or emergency services. The application should demonstrate how these are complimented.</li> <li>• <b>Power Sources:</b> If applying for a power source, you must provide full details of the technology that you wish to purchase in the project description part of the application. This should include detail confirming that the backup power is essential, fit for purpose, and that installation, security, storage and maintenance have been fully appraised.</li> </ul>
When must grants be spent by?	All awardees must be able to draw down funds before 31 March 2026. Grants should then be spent within 12 months of being paid.
What happens when the project is finished?	At the end of the activity period, you must submit a final evaluation report in which we will ask you to fully report on the project and its outcomes.
Are there any activities or items SSEN are unable to support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects which do not benefit people living within the SSEN distribution areas.</li> <li>• Actions that are in conflict to the interests of SSEN.</li> <li>• Defibrillators.</li> <li>• Individuals.</li> <li>• The advancement of religion or politics.</li> <li>• The repayment of loans or payment of debts.</li> <li>• Costs already incurred or activities which will take place before we have decided on an application (retrospective funding).</li> <li>• Payments for activities which are the responsibility of statutory authorities.</li> </ul>
How do I apply?	Applications to the Powering Communities to Net Zero – Community-led Physical & Environmental Resilience Fund are made through an online application form. To access this, please follow the link: <a href="https://www.ssen.co.uk/about-ssen/our-communities/powering-communities-to-net-zero-fund/">https://www.ssen.co.uk/about-ssen/our-communities/powering-communities-to-net-zero-fund/</a>

## About the online application process

The following guidance may help you in completing the application form:

- You must already have or create a user account (using the link above) in order to access and submit a grant application.
- You will be able to save your draft application at key points before logging out of the application portal, and resume drafting it when you log back in.
- We will send you an email confirming your application has been received after you have submitted it. This will contain a link to download a copy of your application and save this for your records.
- You can read Frequently Asked Questions about our online application and grant management system [here](#)
- If you have any problems in accessing or completing the application form, please contact the relevant Community Investment Manager (details above).
- You can view videos on navigating the online grant system [here](#).

## Guidance on completing the application form

We have provided guidance below on the information we are looking for under the questions asked on the application form, as well as any supporting information that we require.

### Documents to upload

We will ask you to upload the following documents during the application process, please ensure you have them to hand:

- A copy of the group's constitution or equivalent governance documents.
- A recent bank statement in the name of the group applying for the grant dated within the last 3 months.
- The group's most recent approved annual accounts
- The budget for the project (or you can use the budget template provided in the application form)
- Quotes for works or goods included in your project budget where these are over the values set out in the fund guidance notes
- A copy of a recent Energy Audit that supports your projects proposed LCT measures for community building projects (if applicable).
- A copy of your Net Zero Plan (if available)
- A copy of the Community Resilience Plan (if available)
- If the project is for development work on a building, please provide evidence that your organisation owns the building or confirmation from the owner that they agree to works being undertaken.
- Project schedule including a time schedule (the project must be able to demonstrate deliverability within twelve months of the grant award date)
- The group's child protection/ vulnerable adults policy (if applicable)
- Any other documents which you think are required in support of your application (e.g. Architects drawings, relevant permissions such as planning, building warrant, and/or listed building consent, letters of support).

Please note due to data protection requirements we ask that you **do not include any photos that feature people** in any of your uploaded documents.

## Group Details

**Note: you will need to register this information the first time you apply for a grant on behalf of your group and it will remain on the portal for any future applications.**

- Name of Group:
  - This should be the name that appears on your group's governing document and bank account statement.
- Type of group:

- You will be able to select from a list: Unincorporated voluntary or community organisation; SCIO; registered charity (other); Company limited by guarantee; Community Interest Company; Community Benefit Society; Community Council; Parish Council; Other
- If your group has one, you will be asked to provide its registered charity and/or company number so please have this to hand.
- Phone number:
  - Please enter a phone number on which we can contact the above-named person.
- Website
- Number of people:
  - on your group's board or management committee – in total, not just office bearers
  - employed by the group
  - who volunteer for the group.
- Date established:
  - Please provide the date that your group's governing document was adopted, or if it is a registered company or charity, the date it was registered with the regulator.
- What are your group's aims and objectives?
- Your groups' main activities including any previous community projects:
  - Provide a summary of the main activities or services your group delivers and/or has delivered to-date.
- Communities your projects or activities support:
  - State which communities or beneficiary groups your group supports. For example all residents in the community your group is set up to benefit.
- Constitution
- Correspondence address
- Registered address:
  - This is the address at which your group or organisation is formally registered, which may differ from the correspondence address.

## About the Project

- A short summary of the project or activity that you are applying for funding towards:
  - Please give a summary (no more than 25-words) of the project or activity you are requesting a grant towards – what it will deliver and for who.
- The geographic area the project will be delivered in:
  - Please provide a postcode / Eircode that best represents the project's delivery location.
- A description of the project you are looking for funding for:
  - We suggest you cover:
    - Where the project will take place.
    - What you want to do
    - How you will do this – e.g. the activities you will deliver, how you will reach those you are seeking to benefit, any equipment needed, and how it will be used.
    - How the community has been and/or will be involved in developing and delivering the project
    - Who will lead the project – their role(s), skills and experience.
    - How you will monitor and evaluate the success of the project
    - The proposed start and end dates for the project.
    - If you are purchasing equipment, provide detailed specifications, where the items will be stored when not in use, and who will maintain them.
    - Relevant training / experience / qualifications you have that is required to carry out the project
  - Suggested word limit - 400 words
- How will you maintain / sustain your project after the period of our grant funding is finished?
  - If the project will continue beyond the period for which you are seeking grant funding, please let us know how you intend to continue it, including how you will secure any funding, volunteers, or other resources needed to do so.
  - Please also include relevant details if the project will help to make your organisation more self-sustaining.

- How have you identified a need for this project within the local area?
  - Your project should address a current need and gap in local provision.
  - Please link to local data including emergency action plans, resilience plans, net zero action plans, local community plans, resident surveys, evidence of previous emergency events and/or power outages.
  - Please also link to any data on the demographic of the local area in terms of need (Index of Multiple Deprivation, extent of fuel poverty, level of remoteness/isolation, etc).
  - Please describe the issues your local community has experienced in relation to resilience (eg. Previous extended power outages as a result of a storm, snow, or flooding).
  - Please describe if you have consulted with any stakeholders and how your project compliments their work and plans (eg. Emergency Services, Local Authority, or the local community).
  - Suggested word limit is 400 words.
- How many people will benefit from the project?
  - Only include those who will benefit directly from the project. This may include any volunteers involved in delivering it. Please ensure the number you give is realistic.
- How have you calculated the above figure?
  - Please tell us how you arrived at this figure.
  - Include the population of the Parish/Community Council area along with other details that are relevant.
- Will any jobs be supported by the project?
  - If yes, we will ask how many.
- Will any community assets (e.g. community hall, local river, etc.) be built and/or improved as part of the project?
  - If yes, we will ask how many.
  - If yes, we will also ask whether the group submitting this application own this asset or have agreement from the owner to undertake works associated with this project. You will need to evidence that the owner is in agreement by uploading relevant documents in the uploads section at the end of the application form.
- Will this project help improve energy efficiency or climate change?
  - If yes, please provide details of the energy generation or carbon reduction potential of the project, where you know this.

## Project Aims and Success

- Explain how your project achieves the Fund aims and priorities outlined on page 1 and 2 of this guidance document.
  - Demonstrate how the project meets the fund priorities:
    - Projects which support communities who are particularly remote or isolated and have experienced emergency events due to poor weather in the past.
    - Projects in areas affected by recent significant weather events, including storms and flooding, which resulted in extended power loss.
    - Projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable community members.
    - Projects which support areas which can be difficult for emergency services to respond to events in.
    - Projects from communities which have been identified as having low resilience.
    - Projects where communities work together towards local resilience planning.
    - Projects that support communities make progress towards net zero ambitions.
  - Suggested word limit - 400 words

## Project Bank Details

- We will require your group's bank sort code and account number:
  - Please ensure the details you provide here are correct as this information will be used to make grant payments if you are successful in securing a grant.
- Bank account holder's name:

- This is the name that your group's bank account is held in, as it appears on bank statements - it should be the name of your group.
- Upload a copy of a recent (within the past three months) bank statement
- Upload a copy of your group's latest accounts (as approved by your board or management committee)
- Additional authorised bank signatory:
  - Provide the name, e-mail address and position of a second person who is authorised to use your group's bank account. Please ensure you enter these details correctly as this person will be e-mailed any grant offer letter for their countersignature.

## Group Finances

- What are the main sources of income for the group?
  - Please provide brief details of how the group normally raises most of its income e.g. from local fundraising, grants, charges for services, etc
- Total income and surplus/deficit from the uploaded financial accounts:
  - The figures you provide should match those in the group's approved annual accounts that you uploaded earlier as part of your application
- Current unrestricted reserves and why they cannot be used for this project:
  - Unrestricted reserves are monies which are not restricted (usually by a donor or lender) for any particular use. If your group's unrestricted reserves cannot be used towards the project you are seeking a grant from SSEN for, we will ask you to explain why.

## Project Budget

- Select an option to add your project cost details:
  - You will have the opportunity to insert the information into a list/ table in the form or to upload your own budget template. Please **do not do both**.
  - If you enter costs in the list / table option then decide to upload a budget file instead, please ensure you delete any entries in the list / table before continuing.
  - Please provide an accurate list of all costs involved in the work, services, or items required for the project. This should include any project costs that you are not requesting a grant towards.
  - If you enter costs in the list / table option, these will automatically be totalled.
  - If you have chosen to upload a budget file, enter the total project cost (as stated in the file) into the box provided.
- Explain how you have costed the project.
  - Please provide at least one quotation for items over £250 in value. For larger capital items (e.g. building work, vehicles, equipment) of more than £2,500 we expect you to have sought at least two quotations, and for such items of more than £10,000 we expect you to have sought at least three quotations. Please upload any quotations you have received towards such costs or upload a document detailing why it has not been possible to obtain relevant quotations.
  - If you are seeking a grant to cover salary costs, please tell us what hourly rate will be paid. SSEN is a Living Wage Friendly Funder; therefore, we require any roles paid for through our funding to meet or exceed the Living Wage.
- Tell us how much you are applying to the Powering Communities to Net Zero Fund for.
 

Only non-recoverable VAT costs should be included in any grant amount you are requesting from SSEN.

## Project Funders

- If your total project cost requires other funding (including where your organisation is contributing its own funds), you will be asked to list all of the other funding sources, including the amounts being applied for and whether this funding is confirmed.

## Checklist

We will ask you to tick yes, no, or not applicable to the following checklist:

- That the group has the appropriate procedures in place to carry out your project safely
- That the group has at least three unrelated people serving on its management committee / board.
- That the project doesn't require retrospective funding
- That, if requested, you can provide the details of an independent referee.
- That any salaries are paid at, or greater than, the Living Wage
- Whether the project requires your group to secure permissions, such as planning permission, a building warrant and/or listed buildings consent, prior to starting work. If it does, tell us whether these have been applied for / granted. If they haven't been applied for or granted yet, tell us when you expect this to happen.

## Uploads

Please remember to upload:

- Any relevant community emergency action plans, resilience plans, or net zero plans.
- Documentation confirming the building owner agrees to the project work being undertaken (if applicable).
- A copy of the organisation's Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult Policy (if applicable).
- Letters of support for your project (if applicable).
- Any other documents which you think are required in support of your application (eg. Architects drawings, relevant permissions such as planning, building warrant, and/or listed building consent).
- A copy of a recent Energy Audit that supports your projects proposed Low Carbon Technology measures (for community building projects – if applicable).