

SP Energy Networks' Community Benefits Grassroots Grants Fund

Application Guidance

Introduction

SP Energy Networks is offering grants of £1000-£10,000 to support charities and community groups in South Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, and Dumfries & Galloway. The fund will accept applications from **Tuesday 20th January** until **Friday 8th May at 5pm**. Localgiving is the delivery partner for the Grassroots Grant fund, and this document contains everything you'll need to know to submit an application.

Location eligibility

If you are a charity, constituted non-profit charitable organisation, a non-profit company limited by guarantee, or a Schedule 1 or 2 Community Interest Company and you deliver work within one of the following Community Council areas where SP Energy Networks are running projects, you'd be welcome to apply:

Dumfries and Galloway

- [Royal Burgh of Sanquhar and District](#)
- [New Luce Community Council](#)
- [Kirkconnel and Kelloholm](#)

South Ayrshire

- [Barrhill Community Council](#)
- [Girvan Community Council](#)
- [Pinmore and Pinwherry Community Council](#)

South Lanarkshire

- [Lesmahagow Community Council](#)
- [Coalburn Community Council](#)
- [Crawford and Elvanfoot Community Council](#)

Scottish Borders

- [Tweedsmuir Community Council](#)

Click the link for your Local fund area to find out more and start your application. If you aren't sure which Community Council your organisation or project are based we recommend you use this [Council Finder](#) to find out.

Please note - additional eligibility criteria related to organisation and project types can be found in the [Eligibility](#) section later in this guide.

What funding requests will be considered?

SP Energy Networks together with Localgiving has ensured its community benefit funds are aligned with community interests and priorities by undertaking extensive research and engaging collaboratively with local communities. Key community priorities were identified through our consultations, with fund applicants required to deliver on at least one area of local improvement through their project.

We are looking for positive and impactful projects which can be delivered across 6 months and support one or more of the following themes:

- **Strengthening financial resilience and educational inclusion** (Relieving pressure on families and financial inequalities, improving financial literacy and extracurricular learning opportunities for young people)
- **Employability support and skills development** (Job readiness, training and career support, including help for carers and parents re-entering the workplace)
- **Social and digital inclusion, wellbeing and active lifestyles** (Reducing isolation, improving mental health and encouraging healthy living)
- **Improving community spaces and buildings** (Accessibility, safety, sustainable upgrades, energy and resource efficiency)
- **Enhancing green spaces and access to nature** (Biodiversity, conservation and nature-based activities)
- **Sustainable and inclusive transport** (Affordable, accessible and healthier travel options and walking/cycling schemes for communities)

Consultation with communities in each fund area has ranked these themes based on local priorities, which are detailed on the Local Fund pages linked earlier in this guide. This ranking will be used as part of the scoring criteria. Organisations should apply under the grant theme that best reflects their project.

Grant sizes and match funding

The fund offers grants between £1000 and £10,000 for projects which can be delivered across a 12-week window. SP Energy Networks is open to receiving requests to part-fund projects between £10,001 and £20,000 in value.

If your project total is between £10,001 and £20,000, you must demonstrate that you have already secured the match funding from your free cash reserves or secured funding from grants, asset transfers, or other sources.

If your project total is more than £20,000, you should not apply for this fund but may be eligible to apply for SP Energy Networks Community Benefits – Local Grants instead. To find out more, please [click here](#). Please note – organisations may only apply for/hold one grant from SP Energy Networks at a time.

When can I apply and when am I likely to receive an outcome/funding?

The fund will accept applications from **Tuesday 20th January** until **Friday 8th May at 5pm**. Complete applications are assessed and scored against evaluation criteria by Localgiving before review by an independent decision-making panel and sign off by the SP Energy Networks Community Funding Board.

Organisations submitting an application before 5pm 13th March can expect to receive an outcome from the first funding panel in May. Applicants submitting after 13th March will be assessed at a second panel and can expect to be informed of the outcome in July.

If your application is offered funding by SP Energy Networks, an authorised member of your organisation will be sent a terms agreement which must be signed and returned within two weeks. After processing your completed terms agreement, SP Energy Networks will arrange for the direct transfer of the grant award.

After you have received your funds, you will have 6 months to deliver your project. During this time, you may be contacted by Localgiving or SP Energy Networks about your project progress - we would love to hear from you if you have any updates to share or if you would like to publicise the work that you are doing.

At the end of the 6-month delivery window, you will be requested to return a monitoring and impact report documenting how you spent the funding and initial results from your project. The full monitoring form will be provided to all successful applicants within a post-funding guidance document.

How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted online via the relevant local fund page for your project and involve a short registration process (collecting the details we will use to contact you and your organisation regarding your application), followed by completion of the grant application form.

Once you have read this guidance document and have a clear idea of the project you want to deliver (including, where relevant, quotes from contractors/suppliers, and details of approved planning/landowner permissions), the application process should take an hour or less to complete.

At the same time, Localgiving's validation team will contact your organisation if you are required to submit any documents for our due diligence process. The later sections of this guide detail what information and documents you can prepare before starting your application (including the application questions).

Who can I contact if I have questions?

After reading this guide, if you have any remaining questions as you complete the application please contact SPENGrassrootsGrants@localgiving.org for all queries related to your funding application - our team members are on hand to help.

As part of the application, you will need to complete a due diligence process confirming your organisation's non-profit status, essential details and documents. Our team may contact you about these requirements via validation@localgiving.org and you should respond to them with any related queries.

Eligibility

The full eligibility criteria are detailed below. Please ensure your project is eligible to be considered for grant support before you submit your application.

What types of organisations can apply?

Charities, which could include but are not limited to:

- Registered Charities
- Charitable Trusts

Non-profit companies, which could include but are not limited to:

- Companies limited by guarantee
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Schedule 1 CICs
- Schedule 2 CICs

Constituted non-profit community organisations, which could include but are not limited to (noting that some of the below may be registered organisations or members of networked charities in their own right):

- Unincorporated associations
- Voluntary or Community groups
- Community parks/woodlands associations
- Co-operatives, Community Benefit Societies, and other Mutuels - provided that they operate for clear wider public benefit
- Development trusts
- Community Transport organisations
- Community amateur sports clubs (CASCs)
- PTA and "Friends of" organisations linked to schools
- Churches and other religious organisations
- Village halls and community buildings
- Guiding/Scouting organisations and other youth clubs
- Further education colleges

What due diligence documents do organisations need before they apply?

- A governing document, constitution, or set of standing orders that confirms non-profit status and an asset lock/dissolution clause. For registered charities and companies this document will be automatically sourced by Localgiving from the relevant regulator

- Up to date accounts (or a 12-month financial projection for new organisations). For registered charities and companies this document will be automatically sourced by Localgiving from the relevant regulator (except for newly registered organisations)
- A UK-based bank account in the name of their organisation with at least two unrelated signatories; applicants can verify their details online using TrueLayer or submit a bank statement dated within the past 3 months.
- A management committee with at least 3 unrelated people/trustees (referred to as directors for registered companies)

What additional information will I need to start my application?

Match-funding requests

If your total project budget is between £10,001 and £20,000, you must be able to demonstrate that your organisation has secured the difference between that total and the maximum grant amount offered by SP Energy Networks (£10,000).

Capital works/construction and significant facilities upgrades

If your project involves significant construction (including structural changes or major refurbishment), upgrades, or improvements to facilities/physical assets which your organisation owns, leases or has a written agreement with the landowner to manage, you will need to upload the details of three quotes for these capital works from different contractors. If you are unable to provide more than one quote you will need to demonstrate a clear reason why this is the case.

If you rent your facilities or manage a space by written agreement with the landowner, you will be asked to upload a document showing you have at least 5 years of tenure remaining. If the lease or agreement does not show general permission to make capital improvements, you will also need a letter of consent showing the landowner approves of your project. **Please note** - this fund will not accept proposals for capital works or repairs to statutory buildings, public highways, and other infrastructure which should be maintained directly by a local authority.

Projects requiring planning permission

If planning permission is required, you will need to provide the reference number for an approved planning application. Funding requests with pending planning applications will not be considered.

Budget items totalling £300 or more

If your project involves the purchase of any single product or multiple sets of equipment or materials (e.g. white goods, IT equipment) of value over £300 which is not part of contractor quotes for capital works, you will need to provide a link to or evidence of a product listing and price.

Please note - Any suppliers, contractors, or vendors involved in your project must be chosen without conflict of interest – i.e. via a competitive, merit-based selection process, free from any bias on personal relationships or other incentives.

What organisations cannot apply to the Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund?

- Organisations that do not meet the required documentation needs outlined above
- Schools (including those holding charitable status), academies, and universities
- Statutory bodies, including town and community councils
- Private Limited Companies and Companies Limited by Shares, whether they operate for profit or not - with the exception of Schedule 2 CICs
- Organisations operating for profit, that regularly pay dividends, or operate for the exclusive benefit of their members
- Organisations without a presence in Scotland (i.e. regional offices or local employees operating within the regions of the fund)

What funding requests will not be considered?

- Projects which are not based in a region included in the **Location Eligibility** section
- The onward transfer of grant funds to beneficiaries or other organisations as awards, or bursaries
- Projects aiming to improve land or buildings where the applicant does not have a written agreement with the landowner to maintain the space
- Projects requiring planning or landowner permissions which have not been approved
- Projects involving the advancement of religion or improving spaces used only for worship - applications for non-religious activities or for spaces open for wider community use are welcomed
- Requests for projects with a total budget under £1,000
- Requests to part-fund projects with a total budget of over £20,000
- Requests to part-fund projects where the match funding has not already been secured by the applicant
- Requests for funding to meet statutory responsibilities - including but not limited to provision of social and health care by local authorities, delivering the curriculum or other regular activity in schools, or capital works/repairs to statutory buildings, public highways, and other infrastructure
- Projects where over 20% of requested funding is for regular service delivery, core costs/overheads or where the relevancy of costs to the project is not clear
- Medical/veterinary research, equipment, or treatment
- Legal representation or the costs of planning, making or maintaining a legal case
- Land purchase or covering the cost of planning permission applications or attempts to block planning permission or development rights
- Projects with a primary aim of generating income for the applying organisation
- Prizes or money paid directly to beneficiaries as an incentive to attend activities (reimbursing travel expenses is acceptable)
- One-off community celebrations (such as summer fairs), trips/expeditions of any length, or residential stays
- Political parties or causes
- Retrospective funding - support from the fund must be for projects which can start after SP Energy Networks' funding decision has been made and the grant has been received by a successful applicant
- Requests for funding more than 6 months of project delivery

Application questions

Please note: All questions which request a written response in the application form have a maximum word count - if preparing your answers offline, please make sure you don't exceed the cap. If you feel you can answer the question with fewer words, please do so.

We have included the majority of questions from the application in this guide, supplemented with screenshots of features which only function online. Please note that your application must be submitted online via the form and Localgiving cannot enter details on your behalf.

Eligibility

Please refer to the earlier section of this guide, **What additional information will I need to start my application?**, to confirm the requirements to progress through the eligibility stage of the application. You will need to confirm whether any of the following statements are correct (and if so, to provide additional details):

- You are requesting to part-fund a project larger than £10,000
- Your project involves capital works (defined in the FAQ section below)
- Your project requires planning permission
- Your project involves the purchase of any single product or multiple sets of equipment or materials (e.g. white goods, IT equipment) of value over £300

Themes

In this section, you will need to choose from 6 themes outlined earlier in this guidance (**What funding requests will be considered?**). Your project might relate to more than one of the themes of the fund - choose up to two you which best align with your work.

Project overview

All applicants will have 6 months to deliver their project, with a latest possible date of 31st January 2027 for completion. If submitting your application before 13th March, please ensure that your application does not involve any activities before June 2026. If submitting your application on or after 14th March, do not include activities before August 2026.

The funder will not cover retrospective costs so will not consider time-specific projects outside these dates, projects running beyond 31st January 2027 or projects lasting over 6 months.

1. What is the name of your project? (20 words max)
2. Is your proposal for a new project or a continuation of an existing project? *[New project/ Continuation of an existing project]*
3. *[If Continuation is selected]* Please summarise the previous delivery of this project, how it was funded (including the names of any grant funders) and why support from this fund is needed to continue or expand the work. (100-150 words max)
4. Please provide the city, town, or village where the project will take place (10 words max)
5. Please provide a summary of what your project aims to achieve across 12 weeks, who it will help, and what you will deliver. (150-200 words max)
6. Please list the expected start and end date for your project delivery

Budget

You will need to state whether your organisation is able to reclaim VAT. When entering costs in the budget table in this section, include VAT only if it is a cost you cannot recover. Do not include VAT if you can reclaim it.

Your organisation can apply for up to £10,000. Please record costs paid to individuals on separate lines, i.e. if two members of staff are being paid to work on the project, record each staff member as an individual staffing cost.

The fund accepts requests to cover overheads/core costs up to 20% of your total project budget - i.e. for a project with total budget of £5000, up to £1000 of that request could be for overheads. You must clearly explain what these costs involve (i.e. insurance, HR & payroll, disclosure checks checks, etc.) and they should be necessary for your project delivery.

If your project involves contractor costs and you have multiple quotes, please select the cost associated with your preferred quote, and provide a description of the key quoted labour or materials.

Please see below for images detailing the data tables used to enter the project budget items. Data is included for illustrative purposes.

Item	Rate type	Cost per month	Number of months	Description (50 words)
Staff salaries	Monthly	£ 600	3	0.2 x staff salary + on-costs for project administrator, co-ordinating recruitment, documenting participant progress and project monitoring and supporting volunteers and external instructors, working 1 day per week across 3 months (2 weeks setup/recruitment, 10 weeks project delivery)
Total: £1800				
Overheads/Core costs		£ 275		office costs (rent, utilities, stationery) for office work 1 day per week x 12 weeks

Add another item

If your total project budget outlined in the **Eligibility** step was larger than the maximum grant size offered by this fund, you will be asked the following question:

1. You outlined that the total cost of your project would be £X. Please describe in brief how the additional £Y required to complete your project would be spent (150 words max)

Local Context

1. Please demonstrate the local need/demand for your project. Where possible, please reference community action plans/local place plans, statistics, research, or surveys that you have carried out. (100-150 words max)
2. Describe any specific groups your project aims to help in more detail. What challenges do they face and how will your project address them? (100-150 words max)
3. Please estimate how many unique individuals will directly benefit from this project.

Guidance - please make sure not to count footfall/repeat attendees more than once, and to make a conservative estimate if unsure of how many people will engage with your project. If 10 specific people attend 10 workshops, your project would have 10 beneficiaries. If each workshop is delivered in a different location to 10 different people each time (i.e. nobody attends more than one session), your project would have 100 beneficiaries.

4. How have you estimated the number of people that will benefit from this project? (100 words max)
5. If your beneficiaries have any specific barriers to engaging with your project (i.e. rural isolation, speakers of English as an additional language), please describe how you will tailor your project to their needs (150 words max, optional)

Project Delivery

1. Please describe the experience amongst your staff/volunteers or the track record of your organisation (if applicable) when delivering similar projects or supporting the beneficiary groups highlighted in your application. (50-100 words max)
2. If members of your organisation are carrying out your project, please list any relevant qualifications or specialist skills they have specific to the work they will be delivering. If people outside your organisation with specialist skills are required, please outline how you will find them and describe the required qualifications/skills for your project. (100 words max, optional)
3. Summarising your project delivery plan, list up to three key deliverable activities/purchases associated with your project, alongside a predicted outcome and a plan to measure your progress within 6 months of starting the project.

Guidance - please ensure that you clearly highlight the key differences you will make for your direct beneficiaries or organisation's operations within the timeframe of your project delivery. Where possible these should be quantifiable environmental, social, or economic goals - i.e. predicted reduction in energy consumption, growth in attendees at meetings, number of people progressing to further education, employment, or training.

Sample data provided below for illustrative purposes only:

Activity/Purchase (20 words max)	Outcome (20 words max)	Progress Tracking (20 words max)
20 young people not in employment, education, or training will take part in weekly gardening sessions ✓	75% will report increased confidence or wellbeing ✓	Participant surveys will be issued at the start and end of project ✓
5 raised beds for gardening activities purchased and built during the project ✓	Increased long-term output of produce grown by our organisation for donation to local food banks ✓	We track our donation volume in our annual reports and would expect to see an increase from last year ✓

Impact and Legacy

1. Please describe the anticipated impact of your project on the wider community beyond the direct beneficiaries of your activities. (50-100 words max, optional)
2. Please describe the impact your project will have beyond the 12-week funded period, including next steps for the project, signposting beneficiaries to other relevant support, and any plan to measure the long-term changes made. (50-100 words max)
3. Describe any expected impact carrying out this project will have on your organisation itself and your staff in terms of your skills or capacity to deliver similar work in future and engage more widely with the community (50-100 words max).

Additional info

Before submitting your application, we recommend that you take the time to review the submitted information across the previous steps of the form. Please ensure that the information you have submitted is true, accurate, and complete to the best of your knowledge, and that any vendors, contractors, or other suppliers of goods or services indicated in the application were included with no basis in personal relationships or other incentives. Once submitted, you will be unable to re-enter the form to edit your answer.

Application advice

Align your project to the local needs and demands

- Make sure to review the fund priorities linked earlier in this guide (Location eligibility). Regardless of the theme(s) you choose in the application form, our assessors will review the content of your whole application to assess alignment with those local priorities.
- Any research or relevant data you can provide to show your project is in response to local demand would also strengthen your application.
- Consider how your project might reach out to and involve underserved or seldom-heard groups of your local community and whether your project delivery needs a specific approach to meet their needs

Show that you have a clear plan to deliver change

- Make it clear who is working on your project (staff, volunteers, or external parties), how they have been sourced, and whether they have experience or specialist skills suited to delivering on your goals or working with specific relevant beneficiary groups

- Make sure your goals are realistic, achievable within the timeframe, and clearly show a difference made for your beneficiaries
- Where possible, show how the work you intend to deliver addresses specific beneficiary or local issues

Where possible, show the possible legacy and impact of this project

- If your project will bring benefits to more than your direct beneficiaries or will help you expand your reach, please tell us.
- Where possible, consider how you can follow up on this project, both with beneficiaries and internally in terms of your organisation's capacity to work in your community in the longer term

FAQs

What are capital works?

For the purposes of this fund, capital works involve significant construction, alteration, or maintenance intended to create or improve a building or land over which your organisation has ownership or a lease. Organisations applying for funding for capital works must provide the details (written or digital estimates of pricing and deliverables) of three quotes from different contractors supplying materials or labour or a reason why more than one could not be sourced. If landowner or local authority planning permissions are required to complete the project, these must already be approved before starting an application to the Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund.

What are statutory responsibilities?

For the purposes of this fund, statutory responsibilities include services delivered by government or a local authority - essential health and social care, emergency services, and education. It also includes the maintenance of public parks, roads and parking facilities, as well as repairs or improvements to buildings owned or operated by statutory organisations.

What is a funding shortfall?

A funding shortfall is the difference between a part-funding request you make to the Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund and the total project cost of your larger project. For example - if your organisation applies for £10,000 from the fund and your total project cost is £15,000, the shortfall would be £5000. Applicants must demonstrate that any shortfall has already been covered through their free cash reserves or other secured funding before beginning their Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund application.

What are core costs?

For the purposes of this fund, core costs include running costs such as rent, utilities, governance costs, insurance, and non-project staff costs such as finance teams, fundraising and HR. The fund will not accept applications which focus on covering the essential costs for regular service delivery but will accept requests amounting to 20% of a project's budget on overheads which are pro-rated and clearly related to project delivery.

Will the fund accept applications to continue/expand existing projects?

The fund will consider these requests if they are expansions/extensions lasting no longer than 12 weeks of existing or past projects that are not core service delivery/general organisation running costs. Applicants must outline the impact of the initial project and how it was previously funded.

Can organisations receive funding or apply more than once?

Organisations can apply to the Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund more than once in 2026, provided that each application is for a clearly distinct project which does not depend on the outcome of another application to be delivered.

Our organisation covers several of SP Energy Networks' construction regions. Can we apply multiple times?

Yes - provided that your new application is for a clearly distinct project from your previous application.

Can we apply for a project that lasts more than 6 months?

SP Energy Networks expects all awarded funding to be used within 6 months and projects should deliver their intended outcome within these dates. If unexpected delays occur your organisation will be able to make a request for a project extension by contacting the fund's support team.

What is Localgiving?

Localgiving is SP Energy Networks' delivery partner for the Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants Fund. We help applicants complete the due diligence requirements for the fund and support them through the application process. We also support grassroots non-profit organisations with fundraising. Our members include registered charities, non-profit companies, and constituted community organisations without shareholders.

Do I have to pay for a Localgiving membership to apply for this grant?

Membership to Localgiving has no impact on your eligibility to apply for this grant or on the assessment of your application. If you have any difficulties starting your application, please contact SPENGrassrootsGrants@localgiving.org

I've forgotten my password - how can I reset it?

If you've forgotten your password, [click here](#) to send a password reset link to the email address you used to set up the account.

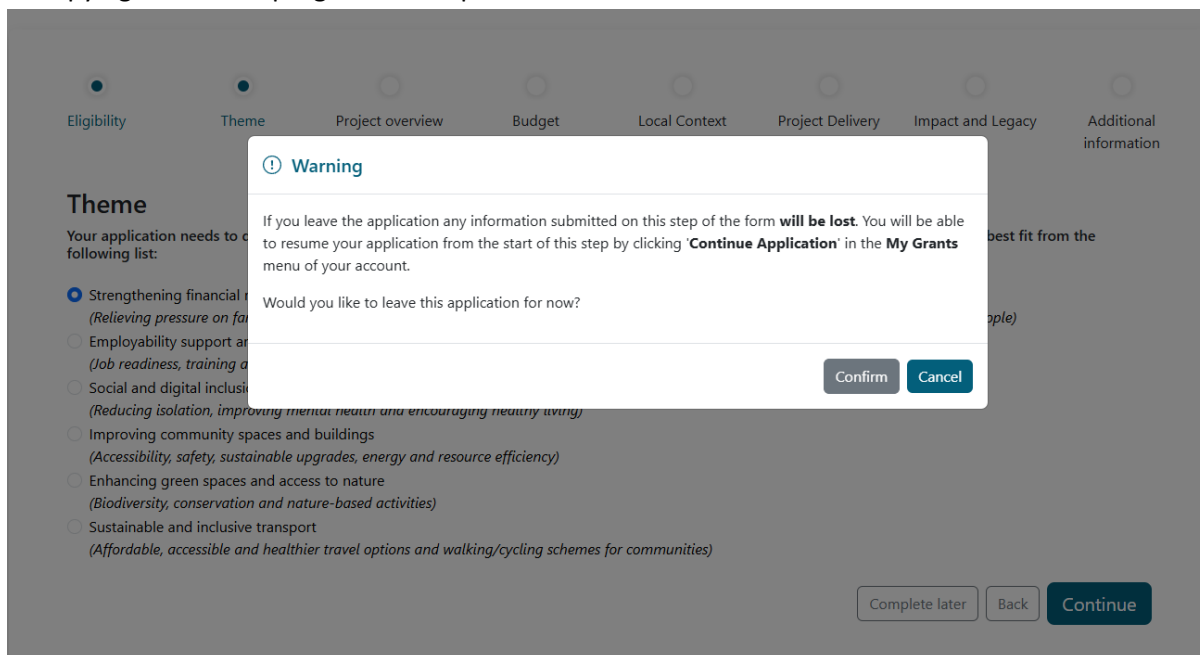
I tried to apply for the fund, but it says my organisation already has a Localgiving account. How can I access it?

If the account is linked to your email, [click here](#) to send a password reset link to that address. If the account was set up by someone else or the password reset request does not come through to your email address, contact SPENGrassrootsGrants@localgiving.org, outlining the name of your organisation and your role within it.

Can I pause an application and come back to it later?

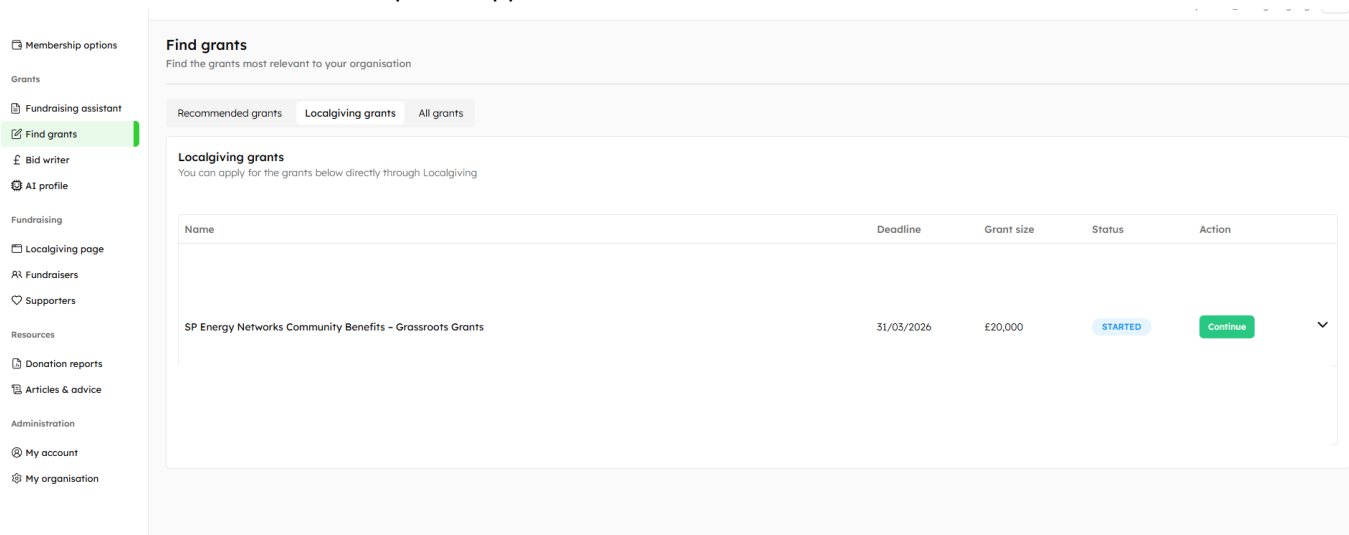
Once you've registered your basic organisation details and completed the Eligibility step of the application form, you will be able to pause an application by clicking the **Complete later** button on

the bottom of each screen. **Please note** - the application cannot save details part way through individual sections of the form - we advise you to complete a section before clicking **Complete later**, or copying answers in progress to a separate document.



How do I get back into my Localgiving account and continue an application I've already started or see a copy of the application I submitted?

First, [log in](#) to your account. Next, click on the **Find grants** menu on the left-hand side of the dashboard. Click on the **Localgiving grants** tab, then on the **Continue** button, or **View application** to access the record of a completed application.



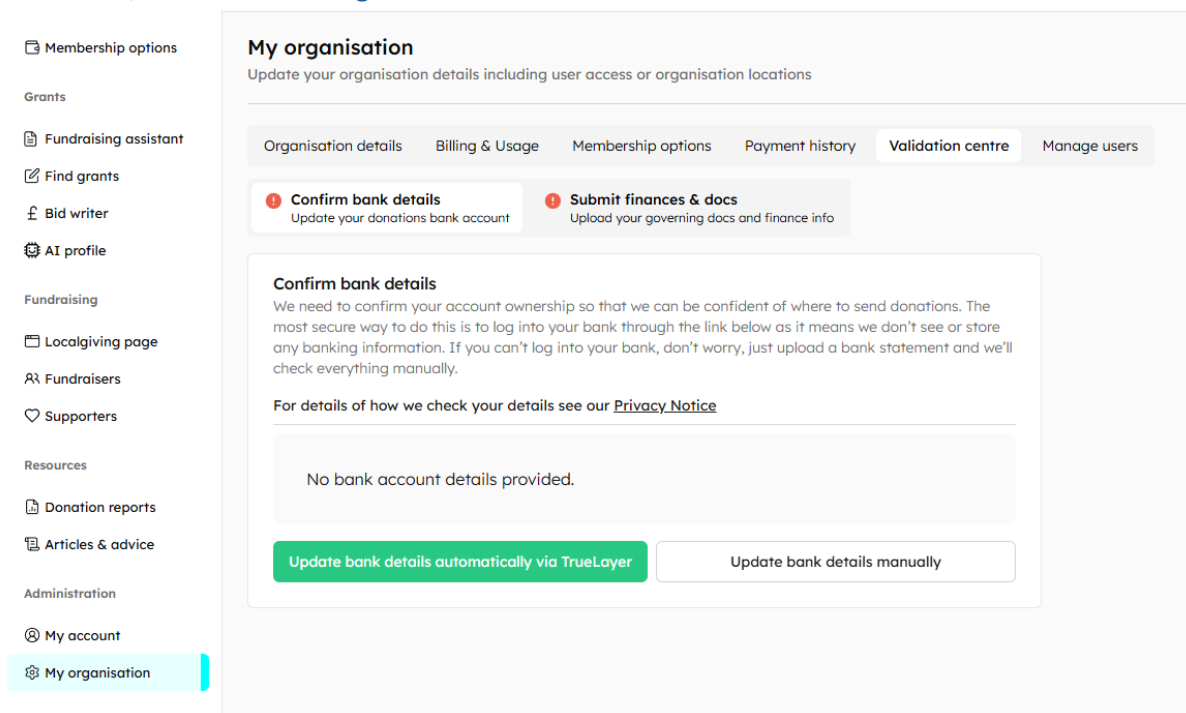
Name	Deadline	Grant size	Status	Action
SP Energy Networks Community Benefits - Grassroots Grants	31/03/2026	£20,000	STARTED	Continue

Can I change answers in an application I've submitted?

Once your application has been submitted the answers provided cannot be changed; please ensure all details are accurate and whole before completing the process. If you discover crucial errors or omissions, please contact SPENGrassrootsGrants@localgiving.org

How can I upload due diligence documents, update my organisation's bank details, or add new users to my account?

First, [log in](#) to your account. Next, click on the **My organisation** menu on the left-hand side of the dashboard. To confirm or update bank details or submit additional documents, click on the **Validation centre** tab (pictured below). To add new users to help submit your application or documents, click on the **Manage users** tab.



How can I update my contact details or password?

First, [log in](#) to your account. Next, click on the **My account** menu on the left-hand side of the dashboard.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the fund or need additional support?

After reading this guide if you have any remaining questions please contact SPENGrassrootsGrants@localgiving.org for all queries related to your funding application - our team members are on hand to help.

As part of the application, you will need to complete a due diligence process confirming your organisation's non-profit status, essential details and documents. Our team may contact you about these requirements via validation@localgiving.org and you should respond to them with any related queries.

We wish you the best of luck with your application.

The Localgiving Grants Team