

Community Projects Throughout North of England Set to Benefit from £100,000 Fund

The Community Partnering Fund is now open to applications

Fund recognises and supports grass roots projects with economic, educational and social value

Brought forward by Northern Gas Networks, Northern Powergrid and Leeds Community Foundation

Local community groups that demonstrate an innovative approach to sustainability are invited to come forward with the potential to receive a share of a grant distribution worth more than £100,000.

Northern Gas Networks (NGN), Northern Powergrid and Leeds Community Foundation have opened the annual, award-winning Community Partnering Fund for entries, with a bigger fund pot available than ever before.

The first phase will award grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 from a £50,000 fund pot, which will be distributed to grassroots projects and third-sector organisations, enabling the three fund partners to broaden their support for local communities in the process.

This year's total fund will be the biggest yet, as Northern Gas Networks has also pledged to give back a further £2,000 to a deserving initiative following a fundraising drive that recognised and rewarded customer participation in a survey to help shape its future business plan, for 2021 – 2026, earlier this year.

Pioneering and sustainable programmes throughout the North of England, including projects that assist with the hardship associated with fuel poverty, those that promote knowledge of energy efficiency and initiatives that inform the public about home safety, are eligible to apply for the funding. Likewise, projects that encourage interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects and associated career opportunities, or groups that promote the free Priority Services Register, which supports energy customers in vulnerable situations, will also be considered for the grants and training on offer through the scheme.

The second phase of the programme, scheduled for early next year, will award an additional £50,000 to worthwhile projects.

Previous ventures helped under the scheme include Community Voice FM (CVFM Radio), which used its grant to reach up to 8,000 local people. The station conducted computer classes for ethnic minority groups, which included the opportunity to learn about energy consumption and participate

in a live radio show to encourage listeners to compare their energy prices online. To further engage the community, a work club was also set up that supported residents to find employment. After shadowing radio presenters and conducting research on carbon monoxide poisoning, those attending the group created a jingle to educate local people about the dangers of CO and how they can be easily identified and avoided.

Tom Bell, Head of Social Strategy at Northern Gas Networks, the gas distributor for the North of England, said: "The Community Partnering Fund is open and ready to support many of the incredible projects taking place in our communities. This is a fantastic opportunity to boost the great work being delivered by inspiring individuals and teams. As a business based in the heart of communities, we are committed to giving back to the areas that we work in and that our team call home, and we wish everyone entering this year the very best of luck."

Michelle Cummings, Social Responsibility Manager at Northern Powergrid, the company responsible for electricity distribution network that powers the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire, commented: "It's incredibly rewarding to see first-hand how the fund can make a difference and how, as a fund partner, we can support the communities we serve beyond keeping their lights on. We'd encourage any groups with outreach activities that develop, strengthen, and educate their local communities about STEM subjects, saving energy and the support available through our free Priority Services Register, to apply for a grant."

Kate Hainsworth, Chief Executive at Leeds Community Foundation, added: "Here at the Leeds Community Foundation, we're proud to have been in partnership with Northern Gas Networks since the start of the funding scheme. Over the years we've seen the programme develop including joining forces with Northern Powergrid in 2018/19 and doubling the fund pot to £100,000, with awards of £50,000 now made every six months. We are excited to welcome applications from a range of exciting projects across the region."

Idrees Rashid, Director of CVFM, said: "We are so thankful to have previously received a grant. The money enabled us to deliver some innovative and engaging activities, providing us the opportunity to support our local community and make a real difference to the lives of our listeners in the Tees Valley area."

Applications for the annual Community Partnering Fund programme will be accepted from 4 September until 15 October 2019. For more information, search for #CommunityPartneringFund on social media or visit www.leedscf.org.uk/community-partnering-fund to apply for a grant.

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Notes to editors

- **Northern Gas Networks** started operating in 2005 and is leading the way as one of the most cost-efficient of the UK's eight gas distribution networks. It delivers great value for money to our customers, as well as a whole host of social and economic benefits to the region. It is recognised as a dynamic, passionate, conscious and people focused team that safely and reliably delivers gas to over 2.7 million homes and businesses across the North East, northern Cumbria and much of Yorkshire. Although it doesn't source the gas, fix boilers and appliances, or get involved with plumbing, it works with those that do to deliver it through a vast network of underground pipes that are constantly being invested in and upgraded. It's more complicated than it sounds so Northern Gas Networks is always exploring cutting-edge thinking, revolutionary engineering practices and world-class science to find new ways to provide sustainable sources of energy. And while its customers may not see the company very often, they can sleep soundly knowing that it's working around the clock to keep them connected and make sure they stay safe. For more information [visit the Northern Gas Networks website](#). Alternatively, [like on Facebook](#) or [follow on Twitter](#).
- **Northern Powergrid** is the electricity distribution network operator for the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire. The company delivers power safely and reliably to 8 million customers across 3.9 million homes and businesses. Northern Powergrid's network consists of more than 63,000 substations and 60,000 miles of overhead power lines and underground cables, spanning some 9,650 square miles. In an evolving energy industry, Northern Powergrid has a key role in creating and managing future energy systems that increasingly interact with customers and smart and low carbon technologies. The company is innovating and investing today so its network is ready for the demands of tomorrow. Find out more about Northern Powergrid at www.northernpowergrid.com
- **Leeds Community Foundation** supports thousands of charities and voluntary groups across Leeds, addressing inequalities and working together to help create opportunities for those that need help the most. It invests in these groups by distributing grants and sharing advice – acting as a catalyst for positive change. Leeds Community Foundation relies on the generosity of individuals, businesses and public sector organisations to help local people to gain the support they need now, while investing in a brighter future for all. To find out more visit www.leedscf.org.uk