

# Chiltern Railways

Community Investment Fund  
(CIF) Guidelines

**2026/27**

## Introduction:

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This handbook outlines what the Community Investment Fund is and provides guidance for groups who wish to apply. Investment in our local communities is important to us and is imperative to furthering development across our route, supporting our £1.5bn annual social and economic value contribution.

The fund is delivered in conjunction with the Department for Transport's Community Rail Strategy which has four key pillars:

- **Providing a voice for the community**
- **Promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel**
- **Bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion**
- **Supporting social and economic development**

### Who can apply for funding?

The Community Investment Fund (CIF) is allocated to Train Operating Companies in England to support the development of Community Rail. Funding is open to not-for-profit organisations including charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs), parish and town councils, schools and colleges and other community groups.

### Key dates and timeline

2025-26 applications are open from **15 January 2026** until **10 February 2026**. Chiltern Railways will then undertake an internal review of the projects according to the criteria set out in this document and we hope to be able to feed back an outcome by **01 April 2026**.

Projects must be delivered before the end of the financial year (**31 March 2027**) and groups will be required to provide regular progress updates and financial statements on their projects.

### Eligible locations

Any groups applying for funding must be located within 5 miles of a Chiltern Railways managed station (list on the following page). Successful projects will ideally relate to improvement activity at, or within the community next to, one of our stations.

### Application and questions

If you have any further questions about this funding scheme, please contact us on [community@chilternrailways.co.uk](mailto:community@chilternrailways.co.uk), or make an application direct through our online form at <https://forms.microsoft.com/e/4vT45RtGDT>.

## Our Managed Stations:

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Only projects within 5 miles of Chiltern Railways managed stations are eligible to apply for Community Investment Fund. A list of these stations is provided below:

- Aylesbury
- Aylesbury Vale Parkway
- Banbury
- Beaconsfield
- Bicester North
- Bicester Village
- Birmingham Moor Street
- Denham
- Denham Golf Club
- Dorridge
- Gerrards Cross
- Great Missenden
- Haddenham & Thame Parkway
- Hatton
- High Wycombe
- Islip
- Kings Sutton
- Lapworth
- Leamington Spa
- Little Kimble
- London Marylebone
- Monks Risborough
- Northolt Park
- Oxford Parkway
- Princes Risborough
- Saunderton
- Seer Green & Jordans
- Solihull
- Stoke Mandeville
- Sudbury & Harrow Road
- Sudbury Hill Harrow
- Warwick
- Warwick Parkway
- Wembley Stadium
- Winslow

# Application Guidance:

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## Project value

- Minimum project value: **£5,000**
- Maximum project value: **£20,000**
- Match funding is prioritised and can top up the grant funding to **£40,000 (for example - £20,000 from Chiltern Railways and £20,000 from partner organisation)**

## Application deadlines

- Applications open at **00:01 on 15 January 2026**
- Applications close at **23:59 on 10 February 2026**
- Applications after this deadline will not be considered or reviewed

## Projects must

- Be within **5 miles** of a Chiltern Railways managed station
- Provide social, economic or environmental benefits to local communities
- Contain a detailed plan for delivery including project costings
- Organisations applying for funds must have a bank account
- Outline what physical changes would need to take place if involving railway property
- Outline if permission has been granted if the project involves private/public land
- Meet one or more of the project categories listed in this document

## Projects must not

- Apply for funds to generate commercial revenue for the bidding organisation, Chiltern Railways, or any other third-party organisation
- Seek to top-up or replace existing public spending (for example, government-funded education or healthcare facilities)
- Require ongoing financial funding or support beyond 31 March 2027
- Require significant internal support from Chiltern Railways to deliver

## Other key information

- Groups that provide match funding will be prioritised as this maximises the total social value that can be delivered for each project
- For successful applicants, we will provide a contract that outlines the terms and conditions of receiving the funding. This will include providing regular updates to Chiltern Railways and the Department for Transport on project progress and an overview of expenditure to date (including receipts).
- If a project is not delivered within the timeframe (by 31 March 2027) we reserve the right to recoup unspent funding on behalf of the Department for Transport

# Application Categories:

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## Upgrading Buildings or Station Enhancements

- Applicants can put forward a bid to transform or refresh buildings or assets at Chiltern Railways stations
- Applicants are required to outline how the building or space would be used and how this benefits the local community and customers
- The project could include installations to existing property such as painting, community artwork or installing murals at our stations
- Please note that internal resource to support these schemes is limited within Chiltern Railways, so the bidding group will need to manage the upgrade/enhancement process with guidance from Chiltern Railways (leaseholder) and Network Rail (landlord).
- The group responsible for delivering the project should approach Chiltern Railways to see if any consent is required for the project to take place

## Wayfinding, Tourism and Rail Trails

- These projects could include adding wayfinding, artwork or creating routes to make public or active travel easier for customers to understand through improved signage
- This could also include promoting local leisure and tourist attractions, business groups or destinations accessible by sustainable means

## Sustainability

- These projects could promote sustainable travel such as cycling and walking connections from our stations
- They could also include investing in green infrastructure to improve biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions and improve the overall environment at stations for local communities
- This could include gardening or planting projects, converting spaces into new community gardens or nature based educational trips for local people

## Education

- These projects could contribute to the social and economic development of local communities through the delivery of projects within schools, charities or other disadvantaged groups
- For example, school education programmes on rail safety, trips for underrepresented or disadvantaged social groups, or the promotion of accessible transport modes

## Previous Project Examples:

### **Marylebone on Display** (Baker Street Quarter Partnership)



An art-therapy led exhibition at London Marylebone showcasing work by women experiencing homelessness, giving them a public platform and enhancing the station environment.

### **Rail Roots** (The Tree Council)



A biodiversity and tree-planting initiative at Aylesbury, Gerrards Cross and Stoke Mandeville, engaging volunteers in creating greener, healthier spaces around the railway and building more welcoming stations.

### **Welcome to Wycombe**

(Chiltern Rangers and Buckinghamshire New University)



A station enhancement project at High Wycombe combining new artwork and planting schemes to promote local heritage and improve biodiversity and customer experience for those travelling through the station.

### **Missenden Mural**

(Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre)



A large-scale mural at Great Missenden co-designed by local sixth-form students and an artist to celebrate local literary heritage and enabling young people to develop project management skills.



Chiltern railways