Have your say on community funding for Barrow

Wednesday 20 May, 2026

An exciting funding programme for community projects in Barrow, led by local residents, is back for a second year.

In total, £85,000 of grant funding is available to support community projects and help those in need in the town.

The funding, managed by Cumbria Community Foundation on behalf of Team Barrow, has been provided by the UK Government and Team Barrow's Delivery Board through a grant from the Social Impact Fund, which aims to make Barrow a better place to live, work, study, visit, and invest in.

Residents keen to be involved are asked to bring their local knowledge and ideas to three community panel workshops this summer. Members of the panel will decide what kinds of projects the money should support and who should be able to apply.

The programme ran for the first time last year, when panel members chose the name the People Helping People Fund. Groups supported by the fund were invited to a celebration event at The Bridge in Barrow on Thursday (14 May).

Projects supported last year include Woodland Wellbeing at Leslands, a social enterprise based on farmland on the outskirts of Barrow. Small groups of adults meet there once a week to grow produce, upcycle furniture, and take part in other activities such as arts and crafts, with the aim of boosting emotional, physical, and mental health.

Founder Elaine Carter said: "I wanted to do something that really made a difference, taking into account what people said they needed and wanted. Our goal is to create a safe, inclusive, and sustainable community space where individuals can develop confidence, resilience, and transferable skills to lead fulfilling, independent lives. We're all really passionate about it."

Group participant Debbie had not left the house for two years before going along to her first Woodland Wellbeing session. Now, her confidence and wellbeing has improved so much, she has been made a director. She said: "It's a real honour, something I'm quite proud of. Elaine is kind, compassionate… she knows how to treat people as equals. I love it here."

Matt Ryder received a grant from the People Helping People Fund to organise guided short walks and activities designed to build skills, confidence and social connections for minority groups in Barrow.

After the first walk, with members of the Furness Multicultural Community Forum and Furness Refugees Society, he said: "Despite a few muddy detours, and plenty of laughter along the way, the day was filled with joy, connection, and discovery. Watching people explore new places, build friendships, and simply enjoy the beauty of the outdoors was truly inspiring.

"Moments like these remind us how powerful community can be – bringing people together, creating belonging, and sharing experiences that uplift us all."

Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice and Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, said: "The People Helping People Fund was a huge success, and we're incredibly grateful to be able to run this programme again, thanks to funding from Team Barrow's Social Impact Fund.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for people from all walks of life to get involved in shaping how funding is distributed across Barrow. Whether you bring lived experience, professional insight, or simply a passion for supporting your community, your voice matters. It's a chance to learn, share ideas, meet new people and build connections, while making a real difference to local lives."

Nat Wealleans-Turner, Community and Social Impact Lead at Team Barrow said: "Team Barrow recognises and values the strength, passion, and expertise within our local communities. We believe it's critical to involve local people from all backgrounds in shaping and guiding our work, as we deliver The Plan for Barrow – making Barrow a healthy, happy, and thriving place to live, work, and visit.

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“We are delighted to grow our strategic partnership with Cumbria Community Foundation over the next four years drawing on their extensive experience in grant making, and to see the positive impact their collaboration with Cumbria Development Education Centre has on the continued development of this exciting participatory element of our Social Impact Fund.

“Year One of the People Helping People Fund has been hugely successful, with local people making decisions about how the fund operates and how funding is allocated making a real, and lasting difference in their communities."

Barrow residents can apply now to join this year’s community panel.

The workshop dates are as follows, at Piel View House in Barrow Park on Abbey Road:

- Monday 29 June, 10am to 2pm
- Monday 6 July, 10am to 2pm
- Monday 13 July, 10am to 2pm

Food will be provided and those who attend all three workshops will receive a voucher of their choice as a thank you for their time and input.

There will be an online information session about becoming a panel member on Thursday 4 June at 1pm. If you would like to attend, contact Laura Goad at Cumbria Development Education Centre on 015394 31602 or email laura@cdec.org.uk for joining details.

To apply to become a panel member, register your interest using this link: https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/BarrowParticipatoryGrantMakingScheme2026.

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