

ArtRoots Fund Guidelines

Enhancing the National Cycle Network

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust | Scotland & England | 2026/27

About ArtRoots

ArtRoots allows communities to make creative improvements to the National Cycle Network (NCN). We provide grants towards projects that will enhance spaces along traffic-free routes, aiming to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling.

ArtRoots empowers communities to plan and deliver what they want and how to make it happen. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust provides funding for projects, and the ArtRoots officer will support you with advice and help where required.

The key point of ArtRoots is that the community manages the project and shapes the outcome. Engaging and delivering locally is essential to a successful project. Communities play a crucial role in encouraging active travel by making areas more enjoyable or interesting to travel through.

By increasing walking, wheeling and cycling, traffic congestion is reduced, public health improves, and carbon emissions and air pollution are lowered.

This document provides an overview of the key elements to consider before applying for the fund. Further information about existing and past ArtRoots projects can be viewed on the ArtRoots interactive map on the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust website.

The ArtRoots Fund in Scotland is funded by Transport Scotland and in England by Active Travel England. Branding requirements for your funder will be shared with you on award.

Accessibility

We want ArtRoots to be accessible to as many people as possible. If you would like to apply but feel you would benefit from some support, please contact us. We are happy to help.

Email: artroots@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

Phone: 07971009400 (Monday to Thursday, 9:00 to 4:00)

We can offer:

- A paper or Word version of any form
- Support by phone or video call to go through the application together

- Large print or alternative formats
- Extended deadlines where needed
- Translation support where possible

Access Fund

If your group has additional costs linked to access needs, such as communication support, accessible venue hire or materials in alternative formats, you may be able to request an Access Fund top-up of up to 10% of your grant. For example, on a £2,500 grant you could request up to £250 of access support. This is assessed on a case by case basis.

Ask us about this at any stage. You do not need to wait until your full application to raise it.

General Criteria

- All ArtRoots projects must take place on a traffic-free section of the NCN or be immediately visible from or adjacent to the NCN, such as on a connecting ramp.
- A community group is defined as an organised group of people who come together on a voluntary basis for the benefit of the local community. A constituted community group has a management committee, a constitution and its own bank account.
- We will prioritise applications which clearly demonstrate community need, the intended impact of the proposed project, and how the project will lead to an increase in awareness and usage of the NCN.
- Applications will be assessed on the strength of the project idea, community need and community involvement, not on how polished the writing is. We encourage groups of all sizes and experience levels to apply. Support is available if you would like help preparing your application.
- Grants will be offered at the discretion of the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust awarding panel.
- Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement confirming their understanding of the funding requirements and commitment to delivering the project.
- The 2026/27 ArtRoots funding round is open for applications from 16 June 2026 / 14 July 2026. Applications will close on 14 July 2026 / 25 August 2026. The fund may close earlier if all available funding is allocated before this date. All projects must be completed and grants claimed by 15th March in Scotland and 1st September in England
- By submitting the application, groups agree for their projects to be used as case studies by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. This includes photographs and project details for publicity and reporting purposes.

Application Process

Who can apply?

- All applicants must be embedded in the community and the project must be community-led.
- Any constituted community group in Scotland / England is eligible to apply for an ArtRoots grant.

- Non-constituted community-based groups, individuals or organisations may be considered at the discretion of Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. If you are unsure whether your group is eligible, please contact us before submitting an Expression of Interest.
 - Only one grant application can be made per community group, per financial year.
 - To be considered, all prospective applicants must first complete an Expression of Interest. You can do this online or by requesting a paper or phone version from the ArtRoots team. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust staff will be in contact within two weeks to provide feedback or an invitation to submit a full application.
 - If invited to apply, applicants submit their application via the online project portal or, on request, by email or post. Please tell us at any stage if you need an alternative route and we will arrange it. You will have a minimum of three weeks from invitation to submit your full application. If you need more time, please contact us.
-

Funding Available

- The standard maximum grant for ArtRoots NCN projects is £2,500. A higher award of up to £6,000 may be available if applicants can demonstrate that their project would significantly increase or raise awareness of active travel through wide community engagement.
 - Applicants will be required to source any additional funding for goods or services totalling more than the ArtRoots grant. This funding must be secured and evidenced in the application.
 - If your group has additional costs related to access needs, for example translation, communication support, accessible venue hire or printing in alternative formats, you may be able to apply for an Access Fund top-up. This is up to 10% of the grant amount, assessed separately and on request. Contact us to discuss: artroots@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk or 07971009400.
-

Funding Conditions

- The grant can cover services provided by external contractors such as, but not limited to, artists, designers, construction workers and engineers.
- Funding project management fees is possible but assessed on a case by case basis by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. If approved, project management fees cannot exceed 10% of the total amount requested and can only be claimed after the project has been completed and the final project report submitted.
- The total cost of the proposal should include the cost of materials, delivery, and installation where applicable.
- Quotes must be obtained and submitted with the application as evidence of the anticipated costs of the project prior to receipt of any grant from the ArtRoots Fund. If obtaining quotes at application stage is difficult, please contact us. We can advise on what is needed and whether the application can proceed while quotes are being gathered.
- Recoverable VAT is not an eligible cost and should not be included in the application. Non-recoverable VAT is an eligible cost and can be included in the total award. You must be able to demonstrate that any VAT being claimed is non-recoverable. If you

are unsure whether your organisation can recover VAT, please contact us or check with your finance contact before submitting.

- Grant recipients will be obliged to make repayment of all funding received in the event of a breach of the conditions of grant. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will always discuss any difficulties with you before taking this step and we encourage you to contact us as early as possible if you are experiencing delays or challenges.

Grants Criteria

- Funding applications are for grants. These will help fulfil the general criteria outlined above. Grants will be considered on their individual merit by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. Applications will be assessed on community need, feasibility, community involvement and intended impact. Presentation quality is not a scoring criterion. If your application would benefit from support before submission, please get in touch.
- Projects can include work that improves a sense of safety, belonging and local identity along the route, not only decorative or standalone artworks. ArtRoots has clear funding boundaries: it funds artworks, placemaking and related creative outputs on or near the NCN and cannot fund path construction, general path maintenance or structural repairs. Within those boundaries, there is real scope for projects that sit alongside other funding streams to improve access and local impact.
- Please see Appendix 1 for a list of examples of what can and cannot be applied for with the grant.
- No part of the grant shall be used to support option appraisals or feasibility studies which cannot be properly capitalised in accordance with proper accounting practice.
- No part of the grant shall be used to support any activity carried out, or material published by the grantee, which is partly political in intention, use, or presentation, or appears to be designed to affect support for a political party.
- In carrying out the project, recipients must comply with all relevant legislation.

Landowner Permission

- Landowner permission may be required for your project. For example, planning permission if you are installing an artwork, or event permission if you are organising an event. Please confirm with your local authority whether you will need permission for your proposed project and include costs where applicable.
- Landowner permission should be in place at application stage where possible. If you do not yet have permission at the time of application, please explain your timeline for obtaining it and who you have already contacted. Applications will not automatically be rejected if permission is pending, provided a clear plan is in place.

If you are unsure whether permission is required, check with your local authority.

Community Involvement

- Evidencing community involvement is a crucial element of the fund. Applicants must describe which communities are engaged and in what way they will participate in the delivery of the project.
- Community involvement does not need to be large-scale or formally documented. It can include informal conversations with neighbours, involvement with a local school or community centre, or working with local artists or volunteers. What matters is that local people have shaped the project.

Applicants will be asked to provide any relevant examples of previous community engagement or examples of working with local organisations.

Design

Copies of any design documents or artists' briefs for the proposed project should be attached to the application. If these are not available at this stage, applicants should attach a description of how they will choose the design for the art project.

If you are planning to commission a local artist, this description can be brief. Just tell us how you will involve the community in choosing the design and who you are considering working with.

Environment and Ecology

We are required to consider the ecological impact of funded projects. At application stage, you will be asked a small number of questions about your proposed site, including whether vegetation will need to be removed, whether the site is near water, whether invasive species are present, and whether your installation includes light or sound features.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will carry out desk-based checks using the Ecological Constraints Tool to see whether the proposed site falls within or near any designated areas such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves or Priority Habitats. We will contact you if this raises any issues that need further assessment.

We also welcome projects that consider ecological opportunities. For example, incorporation of bee bricks, nature-themed design, native planting, habitat features or use of materials that support wildlife.

Promotion

Promotion is a requirement of this grant. Your promotion plan does not need to be detailed at application stage. A brief outline of how you plan to share news of the project locally is enough.

The plan must acknowledge Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and Transport Scotland / Active Travel England as funders. Logos and guidance will be provided on award.

Promotion can include local social media, community newsletters, noticeboards, local press, word of mouth or events. Online promotion is not required.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will supply an official ArtRoots plaque to be installed alongside projects that result in a permanent artwork.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust retains the right to use details about the projects, including photographs, for publicity purposes and case studies.

Maintenance

All permanent artworks and installations require a maintenance plan. The level of detail should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of your project. For most small community projects, a brief description of who is responsible, how often the artwork will be checked, and what you would do if it needed repair is enough.

If vandalism or anti-social behaviour is already a concern in your area, please describe how you plan to manage this and who would be involved. You do not need to have all the answers at application stage. This is something we can work through together after award.

The maintenance plan will need to be agreed with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and the relevant landowner.

Application Feedback

Once the application window closes, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will aim to respond to all applications within 3 weeks. Applicants should not make financial commitments until they have received a formal written offer of a grant.

Applicants will be given the opportunity to adjust their applications in response to feedback to ensure a fair and equal process which is not defined by how well an application is written.

All applicants, successful and unsuccessful, will receive individual feedback. If your application is not funded, we will explain why and, where relevant, suggest how you might strengthen a future application or find alternative support.

If you have not heard from us within the timeframe above, please get in touch.

Grant Offer, Agreement and Claim

- A grant offer with agreement will be sent to successful applicants.
- The grant agreement sets out the terms and conditions to be followed and must be signed and returned before the release of any funds.
- A grant claim form with appropriate account details must be completed on the project portal and authorised by two representatives of the project before any funds will be released. If you are unable to access the portal, or prefer not to use it, please contact us and we will arrange an alternative route for submitting your claim.
- Copies of quotes, receipts or paid invoices must be attached to the authorised form which equate to the sum of the entire project proposal and not just the grant element. If your project involves costs that are difficult to evidence through standard invoices, for example community volunteers, donated materials or informal contributions, please speak to us before submitting your claim. We can advise on how to document this appropriately.
- It may be possible to receive funding prior to any costs for the works being incurred. This must be approved by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust before the grant is offered.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

A short final project report is required after completion of your project. A simple template will be provided. The report should include a brief description of what was delivered, a few photographs showing before and after where possible, and a note on how the project was received in the community. Reports can be submitted by email if the portal is not accessible.

A feedback form is also required and must be submitted within one month of the project completion date. We will provide the form and explain what is needed.

Submitting a final project report and feedback form on time is a condition of your grant. Failure to submit the required reports and feedback within the agreed timescales, or failure to deliver the project in line with the agreed grant terms, may result in a requirement to repay all or part of the grant funding received. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will always discuss any difficulties with you before taking this step, and we encourage you to contact us as early as possible if you are experiencing delays or challenges.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust retains the right to gather data and carry out a review before, during and after the project to assess its effectiveness.

Claimants must keep and maintain proper accounting records of expenditure in the implementation of their project. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust must be given access to these records, after giving prior written notice, at any time within the period of five years after the date of receipt of the grant.

Site Visit

Once the grant is awarded, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust may be in touch to arrange visits to view the project at any stage of its progress. Visits will be arranged at a time that suits you and we are happy to use video call where preferred.

Funding Timeline and Milestones

The following is the expected timeline for the 2026/27 ArtRoots round. Please note that dates are flexible on a case by case basis. Contact us to discuss what is possible for your project.

- Expression of Interest submitted. The fund is open from 16 June 2026 / 14 July 2026.
- Walk Wheel Cycle Trust officer responds within 2 weeks with feedback or an invitation to submit a full application.
- If invited, you can register on the project portal and begin your application, or request an offline form. You have a minimum of 3 weeks from the invitation to submit your full application.
- Applications close on 14 July 2026 / 25 August 2026. The fund may close earlier if all available funding is allocated.

- Once the application window closes, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust will aim to respond to all applications within 3 weeks. You will be approved, declined with feedback, or given feedback for revision.
 - If successful, you will receive a grant offer and agreement. The agreement must be signed and returned before any funds are released.
 - The grant can then be claimed via the portal or by alternative arrangement. Please note that it can take up to four weeks to receive the funds after submission of a grant claim.
 - Complete your project by 15th March 2027 (Scotland) or 1st September 2027 (England)
 - Submit your final project report and feedback form within one month of the project completion date.
-

Appendix 1

Examples of what can be applied for

- Sculptures, murals and mosaics
- Artistic benches and seating
- Decorative signage
- Planters and plant pots
- Interpretation boards
- Interactive objects and equipment
- Transient art (e.g. temporary installations, live performances, events)
- Lighting
- Paint
- Hand tools needed to complete the project
- Repairs and improvements to existing artwork and interpretation
- Contractor fees such as construction workers, designers, and artists
- Project management fees (at the discretion of Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, see Funding Conditions)
- Tool and machinery hire
- Local press advertisement
- Planning and event permission
- Insurance

Examples of what cannot be applied for

- The construction of paths
- General path maintenance or re-surfacing
- Structural repairs to existing infrastructure, e.g. walls, bridges
- Recoverable VAT for organisations who can recover their VAT costs

These are not exhaustive lists and applications can include things which do not appear here. Please contact us to discuss your ideas.

All applications will be considered on merit of the potential impact and sustainability of the grant spend as well as funding available.

For any queries, please contact our team:

artroots@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

Phone: 0117 926 8893 (Monday to Thursday, 9:00 to 4:00) - Ask for a call back from the Artroots team.