

# Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Fund



## Community Asset Maintenance Fund Applicant Guidance

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Fund. The fund replaces previous EU rural development fund LEADER and forms part of the Scottish Government's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme. It involves similar bottom-up decision making to Ayrshire LEADER, delivered by representatives from the local area: the Local Action Group (LAG).

### Fund Structure, 22/23

Body	Role
ARIA Fund LAG	Fund leads, decide on all aspects of fund including grant allocation.
South Ayrshire Council	Lead Partner, administers fund/manages staff on behalf of LAG.

This document provides applicant guidance for the ARIA Community Asset Maintenance fund process and **should be read carefully before applying**.

Applicants are **strongly advised** to submit a **draft application** to the staff team **before the closing date** for review. **Reviews may not be available after the closing date**.

## 2. The Community Asset Maintenance Fund

Community buildings are a great asset – they can cement ‘place’ and provide a bedrock for communities. But what about maintenance? The condition of most community buildings is usually unknown<sup>1</sup>, and when issues manifest they tend to be larger scale than expected<sup>2</sup>, leaving the community grappling for money/resources to address.

The Community Asset Maintenance Fund seeks to address this. It aims to provide funding for a property condition register for each asset detailing the condition of the building both internally and externally. This would also provide a list of costed repairs<sup>3</sup> and proposed maintenance schedule with indicative dates for periodic maintenance (eg: external décor, gutter clearance etc). The report and register would be like a quinquennial survey – a mandatory 5-year survey required by churches/religious buildings which works by providing that critical ‘stitch in time’.

The fund also provides £2k upfront funding for a sink fund to finance repairs.

## 3. Pre-Application Engagement

Applicants **must engage with the ARIA Fund staff before applying**. Applications from applicants who have not committed to this step **will not be accepted**.

Applicants can do this via the ARIA expression of interest form. The **eligibility criteria** should be read prior to committing to this step. The expression of interest form is available at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund)

Further information will be given in information sessions or, where applicable, 1:1 slots.

Applicants are **strongly advised** to submit a **draft application** to the staff team **before the closing date** for review. **Reviews may not be available after the closing date**.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to insufficient information/a register not being developed/maintained.

<sup>2</sup> Tendency to focus on superficial aspects or items requiring urgent attention, rather than internal/external structure/envelope.

<sup>3</sup> Repairs would typically be scheduled in a traffic light system, detailing urgent items in red, those pending attention in amber and items to be monitored in green.

## 4. Key Dates

- **WC 19-6-23**, launch of fund.
- **29-9-23, midnight**, closing date.
- **Early-mid Nov** - applications assessed.
- **Early-mid Nov** – grant award letters issued.
- NB: Project spend should not be incurred before, in the case of successful projects, the grant award letter has been signed, returned and this has been receipted. Project spend should be planned from this date.
- **28-2-24** – final date for project/claims completion.

## 5. Grant Specifications

1. Grant size maximum - £7k. This comprises cost for condition survey/register, and a £2k upfront allowance for a repair/maintenance sinking fund.
2. Grant requests of **up to 90% of total project (condition register + sinking fund) costs** will be accepted (at least 10% match funding) required.
3. **Match funding** should:
  - Account for at least 10% of total eligible project costs.
  - Be in 'cash', not 'in-kind'.
  - Be in place at time of application.

### 4. Grant Payments

The grant will be paid as an 50% upfront payment with two payments of approximately 25% in arrears. The final 25% will be paid on project completion, with:

- Valid cost evidence for survey/register.
- Evidence of register in place.
- Monitoring requirements fulfilled.
- Where groups have an action plan/business plan (please see Eligible Organisations), preference will be for applicants to provide evidence the maintenance schedule with costings has been incorporated into this.

## 6. Assessment

Applications will be assessed by the ARIA Fund staff in a technical check, which covers eligibility, costs alignment, submission of supporting documents etc. Those with best fit will be forwarded to the LAG for assessment.

## 7. Eligibility

### Eligible Area

The eligible area is rural and islands (Arran and Cumbrae) Ayrshire defined by the eligible area map available at <https://tinyurl.com/LAGArea23>

Please use the finder tool at the top right of the map to check that your **project falls within the eligible area**.

Please note, the organisation **does not have to be registered within the Ayrshire eligible area if delivering a project within it** to be eligible.

## Fund Priorities

The table below shows the ARIA Fund priorities. Projects in the Community Asset Maintenance Fund are deemed to hit the Community Wealth Building priority – to develop community assets for their environmental/financial sustainability. The table is provided for your information.

ARIA Priority		Objective
<b>Community Wealth Building (CWB)</b> Please refer to ARIA Community Wealth Building Guidance at <a href="http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund">www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund</a>		To support communities, organisations and enterprises to apply/engage with CWB.*
<b>Quality of Life</b>		To support communities to maintain a good quality of life for all age groups/capabilities.
<b>Enterprise</b>	Rural Enterprise including Community Enterprise	To support rural/community enterprises, especially in key sectors** to develop and grow.
	Rural Jobs	To support local people to access jobs closer to home with a higher wage bracket, created/safeguarded by rural/community enterprises.
<b>Net Zero</b>  Please refer to Net Zero for Communities guidance at <a href="http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund">www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/ariafund</a>	Climate Change Mitigation	To support projects that contribute to/escalate progress towards net zero ambitions through lowering of carbon emissions.
	Just Transition	To support job transition to the green economy, with rural/community enterprise.
	Climate Change Adaptation	To develop the region’s natural assets which would enhance carbon sequestration/flood attenuation/ biodiversity/local supply chain development***

\* Community Wealth Building is about retaining wealth, jobs and enterprises in the local area to create more sustainable and resilient rural and island economies. ARIA aims to support communities, organisations and enterprises to apply Community Wealth Building approaches to their activities.

\*\*Eg: tourism, food & drink, accommodation, social care.

\*\*\*ARIA will support principal funders eg: NatureScot, Peatland Action on carbon sequestration activities where applicable.

## Eligible Organisations

Community groups/third sector organisations with a constitution/incorporation and a community asset:

- Acquired through Community Asset Transfer/other means.
- With a long-term lease (at least 5 years post project completion), conferring responsibility for maintenance/repairs on the tenant. This clause should be clearly marked or stated in a supporting document.
- Preference will be given to groups with a significant term left to serve on their lease.

- Preference will also be given to groups who have an long term, 5 – 10 year action plan/business plan into which the maintenance schedule can be incorporated.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Where this is not in place, please consider the ARIA Communities into Action fund, to develop/refresh/action Community Action Plans.

### Eligible Activity

The ARIA Community Asset Maintenance Fund covers two elements of eligible activity:

- A survey to determine a property condition register for the community asset. The survey should include costings for repairs/maintenance.
- A £2k upfront payment for a maintenance/repair sinking fund.

### Ineligible Activity

- Expenditure committed prior to receipted return of ARIA grant award letter (successful applicants) - expected to be early Nov 23.
- VAT reclaimable by the applicant.

## 8. Supporting Documents

The following applicable supporting documentation should be supplied with your application.

<b>Document</b>
<b>Constitution/governing document.</b>
<b>Incorporation document if applicable.</b>
<b>Accounts:</b> latest year of accounts (audited/examined if thresholds reached).
<b>3 months' bank statements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the account the grant would be paid into.</li> <li>• As close to the date of application as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence that match funding</b> is in place.
<b>VAT certificate.</b> where applicable.
<b>Asset evidence:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valid title deeds.</li> <li>• Valid long-term lease (in place at least 5 years' post project completion) conferring responsibility for maintenance/repairs on tenant.</li> <li>• Statement (please provide)/mark on lease showing clearly clause conferring responsibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Where applicable:</b> group action plan/business plan.
<b>Letters of support,</b> to evidence the Local Support section of the application form.
<b>ARIA Equal Opportunities Form</b>