

Platinum Jubilee fund creates boost for village halls

England's village halls are set to benefit from a major new renovation fund launched by the Government today (28 May 2022) to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

At the heart of rural life and communities, village halls are home to fitness classes, coffee mornings, community groups, jumble sales, art clubs and post office services – even in the most remote of locations. They often provide the only place for a community to meet and socialise locally and are vital in tackling loneliness, providing a lifeline for those who can't travel long distances.

The new £3 million grant fund announced today will be a significant boost to rural communities with 125 village halls set to benefit, allowing vital modernisation and improvements to take place.

Bigger, brighter, contemporary spaces will encourage more people to make use of their village halls, and bring people together.

Lord Benyon, Minister for Rural Affairs said:

Village halls are the centrepiece of rural life and funding their renovation to mark the Jubilee is a fitting tribute to The Queen's Service.

In a changing world, they are important facilities for community groups, social clubs and local services. This funding will ensure they are central to the fabric of our villages for many more years to come.

Margaret Clark CBE, Chair of the Rural Coalition said:

Village halls provide the focal point for village life. They support important services and facilities and offer places to meet which would not otherwise be available to many rural communities. In doing so, they have a crucial role to play in helping levelling up in rural areas.

I welcome the new Platinum Jubilee Fund, announced today, which will allow more village halls to upgrade and modernise their premises, so that they can continue to meet the needs of their communities in the years to come.

David Emerson CBE, Chair of Action with Communities in Rural England said:

We are delighted to know that through this capital funding programme, the Government is renewing its support for village halls in this jubilee year. At the heart of rural communities for over a century, these unique volunteer run halls do so much to support the well-being of local residents, as well as helping to sustain the many livelihoods which depend on use of these important buildings.

This is an announcement that is especially appropriate in the week that 1000s of halls across the country are hosting local celebrations of the Royal Jubilee.

Chris Cowcher, Head of Policy, Plunkett Foundation:

The Platinum Jubilee Renovation Fund for village halls is a real cause for celebration! Many village halls host community-owned businesses, such as local shops, markets and post offices, they create a real beating heart to their villages that, not only, provides vital services but reaches out to the vulnerable, isolated and lonely. We hope this fund will support more community enterprises and quite simply help rural places to thrive.

The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund will provide grant funding over three years (to 2025) to support capital improvement projects for village halls, such as installing Wi-Fi, extending buildings and modernising facilities.

The announcement today builds on previous Government support for village halls. Defra has supported the modernisation of village halls in England through the previous Village Halls Improvement Grant Fund (VHIGF). This fund, launched in 2019, supported projects to modernise 125 village halls, which together with other sources of finance enabled village hall improvements of over £17 million.

The Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund will build on the success of the schemes to commemorate both Queen Victoria and King George, and demonstrate that almost 200 years on, we continue to build on the legacy of the monarchy, both past and present with another 125 village halls who will carry on this legacy.

Details on how the funding will be administered will be announced in due course.