

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU (WM2U – MAKE IT HAPPEN FUND (MIHF) UPDATE REPORT SEPT 2025

We are delighted to share the latest Make It Happen Fund briefing. We are grateful to every funder for their ongoing support, BBC Children in Need, The Hunter Foundation, The Robertson Trust, and the William Grant Foundation; We continue to communicate with other appropriate funders to grow the WM2U MIHF to deepen impact.

This latest update provides an overview of progress to date of the MIHF in Clackmannanshire as we make strong progress.

Our thanks to Debbie Kaney from Corra for her support and expertise in delivering training to the panels and being alongside the panels at every step in support of their work.

Our thanks also to the staff teams in Clackmannanshire for supporting this work. Most of all to the volunteers who have stepped up to form the decision-making panels. It is a privilege to work alongside them.

Clackmannanshire

The Make It Happen Fund (MIHF) Clackmannanshire Decision-Makers

What Matters to You (WM2U) continues supporting Clackmannanshire's strengthening of community voice through the recruitment of local community volunteers to design the grant criteria and decision-making process for the Fund with the support of The Corra Foundation.

Following the WM2U Community Gathering in May 2025, volunteers for 3 panels, broadly aligned with Clackmannanshire's 3 High School catchment areas of Alloa, Lornhill and Alva, came together to undertake 4 training sessions run by WM2u and Corra in June.

The training sessions were located and timed to meet the accessibility and timing needs identified by the volunteers. In this phase, £30,000 will be distributed with £10,000 allocated to each of the 3 panels.

The Grassroots Make It Happen Fund – The Alloa and Lornhill Panels Uniting



At the first training session we asked the Panel '*what matters to you?*' The panel wished to work together to ***'build on community spirit and leave a legacy for our young people as they are our citizens of the future'***.

Reflecting on coming together one panel member said: ***"we might be small county, but we are mighty when we come together."*** Another said: ***"I'm optimistic, coming together to share what matters to us makes me feel that this is a start to making a difference in our communities."*** In merging as one panel, the members of both agreed that £10,000 for each of the catchment areas would be ring-fenced.



In further training sessions the panel looked at barriers they perceived to groups applying for funding and identified solutions that helped shape the criteria for grant making.



The 2 panels named themselves the “Grassroots Make It Happen Fund Panel”. It identified that **barriers** for groups applying for funding could be:

- Unaware of funds available
- No access to printer or computer
- Uninformed – don’t know what they could apply for
- Don’t meet the criteria
- Fear of forms
- Groups may need more than what they can apply for – so don’t apply
- Might not think that the group is good enough
- Lack of confidence
- Application is too difficult or uses complicated language or jargon
- They have no idea where to start
- Criteria too tight”.

So, with that collective knowledge of potential barriers, Grassroots identified **solutions**:

- Have community information sessions
- Offer support and guidance to complete applications
- Spread the word – campaigning in areas where local people will see
- Groups could still get funding but not the amount that they applied for
- Keep application and guidance simple and short.

The Grassroots Make It Happen funds aims

To benefit children, young people, families, parents, and carers through:

- **Improving the wellbeing of children, young people, families, parents and their carers’.**
- **Improving and supporting the ambitions of the community.**
- **Putting the feel-good factor back into our communities.**

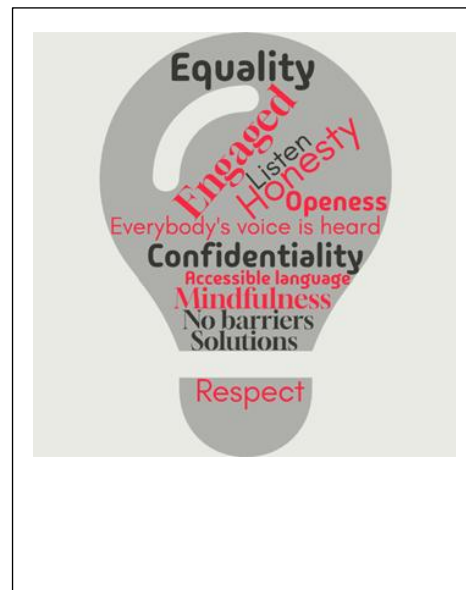
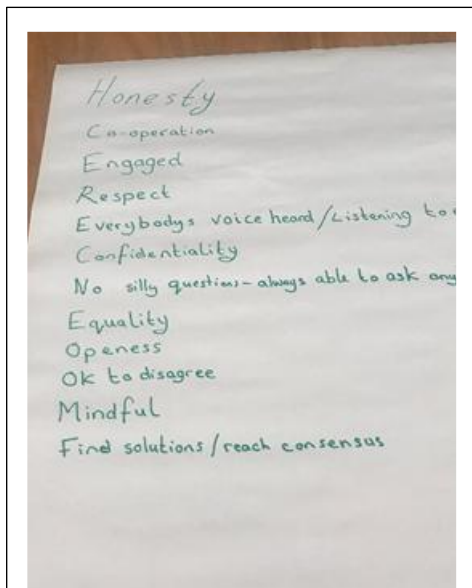
The funding criteria are:

“Organisations based in other parts of Clackmannanshire can apply where the people who live in the areas of Lornshill and Alloa have been fully included in the planning and delivery of the activity. But the activity needs to be delivered in these areas”.

- Keeping it “Grassroots” organisations - Applicant organisations/groups should have an annual income of less than £25,000.
- Groups supporting children or young people that are supported by a larger organisation with an income over £25,000 can apply provided the local group can demonstrate a good degree of independence. For example, where the group of young people are making decisions on activities and are instrumental in the running of those activities.

- The supporting organisation cannot be a public service or statutory organisation such as a school or local authority youth or community development project.
- Young people could apply if the supporting organisation is a charity or a constituted group of interested parents, volunteers or a parent council.
- £500 is the maximum grant that an organisation can apply, limited to one application per organisation or group.

The Hillfoots Make It Happen Fund Panel



The Hillfoots Panel is the third panel covering Alva and the neighbouring villages. It set grant criteria to allow larger organisations and groups to apply with an annual income of no more than £50,000. Its aim is to 'promote inclusion and improve the lives of children, young people, parents, families, carers of young people and young carers of the Hillfoots by:

- Building on Community Spirit, bringing community members together to make a change in their communities and sustain groups to benefit the Hillfoots community.
- Providing affordable, subsidised, or free opportunities and experiences.
- Using the information from applications, the Panel will help inform planning for future funding and services for families in the Hillfoots.

The Panel intends to use information from applications, including those which may not be successful, to identify additional needs. The panel wants to remain involved after the first round of applications and offered to recruit community members who would have never considered volunteering or did not know about the opportunities of the MIHF. The Panel's view is that the MIHF is not just about the money but the process of coming together, learning skills, raising confidence and making a difference locally.

Shared Challenges

Both Grassroots and Hillfoots Panels requested that information on each other's training sessions, progress, learning or any dilemmas were shared on a weekly basis through Jane, the WM2U coordinator, to promote transparency and cohesion across Clackmannanshire communities.

Both understood that they would have to keep their criteria tight to support decision making within available funds and have some examples of the limitations to applicants in their guidance. For example:

- A local authority nursery cannot apply. A group of parents from the nursery who wish to run an activity themselves, can apply. Similarly, Parent Councils of schools can apply to run activities themselves.
- A Community Interest Company (CIC) cannot apply to pay its directors to run an activity. If another organisation (which meets the criteria), wishes to engage the CIC to provide an activity for their organisation, then that organisation can apply for the costs of engaging the CIC.
- An existing organisation cannot apply for its regular core running costs such as office rent, utilities or salaries. It can apply for the costs of a new or existing project. For, example an existing organisation cannot apply for its regular core running costs such as office rent, utilities or salaries. It can apply for the costs of a new or existing activity or project. This might include venue hire, equipment, insurance. For example, an organisation runs several projects in the area. It has a small office with a part-time staff member. The activities are run elsewhere. The organisation cannot apply for the office costs or staff member. It can apply for costs of running the projects, such as venue hire, external tutors, materials.
- A group cannot apply to give cash or vouchers to participants. But it can apply for the costs of providing equipment or uniforms for participants.

Next Steps: Clackmannanshire

Both The Grassroots and Hillfoots Panels are now ready for launch on Thursday 4th September. It will be open for 5 weeks closing on Friday 10th October. Both panels are ambitious for their communities and the fund and want to prevent any barriers to groups or initiatives accessing applications or applying. Therefore, as well as online applications, applicants will be able to access a paper application at several centres across Clackmannanshire. All panel members have volunteered to run 8 community drop-in sessions throughout Clackmannanshire to support applications and to provide an information poster drop in local areas and identifying rural areas which may not have a village hall or shop and social media.

what matters to you

Make it Happen Fund

Where everyone matters

Are you part of a community group looking for funding in the Hillfoots?

The Hillfoots Make It Happen Fund is open for applications from **Thursday 4 September**. To learn more about the fund and receive support with your application, join us at our drop-in information session. You'll also have the chance to meet the volunteer community panel members.

Tues 16 Sept • 10am - 12 noon Cochrane Hall, The Cochrane Hall Park, Alva, FK12 5LJ	Thurs 25 Sept • 7.30pm - 8.30pm Coalsnaughton Village Hall, 30 Main Street, Coalsnaughton, FK13 6JH
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[wm2u.co.uk/hillfoots-make-it-happen-fund](https://www.wm2u.co.uk/hillfoots-make-it-happen-fund)

what matters to you

Make it Happen Fund

Where everyone matters

Are you part of a community group looking for funding in Alloa or Lornshill?

The Grassroots Make It Happen Fund is open for applications from **Thursday 4 September**. To learn more about the fund and receive support with your application, join us at our drop-in information session. You'll also have the chance to meet the volunteer community panel members.

Thurs 18 Sept • 6 pm - 8 pm The Hive, 21 Mill St, Alloa, FK10 1DT	Wed 24 Sept • 12.30 pm - 2pm Tullibody Library, South Campus, The Orchard, Tullibody, Alloa, FK10 2SD
Fri 19 Sept • 10 am - 12 noon The Hive, 21 Mill St, Alloa, FK10 1DT	Thurs 25 Sept • 6.30 pm - 7.30 pm Sauchie Hall, Mars Pl, Alloa, FK10 3EA
Mon 22 Sept • 1.30 pm - 3 pm Sauchie Resource Centre, 11 Mars Pl, Sauchie, Alloa, FK10 3EA	Thurs 25 Sept • 10 - 12 noon The Bruce Lounge, 1 Main St, Clackmannan, FK10 4JA

[wm2u.co.uk/alloa-and-lornshill-make-it-happen-fund](https://www.wm2u.co.uk/alloa-and-lornshill-make-it-happen-fund)

The first awards for the MIHF will be made before Christmas to support groups and initiatives to deliver from January 2026.



The Panels' stories are being documented by Animate the WM2U learning partner and this will be amplified by WM2U's evaluation partner, Dartington which will evaluate the impact of the MIHF in Clackmannanshire by meeting with the community panel members and tracking their journey over the next 10 months through reflective sessions.

For more information on the MIHF in Clackmannanshire, please contact Jane Carter, Clacks WM2U Co-ordinator
jane@whatmatters2u.org.uk

The next briefing will provide more detail on learning and independent evaluation for both Clackmannanshire activity.

One of the significant changes being implemented on feedback from the local MIHF panels to date is to remove the following grant eligibility criterion:

- Grants for individuals to enable families to access the items, experiences or services that matter to them.

The key reasons for this decision are as follows:

1. The feeling of parents that there are adequate existing resources available to meet this need both from a statutory and third sector offering.
2. The difficulty of making individual decisions as quickly as might be required by applicants.
3. The unwillingness to be responsible for a decision that could negatively impact an individual within their community and fear of any subsequent Intimidatory action arising.

We are pleased to discuss this in more detail as required.