

BP Lightsource “Cotesbach Solar Fund”
Cotesbach Parish Council
Adopted December 2025

Introduction / background

- Lightsource BP (a solar developer and operator) completed the installation of a 32.5MW solar farm on the land at Northfield Farm near Cotesbach in late 2022.
- Lightsource BP agreed to donate £1,000 per MW as part of a “Community Benefit”, totalling £32,500. This was received by the Parish Council in early 2023.
- There were no rules, expectations or governance requirements set by Lightsource BP as part of the donation. It was up to the Parish Council how to use the money.
- The money is held in a separate bank account attracting marginally higher interest than the current account, isolated as a savings / reserve account once a decision had been made on how to use it.
- Small amounts have been taken from the balance to pay for unbudgeted requests, e.g. bulbs for the village or funding to support the Village Hall “Natterbox”.
- Discussions took place since receiving the money on how best it can be used, with some investigation into community energy projects but no decisions made until the end of 2025 with these funding principles and process.

The Fund

- The Cotesbach PC Solar Fund has £32,500 available in 2025/26 for eligible community projects. Applications will be accepted from 1st January 2026 with a closing date of 31st December 2026.
- Applications will be decided on a rolling basis as each application is received.
- Groups can apply for grants from a minimum of £100 up to a maximum of £10,000. Awards of larger grants could be given under exceptional circumstances, e.g. evidenced reasons for why a project cannot go ahead for a marginal increase in the £10,000 maximum.
- Applications will not be accepted for amounts greater than the balance available in the fund. The fund balance can be requested from the Parish Council clerk by email.
- The fund will be reviewed and re-publicised on an annual basis.
- Match funding is not a requirement.
- Applicants are expected to first seek funding from other public sources, evidencing where possible why any public funding cannot be secured.

Area of benefit

- Projects must be located within the Cotesbach Parish Council area and primarily benefit residents of Cotesbach.

Project purpose

- Cotesbach is a small village with limited community assets. It has an appealing rural environment which residents value, yet is exposed to significant industrial development nearby. Where possible, village assets, natural spaces, community organisations want to be improved and maintained for residents to enjoy.
- Given these needs and the original source of the funds, priority will be given to projects that align with sustainable development principles, in particular those identified through Harborough District Council including green growth, community involvement and reducing environmental impact. Projects that include the following would be favoured:
 - Projects or initiatives for the benefit of the community.
 - Projects or initiatives that will improve the local environment for the community e.g. through planting or other such enhancements.
 - Projects or initiatives that promote and/or involve the installation of energy efficiency measures, small-scale renewable energy projects and education relating to these.
 - Projects or initiatives that encourage the promotion of wellbeing, good health and community cohesion.
 - Projects or initiatives to support nature conservation, and education relating to this.

Eligible Organisations

- Organisations who can apply include:
 - Local voluntary community groups and charities.

- Cotesbach Parish Council.
- Informal groups of individuals.
- Organisations should have a written constitution / set of rules or governing document.
- A bank / building society account is also required.
- Organisations that have already applied within the application year (or any previous years) can apply for further grants. Organisations can re-apply if unsuccessful at any time.

Exclusions

- Grants are not available for:
 - Commercial organisations (i.e. profit making or otherwise).
 - Projects that only benefit one or a select number of individuals.
 - Projects where there are evident opportunities for alternative funding (a list of potential funding sources from Leicestershire County Council is [here](#) and Harborough District Council [here](#)).

Judging criteria

- The social, economic and environmental benefits which will result from the project or initiative.
- The level of community support for and (where relevant) involvement in the project or initiative.
- The number of people who will benefit from the project or initiative.
- The ability of the applicant to deliver the project or initiative.
- How the work will be continued after the project or initiative has been completed, i.e. its sustainability and legacy.
- Value for money.

Funding process

1. Applicants request an application form by emailing Cotesbach Parish Council Clerk
2. Return the completed form to the clerk alongside any supplier quotes (at least 3 for project costs exceeding £1,000) and supporting material if needed
3. The Parish Council will decide on the application within 21 days. Decisions do not need to be made at a Parish Council meeting, but any decisions outside of a meeting will be ratified and minuted at the following council meeting.
4. The Clerk will make arrangements for payment in line with the proposed project timescales within the application.
5. The Parish Council may ask for evidence of successful completion of the project.