

What would you like to do?

Here are some ideas of what to tell us about your project:

- **What you would like to do**
- **What difference your project will make**
- **Who will benefit from it**
- **How long you expect to run it for. This can be an estimate**
- **How you'll make sure people know about it**
- **How you plan to learn from it and use this learning to shape future projects**
- **Is it something new, or are you continuing something that has worked well previously? We want to fund both types of projects**

We want to encourage social togetherness throughout the rurally isolated communities of the parish of Battle that have been among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. We will achieve this by hosting a programme of music, music appreciation, and music-making for all. Music is a collective experience which can overcome physical distance, since one of the advantages of the auditory domain is that social distancing does not impede social togetherness.

Our rural communities continue to face distinctive challenges during the current crisis, with long-standing systemic health and social inequities that have placed residents at greater risk of COVID-19. In consequence there are few opportunities for personal and social development. This project addresses this need with a programme of music, music appreciation, and music-making to bring people together safely, making them feel better and closer to others. When being part of a collective experience such as these, there is a palpable sense of social solidarity. Music also boosts concentration, self-discipline, listening and aids in developing memory, emotion, and mood.

The project will run this summer, when people are more likely to feel confident about going out into the community. Social distancing measures will be observed as directed by government advice during that time (e.g., seating at tables rather than blocks of seats to ensure a 2-metre distance is kept).

We will ensure as many people participate as possible by promoting the project through our partner organisations throughout the parish. We will gather responses from beneficiaries and use this to inform future work intended to support the rebuilding of our community as we emerge from the current crisis.

How does your project meet our funding priorities?

With the COVID-19 pandemic still with us, we'll continue to support people and communities most adversely impacted by COVID-19. We can support you to:

- **continue to deliver activity - whether your community needs crisis response, recovery or business as usual activity**
- **change and adapt, becoming more resilient to respond to new and future challenges.**

In order to support communities to thrive, we aim to:

- **build strong relationships in and across communities**
- **improve the places and spaces that matter to communities**
- **help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.**

The project takes the universal language and appeal of music and music-making and uses it to encourage greater social togetherness after many months of isolation. People will see each other again and renew a sense of social bonding and association. It will provide a vivid demonstration of just how quickly people can turn to music to express and participate in a sense of belonging. They will enjoy a much greater quality of life than previously.

People will enjoy greater health and social benefits through listening to music, including improved mood, stress reduction, increased memory function, a source of comfort, and enhanced cognitive skills. Therefore, this project will help to produce healthier, happier people, who are much better placed to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis together.

How does your project involve your community?

What do we mean by community?

We believe that people understand what's needed in their communities better than anyone. Tell us how your community came up with the idea for your project. We want to know how many people you've spoken to, and how they'll be involved in the development and delivery of the project.

Here are some examples of how you could be involving your community:

- **Having regular chats with community members, in person or on social media**
- **Including community members on your board or committee**
- **Regular surveys**
- **Setting up steering groups**

We are aware through ongoing dialogues with residents that there are significant issues with rural isolation that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak. Working with local organisations to reach as many residents as possible, we found that:

- People want activities that enable them to go out and meet others after the current crisis and the national lockdown have passed, with many people isolated for an extended, and potentially harmful period.
- Such activities need to be entry-level to be socially inclusive.
- Music was a popular option as an activity because of its broad appeal; music events that had been held locally had proved very popular and people wanted more of them.

We have been guided by residents' tastes and preferences to develop this programme. They also wanted free events where possible and if there was an admission price, it should be at a level that was affordable to as many as possible.

Integral to this project is promoting greater community cohesion. In that cause, we will involve residents in the running of the project through volunteering opportunities, helping us to plan the management of the individual elements of the programme, promoting it in the wider area, and evaluating it.