What's so special about Your Pots?

A short briefing for attendees at the 2026 Your Pots – Your Say community voting event

Your Pots 2026 community grants are helping to build a regenerative economy in Lancaster District. In this fourth and final round, another £50,000 will be distributed through our unique online and face-to-face grant making programme.

This programme is part of the FoodFutures 'Closing Loops' project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund between 2022-27. Your Pots has created an exciting opportunity for the whole community to get involved through voting on who receives a grant of up to £10,000, with £250,000 distributed so far.

The Your Pots process has been developed by Closing Loops partners LESS, Lancaster District CVS and Shared Future CIC. Community co-design is at the heart of the process. Feedback was gathered at the voting events and from focus groups. This fed into design sessions with local people and organisations to refine the process in the following grant cycle.

In November 2023, Closing Loops hosted the first of four annual 'Your Pots – Your Say' community voting events. Your Pots grants are awarded through a participatory budgeting (PB) approach, where members of the public help make decisions on how grants are distributed locally. In 2024 we moved to a larger and more accessible venue to provide a bigger space for networking and for organisations to showcase their work. We used the same venue in 2025, but added the option for online voting to encourage a wider range of people to take part.

In 2026 we are moving to an even larger venue, The Platform in Morecambe, just next to the iconic Midland Hotel and the site of Eden Project North.

What has been achieved so far?

- **£250,067** grant funding distributed
- **54** projects funded
- **77** people joined the first voting event in 2023, compared to…
- **1392** people voting online and in-person in 2025.

Quotes from participants:

'There are some wonderful connections being forged through the project, and I am very conscious of the impact it has had for me and my business.'

'It was great to be part of the conversations ... with members of the community thinking creatively and positively about how we can work together to achieve greater impact for people and sustainability.'

'It's fun to vote!'

We have produced a detailed case study describing the community co-design process over each of the three years. You can view the case study at **https://foodfutures.org.uk/case-studies/your-pots-your-say/**

We also produced a short video of the 2024 Your Pots community voting event, **which you can see here.**

You can also listen to a podcast we produced in 2025, where we interviewed the projects about their experience of bidding for money at the community voting event. **The podcast is available here.**

What is Participatory Budgeting?

In Participatory Budgeting(PB), citizens make decisions over how grant funds and public budgets are spent. PB has been used worldwide and operates at many different scales, from very small budgets within towns or neighbourhoods, to multi-million pound citywide processes.

PB is recognised as an effective way to:

- promote projects, services and investments that matter to communities
- engage and empower residents through deliberation and deciding on funds in their community
- stimulate co-production, trust and responsibility

Find out more about participatory budgeting and how it has been used on the website of Shared Future CIC at https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/participatory-budgeting/

See Your Pots 2026 in action

Participatory budgeting has helped distribute millions over many years in diverse communities. It is gaining in recognition and is starting to be used in Pride in Place areas across the UK.

Your Pots needs to be seen and experienced to understand how this is different from traditional grant making and how it brings far more benefits than simply distributing money.

We would like to invite you to attend the event on Saturday 5th December 2026 at The Platform in Morecambe to see the benefits for yourself. If you're interested in attending, please email Jo Stocking, Pots of Possibility Coordinator at **jo_cl@lessuk.org**.

What has changed in 2026?

Besides moving to a new venue to accommodate even more people at the community voting event, we have refined and improved our online voting based on detailed evaluation after the 2025 event. This will make it fairer for applicants, easier to participate and will streamline our administration. In 2025, around 1300 people voted online and around 80 people voted in person. This year we have improved the online voting platform and hope to grow participation significantly, as well as make more space available for in-person voting on the day.

How online and face-to-face voting will work

Each project will produce a short video to help explain what they hope to do. People at the voting event will watch the videos, meet the projects and ask questions before voting. Online voters must spend time reviewing the videos online before being able to vote. Everyone has to vote for a number of projects, not just one, to help create a level playing field for all projects.

Half of the final score will be from the online vote, and half from those attending the in person event. Obviously people can't vote online and in person!

Want more information, or want to bring this approach to your organisation?

The Closing Loops partners will be busy planning this year's event, but Jez Hall of Shared Future would be happy to have an informal chat with you to answer any questions prior to the 2026 community voting event. Email **jez.hall@sharedfuturecic.org.uk** to arrange a call.

We are planning an information webinar for early 2027 to draw together learning from Your Pots and the smaller Community Pots grants that have also been available over the same period. Together, they form Pots of Possibility, a unique integrated approach to grant making that has helped grow a more regenerative economy in Lancaster District.