

HS2 hits funding milestone, helping more than 200 community projects

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June has seen **HS2** reach a milestone by funding over 200 projects through the Community & Environment Fund (CEF) and Business & Local Economy Fund (BLEF).

Set up in 2017, the programmes have provided over £12 million in funding to community groups and organisations impacted by the construction of HS2.

To date, 205 organisations have received an average grant of £58,000 to fund projects that leave a lasting positive legacy for the local community, including providing funding for new skills training programmes, community facility refurbishments, and establishing new natural environments.

- **HS2 archaeological finds to go on display**
- **HS2: Apprentices, organisations and leaders recognised in Parliament at prestigious awards ceremony**
- **HS2 redesigns Amersham vent shaft headhouse to sit more “comfortably” in environment**

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said: “At its core, HS2 is about bringing communities together across the

UK together and projects such as CEF and BLEF are absolutely vital to achieving this.

“Hitting 200 projects is an extraordinary milestone and testament to the work being done to ensure communities living alongside HS2’s line-of-route have access to worthwhile investments for local projects that will leave a lasting positive legacy.”

Some of the key flagship projects of the scheme have already been completed and are currently in use. To celebrate the funding HS2 Ltd visited the PACCAR scouts site in Buckinghamshire to see funding schemes in action.

Originally awarded funding in September 2020, the campsite is situated on the ridge between Chalfont St. Peter and the River Colne in Buckinghamshire, close to the entrance of HS2’s longest tunnel which is currently under construction by HS2’s main works contractor Align JV.

The PACCAR scouts group has used the funds to build a new state-of-the-art climbing facility which will serve 60,000 young people from across Buckinghamshire and West London each year. The 8-metre tall climbing tower was designed and hand-carved by Bendcrete, a family-run company from Manchester. Bendcrete are also creating an underground adventure caving facility for young people to discover the joys of potholing and caving.

Julie King, HS2 Ltd’s Community Engagement Director, said: “The new climbing facilities on the PACCAR scouts campsite are an excellent example of how communities impacted by HS2 construction can also receive important investment as a result of HS2.

“The over 200 projects already in receipt of funding are just the beginning of our efforts to ensure HS2 leaves a positive legacy for line-of-route communities.”

In Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire, 63 projects have already successfully received over £3.6 million pounds of CEF & BLEF funding since applications opened in 2017.

Previously funded projects included organisations offering employability and tourism support, sports facilities for young people, health & wellbeing activities, heritage facilities and wildlife regeneration projects.

Cathy Elliott, Independent Chair of the HS2 Funds, said: “I am delighted that we have reached the milestone of our 200th awarded project since launching in 2017. We have aimed over the last five years to give back to communities and invest in the widest variety of small to large scale projects which support local communities now and in the future.

“It is always a pleasure to see worthwhile local causes receive awards from HS2’s CEF and BLEF programmes, especially the variety of community facilities we have supported, including the positive work of PACCAR scouts group.”

John Arnold, Chairman of the PACCAR scouts camp, said: “We are grateful to the HS2 CEF fund for supporting our new Climbing Wall and Caving complex project which will allow us to continue to provide

adventure and skills for life to 60,000 young people each year. These new facilities are designed for use by young people of all ages and abilities allowing us to reach every corner of the communities we serve.”

HS2’s Community and Business Funds are administered by independent community charity Groundwork. CEF & BLEF funding is available to community groups and organisations for public benefit and business partnerships impacted by the construction of the London to Birmingham and Birmingham to Crewe phases of the HS2 construction project.

You can find the most up-to-date public information on HS2 Community & Environment (CEF) and Business & Local Economy (BLEF) supported projects along the Phase One and Phase 2a lines of the route via the HS2 Funds map: <https://hs2funds.org.uk/home/projects-funded-by-hs2-funds/#more-2397>