

Photo: Chester Zoo

Ninety nature projects across England have been awarded funding from the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Grants of £68,100 to £1,950,000 will allow work to be carried out at over 600 sites across England. The funded projects vary from insect pathways to tree planting projects, and will also create and support over 2,500 jobs in the environmental sector.

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>
> *Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive at The Heritage Fund*

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said: "The diverse and ambitious projects being awarded funding today will help environmental organisations employ more people to work on tree planting, nature restoration and, crucially, help more of the public to access and enjoy the outdoors."

The projects protecting nature

Some of the initiatives receiving funding today, include:

Bringing the Buzz Back to the City

Urban Green Newcastle and Northumberland Wildlife Trust have been awarded £697,800 to create a network of 45 nectar-rich public sites to protect our precious pollinators.

The work will target young people, with traineeships, volunteering and schools opportunities.



A bee - one of our precious pollinators. Photo: Urban Green Newcastle

Avalon Marshes Wetland Wonderland

Somerset Wildlife Trust, in partnership with RSPB, have received £906,700 for this Wetland Wonderland project. The project will help improve wetland habitats, restore peatland, and improve water quality and connectivity on nature reserves.

The partners aim to remove barriers and seek to engage a wider, more diverse audience with nature.



Children engaging with nature. Photo: Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

More From Trees

The Mersey Forest, through Community Forest Trust, have received £1,326,700 to deliver its Community Forest programme.

The programme will create new green corridors in Liverpool city centre, develop a specialist native species tree nursery, improve wildlife habitats, and deploy natural flood management.

The project will also create a new green taskforce of retrained military veterans and offer nature-based activities to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.



The Mersey Forest team. Photo: Mersey Forest

Chester Zoo Nature Recovery Corridor

Chester Zoo have been awarded £990,500 to create a 6.5 mile nature recovery corridor. The corridor will cover restoration of wetlands, traditional orchards, hedgerows, grasslands and wildflower meadows.

The project will have a focus on addressing demographic inequalities in access to nature by targeting audiences from deprived areas. It will provide opportunities for youth trainees and develop a community volunteer programme.



Great crested newt - a UK protected species set to benefit from the recovery corridor. Photo: Chester Zoo

Trees for Cities

Trees for Cities have been awarded £1,229,600 to increase tree cover in deprived urban areas. 55,000 trees will be planted across 83 locations in seven coastal towns and cities, including projects to celebrate the Queen's Green Canopy (a tree planting initiative).

In partnership with the Field Studies Council, the project will also increase tree-related skills, create learning resources and provide training opportunities for young people.



Trees for Cities team working in Hackney. Photo: Alessio Grigolini

More about the Green Recovery Challenge Fund

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund was developed by Defra to help restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with nature.

This second round of £40m has been delivered to successful applicants by The Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission. It follows a first round of funding where almost £40m was awarded to 69 projects.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive at The Heritage Fund, highlighted the importance of funding nature: “This new funding will not only allow projects to carry out direct conservation essential in protecting our biodiversity, but it will increase awareness of how and why we need to change our behaviours in order to protect our future.”

Take a look at the full list of organisations who have received a Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant.



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Flower beds in Victoria Park in Cardiff



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Photo credit: Eleanor Church

Saving the green spaces that helped us through lockdown