

Credit: Mike Alexander

Wales
Landscapes, parks and nature

Wales' protected natural sites and vital wildlife habitats ? from the Severn Estuary to the Llandegla Moors ? are getting a boost from a new grant scheme.

Improving Wales' network of protected sites

The Nature Networks Fund will provide grants from £50,000 to £500,000 to projects that work within the borders of Wales' protected natural sites. We will be administering the fund on behalf of Welsh Government.

The funding will give a helping hand to some of Wales' most loved species of animals and plants.

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>
> *Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs*

The protected sites are home to iconic wildlife ? such as the otter, bottlenose dolphin and grey seal ? alongside more obscure species, such as the petalwort plant and whorl snails. They are also home to a wide range of birds, including

the critically endangered Atlantic puffin.

The supported sites provide a vital sanctuary and high level of protection to nearly 70 species and more than 50 types of habitat which face threats worldwide.



Horses Flynn and Sol at Craig Gwladus

A vital step

Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, said: “Wales along with the rest of the world faces a nature crisis, with the state of our wildlife and natural habitats declining, threatening extinction to some of our most iconic species.

“The funding Welsh Government has provided to the protected site network is a vital step in protecting and restoring these areas, and helping us to strengthen resilient ecological networks.

“This means we have a better chance to enjoy our wildlife and beautiful national parks today and into the future, which we know pays dividends for our mental wellbeing.

“Places such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest are hugely important to Wales’ wildlife and natural heritage.

“They are cornerstones of our nature recovery work, and protect the range, quality and variety of some of our most important species. I look forward to seeing the exciting projects that arise from the fund that in tandem with the other work Welsh Government is undertaking, builds a green and healthy recovery from coronavirus.”



Skomer Island view

Green recovery

Andrew White, Director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales, said: “Protected sites play a vital role in reversing the effects of climate change and we’re thrilled to be working with the Welsh Government to support Wales’ green recovery through the Nature Networks Fund.

“The Nature Network Fund will also support communities in and around these sites to become involved in this crucial work. This will have direct benefits for health and wellbeing as well as improving the resilience of the sites.”

Find out more

The Nature Networks Fund opens for applications on 12 April. Read the application guidance to find out more.

For further support book onto one of our **webinars**:

- 30 March 4.30?5.30pm
- 6 April 11am?12pm





flourish in Burry Port

My School, My Planet at Whinhill Primary, Inverclyde



onately impacted by COVID-19

CGI visualisation of restored Newport Transporter Bridge

£8.75million boost for Newport Transporter Bridge