Local Places for Nature Capital Fund

See all updates

A grant scheme intended to enable communities in Wales to restore and enhance nature.

Last updated: 22 July 2024. See all updates.

Important

This programme is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

Is this the right programme for you?

- Is your organisation looking to acquire, restore and enhance nature in Wales?
- Will your project transform nature where people live, work and spend their leisure time?
- Do you require a grant up to £250,000?
- Are you a not-for-profit organisation?
- Will your project take place in a peri-urban or urban area of deprivation?

Or a project may be located anywhere in Wales if:

- you are proposing a community food growing project, or
- your organisation/group represents a diverse ethnic community

If you answered yes to these questions then the Local Places for Nature Capital Fund is for you.

Overview

The Local Places for Nature Capital Fund is a grant scheme intended to enable areas of highest deprivation, peri-urban/urban communities, and/or those with least access to nature in Wales to restore and enhance nature 'on your doorstep'. Certain types of project can be funded anywhere in Wales – please see below.

This funding is primarily for:

- projects located or servicing the needs of communities in the 50% most deprived areas **OR**
- community food growing projects anywhere in Wales **OR**
- organisations/groups representing a diverse ethnic community from any part of Wales

If the project area falls within the 50% LEAST deprived of areas, you may still be able to apply for funding. Particularly, if your project will increase the involvement of a wider range of people in natural heritage, and/or if those affected by the project have a specific need. Please email us with brief details, including the postcode of the project site, so we can further advise.

We are offering two levels of grant:

1. £10,000 to £100,000 for capital projects that will acquire, restore and enhance nature in areas of deprivation
2. £100,000 to £250,000. We are offering a limited number of grants up to £250,000. We are particularly interested if your project is located in or near one of the 50% most deprived communities or if you are engaging with a specific need. Deprivation is measured using the overall deprivation measure in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Please use your postcode to check your eligibility against the overall deprivation measure using the interactive map.

If you are seeking a grant between £100,000 and £250,000 please e-mail natur@heritagefund.org.uk before proceeding any further with the process, but please continue to read this grant criteria.

We are particularly looking for projects that can be seen 'from your doorstep'. This means where people live, work, access public services, travel and spend their leisure time.

Funding nature is our joint priority

Nature is our oldest form of heritage. Looking after nature and helping people to understand its importance has never been more relevant. The need to aid nature's recovery is urgent.

That's why funding landscapes and nature is a strategic funding priority for Welsh Government and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Go to our online service to apply now and check the 'how to apply' sections below.

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What the Local Places for Nature Capital Fund offers

- up to one year of grant funding for nature projects worth up to £250,000
- up to 100% funding
- funding for not-for-profit organisations (statutory and third sector) with a bank account and a constitution
- pre-application advice (via email: natur@heritagefund.org.uk)

Requirements

- projects must be able to maintain the asset long term, and provide a maintenance plan as a supporting document to any funding application
- funding cannot be used for the running cost of organisations or routine maintenance costs of existing assets

The programme is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and The National Lottery Heritage Fund. It's **part of Local Places for Nature**, an initiative that aims to restore and enhance nature across Wales.

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Application deadlines and key dates

There are multiple upcoming rounds of the Local Places for Nature Capital Fund.

- Application deadline: 12 noon on 12 March 2024
- Decision by: End May
- Your project completion date: 30 June 2025

- Application deadline: 12 noon on 22 July 2024
- Decision by: End September
- Your project completion date: 8 January 2026

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Stop, Grow, Change for Environmental Growth – what we expect from projects

First Minister's commitment to the Local Places for Nature Actions that make an impact locally

The First Minister of Wales' manifesto commits to halt and reverse the decline in nature and to grow the environment for the benefit of future generations.

Local Places for Nature will enable people to see improvements to the natural environment 'from their doorsteps'. This includes community-led activity and tending to everyday places that we all love.

The scope for Local Places for Nature is broad and we intend it to be locally determined. But it must include at least one of the Local Places for Nature Actions:

1. increase wildflower planting to create pollinator habitat sites
2. create wildlife habitat at a railway station or transport interchange
3. create or restore a community orchard
4. create or restore sensory gardens for therapeutic purposes in health care settings (NHS or charities only)
5. increase local tree planting including street trees, orchards and small woodlands including tiny forests
6. increase community food growing opportunities including the provision of allotments in all areas of Wales

The Local Places for Nature Actions may not be the focus or reason for the project, but should be incorporated to deliver greater value and benefit.

More detailed definitions of what constitutes a Local Places for Nature Action will be sent to all potential applicants when we respond to enquiries.

Projects may intend to:

Stop the decline in nature:

- halt and reverse the negative impact of historic practices and restore habitat on land, in local rivers, streams and ponds and in the marine environment
- minimise the use of pesticides, fertilisers and peat-based compost
- reduce water pollution
- change mowing practices
- remove invasive and non-native species and other threats to nature
- improve water regulation and drainage

Grow nature:

- increase the number and extent of 'places for nature'
- create wildflower meadows and places for pollinators
- increase species abundance
- develop resilient ecological networks, green corridors and wildlife passages
- increase community orchards, the capacity and availability of community growing, allotments
- encourage nature onto public sector estate – for example public buildings, public spaces, community gardens and other public assets
- increase or create urban green spaces, street trees, urban green infrastructure and green roofs
- increase biodiversity – for example through helping pollinators, hedgerows, flower-rich meadows and verges, woodlands and by creating meadow areas on sloping land

Change practices:

- encourage and remove barriers to 'doing the right thing'
- change land use to promote nature, restore habitats, change the capacity of an area for flood or surface water attenuation
- improve soil and water quality
- increase safe access to drinking water (refill stations/water fountains)
- improve air quality/remove pollutants
- use green infrastructure to minimise flooding or improve water availability
- acquire, restore and enhance nature in our towns and cities and in the marine environment

Please note that these are just a few ideas for action. We encourage projects to be innovative.

Many projects could be supported at a local level but some landscape-scale projects may be considered.

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Buying land

We can fund projects that involve the purchase of land that is (or will be) important as local places for nature, and are at or below market value.

The principal reasons for purchase must be a benefit for long term restoration and enhancement of nature and for creating publicly accessible green space.

If you already manage the land and/or buildings that you want to buy, you will need to show us what extra benefits the purchase will bring.

You will need to show that all options for entering into an appropriate management agreement with the freehold owner have been explored before seeking a grant for purchase.

We can help you to buy land if you demonstrate in your application form:

- the significance to nature in a local, regional or national sense, now or once the project has been completed
- there is a clear need for the purchase
- how nature will be restored and or enhanced as a result of your purchase and that at least one of the Local Places for Nature Actions will be delivered as a result
- any changes you make to the land will follow the 'do no harm' principle for nature
- existing man-made structures may be included in your proposal, provided they contribute to creating a place for nature (such as through demolition or retention)
- you have discussed your proposal with the Local Nature Partnership
- the purchase will contribute to more people engaging with nature
- the price accurately reflects the condition and value
- you have the capacity and expertise both to undertake the land purchase and to restore and enhance nature
- you have adequate plans and capacity for management and maintenance of a natural asset over a period of at least 10 years after project completion

Projects involving acquisition of land must demonstrate good value for money, be well planned and demonstrate that it meets needs identified by the community. We will not support purchases that we think are above market value.

If we award you a grant, we may require a charge on the land and/or buildings. We can fund all associated purchase costs such as agent’s fees, saleroom fees and taxes. Please ensure these are reflected in your cost table.

If your project includes buying a heritage item, land or building, the terms of the grant will last indefinitely. If you wish to dispose of what you have bought in future, you can ask for our permission. We may claim back our grant.

We would need the following information about the purchase:

- a location plan, to scale and clearly identifying the extent of the land or building to be purchased and any relevant access to the land and building
- the current status of the land, its current environmental condition, and assessment of the impact of your plans
- the plan to restore and enhance nature and the expected benefit to nature of the purchase
- One independent valuation. This should include a detailed explanation of how the assessment of the market value was reached. We welcome valuations by the District Valuer. We may also arrange for our own valuation.

We will normally be prepared to support a purchase at a figure up to 10% above the top of any range in an accepted valuation.
- evidence that the current owners are the owners (have legal title) and have the right to both sell the land and/or building and transfer the title to the new owner
- evidence of any legal covenants, or rights (such as fishing, shooting, mineral, drainage), or long- or short-term tenancies, or rights of way or access, or any other interests which are attached to the land or building

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Leasing land

The bulk of this grant scheme (85%) is made up of capital. Capital funding may not be used to lease land, so any proposal that includes leasing land is likely to be ineligible for funding.

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Preparing your application

It's important that you think about how your project will meet the requirements for this grant scheme.

Your project must meet one of the four following descriptions:

1. be in a peri-urban or urban area, an area of deprivation and/or an area with limited access to green space
2. **OR** significantly increase the involvement of a wider range of people in natural heritage
3. **OR** be from an organisation that represents diverse ethnic communities
4. **OR** you want to deliver a community food growing project anywhere in Wales

And must achieve the following:

- acquire, restore or enhance nature
- deliver nature that can be seen 'from your doorstep'
- deliver a capital asset that has a plan for future maintenance
- have a plan for local activity, designed and led by communities
- enable participation for a wider range of people: helping them to experience and value nature, leading to individual and community action to protect and enhance nature
- demonstrate additional multiple benefits spanning environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing
- understand and enhance existing biodiversity of the selected site
- follow accepted guidance on biodiversity and biosecurity, for example using locally sourced plants, avoiding non-native invasive species, fertilisers, pesticides and the use of peat-based materials

Supporting documents

The following supporting documents must be uploaded with your application form. File sizes should be smaller than 20MB.?**Please note**?that some of the supporting documents required for this programme are different to those stated in the online application form.

For this programme, we require the following documents:

- governing document (mandatory if your organisation has one)
- Audited or verified accounts (mandatory if you are an organisation). If you are an individual, a newly formed organisation or do not have accounts less than 12 months old, we will require bank statements in the same name as your application for the last three full months.
- project plan (mandatory for all projects) –?you can download a?template from our project plan page
- performance indicators (mandatory for all projects) – read an explanation of these requirements in the performance indicators section below
- partnership agreement (mandatory if you are working in a partnership)
- job descriptions (mandatory if you are creating new jobs or apprenticeships as part of your project)
- maintenance plan (mandatory for all projects)
- briefs for commissioned work (if applicable)?
- calculation of full cost recovery (if applicable)?
- evidence of support, such as letters, emails or videos of support (optional)

Welsh Language

You must consider the Welsh language in all aspects of your work and tell us how you will promote and support the Welsh language and reflect the bilingual nature of Wales. You will need to show how you will offer bilingual provision in your project budget and plan. You should include the budget for translation under the 'Other' costs category in the project costs section of the application form. If you would like more information on how to do this, please get in touch with our Welsh language support team: cymorthcymraeg@heritagefund.org.uk

Acknowledgement

You will need to acknowledge your grant as set out in our Welsh Government grant guidance.

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What you can spend the money on

Capital spending is money that is spent on investment and things that will create growth in the future. Nature is our greatest asset – it underpins everything we do now and in future, as a society. Examples of capital expenditure include:

- purchasing of native trees, shrubs and other plants to create the local place for nature
- Purchase of equipment to restore and enhance nature. Capital spend also includes training in using the machinery and purchasing fuel for use during the project.
- preparation of a site such as removing man-made structures to create places for nature, creating new (but not replacement) fencing and accessible pathways to protect nature, removing invasive species

- purchase of land to create places for nature and accessible green space
- purchase of equipment, tools and seeds etc to create a community growing area
- project planning, procurement and financial management of the Project costs to bring the capital asset into being up to 10% of the total fund
- cost of labour associated with any activities related to the creation of the natural asset

Up to a maximum of **10%** of this capital grant may be used to enable project delivery. By this we mean associated project delivery costs that enable you to create the place for nature such as:

- project planning
- procurement materials
- financial management of the project
- compiling and analysing management information of project delivery

You may not include core organisational costs (or a proportion of) such as office lease, heating, lighting, ICT, as these are your normal business running costs. You may not include the ongoing cost of maintenance, training and running costs.

Activity costs

You may also include costs that enable the project to involve people in delivery and meet The National Lottery Heritage Fund mandatory outcome that 'a wider range of people will be involved in heritage'. You can find more about our mandatory outcome in the detailed application guidance below.

These costs can be up to **15%** of the total grant amount applied for.

Examples of expenditure may include:

- events to promote the places for nature scheme to the wider community, and to celebrate community achievements
- additional hours for an existing volunteer co-ordinator to recruit, train and support volunteers to participate in delivering the place for nature
- volunteering good practice and expenses (in line with Wales Council for Voluntary Action guidance)
- project promotion activity

You can't spend the money on:

- Full Cost Recovery of organisation's core costs
- maintaining existing assets
- remedial works or replacement of existing assets that are already places for nature (for example gates, pathways)
- Works that are not primarily about enhancing or restoring nature. For example, visitor centres, interpretation (this is not primarily an access programme, any access arrangements must be a small part of the nature-based project as a whole).
- a focus on tree planting – however, tree planting may be included as part of a broader overall scheme
- Welsh Government recognises that ash dieback is a significant issue across Wales, but the Local Places for Nature Capital Fund programme does not have this as a focus. The Heritage Fund will not be considering applications for projects solely to remove or manage ash dieback, because it does not restore, or enhance nature. We may consider projects which have a small element of ash dieback, as part of a wider project to restore

and enhance nature. Your application will need to provide strong evidence that demonstrates a net gain to biodiversity and creation of resilient ecosystems.

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How to apply for £10,000 – £250,000

1. visit our application portal and register an account (or log in if you have applied to The National Lottery Heritage Fund previously)
2. submit an email enquiry to natur@heritagefund.org.uk so that you can get feedback from us on your project before you complete your full application
3. when you are ready, complete and submit a full application

There is no dedicated Local Places for Nature Capital Fund application form. You should follow these instructions carefully alongside our Local Places for Nature application help notes and answer all questions in our £10,000 – £250,000 grant application form.

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Naming your project

Start your project title with #NATUR to help us correctly identify your application. For example: #NATUR Abercynon Wildlife Flower Meadow. There is a limit of 15 words.

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Performance indicators

You will need to demonstrate how your project has benefited the environment.

What you need to do

- choose the performance indicators most relevant to your project from the list below
- submit your list of performance indicators (including how you will measure each one) as an attachment to your application

If you are successful in obtaining a grant, these performance indicators will be included in the agreed outcomes for the project.

Plants and animals

Places for nature/habitat acquired [measured in square metres]

Places for nature/habitat restored or enhanced [measured in square metres]

Green walls/roofs created or enhanced [measured in square metres]

Connectivity – new green corridors/routes created/enhanced [measured in metres]

Pollinator improvements [estimated number]

Species abundance increase [estimated]

Priority species [number and species planning to benefit]

Water

Capacity for flood or surface water attenuation [measured in cubic metres]

Improved water quality

Access to water [number of refill/water fountains]

Air

Estimated reduction in CO2 [measured in equivalent emissions]

Improved air quality

Land

Reduction in use of pesticides/fertilisers [measured in %]

Community growing [area by square metre/hectare]

Community growing [number of projects]

Accessible green public space created [measured in square metres]

Accessible green public space improved [measured in square metres]

Wellbeing of Future Generation Act benefits/impact

Total number of traineeships employed on the project

Number of SMEs based in Wales which you will contract/subcontract

Estimated economic impact [measured in £]

Volunteers involved [number]

Volunteer hours contributed

Volunteers who report an improvement in wellbeing as a result of project involvement [number of people]

Community assets created [number]

Employees/visitors/residents/passers-by who will be able to "see" the asset created [estimated number in one day]

Changes to this guidance

We will regularly review this guidance and respond to user feedback. We reserve the right to make changes as required. We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.

- **22 September 2023**: The Local Places for Nature Capital Fund has reopened for applications. The application deadlines and key dates were updated. Outdated information (such as the total amount of funding available) related to previous application cycles were removed.
- **6 October 2023**: Added information about the supporting documents you need to submit with an application to this fund to the 'preparing your application' section.
- **18 October 2023**: Added performance indicators to the list of supporting documents you need to submit with an application.
- **2 November 2023**: Clarified that applications close at 12 noon on the deadline date specified.
- **13 December 2023:** Added a notice to the top of the page, indicating that we are currently not accepting applications. Removed links to the help notes, which will be updated in January 2024.
- **18 December 2023**: Wording has been changed as project enquiry forms are no longer needed for applying to this programme.
- **13 February 2024:** Applications to this programme have reopened. The application help notes have been replaced because our application forms have changed.

The Local Places for Nature Capital Fund is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Local Places for Nature partnership logo