Community Woodlands

See all updates

A capital grant scheme intended to restore, create, connect and manage woodlands in Wales.

Page last updated: 4 March 2022

Important

The Community Woodlands scheme is no longer accepting applications.

- Explore our available funding
- Find out how to acknowledge your grant

Overview

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

That's why funding landscapes and nature is The National Lottery Heritage Fund's key strategic funding priority in Wales.

The projects funded by this grant scheme will help to inform the Welsh Government's thinking on the long-term development of the National Forest in Wales.

In this period of learning, it is possible that once projects have been completed and evaluated that some may not fall under the National Forest brand, but are good woodland projects in their own right.

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What the Community Woodlands scheme will offer

- grants of £10,000–£250,000 for woodland capital projects
- up to 100% funding
- funding for not-for-profit organisations with a bank account and a constitution
- pre-application advice (via email: natur@heritagefund.org.uk)

Timings

- applications are open with decisions within 8 weeks of application

Requirements

- projects involving acquisition of land must demonstrate good value for money, be well planned and demonstrate that it meets needs identified by the community

The total available funding is £2.1million.

The programme is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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Essential criteria

1. Good quality, well-managed woodlands in line with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS): "the right tree in the right place"

The UKFS defines the approach of the governments in the UK to sustainable forest management. This applies to all woodland.

The standard covers different elements of sustainable forest management including:

- biodiversity
- climate change
- historic environment
- landscape
- people
- soil
- water

For further information and advice on managing and enhancing woodlands, visit:

- Natural Resources Wales
- Llais y Goedwig
- Renew Wales
- Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust

2. Accessible to the public

Please see our Landscapes and Nature guidance.

3. Minimum size

There are no limits to the size or configuration of areas of trees to be planted.

New plantings could be:

- the creation of a new block of woodland on a derelict quarry site
- street trees within an urban neighbourhood
- a broad corridor including a new footpath to link two existing woodlands

Improvements to existing woodland could be:

- the adoption of a woodland by the local community
- thinning
- installation of footpaths
- maintenance of degraded access facilities in heavily used community woodlands

For all schemes, tree or woodland management plans will be required. If these are not already in place then the grant can cover the costs of preparing a management plan.

4. Community involvement

These projects must have significant input from local people. For your project to be a success, the range of people benefiting from heritage will be more diverse than before your project started.

Community involvement will help encourage people to use woodlands through the provision of footpaths, nature trails, sculptures etc.

Ideally, community involvement would also include:

- activities to involve people in the restoration and creation of the woodlands
- economic opportunities for local enterprise
- innovation and development
- educational activities
- management of the woodlands through the setting up of voluntary groups, school groups, new enterprises etc

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Highly desirable criteria

Connectivity

As new woodlands are created, connectivity to other woodlands should be taken into account.

In the early years of the National Forest this may not always be feasible, but it will become more important as the area of woodland in Wales increases, helping us to achieve our ambition of a connected National Forest across multiple locations, spanning the length of Wales.

We are keen that our investment in natural heritage has the **greatest impact in conserving and improving habitats that already exist.** You may want to consider a project that enhances a number of existing habitats or that helps join up existing habitats with new planting such as woodlands or meadows, or with landscape corridors such as hedgerows.

While we can fund the creation of entirely new habitats, our greatest concern is to improve the quality and resilience of existing priority habitats. This could be by improving their quality and management, by the creation of buffer strips, by making habitats bigger or by creating greater connection between other nearby habitats.

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Requirements for projects

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

Your project must:

1. create, accelerate restoration or enhancement of community woodlands
2. deliver accessible woodlands for all to enjoy
3. create a woodland with a plan for future maintenance
4. be led by or co-produced with the local community and empower them to create and care for woodlands
5. meet the needs of local people, as a public amenity and designed to contribute to the provision of ecosystem services within the local area
6. demonstrate multiple benefits spanning environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing
7. consider Natural Resources Wales areas statement maps, UKFS guidance on the areas suitable for planting and the woodland opportunities map for guidance on areas for new planting

We have a particular interest in areas that:

- are focused in areas of deprivation
- enable connected nature networks across the length and breadth of Wales

Capital costs

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:

- preparation of a site such as fencing, clearing litter, removing invasive species or constructing accessible pathways and gates
- purchasing of trees, shrubs and other plants to create the woodland (see Connectivity above)

- buying machinery. Capital spend also includes training in using the machinery, operatives and fuel for use during the project.
- project planning, procurement and financial management of the project costs
- the cost of labour associated with any activities related to the creation of the woodland
- costs promoting the woodland to the wider community for example: printing leaflets

Up to a maximum of **10%** of this capital grant may be used to enable project delivery. By this we mean costs that enable you to create the woodland such as project planning, procurement materials, financial management of the project, compiling and analysing management information of project delivery.

You may not include any core organisational costs such as office lease, heating, lighting, ICT, ?as these are your normal business running costs. From Year 2 of the grant onwards you may not include the ongoing cost of maintenance, training or running your project.

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 [including Land and Nature]"). You can find more about our mandatory outcome in the detailed application guidance below.

These costs can be up to **30%** of the total grant amount applied for, and could include:

- events to promote the woodland 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 woodland
- volunteering good practice and expenses (in line with Wales Council for Voluntary Action guidance)
- project promotion activity
- any reasonable expenditure that will enable the project to succeed

This grant scheme does not fund Full Cost Recovery of organisations' core costs.

Ash Die Back

The fund will not consider applications for projects solely to remove or manage Ash Die Back.

However, projects which have a small element of Ash Die Back, as part of a wider project to restore and enhance nature, may be considered. Strong evidence that demonstrates a net gain to biodiversity and creation of resilient ecosystems will need to be made.

Ongoing management

Funding can only be offered where there is a clear plan for ongoing management after funding is finished. You do not need to submit a formal plan to us but we will want to see that it is being considered and there is a woodland management plan in place.

Welsh language

You'll need to include provision for Welsh language within your project. Tell us how you will do this within your application form. You can include translation costs within your budget.

Acknowledgements

You will need to acknowledge your grant as set out in National Lottery Heritage Fund guidance. Order Welsh/English material only.

You will need to acknowledge your grant as set out in Welsh Government guidance. National Forest branding guidelines will be available from November 2020.

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How the application process works

Submit a full application via our online portal at any time and your application will be assessed within eight weeks.

How to apply

1. Visit our application portal and register an account (or log in if you have applied to The National Lottery Heritage Fund previously).
2. From the pull-down menu please choose £10,000–£250,000).
3. Complete and submit a Project Enquiry Form. This gives us a chance to provide feedback on your idea before you complete a full application.
4. Once you have received feedback on your Project Enquiry, complete and submit a full application.

There is no dedicated National Forest Community Woodlands application form. You should follow these instructions carefully alongside our regular guidance and answer all questions in our (£10,000-£250,000) grant application forms. There are links to application guidance and help notes below.

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Naming your project

Start your project title with #COED to help us correctly identify your application e.g. #COED Bangor community Woodland. There is a limit of 15 words.

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Applying for grants between £10,000 and £250,000

You will need to use this guidance alongside the application help notes to answer the questions: The application help notes appear as you complete the application form. Please note these, but also refer to this supplementary guidance.

1st block on the application form

Project Title Please start your project title/name with **#Coed.** For example #CoedBeddgelert

2nd block on the application form "Application"

"Advice received in planning the project"

Please mention all advice received. This could include advice from Llais y Goedwig, NRW, County Council Countryside Service, other relevant community organisations in your locality and the National Lottery Heritage Fund

"project end date"

This date would normally be no longer than 12 months from your start date, unless a different timeframe has previously discussed with us.

"Describe your idea"

This is a key section in your application and should include information such as the current condition of the land, current uses, community involvement and how they will benefit etc.

Please also tell us:

- If you need, or have completed an Environmental Impact Assessment (Wales) and the outcomes of that assessment.
- Have you referenced UK Forestry Standards (UKFS), and how do they impact on your proposal
- Describe and help us understand what you believe to be the barriers to participation in your particular community
- How individuals and communities will be supported to become involved
- How the work proposed will make a tangible difference to individuals, communities and the natural environment.
- How will you ensure any plans for the future are "owned" and delivered for the community, by the community?
- What you will be spending the funding on (in general) There is additional space for a full budget later on in the application form. Remember that a maximum of 30% of this grant can be used for revenue purposes.
- How you will include the Welsh language and/or community languages within your project

"What difference will your project make?"

Tell us how you think the project will change individual and community attitudes and approaches to wildlife and the natural environment. Please reference back to the grant criteria, as required.

"What will happen after the project ends"

This is where you describe your on going maintenance plan for the site. Remember , we can not fund anything after the project ends, but you must have a credible plan for maintaining the site into the future

"Why does this project need to happen now?"

This fund is competitive. You will need to explain the motivating factors in making this application. What is it about the location that makes this the right thing to do now? For an example, are there particular development pressures on the land, is there a one off opportunity to re connect isolated woodlands via a new hedgerow or has the community been eager to improve or create a woodland in their area.

“How will you acknowledge your grant”

You will also need to acknowledge that this is a Welsh Government grant, use the National Forest branding pack (available from your Investment Manager at the National Lottery Heritage Fund) and use their logo. You also need to acknowledge the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Please include details of how you intend to acknowledge these grants in printed and digital formats, websites, social media platforms using Welsh, English and relevant community languages. Any costs relating to translation may be included in your budget.

“Does this project involve an acquisition?”

If the answer is “yes”, you will need to include a map of the site and current valuations and/or price of the land

“At risk”

Read the note on this as “Is nature (habitats and species) in your local area at risk?”. We would expect this answer to be “Yes”

“Will the project involve capital works?”

Please detail the work and costs involved

“Heritage Designation”

Please leave this section blank

“Project Outcomes”

Your project must achieve our mandatory outcome to ‘involve a wider range of people will be involved in heritage’. This is mandatory and you must score “medium” or “high” to be successful in your application.

Please note for these grants we mean “our landscapes and nature” you should tell us how you will work with excluded and disadvantaged communities, who currently do not access Local Places for Nature funding to identify barriers and co create solutions

Please look at our good practice guidance on inclusion, if you require further guidance.

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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.

Woodland

Size of woodland [measured in square metres]

Conifer/broadleaves split [measured in % of hectares]

Tree species and number of each

New Plant per year [measured in square metres]

Connectivity [distance to nearest woodland, measured in miles]

Percentage of restored woodland

Percentage of Ancient Woodland

Well-managed Woodland

What level planning to meet UKFS standards

Woodland breakdown by uses [measured in %]

Biodiversity

Pollinator improvements [estimated number]

Priority species [number and species planning to benefit]

Squirrel, deer, boar etc [numbers/species]

Bats [numbers/species]

Woodland birds [numbers/species]

Moss/mushroom species

Environmental benefits

Estimated reduction in CO2 [measured in equivalent emissions]

Improved air quality

Improved water quality

Access to water [number of refill/ water fountains]

Accessibility

Number of visitors to woodland

Frequency of visitors [annually]

Visitors' main mode of transport to woodland

Distance travelled to woodland

Reason for visit to woodland

Facilities available (ie toilets, café, car park)

Adaptions made to enable more people to access the site – boardwalks, ramps, surfaces

Natural heritage and tourism

Welsh language: will signs, educational documentation be produced bilingually

Bike trails, walking routes [measured in length/miles]

Other attractions, learning spaces

Community involvement [measured in hours]

Volunteers involved [number]

Economic benefit

Number of employees and/or new jobs created

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Tag Link
Closed Programmes