Growing community connections with nature!



Volunteers planting trees. Photo: Saoirse Clohessy.

From curlews to historic mosslands, four projects in the North of England are celebrating local nature and putting people at the heart of plans to protect and restore it.

Through a range of activities, the projects will increase people's understanding of and connection with wildlife, put landscapes and habitats in both urban and rural places into recovery and take action for the environment.

All four projects are great examples of how to respond to our Protecting the environment investment principle and help us achieve our ambitions for nature recovery.

The projects

Tree Equity for Hartlepool – awarded £250,000

Hartlepool's natural landscape almost disappeared during its rapid industrialisation and urban expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries. Trees for Cities will focus on restoring it by addressing the urgent need for increased tree canopy cover in the city. Working with communities, the project will plant at least 10 hectares of trees in nature-deprived areas.

Walking and Talking with Landscape: The Curlew Way – awarded £51,635

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A curlew on a sports field in Colne. Photo: William Titley.

Rewild Moss Side – awarded £78,200

Moss Side is believed to have been named after historic mosslands that once covered large areas of Greater Manchester. However, the criss-crossing rivers, bogs and wetlands have now been replaced by a densely populated urban area. Sow the City will explore the history of Moss Side's natural heritage and work with communities to create wetlands, ponds, moss gardens and sustainable urban drainage systems.

Tree Story: The Story of Wigan Through its Trees – awarded £49,800

Led by Open Eye Gallery, The Story of Wigan Through its Trees will champion communities and local nature in and around the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve. Workshops, tree planting sessions, a photography exhibition and a new website will share stories of the area.



A person takes a photograph of a tree.

Investing in nature recovery

Helen Featherstone, Director of England, North, at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Now that we've welcomed spring and we find ourselves enjoying the great outdoors more and more, it's great news that we're supporting these projects that build important connections between communities and the remarkable natural heritage in their local areas.

“Protecting and strengthening that natural heritage is a key priority for us here at the Heritage Fund and we are incredibly proud to champion these projects that put communities at the heart of nature recovery and conservation."

Do you have a project idea?

We want to fund more projects that reconnect people to the natural environment.

Find out more about what we can fund and explore more land and nature projects in the North of England.



Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society volunteers, Saughton Park, Edinburgh.



A young boy taking part in a community gardening project as part of Nextdoor Nature. Image: Gavin Dickson.



s further than planned

Boardwalk at RSPB Loch Lomond

Working together to fund growth in investment in nature and communities