

GLORIOUS COTSWOLDS GRASSLANDS

Summary: To present an update on Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands.

Recommendation: That progress is noted

Officer Ref: Mark Connelly, Land Management Officer (01451 862006)

Background

1. Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands is a project proposal developed to enable the Board to continue its work on wildflower rich grasslands following the completion of Save our Magnificent Meadows in October last year and to build on and match a generous offer from a private donor.
2. The Executive Committee were informed of the initial application to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (EFF) for funding the Cotswolds Glorious Grassland Project at their meeting on 21st September 2017. This initial application was not successful but follow up dialogue with the EFF resulted in an invitation to submit an amended application. This second application was successful and the Board has been invited to submit a stage 2 application by the end of March 2018
3. Work on the two initial applications was lead by Richie Smith, Community Engagement Officer for the Save our Magnificent Meadows Project before the project finished at the beginning of October 2017. Richie was employed on a short contract for 12 days to develop the stage 2 bid.
4. Funding applications for Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands (GCG) had also be made to the Nineveh Trust for project staff costs and Thames Water for equipment. Both of these bids have been unsuccessful. A bid to the Medlock Trust for £5,000 towards the educational elements of GCG has been successful.
5. An allocation of £30,000 towards the GCG project has been made from the estimated income to be generated by the Hare Trail later this year.

Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands

6. Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands is a 3 year project to establish the Cotswolds AONB as the largest connected network of wildflower rich grassland within the band of Jurassic limestone between Portland and Hull, to significantly raise awareness of its importance and function and to establish a Cotswolds Meadow Service to continue the work into the future on a commercial basis. Over the three years the project aims to create/restore 100ha wildflower rich grassland to extend and link existing grassland sites. To achieve this the project proposes to:
 - Employ a full-time Project Manager and part-time Project Officer
 - Use GIS and knowledge gained from SoMM to identify sites for creation and restoration.

- Identify and contact farmers and landowners, organising meetings and workshops to promote wildflower rich grassland and its value and advantages. This includes new sectors, particularly equine
- Collect seed and green hay from donor sites and spread on receptor sites
- Undertake habitat management with volunteer groups
- Provide small grants for infrastructure such as fencing and pasture pumps
- Promote and facilitate collaborative grazing where a grazier can operate across adjoining land ownerships
- Advise farmers and land managers on the management of wild flower rich grassland.
- Promote the ecosystem services provided by grasslands such as livestock health, carbon sequestration, water management and better quality products.
- Promote the importance and benefits of wildflower rich grassland at events.
- Develop an arts project to engage and work with schools and colleges.
- Work with communities and the highway authorities to identify and restore road verges as part of the grassland network.
- Research the feasibility and launch a self-financing advisory and delivery service – the Cotswolds Meadow Service to provide advice and practical services to continue the restoration and creation of wild flower rich grassland.

7. The application to the EFF is seeking £211,356 towards a total budget of £287,106 across 3 years:

Staff (1.75 fte) and operational costs	£204,970
Advisory visits and task co-ordination	£16,247
Equipment, tools and materials	£3,677
Community engagement and farm demonstration events	£24,524
Meadow Service feasibility	£5,500
Skills and training	£18,393
Small grants	£13,795
TOTAL	£287,106

The difference is made up from the private donation, contribution from estimated income from the auction of the trail Hares and Medlock Trust totalling £80,750

Supporting Paper(s):

There are no supporting papers