

PROJECTS AND FUNDRAISING

Summary: To review the progress of the Projects and Fundraising Working Group, and associated activity.

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee notes the report.

Report by: James Webb, Partnerships Lead

BOARD MEMBERS REPRESENTED ON THE GROUP

- Brendan Costelloe (Chair)
- Ben Dent
- Ellie Fujioka
- John Swanton
- Nigel Adcock

RECORD OF MEETINGS

Working Group meetings this FY:

- 17 July 2024 – in person
- 26 April 2024 – online (Caring for the Cotswolds grants panel)

Relevant meetings this FY:

- 9 August 2024 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting
- 22 May 2024 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting

OTHER ACTIVITY

1. Funding bids

National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) – the Landscape Connections scheme was formally announced on 22 July. NLHF will be investing £150 million into 20 projects during their current strategy period up to 2033. The key themes are nature recovery and communities, with heritage and climate interwoven throughout. Protected landscapes have to be at the core of any project and are expected to be a key or lead partner in any bid.

CNL will be leading a bid and partnering with National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, and we have had several meetings with them. There may also be defined roles for other organisations as the scoping phase develops. We are collectively aiming for a well-formed expression of interest by Christmas, leading into a development phase, followed (hopefully) by a delivery phase. NLHF have advised that the development phase can be up to two years with a delivery phase of up to eight years. Given the likely complexities of the project; partnership agreements, match funding, income generation, etc. – a development phase is essential.

National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) – Caring for the Cotswolds. We have submitted a draft bid for a £250K project that will increase our grant making to £50K per year for three years and provide dedicated resource to the scheme. As part of the project, we will also be able to offer enhanced youth opportunities such as paid placements and a climate action competition.

Outdoor Learning Officer – Helen Komor joined us on Monday 2 September as our new Outdoor Learning Officer (OLO). Helen will be working with our charity partners and schools to co-create outdoor learning experiences for children and young people inside and outside the CNL. It's a really exciting role and one we've wanted for some time. Helen joins a small network of OLO's in Gloucestershire that are all supported by the same funder; Ernest Cook Trust. Funding is for three years.

Access Unlimited – the National Landscapes Association has been awarded funding to deliver a number of day visits, farm visits and residentials for children and young people. CNL has committed to deliver 20% of the total project numbers (with support from partners). The total funding is around £48k. Delivery began in July with almost 100 residential places being delivered in September! The feedback from our partners has been extremely positive and this funding is already giving children from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to experience the Cotswolds.

Dark Skies – National Highways has informed us that we have been awarded £108k for a project that will (1) produce dark skies lighting guidance for the whole of the CNL and (2) reduce the lighting pollution at some key locations (businesses and colleges) along the A417 corridor. This will support the road scheme itself, which is completely unlit. Mark Connelly will be overseeing the project. We have appointed a consultant to produce the guidance and have also appointed someone to deliver the 'on-the-ground' improvements, liaising with those building owners.

2. Access for All: Removing Barriers Programme

In April, Nina Stubbington successfully completed her 12-month trainee role as Grants and Outreach Officer. The role was one of 70 created nationally as part of the 'New to Nature' scheme led by Groundwork UK. The scheme aims to increase the diversity of young people (18-25) entering the environmental sector. During her first year with CNL, Nina co-led Caring for the Cotswolds, supported the Cotswold Way Association, assisted the Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands team and has had an increasing presence on our social media channels. With funding from the British Mountaineering Council, Nina has progressed into a new role (Grants and Access Officer) until March 2025.

A large part of Nina's new role will be to manage the Access for All: Removing Barriers Programme. We will have £254,391 to spend in this FY 2024-25 to go towards capital projects that improve access across the CNL. We currently have this allocated to 25 different projects – five of which we are the lead organisation for, with the rest being external partners such as National Trust, Woodland Trust and Gloucestershire County Council.

3. Everyone's Evenlode

Activity

Since April, the team have delivered outdoor river sessions to almost 700 children. Most of these fell in June and July when the team delivered geography GCSE field trips and Science/ geography days to Cherwell School and Burford School. This required an all-team effort with significant support from the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. Alongside this, community outreach has been immense with 25 different events/ presentations being delivered with a total audience of 1,300 (children and adults). Jennifer Lanham is leading a targeted and sophisticated programme of events.

Income and expenditure in FY 2024-2025

- At the end of May, we received £167,736 for project activity this FY. In January 2025, we will invoice for a further £51,044 to cover a four-month project extension until 31/07/2025. This will enable us to complete the academic year. We have also negotiated some extra paid time for the team. A total project payment of £218,780, spanning 16 months, will support:
 - Rosalind Marsden, Education Officer (3.5 days per week)
 - Rowan Wynne-Jones, Education and Outreach Officer (4 days per week)
 - Jennifer Lanham, Outreach Officer (5 days per week)
 - James Webb, Partnerships Lead (0.5 days per week)
 - We also have resource for project activity costs, training, an event budget and 15% hosting fee that supports core costs.

4. Caring for the Cotswolds

Caring for the Cotswolds is a grant scheme for the Cotswolds. It is supported by businesses who wish to keep the Cotswolds a special place to live, work and visit.

In April the Youth Panel met to discuss the new round of applications. They put forward their scores and recommendations to the Grants Panel who approved eight applications with a total value of £11K. Taking into account the 11 grants awarded in November 2023 with a grant value of £19K, we have more 'live' projects than at any previous time. We anticipate most of these being completed and paid in the current FY.

5. Partnerships

- Cotswolds+ LVEP – Sustainability and Biodiversity group.
- Outdoor Learning Officer – partnership between CNL, World Jungle and Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership.
- Three corporate volunteering days held so far this year for the Boeing Sustainability team, Valpak and Xerox.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- None

NEXT STEPS

- Develop bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- None

SEPTEMBER 2024