

## 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

### 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:
  - 22 May 2024 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting

### OTHER ACTIVITY

#### 1. Funding bids

- **National Lottery Heritage Fund (NL)** – are currently focused on their main grant schemes and the Strategic Initiative for Protected Landscapes (SIPL) scheme has been pushed back. We're anticipating a summer launch at the earliest. One of our concerns was that the scheme would be open to non-profits operating in a Protected Landscape, which would increase competition. NL were reasonably confident the scheme would be limited to the Protected Landscapes family.
- **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 are about to appoint someone to help deliver the 'on-the-ground' improvements, liaising with those building owners.
- **Access Unlimited** – the National Landscapes Association has been awarded funding to deliver a number of day visits, farm visits and 1-night residentials for young people up to 14 years old. They have asked us to deliver 20% of the total project numbers for them, and we have said 'yes'! The total funding is around £48k and we will be delivering some of the project ourselves, but the majority will be handled by key partners across the CNL.
- **Outdoor Learning Officer** - we have been successful in our bid to Ernest Cook Trust to fund 50% of the salary of this role over three years. We are going to use £21k of the Defra Additional revenue budget to support year one costs, which will enable us to begin recruitment shortly. We will continue to seek match funding for years 2 and 3.

## 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

- Highlights of the activity in FY 2023-2024:
  - Delivered 39 sessions on the river enabling 849 children (5–15 yrs old) to experience outdoor education;
  - Worked with 110 young people (16–25 yrs old) on river-based projects;
  - From 20 schools and universities, inside and outside the catchment;
  - Engaged with 2,537 people in the community at 46 different events;
  - Benefitted from 506 volunteer hours.

The cumulative figures for the project duration are published on the CNL website and are pretty impressive: [Engaging with Evenlode](#)

### Income and expenditure in FY 2024-2025

- At the end of April, we received the signed contract and PO for this year's funding. We have negotiated a four-month project extension until 31/07/2025 so that we can 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. Rural Skills Outreach

- FY 2023-2024 was the last 'big' year for delivery and will be superseded by the work of the Outdoor Learning Officer. Here are the figures for 2023-24:
  - 45 sessions delivered, which created 254 children's (4-15) session places
  - 4 work experience placements for 16–18 year-olds

## 5. 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 £11,040. Taking into account the 12 grants awarded in November 2023, we now have approx. £30k in grants committed but not paid. We anticipate most of these being paid in the current FY.

## **6. Website**

- The CNL website has undergone some improvements to layout. We now have a tab dedicated to 'Grants and Funding', where we house FiPL and Caring for the Cotswolds, as well as the completed Leader programme and Cotswolds Champions. Access for All will also sit here in due course. Grant making is a major part of our work and employs a significant percentage of the team. We therefore wanted to showcase our grant-making credentials in one place with a view to attracting further funding for grant schemes.
- The 'Volunteers' tab has also been bolstered with more information on the wardens, and how they are organised. This tab now includes a page on 'Corporate Volunteering Days', in response to consistent enquiries. In the 'About Us' tab, the 'Meet the Team' page has been re-ordered to reflect the priority in which customers would search for us – so trails and access first and corporate services last.

## **7. Partnerships**

- Cotswolds+ LVEP – Sustainability and Biodiversity group.
- Outdoor Learning Officer – partnership between CNL, World Jungle and Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership.
- One corporate volunteering day held so far this year.

## **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

- None

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Develop bids to the National Lottery
- Develop bids to support the match funding for the Outdoor Learning Officer

## **SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None

MAY 2024