

## FUNDRAISING, EXTERNAL BIDS AND INVESTMENT

(NB – National Highways ‘Designated Funds’ projects are covered in Item 12)

### SUPPORTING PEOPLE

**Everyone’s Evenlode:** a £3million investment by Thames Water in the Evenlode catchment as part of their Smarter Water Catchments initiative. The project has four key themes: 1) Water quality, 2) Biodiversity, 3) Natural flood management and 4) Education & Outreach. CNL is responsible for delivering the fourth theme and the project team consists of: Ros, Ruth and Rowan.

**Lead:** James Webb (for engagement) and Mark Connelly (for conservation)

**Contribution to core costs:** The funding from Thames Water includes hosting costs.

- Update: demand from schools has been very high and the team now has a fully booked schedule for the rest of this academic year. The team are already taking bookings for next academic year.
- Update: demand from community groups has also been very high and the team will be leading walks, presenting at shows and festivals across the summer.
- Update: the monthly update for April is attached (*Appendix A*) to highlight the significant activity the team are undertaking in the coming months.

**Engaging children and young people:** three applications were approved in 2021 that provide support towards nature-based **education, training and skills for young people**. The project will utilise the existing rural skills resource and grow our engagement with young people. In October 2021, the surplus funds from the Kingfisher Trail auction were also dedicated to this area of work.

**Lead:** James Webb, Partnerships and Fundraising Lead

**Contribution to core costs:** One of the external bids supported the Rural Skills Officer and Partnerships and Fundraising Leads salary. Activity costs supported by two external funders.

- Update: Whilst Ed Bonn has left CNL for pastures new, he should be credited for undertaking some fantastic outreach work benefiting children and young people at local schools and community groups.
- Update: The outputs for the FY 2021/22 are impressive and will be reported in the CNL Annual Review.
- Update: James Webb is now leading the coordination of the outreach work and is also delivering some of the sessions to honour existing commitments.

**BATHSCAPE Landscape Partnership:** CNL is one of the delivery partners for the project, funded by NLHF, which will create recreational routes for a variety of audiences within the setting of Bath. Contract value just under £90,000. A Trails and Access Officer is leading on project delivery, supported by the Access and Volunteer Lead. There is also significant volunteer involvement.

**Lead:** Becky Jones, Access and Volunteer Lead

**Contribution to core costs:** £25,000 to fund a Trails and Access Officer (1.5 days per week over 2.5 years) and £4,000 towards line management support (Year 1 only)

- Update: Circuit of Bath walking route and guide complete and available as a downloadable PDF from the CNL & Bathscape websites. Also available from the Outdoor Active App – GPX files.
- Update: Nicole has identified 18 further walks as part of the agreed project and written up ten of them (various stages of proofing).
- Update: One Circuit of Bath guided walk completed with another one this weekend and a final one in July. Details on website if you'd like to join.
- Update: 16 new Circuit of Bath Rangers recruited. Their role will be to walk and check their respective sections so ensure the circuit is maintained – a similar role to wardens that look after the Cotswold Way.

## SUPPORTING NATURE

**Severn Trent Water:** Through **Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands (GCG)** CNL is a strategic partner in the 'Great Big Nature Boost' programme that aims to improve biodiversity across 50,000 hectares in the Severn Trent region. The three-year partnership agreement runs from 01 April 2021–31 March 2024 and is worth approx. £40,000 per year (£120,000 total contract value). It will allow the GCG team to restore 20 hectares of wildflower grassland each year. GCG was previously supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; this new partnership demonstrates a big step forward towards sustainability.

**Lead:** Anna Field, GCG Project Asst.

**Contribution to core costs:** 15% of contract value

- Update: Full work schedule planned for 2022. In May, June and July the team will be carrying out baseline botanical surveys and volunteer training. Seed harvesting starts in early July through to August followed by ground preparation and seed spreading in September. The team will also be presenting at events and guided walks throughout the summer - see the website more details.
- Update: There is also a possibility of working in partnership with the Evenlode Smarter Catchment Initiative this year to restore 10 hectares of grassland. The work would need to be match funded by the landowner on a 50/50 basis.

**National Grid 'Landscape Enhancement Initiative':** to enhance landscapes impacted on by National Grid's pylon lines. CNL does not develop the detailed proposals or deliver the projects but only we can submit applications so if we don't do this there will be no spend in the Cotswolds. Payments are made annually to CNL in advance so there is no negative impact on cash flow. Three projects have been approved and funded:

1. Cheltenham's Escarpment Grasslands (£66,292)
2. Hampnett to Chedworth Boundary Restorations; dry stone walling (£94,456)
3. West of Winchcombe Landscape Enhancements; dry stone walling across Nottingham Hill (£57,860)

**Lead:** Simon Smith, Nature Recovery Lead

**Contribution to core costs:** None

- Update: The proposal for the Bridgeman Landscape at Lodge Park (National Trust) was approved on 16 May (project value £285,000 / LEI grant £200,000).

**National Grid 'Visual Impact Provision'**: In addition to the LEI (listed above) National Grid also run a landscape scale programme called Visual Impact Provision (VIP), which has the objective of removing pylons in protected landscapes and undergrounding the cabling. Andy Parsons and Mark Connelly visited the Dorset AONB to meet see a current project (c£116m) to remove 22 pylons. The beneficial impact on landscape and visual impact will be enormous. National Grid has contacted a range of stakeholders about delivering a similar scheme in the CNL. The undergrounding will start west of Winchcombe and follow the route of the Cotswold Way National Trail as far as Dowdeswell Reservoir (just outside Cheltenham). 18 pylons will be removed. Andy, Mark and Ed Macalister-Smith (in his role as Chair of CTAP) are on the project steering group and attended the first meeting on 8 February.

**Lead:** Andy Parsons (CEO) and Mark Connelly

**Contribution to core costs:** TBC

- Update: The National Grid team are presenting to the CNL Board in June

**Big Chalk:** A programme of projects and activity that aims to connect calcareous habitat across landscapes from the south coast to the top of the Cotswolds and Chilterns. Short term bid to Natural England (NE) for initial development with a longer-term plan for a significant Lottery bid, amongst others.

**Lead:** Simon Smith, Nature Recovery Lead

**Contribution to core costs:** unknown at this early stage

- Update: the consultancy work funded by Natural England has just completed. Key elements included:
    - Three partnership development workshops with the Steering Group
    - Research into existing projects and similar programmes
    - Four outreach workshops with stakeholders. 3 geographical and one thematic followed up by 121 interviews where necessary. 105 people attended outreach workshops
    - Detailed data and mapping developed to provide evidence base.
    - Draft final report and recommendations presented early May
    - Steering group considering recommendations and next steps on 23 May.
- Subject to the 23 May Steering Group it is clear that this project development work has significantly helped Big Chalk grow from a small group of partner landscapes to a wider more inclusive programme more suited to its vision and ambition.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND NATURE

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Details are emerging of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF), the replacement to EU structural funds. The funding and delivery of the UK SPF is being devolved to each District, Borough and Unitary authority.

This means that the local authorities with land in the Cotswolds AONB will have their own funds and separate allocations. The spend of the UK SPF will be driven by a Local

Investment Plan (LIP) developed and decided by each local authority, funding is available for this and the next two financial years. The guidance for LIPs and the UK SPF demonstrates some links between the intentions of the UK SPF and the intentions of our statutory AONB Management Plan and wider CNL ambitions; these include;

- A focus on pride of place
- Support for communities including the rural communities
- Support for managing the natural environment, green space, historic and cultural heritage and reducing carbon emissions
- Support for creating jobs, including in the rural and tourism sectors
- Support for 'green growth'

Investments should be aligned with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan which specifically mentioned the role of AONBs, nature recovery and enhancing the beauty of landscapes. We will monitor the situation and keep you update as more details emerge.

MAY 2022