

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 and Fundraising Lead

BOARD MEMBERS REPRESENTED ON THE GROUP

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

RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Working Group meetings this FY:
 - 14 July 2023 - held in the Community Shelter at Westonbirt Arboretum
 - 6 October 2023 - online
- Other relevant meetings this FY:
 - 28 June, 6 September 2023 – ‘Access to Nature’ learning sessions (JW)

OTHER ACTIVITY

1. New to Nature

- Nina Stubbington joined the team in April as our new Grants and Outreach Officer. The role is 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.
- Nina is making excellent progress with all aspects of her work. She has undertaken a review of the Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme and presented her findings to the Board members on the working group. Currently she is guiding applicants through the grant application, as well as offering our business members support with social media content.
- In order to gain experience and skills, Nina is also working with other members of the team. During the summer she has been working with the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands team every Friday to help with the seed harvesting. She is also leading on a social media competition with the Cotswold Way Association that aims to increase their number of followers.

2. Everyone’s Evenlode

- The ‘Everyone’s Evenlode’ project enables children, young people and local communities to access, explore and enjoy their local river. The project is delivered through the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) and funded by Thames Water, as part of their Smarter Water Catchments initiative.
- Q1 and Q2 are always the peak times for the team. Education bookings were strong up to the end of the academic year but particularly busy in June. In the last week of June alone the team delivered three full days of River Surveying field trips at Combe Mill, Oxfordshire. This enabled 150+ GCSE students (years 10 and 11) from the Cherwell School to put theory into practice and gain valuable skills crucial for their studies. Delivering at this level requires a huge amount of preparation, logistics, energy and time.
- Spring/ summer is also busy at the weekends with a full schedule of events, festivals, fairs and talks. This collective activity provides lots of opportunities to engage with the public about the work of the Evenlode Catchment Partnership and the CNL team. The team keep

records of how many people they engage with at these events and at the end of August the number was over 1,300 (adults and children), and this doesn't include Moreton Show. A huge thank you to Rosalind Marsden, Rowan Wynne-Jones and Jennifer Lanham for all their hard work.

- Income and expenditure:
 - At the end of July, we received project payment for the current FY. Essentially, four months in arrears and eight months in advance. This late payment was frustrating as a lot of work had taken place to enable payment at the start of the year.
 - Project income includes a 15% hosting fee that supports core costs.
 - Following negotiations, this year's budget also includes £5,000 to support JW's salary.

3. Rural Skills Outreach

- Using external funding from several sources, we offer outdoor learning sessions to children and young people. For younger audiences, we've adopted a forest school style approach. For the older children and young people, sessions incorporate rural skills like woodland management and dry-stone walling.
- This year, we have provided outdoor learning sessions to children and young people from Cirencester, Bourton on the Water and Burford. As at August, the number of session places delivered was 121, which is in line with previous years. What has been especially rewarding is the feedback from the schools. They report that the children involved have improved attendance, concentration, improved social and emotional mental health and in turn this is improving their academic progress in their classes.
- There is a short video about the project on our website, along with an impact report: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/looking-after/young-people-rural-skills/>
- Income and expenditure
 - A total of £38,000 was raised towards this project from external sources and is held under Restricted or Designated Funds. As at September 2023, the balance of funds is £7,500. This will support delivery for the remainder of this FY.

4. Caring for the Cotswolds

- Caring for the Cotswolds is a grant scheme for the Cotswolds. It is supported by businesses and who wish to keep the Cotswolds a special place to live, work and visit.
- The scheme is currently open to new applications with a deadline of 29 September. As noted above, Nina Stubbington is assisting applicants to develop their projects. We are exploring options with existing youth groups to see if they would like to act as a youth panel to review the applications before the grants panel. This worked well in previous rounds and was a fantastic experience for the young people. We have approx. £20,000 to allocate to new projects.
- As at September (and as expected), no income had been received. Business members typically donate in Q4. 15% of income is used to support core costs.

5. Funding bids

- We have been working on some large bids in recent months. Whilst we weren't successful with our Species Survival Fund bid, it has fostered a much closer working relationship with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT). We are currently working with GWT on a Landscape Recovery bid in the central Cotswold area.

| Date Applied | Funder | Project |
|--------------|------------------|--|
| 21/09/2023 | Defra | Pending: £750,000 Landscape Recovery; GRASwolds (GWT led) |
| 20/07/2023 | National Lottery | Declined: £650,000 Species Survival Fund; Adders & Butterflies (GWT led) - oversubscribed |

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| 20/07/2023 | National Lottery | Declined: £650,000 Species Survival Fund; Headwaters project (CNL led) - oversubscribed |
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6. Partnerships

- July 2023 – Cotswolds+ Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) was approved by Visit England, with Andy Parsons chairing the Management Board.
- August 2023 – MOU finalised between the CNL (Avon Valley Wardens) and Lackham College, Wiltshire to host students on land-based courses.
- September and October – we will be hosting corporate volunteering groups this autumn, who will be helping on important wildlife sites in the Cotswolds.
- Ongoing – we continue to work with and support North East Cotswolds Farm Cluster with the Access and Engagement element of their Landscape Recovery pilot.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- None

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to improve/ enhance the way the organisation presents data and achievements.
- Work with the Chief Executive on fundraising for additional resources to support Climate Action and Education and Outreach.
- Support Nina Stubbington during the second half of her placement with us.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- None

SEPTEMBER 2023