

Community Nature Fund: Application Guidance

We're delighted that you are interested in applying for a Community Nature Fund grant and we thank you for your commitment to supporting nature and biodiversity in our incredible but vulnerable National Park.

This document is designed to help you decide whether the Fund is right for you and your project, and guide you through the process of applying. Please read it carefully before completing your application form.

When you have done so, if you still have any questions, or if you will struggle to complete the application form, please contact us - hello@peakdistrictfoundation.org.uk or 01629 700 606 – and we'll be happy to help.

The Community Nature Fund supports projects that are focused on creating, improving or expanding spaces for nature. We're happy to support all kinds of work that will benefit wildlife and biodiversity, but examples could include:

- creating wildflower meadows
- planting hedgerows or trees
- building or restoring ponds
- installing bird or bat boxes

Who do we fund?

We can fund any of the following types of people and organisations:

- Parish councils
- Schools
- Registered charities
- Charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs)
- Community interest companies (CICs)
- Community groups, societies and associations
- Smallholders (as long as the project you are applying for is not-for-profit and you can show clear benefits for nature)

If you do not own the land on which the project will take place, then you must ensure that you have the landowner's permission to carry out the project before you apply.

What do we fund?

Through the Community Nature Fund, we can only fund the specific costs of delivering your project. We cannot contribute to:

- your general running costs (e.g. overheads, core staff salaries)
- any work which takes place before your grant is awarded
- recoverable VAT
- the costs of fulfilling a statutory duty, obligation or planning consent

A Community Nature Fund grant can be used to pay for:

- capital costs (i.e. 'stuff' that you buy, including tools and equipment, plants and materials to create landscape features such as ponds, walls or fencing)
- tool and equipment hire
- the costs of paying professionals/contractors to deliver parts of your project (but please note that we would expect you to deliver as much of your project as possible yourself or by using volunteers and if you do want to use professionals you will need to explain why this is necessary)

We do not generally fund the cost of specialist advice (e.g. from an ecologist) to help you in planning your project. If you feel that this is something you need, please let us know and, although we cannot guarantee anything, we will usually be able to put you in touch with someone who can provide the advice you need for free.

Please note: if your project involves planting trees, wildflowers or other plants, we expect these to be appropriate native species unless there is a clear reason for doing something different, which you will need to explain in your application.

If you are unsure what any of this means or if specific items are eligible, please feel free to contact us to check, we are happy to help –

hello@peakdistrictfoundation.org.uk or 01629 700 606.

Where do we fund?

To be eligible for funding your project must take place within the Peak District National Park boundary.

We cannot fund projects taking place on sites which are already managed / protected for nature (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local/National Nature Reserves).

How much can you ask for?

Our Community Nature Fund grants range in size from £500 to £5,000. The amount you ask us for will make no difference to your chances of being awarded a grant.

We do ask that you try to achieve the best value for money you can. One of the main ways you can do this is by getting at least two or three quotes for any significant costs or purchases.

What will happen after you apply?

We receive more applications than we can fund so even if your project is eligible you are not guaranteed to receive a grant. In the last year we have awarded grants to around two thirds of organisations which have applied.

We are interested to hear about the wider benefits of your project for your community but please remember that the main purpose of the Community Nature Fund is to support nature and increase biodiversity. This is the key basis on which your application will be judged.

Please note: even if your application is successful, you may not be awarded the full amount you have requested. This is generally for one of two reasons:

- there are elements of your project which we do not believe have clear benefits for nature
- we do not have enough funding available to support all of the projects we would like to and have to prioritise the elements of your project which we feel represent the best value for money

If your application is unsuccessful, or you are only awarded part of the funding you requested, we will always provide you with feedback which includes the main reasons for this decision.

If your application is successful, we will send you a grant offer letter and a claim form, which you'll need to sign and return to us before we can pay out your grant. The offer letter will set out the full terms and conditions of the grant, but there are two main commitments we ask from you:

- to complete and return a simple evaluation form within 12 months of receiving your grant, to tell us about the difference it has made
- to maintain anything bought or built using your grant for a minimum of 5 years

Please note: you will need to finish spending your funding and return your completed evaluation form before you will be eligible to receive a further grant.

Key Dates

This year, we will hold three funding rounds for the Community Nature Fund:

Round 1

You must submit your application by 5th June 2026

You will hear the outcome of your application by 3rd July 2026

Round 2

You must submit your application by 25th September 2026

You will hear the outcome of your application by 23rd October 2026

Round 3

You must submit your application by 29th January 2027

You will hear the outcome of your application by 26th February 2027

What will we do with the information you provide?

Decisions about which projects to award grants are made by a panel which includes members from some of our partner organisations. We need to share information from your application form with the panel members so that they can assess your application. If you are successful, we will also share information from your evaluation form so that they get to hear about the outcomes of your project. Members of the panel will never share any of your information with anyone else.

If we offer to put you in touch with someone who can provide advice on your application or project and you take up this offer, we will share information from your application form with that person, so that they can provide you with the best possible advice. Again, they will never share any of your information with anyone else.

You can read more about how we treat your information in our [privacy policy](#).