



THE NATIONAL FOREST

Forest Society Grants: Applicant Guidance

The Forest Society Grant scheme will fund new ways to support the health and wellbeing of residents and communities within the National Forest. It will engage new and diverse audiences, increase participation, and use local woodlands to harness the wellbeing benefits of spending time outdoors and connecting with nature.

The National Forest 25-year vision is for a forest environment, forest society and forest economy that can work together to create a greener and healthier future. Our vision is for a National Forest society that reflects a strong Forest identity, fosters sustainable living, and promotes thriving communities. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of people having access to natural habitats close to where they live. This has allowed people to exercise, gather safely (when restrictions have allowed), have quiet space for reflection and has helped to strengthen our relationship with nature.

Through this grant programme we want to find new ways to support people as we continue to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic; we want to demonstrate how local woodlands can be a tonic for our wellbeing, and to engage new and diverse audiences to increase activities in the National Forest. All activity must benefit residents and communities living within the National Forest boundary utilising the wellbeing potential of local woodlands.

What's on offer?

We are looking to award between 5 and 7 grants within a budget range of **£1,000 - £3,000**. It is not essential to have match funding to apply, but it may add support to your application, including any in-kind support.

The project could also make good use of the Timber Festival in 2022 – whether to showcase work or share the new ideas and learning, plans for delivery at the festival can be included in the application.

What sort of projects are we looking to support?

We are looking to support new and innovative ideas and projects that will engage local residents and communities with the National Forest.

Projects will need to demonstrate how ideas have taken inspiration from the Forest and that they support the following themes:

1. **Improve health and wellbeing** – promote and support health and wellbeing through facilitating greater interaction with local woodlands and nature. We would like to see more projects that support health professionals, social prescribers and green providers to work together to help individuals to access woodlands and natural spaces, particularly with a focus on mental health.
2. **Encourage participation** – engage and inspire National Forest residents and communities to access the natural environment, learn new skills and have fun. We are particularly interested in projects that engage harder to reach and diverse communities, including those that have been more significantly affected by the impacts of Covid-19.

Grant Criteria

Applicants will need to meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate how the project will meet the two themes identified above.
- Describe who will benefit. We are particularly interested in projects that engage diverse and harder to reach communities that have been more significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Explain how the project will test new and innovative ideas/approaches to either participation or wellbeing and the environment.
- Evidence how you intend to sustain the activities and associated benefits beyond the life of the project.
- Ensure that activity is delivered within the National Forest boundary and benefits National Forest residents and communities.
- Projects will need to be completed between 1st April 2022 and Friday 10th March 2023.

Who can apply?

These grants are intended to attract new organisations and practitioners to trial innovative ways of working with us in the National Forest. Those who wish to apply to the fund must be able to demonstrate that their activity will have a positive impact on local communities within the Forest and will need to show clear commitment to supporting the priorities of this grant.

Organisations who describe themselves as any of the following will be eligible to apply for this grant:

- Voluntary groups
- Businesses
- Community Groups
- Creative organisations/Artists/Facilitators
- Charities/Social Enterprises/CICs

Other organisations who work with community groups who describe themselves as something not on this list may be considered – please discuss this with the NFC team before applying.

The National Forest covers 200 square miles of the Midlands, including parts of Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire – find out more about the Forest here: nationalforest.org. We expect that the work funded by these grants will take place within the National Forest boundary, although organisations who apply need not be based in the Forest.

Additional Considerations

It is not essential to have match funding to apply, particularly as we understand that the funding environment is significantly reduced in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, but it may add support to your application. Where it is relevant, please detail any cash and/or in-kind support (e.g., volunteer time) that will be included in your project.

The National Forest Company will aim to process payment within 5 working days following confirmation of claim receipt and accompanying activity report.

How to Apply

You will need to complete the application form which can be downloaded [here](#) and must be returned to the National Forest team by 21st February 2022.

Please complete the form carefully, making sure to include:

- A clear explanation of the project, its aims and the methods used to engage people.
- How you will measure success and demonstrate benefit for participants.
- Whether and how you intend to utilise Timber 2022 to support your project.
- The expected impacts and legacy of the project, identifying how benefits created during the project may continue in the future.

If you require further information or an informal discussion about your application, please contact Hollie Davison at hdavison@nationalforest.org or call 07816364775.

If you have any alternative access needs that require you submit your application in another format, or require further information in another format, please get in touch with Hollie Davison on the above email or phone number.

The deadline for the submission of applications is **5pm on Monday 21st February 2022**. Applications need to be emailed to Hollie Davison at hdavison@nationalforest.org or posted to the National Forest Company Office (address on application form).

What happens next?

Applications will be reviewed during the period 22nd February to 2nd March and all applicants will be notified of our decisions via email by the end of the day on Wednesday 2nd March. If your application is successful, you will be sent a formal offer letter along with the grant conditions. We will then require written confirmation of your acceptance of the grant (on the "Acceptance of Grant Aid" form sent to you with the offer letter) within two weeks of receiving your offer. If you would prefer your grant to be paid by BACS transfer, please ensure that you have filled out the BACS information on the "Acceptance of Grant Aid" form before returning it. If your application is unsuccessful, you will be given feedback.

Grant Conditions

Grant aid will be made subject to several conditions, including:

- The applicant agrees not to dispose of an asset purchased with grant aid without the prior approval of the National Forest Company.
- The grant does not cover 'Capital' items such as vehicles, computers, and office equipment; or items such as video-cameras. Consideration will be given to the temporary hire of such items, if relevant.
- The National Forest Company should be given credit for their support on all publicity material, including press releases if issued, applying the National Forest Company's brand guidelines, and using the National Forest logo.
- The National Forest Company will complete simple evaluation of each project to establish the outcomes and achievements of each funded activity. Each project will be required to submit a short project summary upon completion. Accepting your grant will require your support with these evaluation activities.

If you require further information, or would like to discuss your project idea further, please get in touch with Hollie Davison on hdavison@nationalforest.org or 07816364775