**The National Forest Arts Grants**

**Guidance for applicants**

**Introduction**

We are introducing this pilot scheme to support the arts sector in the National Forest during the continued challenges that Covid-19 presents. We hope to be able to help the creative community to adapt ways of working and test out new methods so that alternative forms of engagement and creative activity can be undertaken.

We are looking to award 5 x £3000 grants, to be utilised between 31 January – 31 July 2021.

1. **What sort of projects are we looking to support?**

Do you have the seed of an idea for a new project which you would like to trial? This could be a piece of theatre performed on doorsteps, a creative tool kit for people to take on walks or an idea reimagined for an online audience. Whatever you are thinking, we would love to hear from you.

The scheme is open to any art form, including but not restricted to, visual arts, performing arts, crafts, lens-based media, digital arts and socially engaged practice.

We are looking for projects that share the values of the National Forest which are centred around the belief that tackling climate change is urgent and sustainability is achievable - by nature, society and the economy working in harmony.

1. **Who are the Arts Grants aimed at?**

The scheme is to support arts activity to be delivered in the National Forest and is open to artists, creative practitioners, arts organisations and community groups either based in the National Forest or who can demonstrate an existing connection to the National Forest.

The National Forest covers 200 square miles of the Midlands, including parts of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire – [nationalforest.org](https://www.nationalforest.org/)

1. **Applicants will need to meet the following criteria:**
* Demonstrate how the funding will help develop activity during the challenges of Covid-19, adapting approaches and helping to sustain stronger cultural delivery.
* Demonstrate how ideas have taken inspiration from the Forest and that the project will support one or more of the following themes:

*Health & Wellbeing*

*Nature*

*Sense of Place*

*Sustainability*

*Climate Action*

* Projects should be delivered within the timeframe of 31 January – 31 July 2021.

Projects will be selected based upon the above, along with the strength and quality of the idea and the proposed delivery. We also hope to award these grants across a range of art forms and approaches.

1. **Additional considerations**
* It is not essential to have match funding to apply, but it will be looked upon favourably, so where relevant please detail any cash and/or in-kind support.
* If there is a suitable fit then there may be the opportunity to share projects as part of Timber Festival (2-4 July 2021). To be discussed if your project is selected.
* As this funding crosses two financial years, you should aim to claim up to a third of the payment by 31 March 2021 (up to £1000 to be invoiced by 28 February and supported by a financial update) and the remainder on completion of the project, via a claim form and on receival of a simple project report.
* The National Forest Company will aim to process payment within 5 working days following confirmation of claim receipt.
1. **How to apply**

Applications should be made via the National Forest Arts Grants application form available to download from the website [nationalforest.org/about/partner-with-us/grant-opportunities](https://www.nationalforest.org/about/partner-with-us/grant-opportunities) or by contacting Jo Maker, Festival & Arts Officer - jmaker@nationalforest.org.

The deadline for applying is 5pm Monday 11 January 2021. Please email your application to Jo Maker. Please title your email ‘Arts Grants Application’.

If you would prefer to submit your application in another format for access reasons or require the information in any other format then please get in touch.

1. **What happens next**

Applications will be reviewed the week of 11 January and you will be notified of the decision via email (or alternative if requested) by 15 January 2021.

If successful you will be sent an 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.

1. **Grant Conditions**

Grant aid will be made subject to a number of conditions, the key ones being that:

* Grant aided items are maintained for a minimum of five years.
* 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.

**If you require any further information or would like to discuss an idea then please get in touch with Jo Maker, by emailing** **jmaker@nationalforest.org** **or on 07816 213225.**