

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 Lead

BOARD MEMBERS REPRESENTED ON THE GROUP

- Brendan Costelloe (Chair)
- Ben Dent
- Ellie Fujioka
- John Swanton
- Nigel Adcock
- Doug Hulyer

RECORD OF MEETINGS

Working Group meetings this FY:

- 30 June 2025 – online
- 19 September 2025 – online
- 9 February 2026 (TBC) – in person

1. Funding bids

National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) – Landscape Connections

NLHF will be investing £150 million into 20 projects during their current strategy period up to 2033. Protected Landscapes must be at the core of any project. Key themes are nature recovery and communities. To develop this project, CNL has partnered with National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

- In December, we found out that that our application to NLHF was successful. A development grant of £206,000 was approved (total project value = £221,000)
- A development grant will allow us to employ a Project Manager for 18 months who will plan, cost and develop the delivery phase application. This will include critical feasibility work that will inform and evidence the larger bid
- We have an outline of the delivery phase, which will connect high quality habitat along a 37km section of the Cotswold escarpment from Cleeve Common in the north to Selsley Common in the south. It will also involve and connect the people that live and work in the area. If successful, the delivery phase could be a £ multimillion project lasting 5+ years
- The recruitment for the Project Manager goes live in January 2026

National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) – Climate Action

The Great Big Climate Circus is a project that has been developed by Creative Sustainability and World Jungle with CNL as a supporting partner. A NLHF grant of £1.5 million has been approved (total project value = £2.1 million) and the project goes live in January 2026

- The circus will visit three locations per year and offer climate related activities, presentations, music and poetry
- CNL will provide seasonal climate activity sessions for young people to get involved in, delivered by Helen Komor, Outdoor Learning Officer
- CNL payments over the project lifetime total £53,629 and cover salaries, training, management fee, and professional expertise & support.

2. Delivery

Engagement Team

In September 2025, the newly formed Engagement team was completed with the final member (Bec Forster). The Engagement team was created because of the similarity in the audiences we engage with, and cross-over in our respective objectives. By coming together as a team, we are supporting and adding value to each other's work and providing peer support. The team spend the day together in the office every Monday and consists of:

1. James Webb, Partnerships Lead
2. Helen Komor, Outdoor Learning Officer
3. Rebecca Foster, Grants Coordinator
4. Rowan Wynne-Jones, Water Restoration Officer

Access to Nature

- Helen Komor, Outdoor Learning Officer, leads our Access to Nature partnership with CNL, Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership, and World Jungle
- The project is financed through a three-year grant from Ernest Cook Trust, as well as many smaller pots of money that support core and activity costs. The project runs until August 2027
- Helen has completed year one of the project (Sep 24 – Aug 25) and smashed her target of engaging 750 young people with a total of 1,500
- The project has reached some of the most isolated and disengaged young people in the Cotswolds and urban fringe
- Year two will focus on deeper and sustained engagement with small groups of young people

Caring for the Cotswolds

- This is our own grant scheme for the Cotswolds. It is supported by businesses who wish to keep the Cotswolds a special place to live, work and visit.
- In July 2025, the scheme received a significant boost with a £250,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)
- The NLHF grant supports a dedicated Grants Coordinator to manage the scheme over the next three years, until July 2028. In that time, the scheme will distribute £130,000 in small community grants, as well as providing opportunities for young people to join a youth panel, and take part in paid placements
- Rebecca Foster (Bec), Grants Coordinator, joined the team in September 2025
- Ahead of re-launching the scheme in December, Bec updated all the grant documents, created a new online application form and updated the webpages

Water Restoration

- Rowan Wynne-Jones, Water Restoration Officer, began her new role in August 2025
- The project is financed through the Water Restoration Fund, a grant managed by Wild Oxfordshire on behalf of the Evenlode Catchment Partnership. The project runs until July 2027
- The work builds on the hugely successful Everyone's Evenlode project and is broken down into a series of annual milestones
- The milestones include some large research pieces of work that reflect on the findings of Everyone's Evenlode. They culminate in a series of reports that will help inform and shape a future CNL rivers-based project.
- There are also some delivery milestones that involve river-based learning and community engagement

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- None

NEXT STEPS

- Draft a Fundraising Strategy

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- None

JANUARY 2026