

## 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

### RECORD OF MEETINGS

Working Group meetings this FY:

- 16 February 2024 - online
- 24 November 2023 – hybrid; in person/online
- 14 July 2023 - held in the Community Shelter at Westonbirt Arboretum)

Relevant meetings this FY:

- 24 November 2023 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting
- 16 November 2023 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting
- 6 September 2023 – Access to Nature training (James Webb)
- 16 August 2023 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting
- 28 June 2023 – Access to Nature training (James Webb)
- 17 May 2023 – Cotswold Way Association Partnership meeting

### OTHER ACTIVITY

#### 1. 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. Approved bids total £171,064.

Apr 2023 - Mar 2024			
Date Applied	Funder	Amount	Project
08/01/2024 <b>Pending</b>	Ernest Cook Trust	£60,000	Towards a Learning Officer (£20k per annum over 3 yrs)
05/01/2024 <b>Pending</b>	Defra (Water Restoration Fund)	c.£500,000	Sherborne Brook – wetland creation and restoration, National Trust
21/11/2023 <b>Pending</b>	Delamere Dairy Foundation	£5,000	Towards a Learning Officer (Year 1 Apr 24 - Mar 25)
17/11/2023 <b>Pending</b>	Nineveh Charitable Trust	£5,000	Towards a Learning Officer (Year 1 Apr 24 - Mar 25)
13/11/2023 <b>Approved</b>	Ernest Cook Trust	N/A - EOI	Towards a Learning Officer
13/11/2023 <b>Approved</b>	Coln St Aldwyns Children's Group	£500	Towards a Learning Officer (Year 1 Apr 24 - Mar 25)

27/10/2023 <b>Declined</b>	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£47,000	Climate Action work
21/09/2023 <b>Declined</b>	Defra (Landscape Recovery)	£746,283	Large scale habitat improvements in central Cotswolds (GWT led)
30/08/2023 <b>Approved</b>	British Mountaineering Council	£41,000	To fund a Grants and Access Officer role (1-yr) to manage the Access for All funding and CftC
20/07/2023 <b>Declined</b>	Defra/National Lottery Heritage Fund	£650,000	Species Survival Fund: Adders & Butterflies (GWT led)
20/07/2023 <b>Declined</b>	Defra/National Lottery Heritage Fund	£650,000	Species Survival Fund: Headwaters project (CNL led)
01/04/2023 <b>Approved</b>	Thames Water - ECP Steering Group	£109,564	Year 3 (2023-24) costs for education and outreach work on the ECP Project
01/04/2023 <b>Approved</b>	Thames Water - ECP Steering Group	£20,000	Year 3 (2023-24) costs for biodiversity work on the ECP Project

## 2. New to Nature

Nina Stubbington joined the team in April 2023 as Grants and Outreach Officer. The 12-month 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 Caring for the Cotswolds and presented her findings to the Board members on the Projects and Fundraising Working Group. She has successfully guided applicants through the grant application process resulting in the approval of 12 new projects with a total value of £20,000. In addition, Nina is supporting business members with social media content and creation.

In order to gain experience and skills, Nina is also working with other members of the team. During the summer she supported the Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands team every Friday to help with the seed harvesting. Nina also delivered a social media competition for Cotswold Way Association that in order to increase their number of followers.

As at December 2023, Nina has secured a new role with the CNL team that will follow on from her current contract, meaning we retain her until March 2025. The new role, Grants and Access Officer, focuses on managing the Removing Barriers – Access for All funding. Consequently, her new line manager is Becky Jones. We have received support from the British Mountaineering Council to fund this new role in full.

## 3. 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 & 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. As at January 2024, the team had delivered to 617 students.

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 CNL. The team keep records of how many people they engage with at these events and as at January 2024, the number was 2,254 adults and children. A huge thank you to Rosalind Marsden, Rowan Wynne-Jones and Jennifer Lanham for all the hard work.

#### Income and expenditure

- At the end of July, we received project payment for the April 2023-March 2024 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 FY.
- 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.

#### **4. Rural Skills Outreach**

Using external funding, 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 January 2024, the number of session places delivered was 175, 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.

If you haven't seen it already, there is a short video on 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 by CNL. As at January 2024, the balance of funds is £6,300. This will support delivery for the remainder of this FY.

#### **5. Caring for the Cotswolds**

Caring for the Cotswolds is a grant scheme for the Cotswolds. It is supported by businesses who wish to keep the Cotswolds a special place to live, work and visit.

The scheme was open to new applications during summer 2023. As noted above, Nina Stubbington has played a key role in managing the grants scheme, including supporting applicants to develop their projects. This year we partnered with Creative Sustainability and their Youth Climate Group who reviewed the applications on 2 November. It was a productive session and the young people brought insight and mature thinking to the table and ultimately made some great recommendations. They were working to a £20,000 budget to allocate to new projects. The Grants Panel meet on 24<sup>th</sup> November to review their recommendations and make final decisions. The panel approved 12 new projects with a total grant value of £19,519. All applicants have returned their signed award letters.

As at January 2024 we have received income of £1,620. Business members typically donate in Q4 so we are expecting much more to come in over the coming months. 15% of income is used to support core costs.

## **6. Partnerships**

- Jan 2024 - Cotswolds+ LVEP – Sustainability and Biodiversity Action Plan approved.
- Sep-Oct 2023 - three corporate volunteering groups worked on important wildlife sites.
- Aug 2023 – MOU finalised between CNL (Avon Valley Wardens) and Lackham College (Wiltshire) to host students on land-based courses.
- Jul 2023 – Cotswolds+ LVEP was approved with Andy Parsons chairing the group.
- Apr-Jun 2023 – supported the 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 CNL Board presents data and outcomes.
- Work with the Chief Executive on fundraising for furthering our Climate Action and Education and Outreach workstreams.
- Support Nina Stubbington during the second half of her placement with the team.

### **SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None

JANUARY 2024