

## 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
- Jon Grantham
- Doug Hulyer
- John Swanton

### RECORD OF MEETINGS

Working Group meetings this FY:

- 19 May 2026 – in person (Caring for the Cotswolds grants panel)
- 7 July 2026 – in person (Caring for the Cotswolds grants panel)
- w/c 9 November 2026 – in person (Caring for the Cotswolds grants panel)

### 1. Recently approved 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. CNL has partnered with National Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to develop & deliver the “Common Connections” project

- A £206,000 grant was approved in December 2025 (total project value = £221,000) towards a development phase led by 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
- Ben Spencer, Project Manager, started in April 2026 and is working across all three partner offices and is based in Marsden on Mondays
- 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

#### **National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) – 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 NLCF grant of £1.5 million has been approved (total project value = £2.1 million) and the project went live in January 2026

- The circus will visit three locations per year and offer climate related activities, presentations, music and poetry (Stroud 20 June/ Dursley 11 July /Gloucester 18 July)
- 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
- In year one of the project (Sep 24 – Aug 25), Helen engaged 1,500 young people, set against a target of 750 young people
- In year two of the project (Sep 25 – Aug 26) Helen has engaged 446 young people to date, set against a target of 500 young people. Year two is focusing on deeper and sustained engagement with small groups of young people
- The project has reached some of the most isolated and disengaged young people in the Cotswolds and urban fringe. They have been given the opportunity to take part in workshops, days out to locations such as Cleeve Common and Westonbirt, work experience and a residential.

### **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
- The first Grants & Youth Panel was held on 9 February at Stroud High School. Five Board members and 12 students assessed the applications together. In this meeting, five new applications were approved with a total grant value of £16,078.
- The second Grants & Youth Panel will be held on 19 May at Chipping Campden School.

### **Freshwater Focus**

- 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
- A new webpage has been created to showcase Rowan's work:
- <https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/our-work/education-and-resources/freshwater-focus/>

### **Corporate volunteering**

In 2023 CNL formalised its offer to businesses looking to spend the day volunteering in the Cotswolds, either for corporate social responsibility or team building. We have a set price and provide an itinerary and risk assessment in advance. As well as getting useful work done, this initiative contributes to our second purpose: "helping people understand and enjoy the Cotswolds". Highlights include:

- We have welcomed 17 different groups (approx. 195 people)
- Work has included building over 100m of dead-hedge, woodland management, creating reptile habitat and scrub bashing
- Has raised £6,000

### **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

- None

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Draft a Fundraising Strategy

### **SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- None

MAY 2026