

Westmorland and Furness Council's Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund Application Guidance

Thank you for your interest in the Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting fund from Westmorland and Furness Council. Below is some guidance to help you fill out your application form. Please read this guidance carefully and refer to it when completing the application form.

1.0 Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council have launched a new grant fund of £50,000 to support tree and hedgerow planting. The funding is available for schools, to help encourage biodiversity on their sites and increase the pupils' relationship with nature. Along with charities, Parish and Town Councils, community groups and other eligible groups.

One of Westmorland and Furness Council's key values is to be ecologically aware and be responsible for protecting and enhancing our natural environment. An important priority of the Council Plan is to make sure customers are at the heart of everything we do. There are clear benefits to nature by planting trees and hedgerows, but there are also wider benefits to our residents. For example, health and wellbeing, access to green space and access to fresh, local produce through the planting of fruiting trees.

All planting schemes funded through this grant will contribute to the One Tree per Resident project, where we are planting one tree, or one metre of hedgerow equivalent, per resident in Westmorland and Furness.

2.0 Aim of this Fund

The Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund aims to support community tree planting and community growing, by providing financial capacity to collectively support nature and biodiversity. It also helps towards planting one tree or one metre of hedging for every resident in Westmorland and Furness.

3.0 What can be funded

The fund will support the capital costs of establishing a planting scheme, including:

- Ground preparation;
- Tree and hedgerow costs;
- Planting costs;
- Protection; and

- Fencing.

The minimum grant allocation is £2000 with a minimum of 50 trees/metres of hedgerow. The 50 trees minimum can be in combination such as 20 trees and 30 metres of hedge. If you are unable to meet the minimum grant amount of £2000, we will accept applications in partnership.

The groups receiving the grant must own or operate the land or have landowner permission. Proof of land ownership must be provided in the form of a Title Deed or Title Register and if applicable proof of landowner permission must be provided to be considered for funding.

If your planting scheme is on leased land, you need to demonstrate that you have at least 15 years left on your lease. It is advisable to gain consent from the freeholders of the land to support your application.

4.0 What will not be funded?

The Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund will not support:

- Planting schemes that fall outside the boundary of Westmorland and Furness
- Activities that are for private gain
- Planting schemes with under 50 trees.
- Trees and/or hedgerow planted where landowner permission is not granted.
- Planting schemes with no form of public access.
- Work or equipment already purchased or events that have already taken place.
- Ordinary expenditure of the organisation including, but not limited to, operational running costs, maintenance costs or ongoing staffing costs. For the avoidance of doubt, these are costs that would be incurred regardless of whether the project is delivered or not.
- Activities and costs that fall out of scope including revenue and tree maintenance costs.

5.0 Criteria for Funding

The groups and organisations applying must:

- Have clear governance in operation (e.g., have a constitution document, MoU);
- Be non-profit making from your planting scheme;
- Have audited accounts and financial transparency;

- A bank or building society account in the name of your group or organisation with at least two unrelated signatories; and
- Proof of land ownership (Title Deed or Title Register) or landowner permission.

The groups eligible to apply for this fund are:

- Schools
- Town and Parish Councils.
- Voluntary and Community Groups.
- Non-Governmental Organisations.
- Businesses.
- Registered Charitable Organisations.
- Applications in partnership (for those groups unable to meet the £2000 minimum grant on an individual application) from the above eligible groups.

We do not accept applications from:

- Individuals.
- Families
- Private landowners and Farmers (unless in partnership with the local community and a high level of community involvement can be evidenced).
- Other funding opportunities for these groups include: [BN11: Planting new hedges - GOV.UK](#) and [Funding Offer | Woodland Creation Grants | Raise: Cumbria Community Forest.](#)
- Groups that have no formal constitution.

Your application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The cost of your project and the cost per tree (50%).
- Sustainability of your project (25%).
- Community Involvement and Benefits (25%).

It is unlikely that the Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund will be able to fund all the applications we receive. Therefore, an organisation can only make one application, and we reserve the right to prioritise application that achieve the best value for money,

community benefits and long-term sustainability. We also reserve the right to decline applications which do not meet the stated criteria.

6.0 Tree Species Guidance

- For hedgerow planting schemes we want to encourage the planting of species rich hedgerow. A list of recommended woody species can be found here: [The Hedgerows Regulations 1997](#).
- We advise against the planting of sea buckthorn due to the damage it can cause to sand dune systems.
- For hedgerow planting schemes we will only support the planting of native trees within the hedgerows.
- For tree species it is important that you choose the “Right Tree for the Right Place”. Select a species that can grow to its full potential without significant management or pruning work
- [Tree Planting Advice - Plant Trees - Woodland Trust](#)
- [Tree-planting-guide-2019-updates_1.pdf](#)

General Advice:

- If the area you are planting in is damp, alder and willow are good species.
- Oak, birch and rowan species are good for quick establishment.
- Crab apple, pear, walnut, cherries and blackthorn are good for foraging.
- Guelder rose and elder are great for bird species.
- Hornbeam, wild service tree and wayfaring tree are uncommon in Westmorland and Furness so improving their numbers would be good.
- Yew and spindle grow well on limestone.

7.0 How your application is dealt with

On receipt of your application, we will make an initial assessment to check that your organisation and project are eligible, and that all required supporting documentation has been provided. We may contact you to obtain missing information, documentation or for clarification.

We aim to acknowledge receipt of your application within five working days. This will be by email.

You may be contacted by an officer for further details and clarification if you have large cash reserves that are not being used for this project.

Eligible applications which are accompanied by the required supporting documentation will be scored against the scoring criteria and forwarded to the Council's Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund Grant Panel for consideration. The Grant Panel, made up of key officers within the Council, will assess and make recommendations to the Assistant Director for Climate and Natural Environments and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity. The Grant Panel may request a site visit where appropriate.

The Council's Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Fund Grant Panel's recommendation may be to approve or reject the grant award. If a recommendation to award is made, this will include a recommended grant amount.

Applicants will be informed by email of the recommendation within five working days of the meeting taking place.

A Project Completion Form will be completed and submitted by the applicant on completion of the project.

8.0 Condition of Funding

Payment of the funding is subject to completion of such legal agreement as may be required by the Council, which may include specific terms relating to your project and/or the following general terms.

Grants awarded must be spent on the purpose stated in the application. If for any reason your circumstances change or you wish to vary the way in which you spend your grant, you are required to contact us to request written permission to do so.

In the event of a group or organisation ceasing to operate or failing to undertake or complete the project or event for which the grant was offered, or breaching these terms and conditions, Westmorland and Furness Council reserves the right to withhold payment, to reduce an award or seek its recovery.

The financial support provided by Westmorland and Furness Council should be acknowledged in all relevant printed publicity, on websites and in information given to the press. Relevant guidance will be provided to applicants at the time of a grant offer being made.

Your organisation must ensure that its project operated within the requirements of all legislation.

Your organisation should ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in the delivery of its project. Your commitment to this should be clearly identified in a written policy or statement that takes into account current legislation and good practice.

You will be required to inform the Council when your project has been completed and to submit a Project Completion Form within three months of completion (we will provide you with a template). You may also need to provide relevant invoices and a bank statement showing payments made. Organisations who do not complete and return a satisfactory Project Completion Form may be required to return their funding and will not be considered for future funding.

The Council is under a legal obligation to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Decisions of the Council may be challenged by judicial review if the subsidy control rules are not followed or not followed completely. Grants may be suspended, and orders for damages or recovery of any unlawful subsidy made. The Council (and the grant recipient) may suffer reputational damage if an unlawful subsidy is made. As part of the application process, the Council may request from your organisation information about the levels of subsidies, including grant funding, that your organisation has received in recent years.

You will cooperate with the Council so as to allow the Council to discharge its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIR”) and the Local Government Transparency Code (“Codes of Practice”) under section 45 and 46 of the FOIA.

Westmorland and Furness Council accepts no liability for any consequences, whether direct or indirect, that may come about from your use of the Grant or from the Council’s withdrawal of the Grant in accordance with these terms and conditions.

9.0 Delivery

By submitting an application to Westmorland and Furness Council, the organisation named in the application agrees (if awarded a grant) to:

- Use the grant only for the activities described in the application and only for expenditure made after the date of the offer letter.
- Provide information and regular communication about their progress over the period of funding and its benefit on the natural environment and / or sustainability (a completion form must be completed, we may also email you for more intermittent updates).
- Notify the Council within three (3) months of a change in land use or change in ownership.
- Maintain and manage the trees for a minimum of 15 years.
- Act lawfully throughout in relation with best practices and guidance from any relevant regulators and follow any guidelines issued requiring a minimum of two signatories.

- Hold the grant in a UK based bank account or building society account.

10.0 Subsidy Control

The organisation will comply with all rules under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the UK-EU TCA (the Subsidy Control Rules), these are:

- Not take any action or fail to take any action that will cause the Council to be in breach of its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules;
- Provide such reasonable assistance as is requested by the Council to enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the Subsidy Control Rules; and
- Ensure the Grant is spent only to further the delivery of the project and return to the Council any unspent part of the Grant upon completion of the project.

Westmorland and Furness Council may withhold and/or require repayment of all or any part of the Grant from the date of payment if variation, repayment or recovery is required under or by virtue of the Subsidy Control Rules or by any court of relevant jurisdiction.

11.0 Contact Us

Climate and Natural Environment Team,
Westmorland and Furness Council
South Lakeland House, Town Hall, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4DQ

Email: futuretrees@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk