

National Forest for Wales Landscape Scheme 2025/2027

1. Background

Following a successful pilot, the National Forest for Wales (NFfW)¹ is looking to further develop working at a landscape scale to accelerate its growth.

To deliver this strategic approach, Welsh Government is looking to fund ambitious partnerships to carry out key activities:

- that realise the **economic, community, biodiversity** and **recreational** benefits of the NFfW
- are **collaborative between a number of land owners** at a landscape scale
- meet all **6 NFfW outcomes**

Funding worth £4.3M (£2.15M for 2025/2026 and £2.15M for 2026/2027) is available through Local Nature Partnerships.

All approved proposals must complete by **31 March 2027**.

2. Who can apply?

The Fund will be managed and distributed by WCVA as the Scheme Manager of the Local Places for Nature - Local Nature Partnerships Scheme (LNP). A window of the Challenge Fund will be opened within this scheme to undertake the application process. The Challenge Fund is a closed fund within the scheme available to all 25 LNPs pan Wales to apply for on behalf of groups within their partnership.

Due to the collaborative and landscape nature of this scheme, we require multiple organisations/authorities/landowners (i.e. more than 2 partners/land owners) to deliver proposals that cover multiple site locations. There will need to be a lead applicant for any partnership application, and it is expected that this will be the body that hosts the LNP Co-ordinator.

It is not a requirement for any of the proposed partners or sites to already have National Forest Status, but successful projects that includes woodlands must apply for National Forest status through the 'National Forest Status Scheme' before completion of their project. We encourage applicants to contact the local National Forest Woodland Liaison Officer who will be able to advise on achieving the National Forest Outcomes and the application process for the Status Scheme. The activity of successful projects will make a significant contribution to the evidence required to achieve National Forest status.

Further details on the process for a site applying for National Forest Status can be seen via the following - <https://www.gov.wales/national-forest> and by contacting the local National Forest Woodland Liaison Officer.

¹ [National Forest for Wales | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/national-forest)

3. What sort of projects are eligible?

The existing Local Places for Nature guidance for the Challenge Fund applies to this scheme.

We are looking to support innovative, landscape projects, that *as a whole* meet all of the following NFfW outcomes (each participant could focus on individual outcomes if required):

- good quality, well designed and managed resilient woodlands
- woodlands accessible to people
- community involvement in woodlands
- connected woodlands
- dynamic, multi-purpose woodlands and trees
- woodlands that demonstrate learning, research and innovation

Applications should try and reflect (but not be limited to) and demonstrate as many as the following as possible:

- Be rooted in the needs of its 'place' and the impact trees can have for their community/locality.
- Strong community engagement:
 - offering opportunities for deprived communities to access woodland and nature.
 - creating local, sustainable, economic opportunities in rural areas.
- Deliver against wider forestry policy objectives:
 - Tree Planting (see **Annex A** for further detail and examples)
 - Improved access and connectivity
 - Skills development
 - Economic value of woodland
 - Support broader community engagement through education, skill development and volunteering opportunities
 - Innovative approaches to woodland and landscape management and piloting and demonstration of new practices

This funding would not allow double funding of sites that have fund activities covered by 'The Woodland Investment Grant'² or 'Integrated Natural Resources Scheme'³.

4. How much money can I apply for?

There is a £4.3 Million total budget (£4M Capital £300k Revenue) for the fund. Proposals will be considered that are between £50k-£250k. To reflect the total amount of Capital and Revenue funding available there should be no more than 7% of Revenue costs per application. All projects must be delivered and claimed by **31st March 2027**. One application should be made for each project. More than one project or collaboration may be proposed, but these should be ranked in order of preference of funding.

² [The Woodland Investment Grant \(round six\) | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

³ [Integrated Natural Resources Scheme | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

5. What can the money be spent on?

This is a capital and revenue grant fund and provides capacity to build on new and/or existing collaborations, engage communities, businesses and institutions such as local authorities and other public bodies.

We intend this scheme to be as flexible as possible in order to support large, innovative and ambitious activity to unlock the benefits of woodlands for local communities.

Examples of Activity

An example of some of the activity supported through the previous pilot scheme that reflects the landscape approach included:

Engaging community activities for young people and vulnerable adults, improving access and enjoyment to woodlands with improvements and repairs to infrastructure, providing training and demonstrations for volunteers and groups on traditional woodland skills such as coppicing and tree planting, processing timber extracted on site for infrastructure projects and exploring sustainable economic opportunities by trialling and demonstrating using a mobile sawmill and producing a guide for woodland owners and managers that aim to have a social element to their multi-purpose woodland for economic and community benefits.

Connecting the woodlands, hedgerow trees, pastures and peatland of their local forest's for habitat creation, enhanced biodiversity and broader community engagement. For wildlife they provide habitat corridors, homes and sources of food. For the livestock they provide shade. For the local community they provide a new opportunity to learn and make a difference for nature.

Making use the important local woodland habitats and a new site to engage people and build skills which increase economic, community and biodiversity outcomes linked to woodlands and trees. Key activities included carrying out a number of workshops in Orchard Skills, Nature Connection, Agroforestry and woodland ID Skills; Engagement activity including Willow 'Fedge' session with local school; and providing Ecological Survey and GIS Mapping Training.

Costs in relation to tree planting activity and fencing or similar works should follow costs/payment rates as set out in Welsh Government Woodland Creation Grants. Any costs which are over the standard rates (i.e. over 10%) will need to provide a justification for higher costs.

As this is a no aid scheme Items and assets that directly lead to profit generation as their primary purpose will not be eligible.

Proposals that require specific approvals/permissions to carry out activity is the responsibility of the lead applicant to obtain these. Evidence that the proposal has the relevant permission/authority will need to be provided in support of applications.

Annex A provides more detail on eligible costs that can be supported through this scheme.

Please contact NationalForestWales@gov.wales for any further clarification as to eligible activities.

6. Timeline

The anticipated deadline for applications is: **08 September 2025**.

These will be assessed by an independent panel coordinated by WCVA and successful applicants will be notified by **19 September 2025**. A further application window may be opened later in 2025/early 2026 dependant on available budget.

Annex A

Potential Example Activity:

Examples of topics the NFfW landscape scheme could fund partners or land managers to come together to deliver (these are only suggested areas – projects **must** be relevant to the needs of the place):

- Improving community opportunities for engagement with woodlands across an area.
- Identifying and proposing local solutions to fill skills, or knowledge / research gaps relating to woodland in a specific area
- Developing and delivering and resourcing overarching plan / vision for woods/ trees.
- Innovative woodland based economic development solutions for a particular area to increase skills, job prospects, economic viability of local woodlands.
- Providing wholistic nature-based solutions to a woodland area that improve biodiversity and reduce flood risks.

Funded activity could include:

- Tree planting on a limited scale was allowed through the pilot, but we are now looking to increase and maximise the amount of planting we can support at a larger scale. We will issue a further supplementary Annex to this guidance which sets out further detail in due course. To help with this process, we encourage LNP's to make us aware as soon as possible if they have any plans for significant (i.e. over 2ha) levels of tree planting as this scheme may be able to help with the costs.
- A building or equipment to engage local communities in developing skills or business opportunities, using the potential of their woodland across several different land parcels within a defined area.
- Recreational activities that support local communities to sustainably manage, realise economic benefit and protect their local woodlands.
- Research activity that engages local communities for the sustainability of their woodland.
- Activities that engage communities in local economic development based in and around their woodland.

Activity not supported by the scheme include:

Ash dieback and re-stocking

We will not consider applications for projects solely to remove or manage ash dieback.

Projects which have a small element of ash dieback – as part of a wider project to restore and enhance nature – may be considered. You will need to provide evidence that shows a gain to biodiversity and creation of resilient ecosystems.

The re-stocking of trees on a site that has been felled is not eligible for this scheme funding. Re-stocking is a legal requirement of felling licences and cannot be funded through this scheme.

Ineligible costs

The following items are examples of costs, which are **not eligible** for the NF Landscape scheme. This is not a definitive list and all items of expenditure will be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- purchase of land
- cost of leasing land
- projects solely removing/managing ash dieback
- re-stocking of trees on a site that has been felled
- work you are legally responsible for undertaking
- any physical work on site carried out before the authorised project start
- own labour and equipment costs
- general office equipment and furniture
- activities required by law