

Green Shoots for Cheshire and Warrington 2024

Programme Guidance for applicants

A new programme to support projects which improve, or increase access to, local greenspaces or wildlife sites; and at the same time deliver outcomes for individuals and local communities.

This programme is supported by funds from Encirc.

Introduction

As a local grant maker, Cheshire Community Foundation's priorities are:

- To improve mental health and wellbeing
- To tackle poverty and disadvantage
- To develop education, skills and employment
- To build stronger communities across Cheshire

Protecting our natural environment and resources can be a key driver for all of these: by helping to maintain and encourage access to them we can improve people's mental health and wellbeing, reduce inequality of access to outdoor activities and their benefits, help volunteers build skills and learning from outdoor activities, and create opportunities for communities to work together and build new connections.

What do we want to achieve?

This programme focuses on the power of local, grassroots projects working on these themes across Cheshire and Warrington. We want to invest in projects which deliver one of the three following outcomes;

- a. help to make high-quality green space available to everyone
- b. create opportunities to take part in outdoor activities for those for whom access is most difficult
- c. maintain and improve our natural environment/habitats

All projects **must also** deliver measurable outcomes for the people involved which contribute to improved health and wellbeing, skills and employability, or inclusion and community connection.

What funding is available?

1. Branching Out

Grants to up to £10,000 for organisations with an established track record in similar work, and which are keen to further develop or expand an existing project or idea. Each project will:

- 1) improve or expand access to a natural environment in Cheshire and Warrington for local people, with particular focus on those who may not usually have easy access to it,

OR

- 2) demonstrably improve the habitat or physical access to that natural environment

AND

- 3) deliver measurable outcomes for the people involved which contribute to improved health and wellbeing, employability, inclusion or community connection.

2. Planting Seeds:

Grants up to £2,500 for community projects which help to look after, improve or increase access to local greenspaces, and which involve local people.

We welcome applications from across Cheshire and Warrington but priority will be given to projects within which are within 7 miles of Elton.

For this strand there is a lighter touch application process.

Sample activities could include

- involving young people in looking after a greenspace.
- increased planting, creation of a pond or a wildflower area to increase biodiversity. alongside learning activities for the local community.
- creating a more accessible walkway to enable a wider range of people to use a site.
- building a raised bed to make growing activities accessible to older people.
- community clean-up and action days to reduce littering along canal banks.
- volunteers working to create or improve a local pocket park.
- outdoor learning activities for children.

For both strands we are particularly interested in funding projects which are led or informed by young people, people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities and people from the LGBTQ+ community.

General criteria

Projects can last for up to 12 months.

Where physical works are taking place, applicants must either own or lease the land OR have the permission of the landowner for the project.

If the site in question is of designated value (eg a local nature reserve or a Site of Special Scientific Interest), you must be able to demonstrate expert input to ensure planning and delivery is appropriate for the habitat.

If capital works (eg access works, pond digging etc.) are included in the funding request, there may be scope for some flexibility on maximum grant request but please talk to us before you apply.

Sustainability

We are keen for Green Shoots projects to work in a way which minimises their carbon footprint. This way we can help the voluntary and community sector to play its part in responding to climate change and embracing more sustainable ways of working. We will work with successful applicants to look at how they do this, in a way that is appropriate to the type and size of their organization.

Who can apply

We can only support not for profit organisations delivering work in Cheshire and Warrington; including registered charities, constituted community groups and other charitable organisations, including Social Enterprises and CICs

We will consider work on community sites where there is a statutory role e.g. allotments and school grounds, if the funding is requested for additional and extracurricular enrichment activities rather than core curriculum or statutory provision. Schools (or their PTA) are eligible to apply.

Our general [eligibility criteria](#) and [Grant-Making Principles and Minimum Standards](#) apply.

Timing

Opens to applications from 1st March 2024.

Closes to applications 31st March 2024.

Applicants will be informed of outcomes in May 2024.

Please talk to us

We are happy to talk to applicants about their ideas before they apply. Just email us (grants@cheshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk) and one of the Grants Team will arrange a time for a phone chat.