

Exmoor National Park Landscape Conservation Grant



Guidelines for Applicants and Funding Conditions

Please read these guidance notes carefully before completing the application form. If you have any questions at this stage or require the documentation in a different format (e.g. large print), please contact Exmoor National Park Authority on 01398 322277

Introduction

Exmoor National Park Authority has teamed up with the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership to provide a fund to support projects that benefit the landscape of Exmoor.

Exmoor National Park Authority's Partnership Fund has given £100,000 to support the Exmoor Landscape Conservation Grant Scheme and a further £30,000 is available from the Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership, which has funds from the Heathcoat-Amory Charitable Trusts and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The aim of this 3 year grant scheme is to support a range of projects and traditional management works that benefit the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor National Park.

Available as small grants, we can fund up to 50% of the cost of projects such as hedge bank management, scrub and bracken control, orchard management, pond restoration, care of historic features or other landscape conservation work. Up to 80% may be offered but only where the project is of significant importance to the landscape of Exmoor and National Park purposes.

The grant is based on an agreement between the land manager and the National Park Authority. In signing the Agreement you will agree to undertake the environmental improvement works in accordance with the guidelines given below. Upon completion and satisfactory inspection of the work, we will agree to pay the grant.

This is a competitive grants scheme. You may submit applications for different projects, but the maximum grant per holding is £2,500 per year. The project will not be considered if HLS or ESA capital works funding is available. As part of the assessment process, a subsequent application will take into account the delivery of

the initial project. Decisions on grant schemes will be made by Exmoor National Park Authority but please note that as part of the assessment process we reserve the right to consult with relevant partners such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission.

1. Criteria

i) Essential requirements

To be eligible the land must be within the Exmoor National Park.

To qualify for funding a project must further one or both National Park purposes:

- Conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor National Park
- Promotion of opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of Exmoor

In addition to the Essential Criteria listed above, weighting will be given to those projects that:

Provide tangible benefits to the local economy
Demonstrate use of local materials and FSC timber
Demonstrate traditional forms of countryside management

Tenants applying in their own right must certify that they have notified their landlords of their intention of applying for grant aid and gained all necessary consents.

The Landscape Conservation Grant does not automatically affect your eligibility for other grants and subsidies. However, funding for the work covered by the agreement must not be claimed from any other source.

You must let us know if you are in receipt of any other grant aid for the works proposed.

The project will not be considered if it is eligible for capital works payments under the Higher Level Stewardship or Environmentally Sensitive Area schemes.

Planning permission requirements will not normally be eligible.

ii) Works eligible for grant aid

Any works on farmland, (where capital works funding via Environmentally Sensitive Area or Higher Level Schemes is not available) which conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor may be eligible for grant aid. The following are suggestions of the types of eligible work:

Traditional Boundaries

- The restoration of hedges using traditional methods such as laying, coppicing and associated new planting
- The restoration of historic banks and dry stone walls

Landscape Enhancement

- Removal of redundant fences
- Removal of eyesores
- Conservation of designed landscapes
- Management and planting of traditional orchards

Livestock Management

- Provision of equipment; water bowsers, fences or mobile handling systems to enable grazing and management of important grasslands

Consolidation and/or Protection of Archaeological and Historic Sites

- Repair and protection from erosion
- Consolidation of built remains to prevent further deterioration
- Controlling damaging vegetation cover e.g. scrub and bracken

Measures to Conserve Wildlife

- Management of unimproved grassland – eg fencing, water bowsers
- Management of veteran trees

Measures to protect natural resources

- River bank protection or restoration
- Erosion prevention

3. Grant Rates

Grant will only be payable on works included when the Agreement is drawn up and will be subject to any financial ceiling set at that time – currently £2,500

Grant rate will normally be 50% although in exceptional circumstances may be up to 80% may be offered but only where the project is of significant importance to the landscape of Exmoor and National Park purposes.

4. Completing the Application Form

Section A- Applicant details. This must be an individual, a business or a constituted body or organisation. An individual can apply on behalf of a group of individuals e.g. a Commoners Association or a group of tenant farmers/graziers.

Section B- Project Details - Please give details of the project for which you are applying funding towards.

Give a brief summary of the proposed project aims and objectives (please attach separate sheet if more space required). This should include the works you intend carrying out, its scope in terms of area covered and length of project, whether it offers any additional benefits to existing work already being carried out and how the funding will enable you to do this.

Please state the location, including grid references and if applicable, approximate area in hectares.

A map must be included in the application outlining the location of the proposed work. (Exmoor National Park Authority can produce a map for you if you do not have one).

Section C – Eligibility and other sources of grant.

Please note that we cannot fund any project already receiving a grant, or where ESA or Higher Level Capital works funding is available.

Section D – Costs

Two quotes must be included with this application form for the proposed project. VAT- you will only be able to claim grant against non-recoverable VAT.

If you are VAT registered and able to recover VAT elements, enter only the net cost of eligible items.

If you are not VAT registered and wish to reclaim the VAT element you have been charged on eligible items, please enter the VAT element and include the VAT in the total cost of the project cost.

Section E - Project start date and project end date.

- You will be expected to complete the work within 12 months from when the Agreement is offered. Offers not claimed within 12 months of the offer being made by this Authority will lapse and a fresh application will need to be made.

5. Application Check List

Please ensure you have included the following

- i) Completed and signed application form
- ii) A signed map showing the proposed work.
- iii) 2 quotes for the item of work you are applying for
- iv) Any information that you wish to submit in support of your application.

6. Conditions of funding

- All applicants will be notified within 4 weeks receipt of the application.
- The offer letter must be signed and returned before you start the project. No grant can be paid for any work carried out prior to a signed offer of grant.
- Grants will be paid retrospectively; claims for grant payment must be accompanied by an original receipted invoice or other acceptable documentation.
- Grants will be paid on the works agreed once the work is completed to the satisfaction of the National Park Officer. This may require a site visit by a representative of the Authority. You will be expected to complete the work within 12 months from receipt of the grant offer letter.
- As a condition of receiving a grant, details of your project may be used in press and publicity materials by the funders and administrators.
- Maintenance Requirements - You must agree to maintain the work in a sound and reasonable condition after completion.
- All equipment purchased must be maintained and kept available for the purpose in which it was purchased for a minimum of 3 years unless written approval is obtained from the funders. Equipment purchased through this grant may be used for demonstration purposes by the funding partners (at an agreed time and date) for training.
- Grants must be claimed within 12 months of the grant offer date. Offers not claimed within 12 months of the offer being made by this Authority will lapse, and a fresh application will need to be made.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

i) Breach of the Agreement

If you fail to carry out obligations under the Agreement, then all or part of the grant payment may be withheld, at the Authority's discretion, until such time as the breach is rectified to the Authority's satisfaction.

ii) Statutory Requirements

The Landscape Conservation Grant offer does not affect the requirement for any statutory consultations or notifications. These include, although not exhaustively, planning permission requirements, Environment Agency consultations, Environmental Impact Assessments, felling licence requirements, Tree Preservation Orders, notification to Natural England of any operations affecting or adjacent to SSSI's and statutory obligations with regard to public rights of way. Awarding of the grant does not give the applicant statutory consent, this must be sought by the applicant in advance of works. The relevant statutory bodies still have the right to refuse permission.

iii) Data Protection and Disclosure of Information

Exmoor National Park Authority is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information contained in your Agreement will be used by the Authority for administration, evaluation and monitoring purposes. The Authority reserves the right to disclose all non-financial information contained within the Agreement to the named owner or agent and to other Public Authorities and Statutory Bodies. The Authority reserves the right to disclose to the general public the Works carried out under the Agreement. Such information may be in the form of a map.

The National Park Authority will notify DEFRA of the details of this Agreement. As these details are kept by DEFRA for the purpose of reporting to the European Commission, the following statement is provided in order to comply with data protection legislation:

'The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (as data controller) requires details of the identity of recipients of de minimis aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, amounts of aid granted and date(s) of aid granted to be kept on a central register. Such data will be kept in order to comply with the provisions of Commission Regulation 1860/2004 on de minimis State aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors and in particular to ensure that ceilings on the amount of granted aid are not breached. To this end, the data may be shared amongst any organisation granting de minimis State aid in the agriculture and fisheries sectors and will be passed to organisations responsible for upholding the provisions of Regulation 1860/2004 on request.'

If you need any further information, have any queries or need some help with a project idea, please contact Heather Harley, Conservation Advisor (Farming) on 01398 322277, hjharley@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or Bea Davis, Conservation Advisor (Wildlife) on 01398 322278 or bdavis@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Other Grant opportunities

The Exmoor Hill Farm Project is running a scheme called the **Exmoor Moorland Management Fund**, on behalf of the National Park Authority and it is part of ongoing work to encourage long term sustainable management of Exmoor's moorland.

The Exmoor National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund has ring-fenced up to £20,000 available as small grants towards the cost of projects that will work towards maintaining and improving heather moorlands through environmental practices such as swaling, scrub control, heather restoration and improved livestock grazing.

If you would like to apply or would like further information, please contact the Exmoor Hill Farm Project on 01643 841455.

Funding is also available through the Forestry Commission for other work such as tree planting and woodland management.

Large Projects. If you are considering a large scale project which you feel meets National Park purposes it may be eligible for funding via the Authority's Partnership Fund. It is advisable to discuss this first with staff within the National Park Authority's Sustainability and Economy Team and to submit an Expression of Interest form. Guidance can then be provided as to how best to proceed with an application. For further information, please contact the Authority's Sustainable Economy Officer on 01398 323665 or email PartnershipFund@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
We are always happy to advise on the availability of grants and to put you in touch with the right person.

Full details of grants are available on the Exmoor National Park Authority's website within the 'Grants and Funding' pages of the 'Communities' section at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk