

Nature Restoration Fund

Application Advice



General tips

For your application, please provide complete information in each section.

Be concise but thorough in your responses, providing enough detail to demonstrate the project's viability and alignment with Nature Restoration Fund criteria.

If you would like to check that your application meets the essential criteria, please complete our enquiry form.

If you have any questions or need clarification, don't hesitate to reach out to NatureFund@pkc.gov.uk for assistance.

Who is eligible for funding?

Applications are invited from:

1. constituted organisations such as registered charities and trusts, and constituted community groups
2. private individuals and companies, where public benefit will be demonstrated
3. partnerships and organisations working collaboratively with others

Background

Funded by the Scottish Government, the Nature Restoration Fund is focused on action at scale to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity on land and sea, addressing the main drivers of the decline in biodiversity. The Council received notice in March 2025 of the 2025 to 2026 funding of £187,000. Part of this funding is being made available to community groups or organisations for projects that enhance biodiversity and align with local priorities. The minimum grant amount is £1,000.

Projects are expected to meet at least one of the following strategic themes:

- habitat restoration: management for enhancement and connectivity
- freshwater restoration, including hydrological change
- eradication of invasive non-native species impacting on nature

- coastal and marine management to promote restoration and resilience
- urban: enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities

Nature Networks

Projects that contribute to Nature Networks are encouraged. This may include enhancing a protected area (SPA, SAC, SSSI), a Local Biodiversity Site or other nature-rich area, or providing connectivity between them.

For an application, please identify if your project contributes towards the delivery of nature networks across Perth and Kinross. A Nature Network connects areas protected for biodiversity, and other nature-rich sites through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. Please see our [map of nature rich areas within Perth and Kinross](#).

Examples of nature network projects that enhance or connect nature rich areas include:

- enhancing the condition of protected sites: for example, controlling invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed along the Tay Special Area of Conservation
- creating wildlife corridors between nature-rich areas to connect fragmented habitats and facilitate movement of species between protected sites
- restoring riparian zones along rivers and burns to improve water quality, enhance habitat diversity, and connect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
- connecting native woodland habitats through planting of native hedgerows and trees
- designing green infrastructure projects, such as green roofs, green walls, or rain gardens, to increase connectivity for urban biodiversity through a town or village
- restoring wildflower-rich meadows that create stepping-stone habitats between nature-rich areas or through a town or village

Fund guidelines

- Costs can be for capital and revenue spend. Capital spend includes improvement to land or assets such as tree planting or peatland restoration, but not annual maintenance. Revenue spend includes the ongoing costs of delivering a project including engagement activities, surveys, and monitoring work.
- Projects must be fully costed at application.
- All trees and shrubs planted must be [native to Scotland](#) unless part of a pollinator corridor. All other plants must be native where possible and if not then on the [RHS Plants for Pollinators](#) list.

- Projects must be deliverable, value for money and provide a long-term enhancement.
- Projects must be on land accessible to the public or designated for its biodiversity, for example SSSI.
- To ensure a spread of projects, an organisation can only deliver one project in each location.
- Projects are encouraged to deliver benefit for communities. This includes projects that deliver positive outcomes for community health and wellbeing, education, communities of varying needs.
- Projects are encouraged that deliver actions in the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Organisations may be asked for proof of constituted status and/or proof of 12 months activity.
- Maintenance plans should cover the 10-year post-grant compliance period.
- Organisations must have landowner permission for the project and future maintenance agreed prior to any grant award.
- **All projects or project phases must be completed and funds spent by 31 March 2026 (unless otherwise agreed).**

Application and grant process

2 April to 2 June 2025: application submissions, ratings and grant awards

Applications are open from 2 April 2025. Applications are to be sent to NatureFund@pkc.gov.uk, with a closing date for applications of 2 June 2025.

An enquiry form will be made available on the Perth and Kinross Council [Nature Restoration webpage](#) for those who are unsure of whether their project meets the essential criteria.

Once applications are received, an email acknowledging the receipt of applications will be sent, informing applicants about the expected timeline for reviews and decisions. Applications will be assigned a Nature Restoration Funder 2025 project number, and any additional information will be requested.

Applications will be assessed by the working group against set scoring criteria. Once the application deadline has passed, the working group will review the most highly-scored applications and recommend these projects to the Strategic Lead of Environment and Infrastructure to approve or decline the application, under their delegated authority.

Following approval from the Strategic Lead of Environment and Infrastructure, grants will be awarded to all successful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the reasons why their application was unsuccessful. Applicants will be advised of success in July.

Successful applicants are sent a grant letter, acceptance template, and a template for claiming funds against invoices. Applicants must return grant acceptance forms within 2 weeks of the grant advice.

July to March 2026: project completion, grant reimbursement, and reporting requirements

The grant is claimed through submission of copies of invoices, proof of payment (for example bank statement), and a claim form, for project works that have been completed. Invoices must be scanned or photographed and emailed to NatureFund@pkc.gov.uk along with the claim form and proof of payment. Note that the grant is paid in arrears on receipt of paid invoices only. The project must be completed by 31 March 2026, and final invoices, proof of payment, and claim forms received by 7 April 2026.

Successful applicants will be required to provide an interim progress report by 31 January 2026 detailing work that has been completed and a timeline for completion of the remainder of the project and identifying any barriers to completion or work that may not be completed. Any anticipated changes to the items or the total cost of the application should be reported.

A final project report must be completed by 30 April 2026 including photographs demonstrating that the project has been delivered. This will detail how the project met its intended outcomes, including the benefit for biodiversity and the area of project supported (in hectares). It will address any notable challenges encountered during the project and the actions taken to address them. Furthermore, the report will outline the maintenance plans in place to secure the enhancement/restoration works.

Previous projects supported

Habitat and species restoration

- Native tree planting to create woodland habitat.
- Establishment of pollinator hedgerows to support pollinator populations.
- Creation of pollinator banks to provide additional foraging resources.
- Planting hedging and native trees to create linear habitat corridors between existing areas of native woodland.
- Riparian planting along watercourses to improve water quality and habitat diversity.
- Removal of non-native trees to restore native woodland.
- Creation of species-rich grassland.
- Purchase of machinery for meadow creation to enhance grassland habitats.

- Extension of community orchards and planting for pollinators.
- Restoration of heathland habitats through the removal of scrub and trees.
- Restoration of meadow habitats by clearing scrub.

Freshwater restoration

- Creation of scrapes, wildlife ponds, and wetlands.
- Enhancement of ponds and wetlands.
- Implementation of riparian buffer zones to reduce nutrient runoff and improve water quality.

Invasive non-native species control

- Landscape-scale control of invasive non-native species including giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, and rhododendron ponticum for example.

Urban restoration

- Rewilding school grounds by creating pollinator-friendly hedgerows, wildflower meadows, ponds, bee banks, and native woodland areas.
- Conversion of sections of greenspace into biodiverse meadows and wetland habitats.
- Planting pollinator-friendly native fruit and nut-bearing trees in urban areas.
- Creation of large wildlife ponds, bog gardens, and pollinator highways through sowing native wildflower seeds.

What can and cannot be funded

Costs that can be funded

- Contractor costs to undertake detailed design or groundworks.
- Capital equipment, resources and materials (for example, fencing, plants) that will deliver on the ground nature restoration as part of the overall project.
- Costs associated with training and skills development such as training providers, and PPE.
- Irrecoverable VAT relating to project costs and activities.
- Costs for delivering community engagement activities.
- Surveys, monitoring, data analysis or research as part of project design.

Costs that cannot be funded

- Ongoing maintenance of any site.
- Activities which are a condition of planning or statutory obligations.
- Creating infrastructure where there is no biodiversity enhancement, such as a wooden bridge over a small stream or a bench in a nature reserve.
- Interpretation materials apart from warning signs for the public where activity is taking place.
- Single use plastics, such as for tree protection for example. Biodegradable or re-usable materials should be sourced.
- Contingency costs.
- Applicants cannot contract their own company for works.
- Projects that can be funded through the Forestry Grant Scheme.
- Projects that are already receiving or have the potential to receive funding from agri-environment schemes may not be eligible. Applications should explain how the Nature Restoration Fund will enable the project to progress further or achieve outcomes that would not be possible with funding from agri-environment schemes alone.

Scoring criteria

The Council's internal Nature Restoration Fund working group will review all applications against set scoring criteria and select the highest scoring, best value for nature restoration projects for funding.

Essential criteria	Points considered to determine the project's value for each criterion
Biodiversity impact (6)	How well does the project align with strategic themes? What benefits does the project provide for biodiversity? (for example, increases in species diversity, habitat quality). Does the project have potential to deliver a transformational impact on biodiversity, such as restoring degraded ecosystems or creating habitat connectivity at a landscape scale?
Value for money (2)	Are costs reasonable and clearly explained? Does the budget show good use of resources

Essential criteria	Points considered to determine the project's value for each criterion
Maintenance (2)	<p>Is there a clear plan for delivering maintenance activities beyond the initial project period?</p> <p>Who will look after it, and what will they do?</p>

Non-essential criteria	Points considered to determine the project's value for each criterion
Nature Networks (2)	<p>Does the project help make or strengthen strategic connections between protected or nature-rich habitats?</p> <p>Does the project protect, enhance, or expand existing protected or nature-rich areas?</p>
Legacy (2)	<p>Does the project enhance community wellbeing by providing access to nature or green spaces?</p> <p>Will the project lead to improvements in air and water quality, contributing to a healthier environment for the local community?</p> <p>Does the project include provisions for educational initiatives?</p>
Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2)	<p>Does the project directly align with and support the objectives outlined in the Tayside LBAP?</p> <p>Does the project address specific actions outlined in the Tayside LBAP?</p> <p>To see the full Action Plan, please visit taysidebiodiversity.co.uk</p>
Community engagement and support (2)	<p>Have local people helped plan the project, or will they take part in the project?</p>
Climate change mitigation and/or adaptation (1)	<p>Will the project help store carbon (for example, tree planting) or make the area more climate-resilient (for example, reducing flooding)?</p>
Multi-year project (1)	<p>Will the project continue beyond a single year to achieve bigger results?</p>

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the Contact Scotland BSL website

<https://contactscotland-bsl.org>