

Community Fund

Fund aims

The Community Fund directly supports the delivery of the Scottish Forestry Strategy outcomes and objectives including:

Outcome:

- Improved health and well-being of people and their communities

Objectives:

- Assist community participation
- Enhance opportunities for health and enjoyment
- Contribute to growth in learning and skills

The funding aims to support groups and organisations to encourage and support greater use of woods by people to derive health, well-being and community benefits.

Other FCS initiatives the fund supports include:

- Working with communities: our commitment (www.forestry.gov.uk/communitiesscotland)
- Woods In and Around Towns (www.forestry.gov.uk/wiat)
- Woods for health (www.forestry.gov.uk/woodsforhealth)

Information on how the application will help deliver these aims needs to be provided by applicants.

Applicant eligibility

Eligible applicants include community groups, voluntary groups, development trusts, social enterprises, charities, local authorities etc., with objectives supporting the above outcome and objectives. The Community Fund is not available to private individuals.

The minimum requirement is that the applicant has a bank account, and for community-based groups, a basic constitution (further information on model constitutions can be accessed at: www.scvo.org.uk/information/organisational-structures/setting-up-a-voluntary-association/). FCS may require to view a copy of an applicant organisation constitution.

Eligible activities

These include:

- Schemes that promote physical activity e.g. walking schemes, safe routes to school, natural play and adventure play.
- Developing materials that promote the health and well-being benefits of using woodlands.
- Facilitation of volunteering for skills training, health improvement and community development.
- Establishment of volunteer groups and the induction of volunteers.
- Providing resources to involve communities in the decision making process of managing their local woodland.
- Costs associated with developing National Forest Land Scheme applications e.g. feasibility studies, valuation and ballots. Funding will not normally cover legal fees.

This is not an exhaustive list.

This funding is not suitable for land based expenditure that can be supported by the Scotland Rural Development Programme.

It cannot be used to fund existing staff that work for public sector organisations e.g. Local Authorities. Furthermore, it cannot also be used as capital funding for the acquisition of fixed assets for example land and buildings, or mobile assets except hand tools and possibly chainsaws.

Funding can support activities on the National Forest Estate.

If activities are linked to formal education then please make contact with your local Outdoor and Woodland Learning group (www.owlscotland.org) to discuss the project with them and seek their involvement if appropriate.

Application

There are two separate application processes:

- i) for applications up to £1,000 (via an application letter); and
- ii) for applications above £1,000 (via an application form)

The relevant information and application form (over £1,000) is available from your local FCS Conservancy office. Details of your local office can be downloaded from:

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<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4U4J23>. The level of information required will be proportionate to the level of funding required.

Payments

Funding is only available for activities delivered before the 29th February 2016.

The level of funding will be on a sliding scale as follows:

- 100% for projects up to a total cost of £5,000
- Up to 90% for projects with a total cost of between £5,001- £20,000
- Up to 75% for projects with a total cost exceeding £20,000

Payments can only be made on receipt of a suitable invoice from the applicant following the delivery of the agreed activities. A completed monitoring form is also required to be submitted with the invoice (see "Project Monitoring" section below). For awards of £2,000 or more FCS can consider paying the award in two instalments (an invoice and monitoring form (covering the activities claimed) must be submitted at each instalment) - prior agreement with FCS is necessary. However, each instalment can only be paid, following receipt of an invoice, once the specific activities that the funding is for have been carried out.

The Community Fund is administered under the FCS Forestry Development Programme (FDP). The FDP has standard terms and conditions. A copy of these can be made available on request and will be provided with the grant offer letter, if an application is approved.

Match funding

Other FCS funding cannot be used as match funding. If you are applying for less than 100% of project costs please provide details of where match funding or in-kind contributions are being provided from. Match funding and in-kind contributions will form part of the value for money assessment of an application. The "in-kind" contributions must be specifically for the support of the project in question. The value of "in-kind" match funding in the form of donations of materials, equipment or services (including specialised and professional services) must be quantified and supported by letters on headed paper, signed by a member of staff of the organisation providing the service or goods.

Volunteer time may be counted as **an in-kind contribution** at a rate of £50 per day for unskilled labour, £150 per day for skilled labour and £350 per day for professional services. "In-kind" support should not normally make up more than **25% of the total**

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of match funding. Records must be maintained of the hours worked by named volunteers.

Approval

Approval will be on continuous basis. Funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The FCS representative administering your application will inform you on the timing of a decision (usually within 28 working days of the date the application is registered). You must inform FCS of any change to your project and in particular any changes to how the funding is to be used. These changes need to be agreed by FCS.

Project monitoring

For all applicants to the Fund completion of the CF monitoring form is a condition of funding. This form should be completed, signed and submitted along with the invoice required to claim funding.

For projects receiving a contribution of greater than £1,000, from the Community Fund, a further descriptive report is required (between 200 - 500 words) including pictures if appropriate on submission of the final invoice. The written report should include a description of the main activities and outputs from the project and its impact, for example, by providing feedback from participants.

The monitoring report and any supporting information will be used by FCS as a record that the funding has been used appropriately; it may also be used by FCS to help promote the fund (submitting this information will be on the basis that FCS is free to use it for that purpose). Before the final invoice is paid FCS must receive a completed monitoring form and descriptive report, if required, with the declaration (at the end of the form) signed.

Further information

If you require an application form, have any queries, are unsure about any of the above, or want to discuss a potential application you should contact your local Conservancy Office. Contact details for each office are available at

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4U4J23>