



## Dorset Community Tree Fund

Information & Guidance Notes

December 2023

### Information

#### What is the Dorset Community Tree Fund?

The Dorset Community Tree Fund supports community tree projects throughout the Dorset Council area and is co-ordinated by the Dorset National Landscape Team.

Trees are important in many ways: they support wildlife, slow water, sequester and store carbon, filter and cool air, and contribute to our collective culture and memories, health and wellbeing. Communities can help to ensure that our trees, old and new, are managed for wildlife, climate and people, and the Dorset Community Tree Fund seeks to support parish and town councils and their communities with their plans for planting and caring for trees in their area.

#### Details of the fund and eligibility

- The fund opens in December 2023 with a rolling application window; it will remain open until all funds are allocated (we expect this to be by March 2025).
- The fund is open to community organisations in the Dorset Council area, especially parish and town councils and schools, along with community groups who have a constitution, bank account, public liability insurance etc.
- There is no maximum grant but, as an indication, we expect any applications above £1,000 to demonstrate exceptional impact and value for money.
- Applicants must show at least 25% 'match funding' from other sources: this does not have to be cash and can include volunteer time and in-kind contributions.
- Eligible projects must:
  - have community support
  - relate to land in the Dorset Council area
  - have at least some public access
  - have the permission of the landowner and statutory bodies where appropriate
  - use only plants sourced and grown in the UK - for more information see: [Where Do Our Trees Come From? – Woodland Trust](#)
- Projects must not:
  - be receiving funds from elsewhere for the same activity
  - be fulfilling a statutory obligation.

## What types of projects can be funded?

The fund can support a range of activities:

- **Planning and design:** we particularly welcome applications to support the planning and design phase of tree planting projects ('Stage 1'); a follow-on ('Stage 2') application can be submitted for the planting itself (subject to fund availability).
- **Tree planting; hedge planting and gapping up; hedgerow tree planting, orchards:** if you are applying for a planting project without a prior 'Stage 1' application, you must provide a detailed plan including:
  - site details:
    - location: eg use [Grid Reference Finder](#) , [what3words](#) or [Google Maps](#)
    - details of planting site: area / length; current setting / land use / vegetation; attach one or two photographs of the site
    - evidence of permission from landowner / statutory body if appropriate
    - extent of public access
  - details of proposed supplier, species / size selection, and rootstock if planting fruit trees (some trees may be available for free eg from [Woodland Trust](#))
  - a scale plan of the planting area (the Tree Council has some [example site plans](#) that might be helpful)
  - your plans for planting, protecting and establishing the trees (for information on tree protection see [Woodland Trust tree guard research](#) )
  - your longer term management and maintenance plan.
- Planting projects on road verges are only likely to be funded in exceptional circumstances and with Dorset Council consent; unless you have already agreed a detailed plan with Dorset Council, there must be a Stage 1 application for planning and design: please contact the Project Officer before preparing your application.
- **Other items:**
  - events or training to engage communities
  - interpretation materials
  - tools and equipment for planting and maintaining trees

We cannot fund:

- projects on private land with no public access
- commercial projects for private financial gain

## Selection criteria

The fund supports activities that meet two of Dorset Council's corporate priorities: protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology, and creating stronger healthier communities.

Applications will be assessed in this context against the following criteria - these may not all be relevant to your project but please show, where appropriate, how your plans take account of:

- biodiversity
- climate resilience
- community access and engagement
- sustainability
- value for money

## Application process

- The grant guidance and application form may change over time: please ensure that you use the documents on the website at the time of your application.
- Applications will be assessed within 4-6 weeks of submission and you will be notified by email. You should not begin any funded activities until you have received notification of your grant award from us and returned your acceptance of our grant offer and any conditions.
- Grants will be paid in arrears on submission of a claim form, receipts and evidence of completed activity (including photos where appropriate).

## Guidance notes for completing the application form

- For every question you are given a box in which to type your answer which will automatically expand to fit the text as you type.
- If completing the form by hand please write clearly and submit additional sheets if needed.
- Please keep your application concise; we will contact you if we need more detail.

## Section A – Applicant details

- 1. Name of organisation:** this is who will be directly responsible for the project and financially accountable for how the grant will be spent.
- 2. Project title:** this will tell us what the project is about, it should be as short as possible and clearly define the activities for which you are requesting funding.
- 3. Grant request:** this is how much money you are requesting from the Dorset Community Tree Fund and the figure must correlate with your financial statement in Section C.
- 4. Main contact:** please complete the details for the main person who will be dealing with the application on behalf of the organisation.
- 5. Organisation:** please complete the boxes that apply – we will ask for evidence of your constitution, structure, accounts, governance policies etc.
- 6. VAT:** if your organisation is VAT registered, funding will be paid net of VAT. Non-VAT registered organisations will be paid the gross amount including VAT.

**7/8. Dorset Council contracts and grants:** let us know if your organisation has a contract with, or is in receipt of a grant from Dorset Council.

**9/10 Location:** let us know where the project and organisation are based: this must be in the Dorset Council area - you can check the Dorset Council boundary here:

[Interactive map of Unitaries, Districts and Boroughs - Dorset Council](#)

## Section B – Project description

**Project summary:** please explain concisely what your project is about and what you need the funding for; as a guide please use no more than 200 words.

### Project details

1. Please let us know the project location using eg: [Grid Reference Finder](#) , [what3words](#) or [Google Maps](#)
2. The area or length your project will cover, where applicable.
3. Please let us know the anticipated start date of your project. This is when you expect to have all the finance and necessary permissions in place to enable the project to proceed. Any elements you want to be covered by the grant must not be carried out prior to this date.
4. Please let us know the anticipated end date of your project. This is when you believe your project will be completed and objectives met.
5. Please provide a concise description of all the elements of your project.
6. Please list any key events/activity dates or milestones that you expect to take place during the project (these can be approximate).
7. Use the tick box to let us know if the Dorset Community Tree Fund grant is for the project as a whole or a specific element of your project.
8. Please briefly set out what the Dorset Community Tree Fund grant will be used for if your application is successful (we will ask you to provide an itemised list in the budget sheet).
9. Is there clear evidence of the local demand or need for your project? Please tell us about any evidence you have gathered which supports your project. This could be a feasibility study, community consultation, survey or recorded discussions - please provide a copy if available. Please indicate if you have the support of your local parish or town council, and / or Dorset County Councillor.
10. Tell us who will benefit from the project - who are the main targets, who else will benefit and will it involve any particular groups of people? (e.g. young people/ older people, people with disabilities etc.).
11. Please list any permissions required to carry out your project, and if that permission has already been obtained or not.
12. Let us know of any partners directly involved in the project's implementation.
13. We need to know what your project will achieve. So please tell us what the direct and countable results will be using the questions given.

14. Explain how you expect your project to continue after the grant funding period has ended. This can include coming back to us for a Stage 2 planting grant if you have applied to us for a Stage 1 grant. How will the project outcomes be financed and managed? Who will maintain and manage the trees / hedges / orchard? Who will use interpretation materials and how will they be accessed? Can you demonstrate it is a sustainable project?

### Section C – Financial details

The Community Tree Fund can support up to 75% of your project costs. The remaining funding must come from match funding, either cash or in-kind or a mixture of the two, but cannot be matched by Exchequer funds – ie money from a Government department or agency (eg Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission etc). The grant is paid upon completion of the project and not in advance.

Please complete the Project Budget spreadsheet to show a detailed breakdown of costs and funding for your project using these guidance notes to assist you.

❖ *We would prefer you to complete the **Excel version** in which the figures will be automatically worked out for you; if you are unable to use Excel please use the table in the application form and work out the figures manually.*

N.B. If using the Excel spreadsheet you will see that some cells are locked and can't be edited. You can still add extra rows if needed.

#### Part 1 Expenditure Table – Description of costs and activities

**For example:**

- **Project manager:** If you pay someone with experience to manage your project; the cost will be a **cash** cost to your project. If a person chooses to manage the project without payment this will be an **in-kind** cost
- **Specialist contractor:** if your project requires you to hire specialist skills the cost will be a **cash** cost to your project
- **Purchase or hire of goods/equipment:** The cost of all goods and equipment that will be purchased/hired for the project should be individually listed: this is a **cash** cost to your project. If someone loans equipment without charge, the value can be included as an **in-kind** cost.
- **Design & print:** If you are paying for the design and print of leaflets or publicity material this is a **cash** cost. If, however, someone volunteers their time to design your material (without charge) this will be an **in-kind** cost.
- **Volunteer time:** If people volunteer to help with the project (without payment) this can be recorded and used as an **in-kind** cost.

Recording volunteer time is **essential** and a timesheet detailing volunteer time and activity must be submitted with your claim forms (please request a timesheet template from us if needed). When calculating the value of your volunteers' time please use the following rates:

- *professional volunteer (for example, accountancy or teaching): £50 per hour*
- *skilled volunteer (for example, leading a guided walk): £20 per hour*
- *volunteer (for example, administrative work): £10 per hour*

## Part 2 – Income Table

- **Description of sources of funding:** Please give details of all cash contributions towards your project from your own organisation and other partners/funders and state whether this is confirmed, awaiting decision or not yet applied for.
- **Sub-total of cash funding:** If you are completing the Excel form the cash sub-total will be added up for you. If you are completing the form manually please add up the column.
- **In-kind contribution:** If you are completing the Excel form the in-kind total will be entered for you. If you are completing the form manually please add up the total.
- **Amount requested from Community Tree Fund:** If you are completing the Excel form the amount requested will be entered for you. If you are completing the form manually please add up the total of cash (a) and in-kind funding (b) and take this total away from the total project costs. The total will be the funding amount you are requesting.
- **Total income:** If you are completing the Excel form the total income box will be added up for you. If you are completing the form manually please add up the sub total of cash funding box with the in-kind contribution and the amount from the Community Tree Fund. This total should agree with your total project cost above.
- **Dorset Community Tree Fund request as a % of the total project cost:** If you are completing Excel form online the figure will be calculated for you. To manually calculate the % of total project cost divide the Community Tree Fund amount being requested by the total project costs and multiple by 100.

## Section D - Declaration

The form must be signed by a person with relevant authority (this can be an electronic signature), dated and emailed to: [jill.hearing@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:jill.hearing@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

- ❖ **Email submissions are preferable.** Please contact Jill Hearing on 01305 228273 if you prefer to submit a hard copy.