Plunge In! The Coasts and Waters Community Fund

Information for Applicants

Introduction

In 2020, Scotland’s coasts and waters will be celebrated with the Year of Coasts and Waters (YCW2020) designed to inspire both visitors and locals to explore and experience our unrivalled landscapes and seascapes. Led by VisitScotland, the aim is to celebrate and promote the very best of Scotland’s coasts and waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors.

‘Coasts and Waters’ will cover a wide range of environments, including our seas, freshwater lochs, rivers and streams, wetlands and coasts, as well as the wildlife found within them.

There are five key objectives for YCW2020: promotion, celebration, participation, collaboration and industry engagement. More detail on how these will be achieved is available on VisitScotland’s website.

Plunge In! The Coasts and Waters Community Fund

This fund has been set up by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to create new opportunities for communities to connect with our coasts, seas and freshwaters. The fund will offer support to communities to participate and celebrate YCW2020 in their own way, while becoming part of the wider programme for YCW2020.

The fund will support community-led projects costing between £2,000 and £10,000.

A wide range of activities and proposals will be considered; some examples of what we will fund are provided below. Projects could include an events element, but there will be a focus on projects that provide a legacy from YCW2020 beyond a single event. The legacy could be an increased level of skills or ongoing engagement with coasts and waters. Alternatively, there could be an output from the activity such as an artwork, a collection of data, or a short film, which would form the legacy.

This is a competitive fund for projects that will be implemented during 2020, with projects starting from April 2020 onwards. The assessment of applications will have a two-staged approach depending on the project start date. Projects starting before 1 July 2020 will be assessed first, with successful projects being announced by the end of March 2020. Projects starting from 1 July onwards will be assessed and announced by the end of May 2020.

All projects must be completed by 31 December 2020.

Nature Reserve Travel Grants

In addition, the fund will support smaller grants which will allow groups of young people (school groups or youth groups) to visit a National Nature Reserve or Local Nature Reserve in Scotland.
The aim is to encourage these groups to engage directly with coasts and waters, and to support access and enjoyment for all. We will fund grants up to £500 to help cover travel expenses.

What we want to fund

Projects should help to achieve the following outcomes. The first of these outcomes is mandatory and must be addressed by all projects (including Nature Reserve Travel Grants). Projects should also address one or more of the other outcomes (not required for Nature Reserve Travel Grants).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandatory Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are more engaged with our coasts and waters</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our coasts and waters will be in better condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have learned more about our coasts and waters and can share this knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>We have developed skills to help us look after our coasts and waters</td>
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<tr>
<td>We have brought about positive changes in ideas and actions to help our coasts and waters, including being more resilient to climate change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our local area will be a better place to live, work or visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our local economy will be boosted, through sustainable and responsible practices</td>
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In addition, projects should contribute to one, or more, of the wider objectives of YCW2020: promotion, celebration, participation, collaboration, and/or engagement with the tourism industry.

Who can apply?

Applications are invited from constituted organisations, including registered charities, trusts and community groups. Where applications are received from partnerships or organisations working collaboratively, a lead applicant must be identified.

Applications from the following groups will not be eligible, unless you can clearly demonstrate strong links to, and benefits for, communities and the community has been involved in the development of the proposed project.

- Local authorities and other public sector organisations
- Academic institutes
- Private individuals and companies (only eligible where there is significant public benefit)

For Nature Reserve Travel Grants, applications are welcome from schools and constituted youth groups.
Examples of what we could fund

**We could fund projects which...**

- Celebrate our coasts and waters. (This is a mandatory element of all projects.)
- Take action to help communities adapt to climate change, particularly focusing on nature-based solutions.
- Take action to look after coasts and freshwaters, for example addressing habitat loss and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change.
- Take action to look after nature in our seas, with a focus on [marine protected areas](#), [priority marine features](#) and marine birds.
- Share and preserve people’s memories and experiences (often recorded as ‘oral history’) with clear links to the natural environment and/or wildlife.
- Share and preserve cultural traditions (for example, stories, festivals, crafts, music and dance) which have clear links to the natural environment and/or wildlife.
- Take action to tackle [invasive non-native species](#) (INNS), where this will contribute to wider efforts to prevent the introduction or spread of INNS.
- Undertake environmental restoration projects which contribute to established, long-term restoration of habitats.
- Expand and improve community recording of the natural environment and/or wildlife.
- Promote, improve and encourage recreational visits to our coasts and waters.
- Share, expand and look after collections of objects, books or documents in museums, libraries or archives which have clear links to the natural environment and/or wildlife.
- Record and share histories of people and communities or places and events, which have clear links to the natural environment and/or wildlife.
- Record and share the heritage of languages and dialects relating to coasts and waters.
- Develop and promote arts projects which celebrate our coasts and waters.
- Support groups taking on new responsibility or build new skills and capacity in organisations that already have responsibility for coasts and waters.

**Nature Reserve Travel Grants** only: enable groups of young people to visit [National Nature Reserves](#) or [Local Nature Reserves](#) with opportunities to engage with coasts and waters.

What we don’t want to fund

**We will not fund...**

- Beach cleans or litter picks
- Stand-alone events which leave no legacy (except for [Nature Reserve Travel Grants](#))
- One-off actions relating to INNS which are not connected to larger efforts to prevent introduction or spread.
- One-off actions relating to restoration projects which are not connected to larger restoration projects.
- Projects to look after historic buildings, monuments and places
- Research projects which don’t have direct and significant benefits for communities
Funding parameters

The Coasts and Waters Community Fund has a total budget of £150,000.

- The maximum funding we will award to a project is £10,000
- The minimum funding we will award to a project is £2,000

All applications (except Nature Reserve Travel Grants) will be required to confirm cash or in-kind contributions to the project. There is no maximum intervention rate. We prefer to fund about 50% of project funds, but could make an award at a higher intervention rate where applicants can clearly demonstrate that their project makes a significant contribution to the outcomes and shows exceptional value for money.

Applications that have match-funding already confirmed at the time of applying will have a higher chance of funding success. You will need to have your match-funding in place before you start your project. However, we cannot fund projects that are already underway.

You cannot use other sources of SNH funding for match-funding. Match-funding can be from another government body or other eligible sources such as Lottery funds, charitable trusts, companies or your own funds.

It is a requirement of SNH funding that you have any necessary permissions (e.g. landowner permission) and insurance (e.g. public liability insurance) in place before the start of your project. You may be asked to provide evidence of this.

For Nature Reserve Travel Grants, there is no minimum level of funding, and the maximum is £500. In addition, these grants can be paid in advance and do not require match funding. If we receive a large volume of similar quality applications for Nature Reserve Travel Grants, we may allocate funding through a ballot between all eligible applicants.

For all grants, we have provided an eligibility checklist on page 6 to help you assess if you are eligible to apply. Please note that projects that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered further.

Evaluation and Reporting

All successful applicants will be required to evaluate and report back on their projects. The reporting requirements will depend on the size of the grant provided.

For the larger grants (over £2,000), we expect you to tell us in your application how you will measure the success of your project, and what evidence you will gather to demonstrate this success. You should ensure that your planned evaluation demonstrates if your project aims and outcomes have been achieved. Please be as specific as possible about what you will monitor, how you will do it and when you will do it. The types of things you could consider include (but are not limited to):

- Number of volunteers/participants in your activity
- Involvement of young people
- Number of records collected (for data collection projects)
- The area of habitats restored or improved
- Feedback forms from participants detailing their experiences of the activity and benefits gained
The difference you have made to the participants and/or the natural environment and wildlife
Photographs, videos and other media which show the activities undertaken and demonstrate the outcomes achieved. (Please confirm that you have the appropriate permissions for such materials to be shared with us and for us to show on our media channels.)

A final project report must be submitted to SNH after completion of the project, describing the activities undertaken, successes and challenges, and outcomes of the project including the longer-term legacy. You should also confirm the amount of funding spent.

For **Nature Reserve Travel Grants**, we only require a short report (e.g. 1-2 sides of A4) telling us about the activity and who was involved. For example, we would expect to see a summary of the number of participants, where they went, how many young people were involved, the benefits to participants, and the difference their project has made to people and/or nature. We welcome photographs, videos and other media which show the activities undertaken and demonstrate the outcomes achieved (but please confirm that you have the appropriate permissions for such materials to be shared with us and for us to show on our media channels). You should also confirm the amount of funding spent.

**Timescales**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening date for applications</td>
<td>7 January 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
<td>28 February 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>For projects starting before 1 July 2020:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application decisions</td>
<td>13 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding offers issued and accepted</td>
<td>27 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>For projects starting after 1 July 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application decisions</td>
<td>8 May 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding offers issued and accepted</td>
<td>22 May 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects start date</td>
<td>Any time after 1 April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects end date</td>
<td>By 31 December 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final reports received</td>
<td>By March 2021</td>
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**Acknowledgements**

You will be required to acknowledge SNH support as set out in the guidance [https://www.nature.scot/guidance-applicants-how-acknowledge-our-support-your-project](https://www.nature.scot/guidance-applicants-how-acknowledge-our-support-your-project)

VisitScotland provides guidance and advice on branding for the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 [https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/marketing-toolkits/themed-years-toolkits](https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/marketing-toolkits/themed-years-toolkits)

**Questions**

Any further queries not answered in this Information for Applicants can be sent to PlungeIn@nature.scot.

To access all application documents, go to the Plunge In webpage.

To find out more about all of SNH’s activities during the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020, go to the YCW2020 webpage.
Eligibility Checklist for Plunge In! The Coasts and Waters Community Fund

Please use this list of questions to check that your project is eligible before applying.

✔ Is the application form complete?
✔ Is the requested grant within the limit (£2,000 to £10,000)?
✔ Is your organisation eligible for funding (see “Who can apply”)?
✔ Does your project directly relate to Scotland’s coasts and/or waters (seas, lochs, rivers, wetlands)?
✔ Does your project contribute to the mandatory outcome plus at least one other outcome?
✔ Will your project start after 1 April 2020 and end no later than 31 December 2020?
✔ Is evaluation and reporting a planned and integral part of the project?
✔ Are there match funds available, are they eligible, and will they be in place before the project starts?
✔ Does the project create a legacy beyond 2020?

Nature Reserve Travel Grants

✔ Are you a school or youth group located in Scotland?
✔ Is the requested grant less than £500?
✔ Does your project support small-scale visits to National Nature Reserves or Local Nature Reserves?
✔ Is your claim for travel costs to the site?
✔ Does your project directly engage young people with Scotland’s coasts and/or waters (seas, lochs, rivers, wetlands)?