



The Big Tree Plant funding scheme

The aims of The Big Tree Plant funding scheme

The main aim of The Big Tree Plant funding scheme is to encourage and support community groups to plant trees in neighbourhoods where people live and work. The scheme can fund work such as community involvement, site surveys and expert advice as well as trees, planting materials, labour, and tree care and maintenance.

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme will give £4 million in grants during the campaign (2011 to 2015). We want this to pay for the planting of at least one million trees in a mixture of street trees, small groups of trees in greenspaces, and other neighbourhood tree planting.

The guidance notes which are part of the application form will help you complete your form and get the most out of your project. They will also help you find out whether there is any reason why your project may not be eligible.

Do you want to know more about setting up and running a tree planting project?

You can find information on how to develop and run tree planting projects such as how to choose the right trees, plant and care for trees, involve the local community and set up a community group at www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant.

What your project must do

You may be eligible for funding if your planting project will do all of these:

- Plant trees in neighbourhoods in England where people live and work.
- Involve the local community and provide benefits to people in the neighbourhood.
- Plant individual street trees, small groups of trees in greenspaces, or other neighbourhood tree planting.
- Have in place a method for ensuring the trees are cared for in the future.
- Get the support and permission of the landowner where trees are to be planted.
- Be run by a group or organisation that represents the interests of the local community and is non-governmental and non-profit distributing¹.
- Start and finish the work we are funding sometime between 1 May 2011 and 31 March 2015.



The Big Tree Plant funding scheme is provided by the Forestry Commission as part of its contribution to the Defra led partnership.



How we will assess your project

The information you provide in your application form will be used to assess your project. Please complete your application as fully as possible.

We will first check that your project is eligible using the list above. If it is, we will then assess how it fits with The Big Tree Plant funding scheme as a whole, looking in particular at:

- numbers of new trees to be planted, particularly trees in urban areas and including individual street trees;
- levels of community involvement in tree planting, during your project and in the future;
- local support for planting trees;
- value for money including the amount of matching funding;
- plans for ensuring establishment and long-term care for trees; and
- how much the project will improve the environment for communities in areas of greatest need.

Your application will be assessed by a panel of representatives from civil society organisations; the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); and the Forestry Commission. This will meet twice a year. Go to www.forestry.gov.uk/england-bigtreeplant to find out the date by which you have to submit your application for it to be considered at the next panel meeting.

Application form

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme application form includes guidance notes that you will be able to read on-screen as you write or at the end if you print it. You can find more information on the funding scheme at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-bigtreeplant. If you need further advice on the scheme or application form, please contact²:

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme administrator
c/o Groundwork London, 12 Baron Street, London N1 9LL.
Tel: 0800 856 7984
E-mail: bigtreeplant@groundwork.org.uk

1 Non-profit making means that the group does not pay any profits to individuals. Local authorities cannot apply directly but projects in partnership with local authorities are welcome.

2 We cannot provide direct support or advice for developing or running individual projects.

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme application form

Please read the general information above and the guidance notes at the end before completing this application form. The form is easiest to fill in on screen, the text boxes will expand as you type. To read the guidance notes, click on the small reference numbers in the form. To go back to your previous place in the form, click on the relevant reference number in the notes. Alternatively you can scroll down and scroll back up. If you print the form the notes will be at the end. If you are completing the form on paper, please add additional sheets if you need more space.

1. Details of the key contact for the application¹

Title:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email:

2. Details of the group making the application

Name of group:

Description of the group:²

3. Where will the trees be planted?³

Project address if known (include post code, or grid reference, or link to a web-based map⁴) or general location:⁵

If appropriate, please enclose a letter of permission and support from the landowner including full contact details.⁶

4. Description of the project

Please give a description of your project including aims, who will be involved and what the overall benefits will be:⁷

Please describe what local community support you have for your project or how you plan to get this support:⁸

If possible, please tell us who will plant the trees and how many people will take part:⁹

Please list, where possible, the number, size¹⁰ and species of tree your project will plant and whether they will be planted as individual street trees, individual trees in other settings, or groups of trees in parks and other greenspace:¹¹

If possible, please give dates for when the tree planting will start and finish:¹²

5. How will the trees be looked after in future?

Describe how the trees will be cared for after your tree planting project has finished and how the local community will be involved:¹³

Describe what you will do to encourage more community involvement in more tree planting once your Big Tree Plant funding scheme project has finished:¹⁴

6. Funding ¹⁵

A. Cash cost of your project:¹⁶

Is the group that will receive the funds registered for Value Added Tax (VAT)?¹⁷

Yes No

If "Yes", do not include in A any VAT that you can recover.¹⁸

B. Value of free offers of help, goods or services (in-kind contributions):¹⁹

Please let us know about other sources of funding that you have in place.²⁰

C. Total non-Governmental or other grants:²¹

D. Total and details of other Governmental grants:²²

E. Amount applied for from The Big Tree Plant funding scheme:²³

If C + D + E is less than A, please explain how you will raise the remaining funds:

If C + D + E is more than A, we will not consider your project because you are asking for more than its total cash cost.

In the table below, please provide an estimate of when you will claim the funds:²⁴

| Financial year ²⁵ | Estimate of Big Tree Plant funding scheme money needed in that year (£) ²⁶ |
|------------------------------|---|
| 2011/12 | |
| 2012/13 | |
| 2013/14 | |
| 2014/15 | |
| TOTAL ²⁷ | |

Will the bank account into which you want the funds to be paid be controlled by the group making this application?²⁸ Yes No

If no, please tell us which organisation you want the funds to be paid to and explain why this is necessary:²⁹

Grants will normally be paid in arrears but we may agree to limited payments in advance in exceptional circumstances. If any grant is being asked for in advance of spending the money, please explain why this is required:³⁰

Please send the completed form and supporting information required to:³¹

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme administrator
E-mail: bigtreeplant@groundwork.org.uk
c/o Groundwork London, 12 Baron Street, London N1 9LL
Tel: 0800 856 7984 Fax: 0207 278 1515

I confirm that the information supplied in this form is correct and that I am authorised to make this application on behalf of the group described in Section 2.

Name:

Date:

If you need this publication in an alternative format, for example in large print or in another language, please contact:

The Diversity Team
Forestry Commission
Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT
Telephone: 0131 314 6575 Email: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Guidance Notes

Click on the reference number in the guidance notes below to be taken back to your previous place in the form. These guidance notes will appear at the end of the document if you print it.

¹ This is the person we will normally communicate with about the application and the project. It must be someone who represents the group or organisation applying for funding.

We are required to release information to comply with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Freedom of Information Act 2000. We will not allow any unwarranted breach of confidentiality, nor will we contravene our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. The Forestry Commission will be the Data Controller. Personal data is collected for the purpose of administering The Big Tree Plant funding scheme. This will include sharing it with Defra and other members of the grants panel when they assess your application. The Forestry Commission deals with all requests for information in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

² Please describe the aims of your group or organisation and how it is set-up. For example, an informal voluntary group, a group with a formal constitution, registered charity, company limited by guarantee, school parent teacher association, parish or town council etc. The group or organisation applying for the funding must be a non-governmental, non-profit distributing organisation that can represent the interests of the local community. Local authorities are not eligible to apply, but projects run in partnership with local authorities may be eligible.

Please supply copies of any documents you have that set out how your group or organisation is run. Your group or organisation must have at least a written description of its aims, the responsibilities of the people who run it, and how it operates. You do not have to be formally constituted to be eligible for the fund, but it could be advisable if your project is large or high risk. If you have a written constitution or articles and memorandum of association please send us a copy. Alternatively, the information we need could be included in the approved minutes of a meeting of your group. We will use these documents to check that how you are set up is compatible with our scheme.

³ Your project must plant trees in neighbourhoods in England where people live and work. We encourage projects in urban areas but will also consider projects in neighbourhoods in smaller settlements or suburban areas. Tree planting could be on streets or in publicly accessible green space, for example, land owned or managed by parish councils, community groups, wildlife trusts, local authorities, government etc. Projects may be considered on privately owned land or land that is not publicly accessible such as school grounds as long as they provide benefits to local people and involve the local community in the project.

⁴ We need this to find your project location(s) or area on a map.

⁵ We will consider projects where you do not yet know the exact location. This may be, for example, because you are working across a range of potential locations in an urban area. In such cases, we will make it a condition of the grant that you demonstrate permission and support from the landowner once you have identified the location and before you start work.

⁶ If you specify a location as opposed to a general area you must supply a letter of permission and support from the landowner. We may contact this person directly to clarify their support and keep their details in accordance with the data protection statement above. It is your responsibility to let them know this may happen.

⁷ We are particularly interested in how your project fulfils the campaign aims. These are additional trees planted in neighbourhoods in England that last in the long-term; improvements in local quality of life; and local community groups with the capacity to plant and look after their local trees, both the ones you plant with our funding and others in the longer-term.

⁸ There should be evidence of broad support from the local community, for example, in response to a local survey. We are very unlikely to fund a project with significant local opposition.

⁹ We are particularly interested in the number of people involved who live or work in the area local to the project. The more the planting is done by local volunteers the better. If necessary, you can pay contractors to do some of the tree planting. For example, you may need professionals to do the tree planting if it is in difficult conditions on busy streets.

¹⁰ For example, standards (young trees with a stem of about 1.8m); half-standards (with a stem about 1.2m); transplants or whips (young saplings around 2 to 4 years old), seedlings (around 1 year old), or seeds.

¹¹ We expect most of the projects we fund to be small scale tree planting of individual street trees, groups of trees in greenspaces, or other small-scale tree planting. Any woodland planting must be less than 0.5ha.

Factors to think about when choosing your trees include how big they will grow, whether they will affect neighbouring property, whether the soil conditions are right, the impact of climate change, and what you want from your trees. In towns and cities try to choose species that will cope with the current challenging conditions and also the hotter, drier climate projected for the future. Most of Britain's native tree species will continue to be a good choice. Some non-native species may also make sense for planting in the urban environment. It is usually better to plant United Kingdom grown trees to avoid unknowingly importing pests and diseases. You can help protect the environment by buying your trees from reputable suppliers. More information to help you choose your trees is available at www.right-trees.org.uk.

¹² Your planting project must start and finish sometime between 1 May 2011 and 31 March 2015. You will need to look after your trees beyond this timescale but we will not fund any work after 31 March 2015. Note that the tree planting season runs from November to March, unless you are planting container grown trees.

¹³ We can fund the costs of establishing your trees (weeding, mulching, watering, replacing lost trees *etc*) up to 31 March 2015. After this, it is very important that the trees continue to be looked after in the long-term – trees in towns and cities provide the most benefits when they are mature. For example, you could get a commitment from the landowner or other organisation such as a local authority or community volunteers. We will require as a condition of funding that you let us inspect the trees planted at any time for five years after the end of your project to check they are still providing the benefits envisaged.

¹⁴ We would like the projects we fund to be just the start of even more tree planting and more community involvement.

¹⁵ The fund can cover the costs of goods and services such as trees and material for tree planting; preparatory work such as utility searches, test pits, and planning applications; local community engagement; contract labour for running the project and undertaking works; time of staff spent on running the project, and expert advice. We will not fund the employment of extra staff. Nor will we fund land acquisition and other significant capital expenditure such as machinery purchase. We will consider funding hire of machinery. Small items such as tools or protective clothing for tree planting are eligible but must remain the property of the group or organisation. We cannot pay for any costs incurred before you have received and accepted a formal offer of funding.

¹⁶ This is the total amount of money you expect to pay to do your project (and should not include any recoverable VAT – see notes below).

¹⁷ This must be the VAT status of the organisation to which the funds will be paid. In exceptional circumstances, this could be different to the group or organisation making the application (see notes on bank account details below). See <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/index.htm> for advice on VAT if you are unsure.

¹⁸ If you are VAT registered you must do this whether or not you choose to recover the VAT. Recoverable VAT is not eligible for funding.

¹⁹ Please describe the nature and value of the in-kind contributions. For example, staff time, goods or services donated by another organisation, or volunteer time. The volunteer time must be of skilled volunteers providing a service to the project and should be valued at £50 per person per day. Less formal volunteer work such as members of the community taking part in a tree-planting day or attending a local meeting is still beneficial for your application but does not count towards matching funding via gifts in kind. If you include the value of in-kind contributions in your application you will need to provide evidence of the value of this contribution when you claim your funding. This could be evidence of number of skilled volunteers and amount of time spent or of the value of goods or services donated. The value of gifts of large capital items such as land cannot be included because capital expenditure is ineligible.

²⁰ Please tell us about any other funding that you have in place or definitely been offered. You do not have to have all the funding in place at this stage. We will normally fund no more than 75% of eligible costs although we may fund up to 100% in exceptional circumstances. Having a high percentage of other funding (known as matching funding) and gifts in kind will be an advantage. The Big Tree Plant funding scheme does not use European Union money so some of your matching funding can be from European Union sources.

²¹ It is your responsibility to inform any other funders of the project about any funding from The Big Tree Plant funding scheme.

²² Please provide the name of the funding organisation, grant scheme, and amount of money that you have in place or definitely been offered. Match funding from other Government funds with similar objectives such as English Woodland Grant Scheme or Natural England Environmental Stewardship is not allowed.

²³ The minimum level of application is £500. The maximum amount of funding for any one project is normally £25,000 but we may consider applications for more than this, for example, a city wide project. We will not fund a group to take a Big Tree Plant funding scheme and use it to set up their own grant scheme. We will assess the value for money of your project against standard costs calculated by us over long-experience of similar projects and by looking at progress towards our target of one million trees. Advice on standard costs is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-bigtreeplant. Groups may make more than one application for different projects in different neighbourhoods although we will be looking for a good geographical spread and a variety of organisations in the projects we fund.

²⁴ We will use this information to ensure we have sufficient funds each year. The split between years can be an estimate at this stage, to be confirmed later by agreement. We will agree a payments schedule with you if your application is successful.

²⁵ Our financial year runs from 1 April – 31 March. You must complete the project and make the final claim before 31 March 2015.

²⁶ We expect most projects will make just one claim when the work is done but some may be easier to manage if more than one claim is made as the project progresses. You must normally make claims after you have spent the money using a form we will supply. You will need to provide a breakdown of types of expenditure (for example, spend on trees and tree planting, community involvement, administering the project, and preparatory work) and evidence of expenditure and progress when you claim.

Evidence of progress will be a brief report on a template we will provide and other evidence such as before, during and after photos. Evidence of expenditure can consist of receipts, itemised extracts from bank accounts, audited accounts signed off by a qualified accountant, timesheets and salary details or other evidence of the value of staff-time spent on the project, evidence of volunteer time or value of goods and services donated, or other forms of proof agreed by us in advance. You must keep records of your project including expenditure. We will audit a representative sample of the projects.

²⁷ This must be the same as the total asked for from The Big Tree Plant funding scheme at E.

²⁸ The bank account should normally be under the direct control of the group applying for the funding. In exceptional circumstances, we may make payments to a bank account controlled by another non-profit distributing organisation working in partnership with the applicant, provided the funds will be spent on the project as described in your application form. This could be a local authority, for example. You will need to supply full bank account details when you claim.

²⁹ Tell us the name of the organisation and its status. For example, local authority or a registered charity.

³⁰ In exceptional circumstances, we may agree to provide part of the funding in advance of expenditure. The limit for this will normally be £1,000 or 10% of the amount asked for from The Big Tree Plant funding scheme, whichever is the lower. In such circumstances, we will not make any further payment until you have provided us with evidence of progress and expenditure.

³¹ An e-mail application is preferred but we are happy to accept paper applications. Check that your application includes: completed application form, documents describing the structure and function of the group or organisation applying, and permission from the landowner if needed (either electronically or on paper).

If your application form does not meet our minimum requirements we will let you know as soon as possible. If it does meet them it will be considered by a grants panel. The panel has representatives from civil society organisations, Defra and the Forestry Commission. The civil society organisations on the panel are potentially eligible for funding but disclosure of any potential conflict of interest and withdrawal from any decisions where such conflicts could exist are required.

The Big Tree Plant funding scheme panel could decide to offer you funding in full, offer you part-funding, reject your application, or ask for further information. We will let you know the decision as soon as possible after the panel meeting. We will publish the panel's proceedings at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-bigtreeplant. As the organisation running the funding scheme, the Forestry Commission will have final say on the appropriate use of public finances. If you have a complaint about the decision or the way your application was handled please refer to the Forestry Commission complaints procedure, see [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcinformation.pdf/\\$file/fcinformation.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcinformation.pdf/$file/fcinformation.pdf).

If you are successful, we will offer you the funding in the form of an offer letter with some conditions, including that you acknowledge The Big Tree Plant funding scheme in all project publicity.

If you agree with the offer, accept it and start your project.