



Building communities. Transforming lives.

# Partnership Grants Scheme Expression of Interest Guidance Notes



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## Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guidance which contains important information you will need to help you decide whether your organisation and project are eligible and suitable for Biffa Award Partnership Grants Scheme funding.

Between £250,000 and £1,000,000 is available, and although there is no limit on the total cost of your project, preference will be given to projects where Biffa Award is recognised as a majority funder.

We strongly recommend that you only submit an Expression of Interest when your project is in a position to start work, as we will expect the project to commence once a Formal Offer Agreement has been issued in February 2026.

The Scheme remains highly competitive and receives a far higher number of applications than we can fund. 2024 saw application submissions in excess of £8.4million. Even if your submission qualifies for funding, it may still be rejected if the Board feel that it would not compete against others.

**Unfortunately, village halls, community centres and churches are excluded from making an application to the Partnership Grants Scheme.**

**We are unable to support projects in Scotland and Wales.**



# Our Themes

## Built Environment

An Expression of Interest submitted under this theme should aim to restore, modernise and improve cultural, heritage or visitor facilities.

Grant applications for exhibitions, interpretation and interactive displays, including design costs, are welcomed, as are applications for new visitor centres, education spaces, walking trails and associated facilities.

You will need to demonstrate regional or national significance, how the facility will be inclusive and how it will inspire learning, creativity and participation amongst tourists and day visitors.

The facilities must be open to the general public for a published period of at least 104 days each year, and you should consider environmental sustainability.

We are unable to provide funding towards staff costs or volunteer costs related to the management of any part of the project.



**Please note that your application should not cross over two themes.**

## Natural Environment

For submissions under Natural Environment, we are looking for projects that seek to support, protect and restore a variety of living things, their habitats and the natural processes that support them.

Projects should deliver commitments set out in your country's [Environmental Improvement Plan](#), legally-binding targets from the Environment Act 2021 or priorities identified within Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Grants to cover the purchase of land to protect it in perpetuity, to create or extend an ecosystem, or to secure vital habitats for the future, promoting nature's recovery, are welcome.

Additionally, we encourage applications to help nature reserves and natural spaces adapt to climate change, for example: habitat management work to improve fire breaks and access for fire services to tackle wildfires; installing dams to manage water flow; and providing shade for wildlife.

Day rate equivalent costs for staff undertaking direct delivery work in relation to the project, or supervising volunteers in project delivery tasks can be funded, but only if this demonstrates better value for money than using an external contractor to deliver the same work.

We are unable to provide funding for habitat improvement work on land where the applicant plans to sell biodiversity units. However, we are able to purchase land that an applicant will improve for the purpose of selling biodiversity units.



**Please note that your application should not cross over two themes.**

## Submission Deadlines

The purpose of the Expression of Interest (stage one) is to allow an initial assessment of the project by the Biffa Award Board. Each submission is closely assessed against our eligibility criteria and the priorities of the scheme, to enable identification of those projects that are most likely to be funded.

Applicants can submit multiple Expressions of Interest for this scheme, but only one stage two application per organisation will be considered for the Board meeting, if invited.

As the completion of a Full Application (stage two) requires a significant commitment, resource and effort, including the production of a short film, we do not wish to invite an applicant to make a Full Application if we feel they are unlikely to be successful.

If invited to submit a stage two full application, you will need to upload quotations and competitive tender documents to support project costs, as per regulatory guidelines: One recent quotation for any single items costing up to £1,000; three recent quotations for any single items or works costing more than £1,000 and up to £25,000; and evidence of competitive tendering where project costs exceed £25,001.

### Stage One

Submission of Expression of Interest deadline: **Noon 30 May 2025**

Outcome of Expression of Interest submission: **Late July 2025**

### Stage Two

Submission of Full Application: **Noon 05 September 2025**

Outcome of Full Application: **December 2025**

### If Successful

Work to commence: **February 2026**

First Claim due: **May 2026**

Project completion: **February 2027**



## Is the organisation and project eligible

The organisation must be a fully constituted, charitable or not-for-profit organisation with no share capital. Unfortunately, local authorities, hospices, hospitals, day-care centres, rehabilitation units, residential care facilities, allotment sites, schools/colleges, activity centres and youth clubs are not eligible to make an application through the Biffa Award scheme.

### **The project must be eligible for registration with the scheme's regulator, Entrust, and must meet the following criteria:**

- Application value must be between £250,000 - £1,000,000
- The project site must be within 15 miles of a significant Biffa Operation or active Biffa Landfill Site (please refer to the postcode checker for this fund on the Biffa Award website and save the address as you will need this to submit your application)
- The project site must **also** be within 10 miles of a licenced landfill site (please click [here](#) to check eligibility and save the address as you will need this to submit your application)
- A Third Party Contributor to fund 10% of the application value should be identified (this could come from your own reserves if you are not an EB)
- The project must not cross the two themes
- All shortfall funding must be secured
- Work must start in February 2026 and finish within one year
- Natural Environment projects should support your country's Environmental Improvement Plan, any legally-binding targets from the Environment Act 2021, or priorities identified within a Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Minimum of 104 days of published and full public access each year
- Any Biffa Award grant must be used for site-based improvement work, not for movable equipment, staff core costs or storage facilities
- Red Book Valuation at stage two will be required for any land purchase applications under the Natural Environment theme
- Planning permission must have been granted prior to the submission of an Expression of Interest
- If the organisation does not own the project site a fully signed lease with at least 25 years remaining must be in place for Built Environment applications. We cannot accept any other forms of agreement, including but not limited to draft agreements, letters of intent, heads of terms, subleases or underleases
- A fully signed landowner agreement, giving permission to access the site for maintenance, surveying and monitoring for at least 25 years post completion of the project must be in place for Natural Environment projects, if the applicant does not own the land

You cannot re-apply for funding on the same site of a previous Biffa Award grant within one year of receiving your final payment.

## **What we look for in an application**

Your application should showcase creativity, innovation and environmental sustainability. You should consider ways to mitigate the impact of your project both during project delivery and after funded works are complete, for example by employing local tradespeople, using sustainable materials, recycling existing components, reducing energy consumption or reducing carbon footprint.

As well as answering some general questions through our online grants application portal, you will be asked to upload a separate document that outlines your project in no more than 1,000 words, provide relevant project designs and visualisations, and submit up to 10 relevant photographs, where possible.

Remember, the scheme is extremely competitive, so this is your opportunity to sell your project to us. Be concise but provide as much relevant detail as you can across all sections of the form, working within any word limits.

## **Built Environment**

Your project outline should tell us how the project will transform, restore, modernise and improve your cultural, heritage or visitor centre.

Outline any plans for ambitious, interactive and exciting interpretation. Demonstrate its regional or national significance, and how will it be inclusive of a diversity of potential beneficiaries. Your plan should also include how will it promote learning, creativity and participation.

Don't forget to include details of any volunteer involvement, partnership working and your published opening hours.

## **Natural Environment**

Your project should outline how the project will restore, improve, and transform the natural environment and provide details about its regional, national or international significance.

You will be asked to provide a full biodiversity management plan and list of species and/or habitats the project will introduce, conserve and/or protect, as well as information on public access and volunteering opportunities.

Don't forget to include details on any wider partnership plans for the project.

## Work that we cannot fund

Unfortunately, we are unable to fund some items. This is a list of some of the most common things that we receive requests for but which we must decline. The list is not exhaustive, so if you are in doubt, please contact us by email at [biffa-award@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:biffa-award@wildlifetrusts.org) so that we can advise you.

- ⊗ Cross-themed applications
- ⊗ Car parks and vehicle charging stations
- ⊗ Offices and volunteer spaces
- ⊗ New supplies including gas, electricity and water
- ⊗ Elements to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements
- ⊗ Portable items that will not be permanently kept at the address listed as your project location
- ⊗ Furniture
- ⊗ Fencing (unless part of a Natural Environment application)
- ⊗ Events, workshops, websites
- ⊗ Marketing materials
- ⊗ Publications
- ⊗ Storage
- ⊗ Staff salaries and core costs of an organisation
- ⊗ Project management or staff time to procure goods and services
- ⊗ Volunteer facilities or associated costs
- ⊗ Areas not accessible to the general public (Built Environment)
- ⊗ Feasibility studies and baseline surveys
- ⊗ Research
- ⊗ Tender costs
- ⊗ Planning applications
- ⊗ Building consents
- ⊗ Preliminaries
- ⊗ Recruitment costs
- ⊗ Solar panels and battery storage facilities
- ⊗ Work that has already taken place
- ⊗ Habitat improvement work on land on which the applicant intends to sell biodiversity units
- ⊗ Land purchase under the Built Environment theme

## Previously funded Built Environment projects

Biffa Award is proud to have funded some truly inspirational and innovative Built Environment projects over the last seven years. From STEM experiences at science centres and captivating aquariums, to immersive memorials, and spaces designed to foster creativity, learning and participation.

Winchester Science Centre was awarded £292,400 to relaunch its visitor experience aimed at inducting children in STEM. The transformation included a brand new multi-sensory exhibition centred around Sound, Hearing and Vibration, a live science demo area and an invention studio.



New educational exhibits including a hands-on STEM, crafting and water play station, a high-tech jellyfish and plankton exhibition, and a physical, audio visual recreation of the East Yorkshire shoreline can now be enjoyed by diverse audiences of all ages at The Deep in Hull thanks to a grant of £418,550.



£700,000 of funding supported the International Bomber Command Museum in Lincoln to create interactive and immersive exhibitions including a peace garden to remember the people who gave their lives serving in Bomber Command during the Second World War.



£390,784 supported the installation of retractable auditorium seating to make space at The Customs House in South Shields more flexible. An immersive and interactive theatre experience and participation hub has also allowed the organisation to deliver a comprehensive cultural programmes to enhance engagement within the community.



## Previously funded Natural Environment projects

Biffa Award is proud to have funded numerous Natural Environment projects that have a meaningful impact on nature conservation and the recovery of biodiversity. Our projects have reintroduced beavers to Britain, created rich pollinator habitats, and secured land in perpetuity for nature's recovery.

Coronation Meadows, supported by King Charles III, patron of The Wildlife Trusts since 1977, was awarded £964,419 to restore and create wildflower meadows across the UK. To date, 90 outstanding new wildflower meadows have been created covering more than 1,000 acres supporting an abundance of pollinating species.



Beavers are natural engineers, able to create wetlands, restore native woodland and improve conditions for other species including otters, fish and dragonflies. Funding of £923,831 allowed the first wild beavers to be released in Knapdale Forest, after they were hunted to extinction more than 424 years ago.



£750,000 enabled the Woodland Trust to secure the remaining two thirds of Yonder Oak Wood, Exeter securing it in perpetuity for the benefit of nature's recovery. In ownership, the site will provide a matrix of habitats that will enhance biodiversity, bio abundance and landscape connectivity, whilst also offering recreational green space to the public.



£1m of funding to Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust – enabled the creation of 200 hectares of new pollinator habitat across England and Wales. The project has engaged more than 80,000 people, educating them on the plight of pollinators in the UK.



## About us



Biffa Award is managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). As well as operating as an umbrella group for the 46 local Wildlife Trusts that have been formed across the UK, RSWT has a dedicated grants team that manages several different funds, covering a number of broad environmental themes.



Biffa Award money comes from Landfill Tax Credits, reclaimed from the Government through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). The scheme is regulated by Entrust, which ensures that the tax credit is awarded and managed according to Government regulations.



Entrust is the HMRC appointed regulator of the Landfill Communities Fund. All projects are registered with the regulator to ensure funding is spent in line with Government approved objects. All projects, except for some existing Environmental Bodies (EB), are registered by RSWT.

### Third Party Contribution

You can apply to Biffa Award for up to 100 per cent of the project costs. However, under LCF regulations, only 90 per cent of any grant can be paid by us using Landfill Tax Credits. The remaining 10 per cent needs to be provided by another source, either from your own general reserves (if you are not a registered EB) or from an independent source (if you are a registered EB). 10 per cent will be paid directly to Biffa Group Limited, on request, if your application is successful.

Third Party Contributions are different to match or shortfall funding and are non-refundable.

If you are already enrolled with Entrust as an Environmental Body, you must follow specific rules around the Contributing Third Party which can be found on the Entrust website at: [www.entrust.org.uk](http://www.entrust.org.uk).

We may revise the amount of funding available and make changes to our published criteria, as well as updating the list of significant Biffa Operations at any time. Where possible we aim to give three months' notice.