



Hedgerow Grant Fund

Terms and Conditions

Old Chalk New Downs Project Objectives

The project has the following objectives:

- To restore historic hedgerows.
- To increase habitat connectivity and facilitate species movement through the landscape.
- To interrupt surface flows of water and reduce run-off which may contribute to localised flooding.

Definition of a hedge (from Natural England)

A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide at the base, provided that at one time the trees or shrubs were more or less continuous. It includes an earth bank or wall only where such a feature occurs in association with a line of trees or shrubs. This includes 'classic' shrubby hedgerows, lines of trees, shrubby hedgerows with trees and very gappy hedgerows (where each shrubby section may be less than 20m long, but the gaps are less than 20m).

1. Funding Terms

These grants are being offered under the following terms:

1.1 The OCND project will fund 90% of the proposal costs.

- 1.2 It is expected that the applicant contributes 10% towards the project proposal either in cash or in-kind.
- 1.3 When appropriate, work must be carried out following the guidance set in Appendix 1
- 1.4 When creating or gapping up hedgerows the applicant must refer to the Kent Downs AONB guide on managing hedgerows to guarantee the natural character of the area.
- 1.5 Funding from this grant may impact upon State Aid rules if it is felt to provide an unfair competitive advantage to an applicant. The applicant must ensure that is not the case with their proposal. More information about state aid can be obtained from here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid>
- 1.6 All applicants must agree to report progress of their projects and to projects being evaluated to ensure the outcomes match those agreed by the OCND project team.
- 1.7 If deemed appropriate successful grants recipients will be required to work alongside a OCND team member or contracted land manager advisor to ensure work is scoped, tendered, delivered and sustained appropriately.
- 1.8 All applicants must agree to work at their site being used in OCND publicity.
- 1.9 It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to ensure that all the permits and licences required to carry out work in or adjacent to protected sites or areas are in place prior to the commencement of the work. (see Appendix 2)
- 1.10 It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to ensure that the contractor submits a correctly completed Risk Assessment and Method Statement prior commencement of the work at any of the sites specified in the funding application.
- 1.11 Prior to confirmation of the grant funding, we will ensure that all terms and conditions can be met. If not, and if appropriate, a written amendment to the standard terms and conditions will be appended.
- 1.12 Whenever pertinent and after the agreement has been signed, we reserve the right to negotiate with grant recipients' further variations to Fund's terms and conditions and these will be reflected in writing.

2. What we will and will not fund

- 2.1 The grant will only support works undertaken with landowner's permission and the support of a member of the OCND team or a designated land management advisor (see point 3 below).
- 2.2 We will not fund hedge planting already funded through Countryside Stewardship Agreements or any other trust or foundations.
- 2.3 We will not fund work for personal gain, it is expected that the projects funded will have a public good through their provision of benefits for wildlife.

3. Role of project staff and land management advisors

As part of the terms of receiving this grant recipients are required to work alongside an OCND member of staff or an appointed land management advisor. Their roles are:

- 3.1 To ensure the project delivers the benefits for biodiversity.
- 3.2 To visit the holding prior to a decision being made to award funding by the grant panel (or OCND project steering group), assist the landowner in ensuring the benefits of their proposal to the overall project aims and report back to the grant panel ahead of a decision.
- 3.3 Make a minimum of three further visits to each landowner, at project inception/start of capital works, mid-point in the project and project completion.
- 3.4 The OCND project reserves the right to require work to stop at any point if it is felt to be detrimental to habitats and species, contravenes any statutory regulations or requirements or is felt to be outside the terms under which the grant was awarded.

4. Management and Maintenance

We wish to ensure that grants allocated are appropriately spent and the assets (hedgerow) adequately managed and maintained. Therefore, and following Heritage Lottery Fund criteria, where capital works are completed the landowner or tenant will be expected to agree to maintain any assets in such condition so that they continue to perform the purpose for which they were installed for a minimum period of **ten years** following the best management practice by the Kent Downs AONB ‘Hedgerow in the Kent Downs landscape’ (<https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/>) and Hedgelink UK (<http://hedgelink.org.uk/>).

In the event that the works are not maintained to a reasonable standard during this period, the grant recipient must repay the awarded amount to Kent County Council, save for normal wear and tear. Where ongoing responsibility has been passed onto a third party, the grant recipient understands that it will be responsible for ensuring that those works are adequately maintained.

In the event that the land subject to the works is sold or the grant recipient’s interest in it is transferred, they must inform Kent County Council of the intention and either transfer the terms of this letter licence to the transferee or repay the grant funding paid for the works.

5. Buying goods and services

If you receive a grant you will be expected to adhere to the following procurement thresholds:

Up to £7,999	Provide one written quote
£8,000 - £10,000	Provide at least three written quotes

We encourage value for money and if you do not accept the lowest quote you will need to tell us why.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

It is important that the outcomes of any grant awarded are monitored and reported on. We would expect any grant recipient to allow an OCND team member access to their land to evaluate the success of any work undertaken through the grant at least once per year up to the end of the agreed maintenance period.

In your application you were asked to identify length of hedge to be restored or newly planted with a mix of native hedgerow species suitable for the location and planted as per Appendix 1. Monitoring of your project will be based on this. Failure to achieve them may result in grant monies being withheld. You must inform us of the completion of the work and one of our staff members will visit the site and sign off the work so to release the final payment.

7. Payment of Grant

Payment will be made upon completion of the work to satisfactory standard to a standard mutually agreed by recipient and the OCND project team and submission of the completion report.

Only under exceptional circumstances and at our discretion, we will pay 60% of the grant at the beginning of the project (this recognises the capital cost of materials etc. which may be required to deliver the project) and the remaining 40% will be paid on completion of the work.

The OCND project retains the right to vary the above payments schedules at the discretion of the grant evaluation panel.

8. Insurance

You must ensure that all necessary insurance cover is in place prior the commencement of the work. We are not responsible for liabilities incurred by the applicant and/or grant recipient.

9. Publicity and acknowledgement

The OCND project reserves the right to publicise projects receiving grants in any future promotions. You must ensure that we and the Heritage Lottery Fund are acknowledged in any publicity. The OCND team can provide the relevant logos in a suitable format.

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**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and associated by the Heritage Lottery Fund



APPENDIX 1

Planting new hedges

Requirements

- carry out work between 1st of November and 31st of March
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- alternately, apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting only
- plants must be:
 1. 2-year-old transplants
 2. at least 450mm to 600mm high
 3. native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
 4. planted in a staggered double row 40cm apart with **a minimum of 5 plants per metre. In the case of planting to interrupt surface flows of water, plant 7-8 plants per metre.**
- kept clear of weeds until they are established
- remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- replace all failures in the following planting season
- trim the newly planted hedge in at least the first 2 years to encourage bushy growth, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut
- if appropriate, prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- Refer to Kent Downs AONB guidance suitable species for you geology <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/explore-kent-bucket/uploads/sites/7/2018/04/18123732/HEDGEROWS.pdf>

Do not:

obstruct or block access to open access land

Keeping records

- Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:
- photographs of the completed work

Hedgerow gapping-up

Requirements

- carry out work between 1st of November and 31st of March when the hedge is still dormant
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- alternately, apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting

- plants must be:
 1. 2-year-old transplants
 2. at least 450mm to 600mm high
 3. native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
 4. planted in a staggered double row 40cm apart with a minimum of 5 plants per metre. In the case of gapping up to interrupt surface flows of water, plant 7-8 plants per metre
 5. kept clear of weeds until they are established
- if appropriate, prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- replace all failures in the following planting season

Do not:

- obstruct or block access to open access land

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out the work

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for the work.

When to plant

November is generally the best time to plant; however, if planting into clay soils wait until March. Planting should not be undertaken in freezing weather or waterlogged ground. If planting into a newly restored earth bank, plant the following autumn.

Planting

To undertake hedge gapping-up successfully:

- prepare the ground so the soil becomes friable (has a crumbly texture) and is free of other growth
- plant native species that already grow in the local area
- take care of roots before planting by keeping them covered at all times, especially when it is sunny or windy
- avoid opening more than one bag of plants at a time
- Consider planting new hedgerow trees if they are characteristic of the local landscape.

Control weeds

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the growth rate of the new plants by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Avoid using a strimmer as these can damage the plants.

Protect the plants

Fence off the plants if sheep, cattle or horses graze the land. Keep fences far enough away so the hedgerow can grow at least 1.5m in width.

Rabbit netting may be needed, either on its own or with stock fencing, if there is a known problem with rabbits or hares.

Avoid using spiral guards as they limit the amount of dense growth at the base of each plant, are unsightly and difficult to remove.

We encourage the use of biodegradable guards, but they still need to be removed and disposed of appropriately once the plant is established.

(Requirements adapted from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Hedgerow Options and Guidance.)

Relevant Consents

Prior to the commencement of the works the grant applicant must obtain any relevant consents and submit these with the grant application. This may include:

- Consent from NE if the site is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Consent from Historic England if the site includes a Scheduled Monument
- A felling licence from the Forestry Commission
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO) consent
- Consent from Natural England if your proposal is likely to impact on any protected species.

Cross Compliance

It is the responsibility of the grant applicant to check that the proposed project meets all cross-compliance regulations and if needed obtain written permission from the Rural Payment Agency if required.

Burning & Chipping arisings from scrub clearance or fence re-instatement

- Ideally arising should be chipped on site and any saleable wood removed from the site or stacked as habitat piles in a suitable location if it is uneconomic to remove.
- Fire sites should be kept to a minimum and avoid areas of known sensitive species, such as orchids.
- Any work involving large machinery, such as diggers or tractors must be carried out to minimise the impact on the ground. It may be necessary to temporarily stop work during poor weather if ground conditions become too wet.
- Any damage from vehicle movements must be re-instated
- Any fire sites should be located to minimise damage to chalk grassland and other protected species

- Consider burning on metal sheeting to protect the ground and allow the removal of ash to prevent nutrient enrichment.
- Fires should always be attended, turned in and dampened down before leaving site.
- Small volumes of brash can be burnt on discrete fire sites; on wet ground for example these can be laid on corrugated metal sheets to aid removal of ash and prevent it mixing with soil.

Source: The Scrub Management Handbook: Guidance on the management of scrub on nature conservation sites (IN124) published by Natural England.

Managing scrub & tree cutting

Any scrub management and tree cutting must be done outside of bird nesting season (1 March and 31 August). Any tree cutting or scrub management must aim to avoid impact to nesting birds and infringement of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and breaching the European Habitats Directive 1992/Nesting Birds Directive.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences>