

Sherwood Forest could benefit from Heritage Lottery Fund with £3m bid

Nottinghamshire County Council has today submitted a £3m bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding to boost conservation of natural and cultural heritage within Sherwood Forest. Working with a number of partnership agencies, the county council is leading on a bid for funding from the HLF's Landscapes Partnership programme.

The deadline is today (FRI) for bids from partnerships of local, regional and national organisations to help conserve areas of distinctive landscape across the UK.

Competition for funding is high, and organisations can bid for funds of between £100,000 and £3m from across the UK for projects to run for around five years, and Nottinghamshire County Council has bid for £3m - the maximum available - with the application submitted today. However, the HLF funding process is a two-stage process: if this first stage of the bid is successful, then a further phase of development work will be needed before schemes could be implemented on the ground in 2016.

Nottinghamshire County Council currently manages Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve, which is a site of special scientific interest and is home to the legendary Major Oak in Robin Hood country. But the bid for Landscapes Partnership funding would support projects in a wider area – 200 square kilometres of land covered by Sherwood Forest, and managed by a range of public and private landowners.

The Sherwood Forest Landscape Partnership bid has been put together by a growing partnership of organisations from the heritage, conservation and community sectors. (See below for list of partners). Sally Gill, Group Manager for Planning at Nottinghamshire County Council said: *"We already work very closely with a range of agencies to conserve Sherwood Forest and it makes sense to make an application. It is very early stages, but thanks to some hard work by many partners, we have made an application today. If ultimately successful in this application process, it will offer great opportunities for local people to find out more about the heritage of Sherwood Forest."*

There are nine specific outcomes that successful HLF schemes will need to meet to stand a chance of success:

With investment, heritage would be:

- better managed
- in better condition
- identified/recorded

People would have:

- developed skills
- learnt about heritage
- volunteered time

Communities would see:

- environmental impacts reduced
- more people and a wider range of people would be engaged with heritage
- their local area become a better place to live, work and visit.

First round applications had to be made by today and the result of the first round will be known in October. Successful bidders will then be invited to apply for a second stage to develop their bid with more details – depending on the complexity of scheme proposals this could take a further two years.

A wide range of organisations has been involved in developing the Sherwood Forest Landscape Partnership bid, including:

Ashfield District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Edwinstowe Parish Council
The Environment Agency
Experience Nottinghamshire
Forest Town Nature Conservation Group
The Friends of Moor Pond Wood
Greenwood Partnership
Groundwork Cresswell, Ashfield and Mansfield
Mansfield District Council
Natural England
Newark & Sherwood District Council
NFU
Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
Nottinghamshire County Council
Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
RSPB
Sherwood Forest Trust
The Forestry Commission