

The Chestnut Fund

Registered Charity No. 1048520

Start-up Grants and Support Grants - Information

For Independent Community Conservation Groups in the UK

These grants are made by the Chestnut Fund and administered by BTCV:

(Community Network, BTCV, Sedum House, Mallard Way, Potteric Carr, Doncaster, DN4 8DB

Tel: 01302 388834)

Start-Up Grants Criteria

A1) Purpose of the grant

- a) The start-up grants are provided by the Chestnut Fund, an independent charity working closely with BTCV, to support groups which have little money when they are first set up, whose principle purpose is conservation volunteering and to enable them to begin practical work.
- b) The grant is towards administrative expenses and/or BTCV association fees and insurance premiums for the initial association.
- c) If membership and/or insurance fees have been paid prior to submission of a grant application they cannot be refunded via a retrospective grant - the object is to encourage and support future activities.
- d) Administration includes postage, photocopying, stationery, printing, publicity, posters, newsletters, hire of meeting rooms, telephone bills etc.
- e) Separate grants are available for new or existing groups for tools, equipment and in some cases, training.

A2) Eligibility

- a) Groups are eligible within their first year of existence, or when first becoming established as an independent group.
- b) If a group, or organiser(s), has previously been associated to BTCV, but has lapsed for several years, the local member of BTCV staff must confirm that it is a substantially a new and different group.
- c) The group must be stand alone with no parent or sponsoring body, and not doing work that others are responsible for funding.
- d) The group must have minimal unrestricted funds, i.e. less than **£2000**.
- e) The group must not be part of, or directly sponsored by, another organisation.
- f) Grants will be up to **£150**
- g) Insurance premiums will normally only be considered for BTCV's own insurance scheme.
- h) A grant for Power Tool insurance for a new group will require exceptional evidence of need.
- i) The application must be endorsed by the local BTCV office. Groups which are national, span regions or are directly linked to other organisations (such as those where authority to associate is vested in the Community Network) will only be considered in exceptional cases.

A3) Approval Procedure

As for the Support Grant, see **(B3)** overleaf.

Support Grants Criteria

B1) Purpose of the grant

- a) The support grants are provided by the Chestnut Fund to enable groups to begin or extend practical work.
- b) The grants are not for administrative, running costs or consumable items or materials.

B2) Eligibility

- c) The group must have minimal unrestricted funds, i.e. less than £2000 and it must not be part of, or directly sponsored by another organisation.
- d) Applications must be for a specific schedule of items. Preference will be given to tools and equipment requests selected from and supplied by BTCV Retail. If alternative supply is requested the comparative pricing from BTCV Retail should be shown.
- e) The grant is for tools, equipment (but not project materials, plants or consumables), or training (especially when aimed at a leader or trainer who will be the expert or will train within the group, rather than training all the volunteers in one skill). It will not usually fund publications, power tools or training for a whole group.
- f) The application must be endorsed by the local BTCV office. Groups which are national, span regions or are directly linked to other organisations (and where authority to associate is vested in the Community Network) will only be considered in exceptional cases.
- g) A group may have Start-up and Support grants in the first year. Subsequent Support grants may be allowed after 3 years provided i) there is evidence of continued growth or a new area of work and ii) there is a specific positive support statement from the local BTCV office.
- h) Grants will be up to **£350**.

B3) Approval Procedures

- a) Groups are asked to discuss the grant application form with their local office, to give the local officer a chance to check their eligibility before they raise the formal application. Forms may be issued directly from the Community Network in Doncaster or the local BTCV office, or download from the BTCV web-site.
- b) Forms must be returned to the local office and endorsed by the member of local staff, who is responsible for ensuring the conditions of association are met (or the local element of a cross-region group). The local officer must recommend the group for the grant, confirming all elements of eligibility have been met and giving their reasons for support - common reasons include that BTCV are already working with the group, or that the project(s) they intend to undertake will contribute significantly to conservation work in their area.
- c) Once received by the Community Network, the application will be considered. If the application is ineligible the Community Network will notify the applicant and local office with their reasons as soon as possible in case there has been some misunderstanding and the application can be resubmitted. The Community Network will place the application before the Grants Committee who will decide such cases within 3 months. It is intended that the review/approval process can be held every 6 weeks in order to enable practical conservation work to proceed as quickly as possible.
- d) Where the grant covers membership or insurance costs payable to BTCV, the moneys will be transferred directly from the Chestnut Fund to the appropriate BTCV departments, but confirmation will be sent to the group/local office from the Community Network.
- e) Where the grant covers items from BTCV Retail or training costs payable to BTCV, monies will be transferred directly from the Chestnut Fund to the appropriate department, but confirmation will be sent to the group/local office from the Community Network.

- f) The Chestnut Fund is independent of BTCV and is makes grants at its own discretion and criteria. There is no right to a grant by any group or member of BTCV staff.

Additional Information

- C1)** Applications should be completed in black ink to enable photocopying.
- C2)** The Chestnut Fund should be the group's funder of last resort.
- C3)** Groups should have minimal unrestricted funds. This means that groups should have limited funding (i.e. under £2000) available to be spent as the group requires. Groups in receipt of grants in excess of this amount, but restricted in what it can be spent on, (e.g. materials only), will be considered. To assist the grants committee, groups should clarify and explain if and how existing grants are restricted. The committee will consider grants for groups with funds over £2000 if refusing the grant would cause the groups work to be adversely affected.
- C4)** The Chestnut Fund requires that the group has a proper bank account, in the groups name and at least 2 independent people involved.
- C5)** The Chestnut Fund prefers that groups do not use other organisations bank accounts. However if this is the case, the group should clarify their relationship with the other organisation.
- C6)** The Chestnut Fund will not fund statutory authorities.
- C7)** School or Tenants groups, in particular, should make clear:
who will be doing the work (e.g. parents, children, residents, the community in general),
whether part of the curriculum or in peoples own time (albeit supporting the curriculum),
who will benefit from the work, who is responsible for the land
whether the work is tidying or creating new habitats.
- C8)** Supplementary information about a group is always useful. The group and local staff may know the legal status of the group's site, the group's relationship with councils, housing associations or private companies and the work the group undertake, which may assist the committee to make decisions.
- C9)** Grants are non-retrospective and non-transferable.
- C10)** Grants limits are set and are to include VAT & delivery. (Please note that the prices in the BTCV Retail catalogue do not include VAT or carriage).
- C11)** Tools should be, preferably, purchased from BTCV Retail, unless the required tools are not available and then an alternative supplier will be considered by the committee. An alternative supplier will also be considered by the committee, if this is preferred by the group and will require special evidence for the committee to discuss.
- C12)** BTCV Training course will be charged at BTCV subsidised rates, if those attending are from BTCV Associated groups. Travel costs to training are not normally paid but will be considered by the committee on a case by case basis.
- C13)** Some power tools may be approved, where it is a principal element in the work of a group involving and used by many people. Generally power or specialist tools involving just one operator will not be considered.
- C14)** The Chestnut Fund will not fund promotional clothing or 'uniforms'.
Safety and protective clothing may be considered when it is not for individual issue.
- C15)** Office equipment (printers, computers, and photocopiers) is not eligible, unless special evidence of exceptional need is provided. Any application must show that items requested would directly increase conservation volunteering and that it is the most cost effective answer overall.