

16 April 2019

Dear ,

**Ref: ATISN 13063 - 2014/15 Nature Fund spend**

Thank you for your request which I received on 18 March 2019 about the **Nature Fund spend**. The following information you requested is provided below the original individual requests.

- (i) *Summarise how the £6 million Welsh Government money for a 'Nature Fund' was spent and which organisations/individual land owners/estates benefited by how much?*

The final expenditure for the Nature Fund was £ 4,904,723 defrayed against activities undertaken by the 20 active Nature Fund Projects and the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Transition Fund over 2014/2015 – (effectively a 7 month window of activity). The following table sets out the beneficiaries<sup>1</sup> of this funding.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Coed Cymru & River Trusts	Coed Cymru	610,000
Berwyn & Migneint, Black Mountains and Radnor Upland Recovery Project	Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (Cymru)	241,800
Natural Buzz - a project to support the Action Plan for Pollinators	Keep Wales Tidy	130,000
Cynllun Gwella Dyffryn Elwy Habitat Improvement Project	Conwy County Borough Council	180,000
Llyn Partnership Coastal Connectivity	Gwynedd County Council	240,000
Unwanted vegetation and restoration of peatlands	Snowdonia National Park	132,000
Long Forest nature funding proposal	Keep Wales Tidy	154,254
Peatland Push Cymru - Pumlumon Living Landscape (PLL) – A Payment For Ecosystem Service (PES) Scheme	Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust	59,000
Eastern Valleys Upland Project	Torfaen County Borough Council	280,000

<sup>1</sup> Note that Welsh Government refers to beneficiaries as the organisation (known as the lead organisation) that directly receives the grant funding.

Pond Connections	Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) Trust	63,000
Castlemartin Peninsula: Integrating Natural and Social Resources	The National Trust	123,000
Future Fisheries - Living Seas	The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales	64,500
Pollinators for life project	Torfaen County Borough Council	282,100
Elenydd Purple Moor Grass Project	Cambrian Mountains Initiative	152,000
Ecosystem Enterprise Partnership (EEP) – Ecobank Project	Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum	150,000
Black Mountains Ecosystem Restoration: Linking Peatlands, Heathlands, Rivers and Woodlands	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	201,500
Manage and benefit from woodland resources in rural Conwy	Golygfa Gwydyr	125,000
NWM Futurescape programme (Incorporating Lake Vyrnwy, Sustainable Moorland, Developing ecosystem & Farm Advisory Focus)	RSPB	241,800
Connectivity work in the Duhonw Catchment	Robert Powell, Blaenbwch	97,769
Llynfi Valley - ‘Spirit of Llynfi Woodland’	NRW	627,000
NRW Transition Fund	NRW	750,000

The following links provide summaries of the projects as at project award;

<https://gweddill.gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150513nature-fund-collaborative-projects-en.pdf>

<https://gweddill.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/nature-fund-projects/?lang=en>

- (ii) *Explain in each case, by means of an ecological assessment, how exactly nature (our wildlife and habitats highlighted in the State of Nature report) would benefit from each of the projects funded?*

Where necessary and appropriate, individual project undertook a habitat assessment, or NRW compliance when undertaking specific habitat improvements. It was a requirement for every project to ensure that the project is set up and reported on using the JNCC’s Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) to allow monitoring of the ecological health and biodiversity of the habitats in the focal areas before and after intervention. As a result Welsh Government does not hold ecological assessments for each project.

Data regarding the outcomes (including those related to wildlife and habitats) reported at the end of the Nature Fund is attached as *'Document 1 - 2015.10 Breakdown of Nature Fund Project Outcomes and Benefits'*

An infographic summarising the achievements of the Nature Fund is also attached as *'Document 2 – Nature Fund Achievements Infographic'*

(iii) *Specifically information regarding:*

(a) *Any shooting or fishing enterprises were funded, including any project relating to work on pools and tracks within shooting estates;*

No shooting or fishing enterprises were beneficiaries of Nature Fund funding. It is not known by the Welsh Government if work on pools and tracks occurred within 'shooting estates'. Please refer to the information released in response to question (i) detailing the organisations receiving funding from Welsh Government.

(b) *How funding these estates for such work were considered to be benefiting nature?*

Please refer to the information released in response to question (i) detailing the organisations receiving funding from Welsh Government.

(iv) *Specifically information regarding any money paid to Harry Legge-Bourke or his Estate?*

No money was paid by Welsh Government to the Glan Usk Estate, or its owner. Please refer to the information released in response to question (i) detailing the organisations receiving funding from Welsh Government.

(v) *Knowledge on the role that NRW staff played in approving projects and the expenditure under the scheme of delegation in place at that time.*

The NRW played no direct part in approving the projects. The NRW were consulted where appropriate as a technical advisor within the approval process. On a project by project basis NRW may have provided guidance regarding feasibility, regulatory control and eligibility of activity particularly at protected sites. As such, a scheme of delegation was not applicable regarding the NRW's role within the Nature Fund.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,

Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely