

Haslemere Vision Application to HTC for A Small Grant Award - Supplementary information

See below the answers to the questions within the application that say 'see attached supplementary information pdf'.

PROJECT DETAILS

Background

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits we get from the natural environment. It contributes to our economy, our health and wellbeing, and it enriches our lives.

Haslemere has a particularly rich array of biodiversity assets within and around the town. These include a number of European, nationally and locally designated sites including the Wealden Heaths Phases I and II Special Protection Areas, several Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 20 sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), 84 ancient woodland sites and 2 Conservation Verges. Haslemere also lies within Surrey's network of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, which contain large areas where targeted conservation action is considered to deliver the greatest benefit. Additionally the town borders the South Downs National Park and lies partly in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and protected National Trust land.

The overall aim of the Haslemere Biodiversity Project (HBP) is to map, monitor and enhance biodiversity in the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area. This is especially important in the light of various reports showing that a third of Surrey's biodiversity is either extinct or in serious decline. Consultations with the local community undertaken by Haslemere Vision as part of the wider work for the Neighbourhood Plan have confirmed that Haslemere's biodiversity assets are highly valued by local residents who wish to see them conserved.

The project has 3 main objectives:

- Establish the biodiversity baseline for the NP area and develop policies and plans to protect and improve Haslemere's biodiversity over the longer term.
- Build partnerships with the many local groups working on nature conservation and establish a common platform for co-operation and co-ordination.
- Raise awareness of local biodiversity issues and activities through communication and community engagement.

The project will be structured as a series of discrete phases, each of which will be valuable in their own right. The current focus is on Phase 1 which seeks to get the project up and running while delivering tangible outputs that demonstrate the value of the proposed work and incentivise investment in future phases.

The key tasks and deliverables for Phase 1 are shown below:

| Phase 1: Key tasks and deliverables | |
|--|---|
| 1. | Establish an initial picture of the biodiversity baseline and identify priority areas for protection/enhancement: We will conduct preliminary mapping of the key designated sites, corridors and stepping-stones and identify any critical data gaps (including the need for a more detailed biodiversity inventory for particular sites). This will help identify those areas that are in particular need of protection and/or improvement (i.e. 'priority' areas). |
| 2. | Establish a Haslemere biodiversity knowledge base: Identify existing biodiversity data sources and start to collate key information; explore the implications for integrating and sharing data between partner organisations. |
| 3. | Review existing local and national policies relating to biodiversity: as a basis for guiding policy development in the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan. |
| 4. | Identify and engage with priority partner organisations; explore interest in establishing a formal Haslemere Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Group. |
| 5. | Develop and disseminate initial communication materials (e.g. articles, social media, stalls at community events) to raise awareness of the project among potential partners and the wider community and encourage local people to get involved. |

What aspect of the project will grant money be used for? Please be as specific as possible.

The grant award money will be used to fund the capital items listed in the table below:

- Mapping/survey equipment to support development of the Haslemere biodiversity baseline.
- Communications and outreach materials to raise awareness of local biodiversity issues and activities and promote community engagement.

| Category | Item | Quantity | Cost (£)* |
|---|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Mapping/ survey equipment | Dormouse box @ £10/box (dormouse surveys) | 50 | 500.00 |
| | Mink rafts @£63.35/raft (mink, otter & water vole surveys) | 5 | 316.75 |
| | Clulite torch (CB2 Clubman Deluxe) (Survey amphibians, river (crayfish and fish), nightjars) | 1 | 162.00 |
| | GCN e-DNA kits @ £244/kit (Great Crested Newt surveys) | 2 | 488.00 |
| | Waders (River & pond work) | 1 | 30.00 |
| | Maps and additional species/habitat data from Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire Biodiversity Records Centres | | 500.00 |
| Communications/ outreach | Set of posters & other display materials | 1 | 200.00 |
| Total | | | 2196.75 |
| *All prices include VAT and, where appropriate delivery charges | | | |

Additional details are as follows:

Mapping/survey equipment to support development of the Haslemere biodiversity baseline

- The HBP will work closely with the Surrey Dormice Group (SDG) to support surveys conducted within the NP area (see attached plan of Dormice Records for Haslemere). Currently SDG is looking to continue surveys of the north and south portal of Hindhead Tunnel, previously carried-out by the developer. The National Dormice Monitoring Programme (NDMP <https://ptes.org/campaigns/dormice/surveying-and-monitoring-hazel-dormice/national-dormouse-monitoring-programme-ndmp/>) requires 50 boxes per site for monitoring purposes. There are three current and potential SDG NDMP sites within the Council's boundary, which require new boxes and/or set-up. This funding will help support SDG's work in and around Haslemere.
- This spring the HBP plans to conduct surveys of ponds within the eastern side of HTC boundary, specifically searching for great crested newts, but also collecting records of other amphibians. The Clulite Torch will assist with such surveys, as will eDNA kits and waders. The information will provide records to determine any key Pond Corridors within the Town's boundary, especially with reference to great crested newts.
- The HBP plans to conduct riparian mammal surveys of the River Wey's headwaters within Haslemere, using mink rafts. This could also tie-in with the National Trust Beaver release project at Vale Wood and determine what species utilise River Corridors within the Town. Otter has been recorded within nearby Frensham Parish over recent years.
- We also wish to purchase a set of high resolution maps showing the statutory and non-statutory designated wildlife sites that occur within and close to the boundaries of the Haslemere NP area as well as detailed records on protected/designated habitats and species. These maps and data sets will be supplied by the Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre (SBIC), Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre and the Hampshire Biodiversity Centre.

Communications and outreach materials to raise awareness of local biodiversity issues and activities and promote community engagement.

We would like to develop a set of posters, banners and other display materials to use at local community events and other fora. For example, we are planning to operate a stall at the Haslemere Charter Fair in May and we are actively seeking similar opportunities to participate in other community events. We would also envisage that these materials could be used with partner organisations to raise the awareness of the project more widely alongside specific local groups (e.g. schools, youth groups, gardening/allotment groups etc.).

What benefits for the Haslemere community do you expect will result from the project?

The project is expected to provide the following community benefits:

- Development of a Haslemere biodiversity knowledge base will help ensure that Local and Neighbourhood Plans include appropriate policies to protect and enhance wildlife. It will also provide vital tools for planners, developers and other land managers to help make sure that development in the NP area is sustainable and protects local wildlife.

- A positive contribution to addressing Haslemere Town Council's recent Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Motion and delivering associated action plans.
- Encourage the local community to get actively involved in caring about and taking action for wildlife.
- Promote physical and mental health, including reductions in obesity and improved concentration, by encouraging the local community to have greater contact with nature through a variety of community engagement activities (e.g. garden/school/allotment wildlife surveys, guided wildlife walks, nature clubs, volunteering with local conservation projects, etc).

ORGANISATION DETAILS

What are aims and objectives of the organisation?

Haslemere Vision is a non-partisan volunteer group of local residents committed to delivering the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, and passionate about enhancing the environment and community of Haslemere and surrounding villages.

Our mission is to engage with residents and organisations to deliver community projects, enrich our environment and create a bright future for all members of the community; making Haslemere and surrounding villages a nicer place to live, work and play.

We aim to work with relevant stakeholders to:

- Ensure that policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the principles of localism are implemented
- Agree upon a development blueprint for the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Ensure stewardship of our natural environment
- Enhance the experience for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users