**Community Nature Connections Grants**
**Guidance for Applicants**

Community Nature Connections is about maintaining our local greenspaces\*, encouraging activities in nature and supporting the groups that look after them. The project includes a budget for small grants to support these aims.

The grants aim to support people and groups across Hastings to come together, to be active in nature and to improve our greenspaces. The grants can be used to fund a variety of things, from equipment, to supporting volunteers, to running activities.

*\*Greenspaces refers all types of the natural environment, including woodland, wetlands and coastal areas*

 We suggest you talk to Community Nature Connections staff before completing this form, orif you would like a more accessible way to apply for this funding.Please contact Lucy or Su at HVA, 01424 444 010.

***How much can I apply for?*** Up to £500 is available for smaller focused projects or activities, and up to £1,000 for ideas with greater impact, ie, reaching larger numbers, or a series of activities.

***Who can apply?*** Grants are open to individuals as well as formal or informal groups, based in Hastings, with an income below £10,000 per year who meet the criteria.

***Projects/activities will need:***

* A clear plan for the funding
* A plan to involve local people, or information about who is already involved
* To keep a record of costs
* To share the story of their project (eg in photos, as a short report or social media)

***The following are examples of the sort of things that could be supported:***

* A gardening project that encourages people to grow their own produce by sharing packs with seeds, basic equipment and guidance on what to do and a Facebook page to share successes and stay in touch.
* A group wants to involve more people by running a series of nature-based creative and wellbeing activities and needs to invest in equipment or pay for workshop facilitators.
* The ‘Friends of’ a local park want to hold an Open Day to attract more volunteers, and want the grant to pay for event insurance, seedlings for a planting activity and gardening equipment.

**We will not fund projects that:**

* Only benefit one individual
* Are focussed on making profits and sharing these profits privately
* Discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, age, or sexual orientation
* Are managed by groups that have had a previous grant which has not been managed satisfactorily
* Are raising funds for works or equipment already committed, bought or completed
* Include unspecified expenditure (e.g. a campaign with flexible funding)
* Activities that have already taken place
* Activities already funded by another organisation
* Overtly or exclusively promote a political agenda
* Overtly or exclusively promote a religious agenda
* Include purchase of alcohol or illegal substances

***Community Nature Connections staff can work with you develop your plan***

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| **Idea** | ***Include in the application*** |
| **What is your group/idea/activity all about?**  | Please provide a couple of sentences to describe what the project or initiative is and its name (if it has one):  |
| **What will you achieve with the grant?** | How does your activity meet the criteria below?* Where will your activity or project be based?
* Is there a clear benefit for your community?
* Is it volunteer led and who is already involved?
* Is there a clear plan for the project?
* What is already in place to support the project idea?
* What else will you need to do or put in place to make your plan work?
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| **What themes will you explore?** | In your opinion, does your activity link to any of the followingThemes?[ ]  Actively engaging with nature[ ]  Caring and taking action for nature[ ]  Appreciating the beauty of nature[ ]  Celebrating the mystery, signs and cycles of nature [ ]  Engaging emotionally with nature[ ]  Other (please state): |
| **Things to consider / include** | * What local assets will support the project?
* How will you spend the funding?
* Identify any training needs, where can these be found?
* What are the short and long term benefits of the activity?

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| **Completion Checklist**Have you included everything? | [ ]  Budget [ ]  Application form |
| **Once approved:**You will be sent an offer / agreement form  | [ ]  Sign the offer / agreement form [ ] Include bank details  [Return to us via email] |
| **Processing payment of the grant**  | The signed agreement will be processed by HVA within 10 days.  |
| **Monitoring and evaluation** | You won’t need to do any formal monitoring, we just need you to keep evidence (e.g. receipts) that the money has been spent. We will organise a catch up with you around 6 weeks after the grant is awarded. |
| **Feedback** is not obligatory; but we would value you sharing your experience with the project, so we can learn from it.  | Your feedback on what was done with the grant is really useful; as well as photos or videos. * What were the successes?
* What were the challenges?
* Any feedback from participants?
* Is continued support needed or is the group able to be volunteer and be community-led.
* Any unexpected outcomes?
* What next?
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