



For immediate release

- **London Wildlife Trust to receive £244,996 in fund to support community volunteering opportunities through UK Government investment. Delivering 'Nature Nurtures' a project in partnership with Spread the Word, Black Girls Hike CIC. & London Youth.**
- **London Wildlife Trust among over 160 organisations across arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth, and heritage sectors to benefit from the £4.6 million Volunteering Futures Fund.**
- **Funding set to increase volunteering opportunities for young people, and people who experience barriers to accessing volunteering, over the next two years.**

Over 160 community organisations, including London Wildlife Trust for the Nature Nurtures project, are set to support 7,800 new volunteering opportunities over the next two years, as the Government has confirmed the beneficiaries of a £4.6 million fund that will level up to access to the benefits of volunteering across the country.

London Wildlife Trust has been awarded £244,996 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports, delivered by Arts Council England for the Nature Nurtures project in London.

Nature Nurtures is a cross-sector consortium project led by London Wildlife Trust with partners Spread the Word, Black Girls Hike CIC, and London Youth. Nature Nurtures will work with young people and our partners to develop a new model for youth volunteering at the Trust, using creative nature writing as an innovative engagement tool. The project will focus on young people from under-represented groups, from Black and Asian and minoritised ethnic heritage, who are not currently accessing volunteering.

By linking natural heritage with creative arts, Nature Nurtures will amplify positive environmental action. The project will increase representation and give young people the opportunity to explore identity and cultural heritage within the context of Natural Heritage. Arts and culture workshops led by Spread the Word will help make environmental issues relevant, personal and tangible.

The project will also increase and create suitable volunteering opportunities for young people aged 16-25 who are currently under-represented in the environmental, creative writing, and arts sectors. They will have the opportunity to attend monthly volunteering sessions and gain new skills in practical nature conservation including 'Lead Volunteer' training at various London Wildlife Trust nature reserves

Via a range of workshops and training opportunities, Nature Nurtures will support young people to connect with their peers, build confidence, and boost physical and mental health. Activities include guided meditation, 'forest bathing,' immersive walks, mentoring, and OCN Level 1 accredited youth

leadership training delivered by Black Girls Hike and London Youth.

The Volunteering Futures Fund was launched last year and will be distributed by Arts Council England. It will break down barriers to volunteering and enable organisations across the arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth, and heritage sectors to continue their valuable work within local communities whilst volunteers enjoy the personal benefits of making a difference.

Those set to benefit most from the funding include young people and people with disabilities. Colleges, local councils, schools, health and wellbeing organisations are also among the recipients of the Fund.

Arts Council England have awarded these organisations in order to respond to demand from a wide range of beneficiaries, such as from those who may be experiencing loneliness or social isolation, to young people in the LGBTQ community, people with learning difficulties and complex needs.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

“As we have seen throughout the pandemic, volunteering offers a wealth of benefits to both the volunteers and the organisations who rely on their help, encouraging acts of generosity, public spirit and neighbourliness.

“The Volunteering Futures Fund will deliver a step-change in connecting those who may be isolated, lonely or experiencing any number of potential barriers to get involved in volunteering.

“I’m delighted that more than 160 organisations will now benefit from £4.6 million in Government funding to enhance collaboration between local councils, the public sector, and civil society.”

The £4.6 million UK Government funding is being awarded and distributed via Arts Council England. Grants of £100,000 or more have been awarded following an Arts Council competitive process launched in November 2021. There are 19 lead organisations that will work with more than 160 partner organisations to deliver volunteering opportunities at a local level across England.

An additional £2.2 million has been distributed by Pears Foundation and NHS Charities Together.

Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England said:

“There’s an abundance of evidence to show that volunteering can be a key factor in helping people lead happier lives.

“This new investment will enrich villages, towns and cities across England, increasing health and well-being and decreasing loneliness and isolation.”

Leah McNally, Director of Learning, Youth & Communities at London Wildlife Trust said:

“We are really excited to be working with partners Spread the Word, Black Girls Hike and London Youth to develop a new model for youth volunteering at London Wildlife Trust. We will be delivering innovative nature-themed creative writing workshops, youth leadership and volunteer management training to get a wider range of creative young people involved in taking action for nature in London.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

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- The first round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched in September 2021 when DCMS ran a competition for matched funders [here](#).
- The second round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched by Arts Council England in November 2021 [here](#).

About London Wildlife Trust

Founded in 1981, London Wildlife Trust is dedicated to protecting and conserving the capital's wildlife
wildlondon.org.uk

@WildLondon

London Wildlife Trust is dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of London's wildlife and engaging London's diverse communities in nature through our nature reserves, education, volunteering and campaigning. Our vision is a London alive with nature, where everyone values and takes action for wildlife.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Funds. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19.