

Committee: High Weald AONB Management Board

Date: 20 June 2018

Title of Report: Landscape Enhancement Programme Grant Awards

By: AONB Business Manager

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- i. ratify the Sussex Lund Panel's grant award decisions listed in Appendix 3;
 - ii. note the application to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 One of the objectives of the Partnership's Landscape Enhancement Programme is to enable non-government bodies to support landscape conservation and enhancement projects across the AONB.
- 1.2 The Partnership is now in its second year of administering Sussex Lund and is continuing to explore how the National Grid's Visual Impact Provision - Landscape Enhancement Initiative (VIP-LEI) can deliver AONB objectives following the successful application for the *Beautiful Boundaries* project.
- 1.3 Both schemes involve grants, to be administered by the AONB Partnership, for site-specific landscape enhancement works.
- 1.4 This report sets out proposed Sussex Lund grant awards for endorsement by the Management Board, prior to grant offers awards being made by East Sussex County Council on behalf of the Partnership.
- 1.5 It also provides information on two applications that have recently been made to National Grid's VIP-LEI.

2.0 Sussex Lund

Scheme purpose

- 2.1 Sussex Lund has been established by Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin to improve the present day landscape of the High Weald AONB by making contributions to small, practical projects that have immediate effect and inspire wider change.

Grant applications 2018

- 2.2 The AONB Partnership received 48 applications (10 more than 2017) to Sussex Lund with a total grant request of £305,647.
- 2.3 We received applications from: 17 private individuals (landowners and farmers); 14 charities; 5 community groups; 5 parish/town councils; 2 community interest companies; 3 other non-profit organizations; and 1 school.
- 2.4 Forty-two projects are in the AONB with 6 just outside the boundary. A project location map is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.5 Of the applications, 9 focus on woodland, 8 on hedges, 6 on wetland, 6 on access, 5 on amenity, 5 on grassland, 3 on heathland and 6 on a mixture of activities.
- 2.6 Twelve of this year's applicants have applied before.

Assessment process

- 2.7 AONB Unit staff assessed the grant applications, scoring each against agreed criteria and producing a summary report for each. An example is attached as Appendix 2. Recommended grants/conditions were provided for consideration by the Sussex Lund Grant Panel.
- 2.8 The Sussex Lund Grant Panel, which included JAC Chair Sylvia Tidy and AONB Director Jason Lavender, met on 7 June. The Panel's decisions are attached as Appendix 3.

Recommendations

- 2.9 The Sussex Lund Grant Panel supported 39 applications with grant awards ranging from £723 to £10,000. The total grant award is £176,456.
 - 2.10 All of the supported projects have demonstrated that they have a public benefit. Projects on private land can all be appreciated from nearby lanes or rights of way.
- 3.0 National Grid's Visual Impact Provision - Landscape Enhancement Initiative**

Scheme purpose

- 3.1 National Grid's Visual Impact Provision - Landscape Enhancement Initiative (VIP-LEI) aims to reduce the visual impact of National Grid's existing infrastructure and improve the related visual quality of the landscape.

- 3.2 In 2017 the Partnership secured a grant of £199,860 under the Scheme for the *Beautiful Boundaries* project. The project is now in delivery and the Partnership's land management project officers have developed two more projects: *Beautiful Boundaries 2* and *Wonderful Woodlands*.

Beautiful Boundaries 2

- 3.3 The project has been developed with 10 landowners and farmers on 10 land holdings. A project location map is attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.4 Works will focus on: new hedges (planting and fencing); hedge restoration (coppicing, gapping up and fencing); planting new hedgerows trees and shaws; and managing woodland margins.
- 3.5 A contribution of £164,612 from the National Grid Scheme has been requested, 75% of the total project cost of £219,482. If the application is successful 15% of the grant will be used for scheme administration and promotion and 85% of the grant will be allocated to grant awards ranging from £4,404 to £28,808 for delivery of the capital works. The indicative grant awards are attached as Appendix 5.

Wonderful Woodlands

- 3.6 The project has been developed by the AONB Unit working in partnership with three landowners, the RSPB, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission. A project location map is attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.7 The project will create and enhance rides, glades and ponds within 106 hectares of woodland directly affected by the National Grid's transmission line.
- 3.8 A contribution of £101,771 from the National Grid Scheme has been requested, 75% of the total project cost of £135,695. If the application is successful, 13% of the grant will be used for scheme administration and promotion and 87% of the grant will be allocated to grant awards for delivery of the capital works. The indicative grant awards, which range from £4,763 to £63,784, are attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.9 The applications are currently being scrutinised by a Grants Officer and Landscape Assessor with a decision by the National Grid's VIP-LEI Panel expected at the end of June. If approved the application will have scrutiny and approval by OFGEM and the final outcome is expected in January 2019.

4.0 Risks

Sussex Lund

- 4.1 A small number of grants may be paid in advance to community organisations to help their cash flow. There is a small risk that the works won't be

completed or will not be delivered as agreed in the grant offer and the grant will have to be reimbursed or reclaimed.

- 4.2 To manage the risk the grant terms and conditions will make the circumstances under which the grant will need to be reimbursed/reclaimed clear.

National Grid's Visual Impact Provision - Landscape Enhancement Initiative

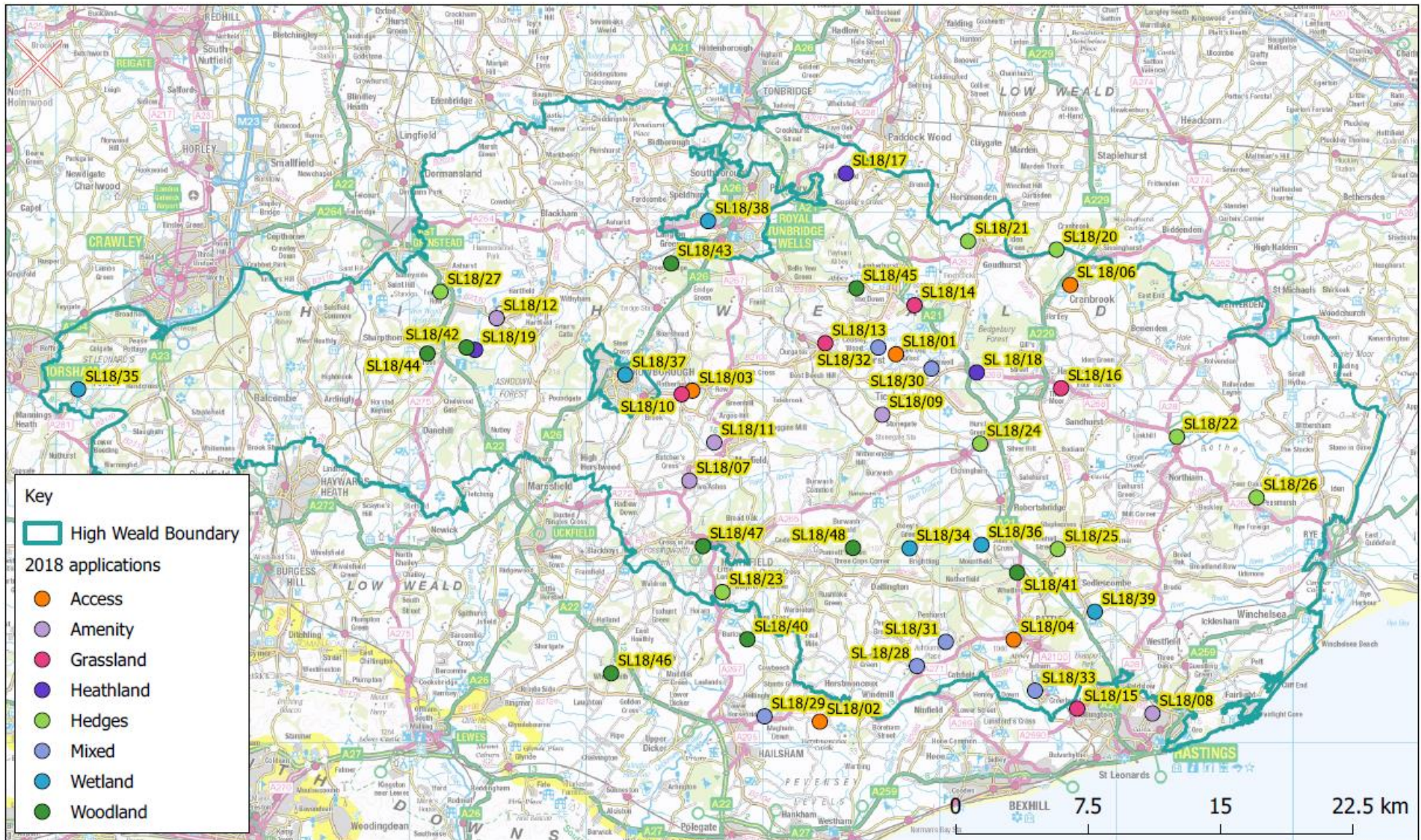
- 4.4 There is a risk that the landowners may want to change their projects, or drop out of the Scheme, at any point.
- 4.5 To manage this risk there is an agreement with National Grid that minor changes can be made to the individual projects. If a landowner were to drop out of the Scheme there are other landowners with similar projects who could be involved instead, ensuring grant award targets are met.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

- 5.1 The grant awards will enable a range of individuals and organisations to undertake works that will conserve and enhance the AONB and deliver management plan objectives.
- 5.2 The Management Board are recommended to:
- ratify the Sussex Lund Panel's recommended grant awards and associated conditions listed in Appendix 3;
 - note the applications to the National Grid's VIP-LEI.

Contact: Gerry Sherwin, AONB Business Manager, g.sherwin@highweald.org

Appendix 1 – Sussex Lund Application Locations 2018



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Appendix 2

Project	Church Farm hedgelaying and coppicing		Reference no	SL18/22
Applicant	Private Landowners	Applicant type	Hedges	
Location	Newenden, Kent	High Weald	Yes	
Request	£2100	Recommendation	£2100	
Summary	Hedge-laying 140 metres of a hedge adjacent to a footpath and around two sides of a large garden that extends into surrounding fields.			
Assessor's comments	<p>Positives: This is a straight forward and well thought out project in a fairly prominent public location and it should do much to promote hedgerow management to residents and visitors using the local footpaths. It also has the potential to show how garden boundaries adjacent to a farmed landscape can be conserved and managed to complement the neighbouring landscape. Concerns: None.</p>			
Suggested conditions & support	<p>No conditions. Further support: Provide links to best practice guidance in hedge management and offer applicant hedge management information board.</p>			
Project (in applicant's own words)	<p><i>"We would like to have traditional hedgelaying and coppicing carried out on two sides of our land, as indicated on the attached maps. One section of the hedging runs immediately adjacent to a public footpath from the church to the current burial ground (the churchyard surrounding the church is no longer used for burials) and on to Frogs Hill and is heavily used by villagers and visitors. The other section is immediately adjacent to a field and unofficial path used mainly by villagers.</i></p> <p><i>The hedges are currently unkempt and too sparse in places to act as effective stock boundaries and wildlife corridors. We believe that hedge laying and ongoing maintenance and planting will, in the long term, improve their effectiveness in both these roles and also make them more aesthetically pleasing.</i></p> <p><i>Overall, we believe this will improve the landscape of this part of the High Weald, in a village which is experiencing increasing numbers of visitors. It will also improve the view of the residents of four houses in Beech Road (other than our own), which back on to the fields that are edged by the hedges".</i></p>			
Evidence of need	<p>Photographs show 140m of hedgerow that's overgrown with gaps and it would benefit greatly from laying and gapping-up. The project would re-vitalize the hedgerow making it stock-proof with much 'thicker' growth and will create a better wildlife corridor and link different habitats – small woodland, grassland/hedge margins. In addition, it would re-instate an historic field boundary.</p>			
Previous experience	<p>The applicants have 12 years of experience running a smallholding and managing land-based contractors. They have also sought advice on this project from an accredited member of the National Hedgelaying Society.</p>			

Maintenance/ Sustainability	The applicants will fund: the fencing to protect the hedge after it has been laid; the on-going maintenance of the hedgerow; and plant-up gaps if and when needed in the future. Once the hedge was been fully re-established, they plan to remove the fencing and use the hedge as a stock proof field boundary.		
Cost breakdown	Capital works	Laying 140m at £15/metre including stakes and binders	£2100
	Total		£2100
Inspiring wider change	The applicant is keen to write an article publicising the project for Newenden Parish magazine, the village website and for Sussex Lund and the High Weald partnership to use. A section of the hedge runs along a popular public footpath used by residents and visitors. The applicants have regular visitors from UK and overseas to the site – they host Workaway volunteers and artist events throughout the year, and they have a small holiday let.		

Images

This section of the hedge runs along a public footpath



The red lines show the hedges to be restored



Appendix 3

Sussex Lund 2018 - Recommended Grant Awards

Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/40	Woodland	Community group	Sacred Earth Community Benefit Society	Planting of hazel cobnut trees and hazel whips to increase Dormouse habitat; haloing of oak standards to improve tree health.
SL18/41	Woodland	Private individual	Private Landowner	Non-native species removal and bracken control within a 5ha wood including improvements to site entrance for more frequent and easier extraction of timber.
SL18/42	Woodland	Other non-profit	The Conservators of Ashdown Forest	Management of a volunteer group and access improvements to 12 acres of recently purchased woodland adjacent to the Forest Centre.
SL18/43	Woodland	Private individual	Private Landowners	Training and tools to build capacity for self-management of a 5 acre woodland; planting and protection of a new hedge and hazel copse.
SL18/44	Woodland	Charity	London Youth	Installation of deer exclosures to accelerate woodland establishment following rhododendron removal.
SL18/45	Woodland	Parish/town council	Lamberhurst Parish Council	Equipment to enable volunteer management of community greenspace; bracken management within a woodland glade.
SL18/46	Woodland	Community Interest Company	Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC	12 conservation events involving: tree thinning, planting and coppicing activities, bird hide and habitat box building and woody dam creation; working with local families and children with extensive special needs.

Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/47	Woodland	Community group	Cross in Hand Amenities Society	Removal and follow-up treatment of invasive species, <i>rhododendron ponticum</i> , from a community woodland.
SL18/48	Woodland	Private individual	Dallington Land Project	Specialist tree management and invertebrate surveys of an ancient woodland site with a significant population of ancient trees.
SL18/37	Wetland	Parish/town council	Crowborough Town Council	Creation of a pond and dipping platform within Crowborough's new pocket park.
SL18/38	Wetland	Non-profit	Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators	Creation of a pond adjacent to Bulls Hollow rocks, enabling implementation of management plan recommendations for the Common.
SL18/39	Wetland	Charity	Pestalozzi International Village Trust	Volunteer removal of rhododendron from a derelict pond with desilting to recreate an island.
SL18/34	Wetland	Private individual	Private Landowner	Restoration of a pond within the walled garden of Brightling Park, a Humprey Repton influenced landscape.
SL18/35	Wetland	Charity	The Arun and Rother Rivers Trust	A citizens survey project in the upper reaches of the Arun; with a particular focus on identifying projects to benefit river habitat.
SL18/36	Wetland	Private individual	Private Landowner	Coppicing around and dredging six ponds, planting a new 160 metre hedge, and gapping up 220 metres of hedgerows on the farm.
SL18/20	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Laying and gapping-up of 63 metres of a historic hedgerow alongside a well-used footpath with coppicing of adjacent copse.
SL18/21	Hedges	Private individual	CE & WS Millson	Hedge-laying and chainsaw training to allow the owners to manage the farm hedges and coppice some trees around a pond.
SL18/22	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowners	Hedge-laying 140 metres of a hedge adjacent to a footpath and around two sides of a large garden that extends into surrounding fields.

Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/23	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Laying and planting 220 metres of hedgerow along an historic routeway used as a public road.
SL18/25	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Hedge-laying of 200 metres of historic boundary alongside a rural lane and re-instatement, through planting, of 120 metres of a remnant hedgerow alongside a public footpath.
SL18/26	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Hedge-laying and gapping up of 150 metres of a historic boundary running alongside a wood and rural lane.
SL18/27	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Planting of a 129 metre hedge along a new boundary and semi-improved grassland close to the Forest Way.
SL18/24	Hedges	Private individual	Private Landowner	Planting 55 standard trees, and 70 metres of hedge alongside a footpath, within a woodland.
SL18/17	Heathland	Charity	Kent Wildlife Trust	Creation of underground (and vandal proof) water storage to ensure continued grazing of heathland within a popular local wildlife site.
SL18/18	Heathland	Charity	Species Recovery Trust	Surveying, management and monitoring of a rare species, Heath Lobelia, in a woodland site undergoing development and restoration.
SL18/19	Heathland	Non-profit	The Conservators of Ashdown Forest	Equipment to make it easier, and less costly, to transport cattle essential to the grazing, and therefore health, of Ashdown Forest's heath and the species-rich grassland at Wakehurst Place.
SL18/12	Grassland	Charity	PCC of Holy Trinity Coleman's Hatch	Creation of 800m ² of wildflower meadow using turf and seed as part of a bigger project to restore a botanically-rich churchyard and create a wildlife-friendly graveyard extension in the adjacent field.
SL18/13	Grassland	Parish/town council	Wadhurst Parish Council, Wadhurst Community Gardeners	Installation of traditional cobbles around a vulnerable grassland road island and management of the grassland for wildlife.

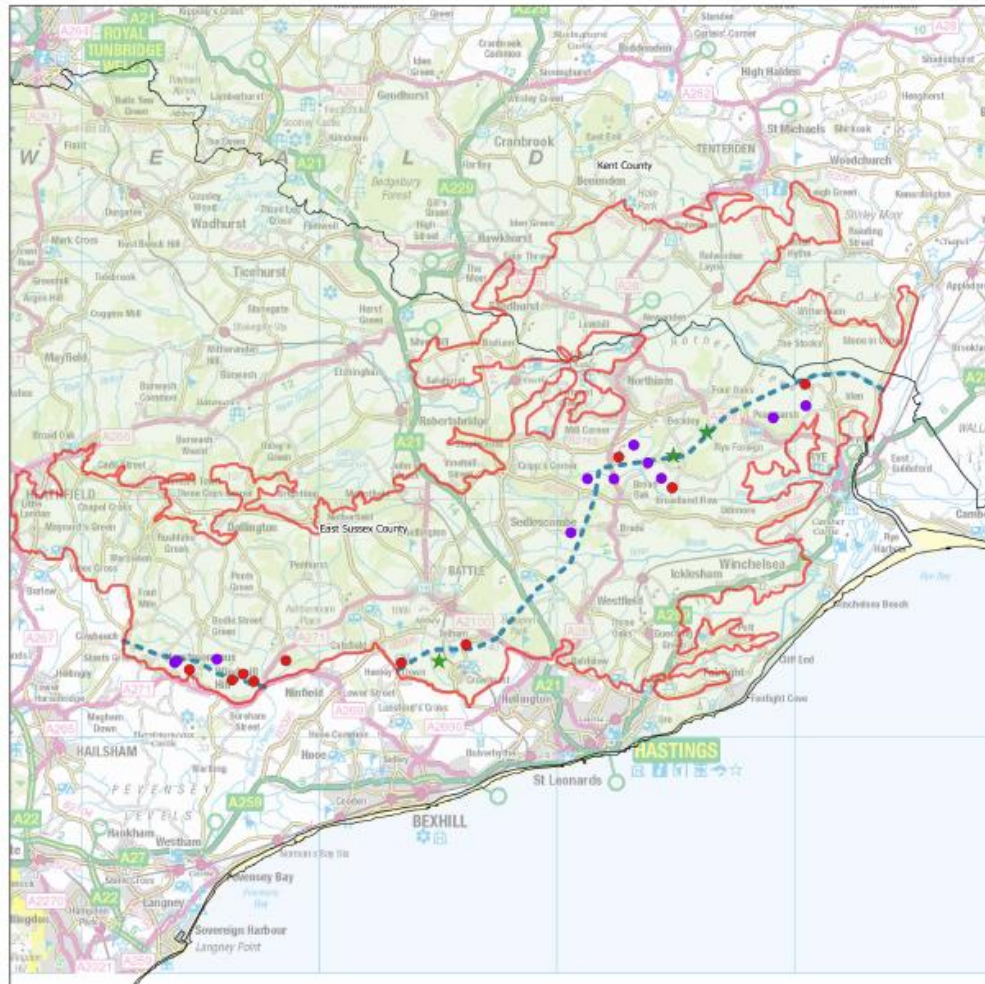
Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/14	Grassland	Charity	National Trust - Scotney Castle	Equipment and training to build volunteer capacity to manage more inaccessible and smaller areas of species-rich grassland, primarily river meanders.
SL18/15	Grassland	Charity	Sussex Wildlife Trust	Equipment to build volunteer capacity to manage species-rich grassland within a 44 hectare reserve on the edge of Hastings.
SL18/16	Grassland	Charity	Hands of Hope Charity	Habitat surveys of the natural environment and wildflower plug planting around a new food-focused community hub being developed within a derelict walled garden.
SL18/07	Amenity	Charity	Five Ashes Village Hall and Memorial Playing Field Committee	Planting of 21 standard native trees and shrubs to increase diversity around the recreation ground and provide a tree identification tool for the local community, including the primary school.
SL18/08	Amenity	Charity	Education Futures Trust	Creation of a 'secret garden' as the first stage of an ambitious project to restore The Firs, a semi-derelict site within Hastings, to a therapeutic and outdoor learning facility.
SL18/09	Amenity	School	Stonegate Cof E Primary School	Replacement of existing playground equipment with new equipment made from recycled rubber, and wildlife-friendly planting around the playground boundary.
SL18/10	Amenity	Parish/town council	Rotherfield Parish Council	Installation of a new access gate and two oak benches to enable access to and appreciation of the cemetery; creation of a compost area to enable a more wildlife-friendly cutting regime.
SL18/11	Amenity	Private individual	The Pages Farm Partnership	Removal of 30 large conifer trees, predominately Scots Pine; installation of 30 metres of post and rail fence around the pond adjacent to the footpath; skip hire for rubbish removal.

Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/01	Access	Community group	Friends of Bewl Water Bird Hide	Community refurbishment of a popular bird hide which overlooks the wildlife sanctuary at Bewl Water reservoir.
SL18/02	Access	Community group	Vitality Villages	Tools and materials for replacing five traditional step-over stiles with oak ladder stiles, working in partnership with the local 'Men's Shed'.
SL18/03	Access	Charity	Rotherfield Millenium Green Trust	Resurfacing of 120 metres of boardwalk in the village's Millennium Green to prevent people slipping over.
SL18/04	Access	Parish/town council	Battle Town Council	Surfacing of a well-used path through a woodland shaw and piloting of a new cutting regime for adjacent amenity grassland to develop greater habitat diversity.
SL18/05	Access	Community group	Groombridge Sports Ground Association (GSGA)	Surfacing of 707 square metres of Tanyard sports ground car park which is heavily used by visitors to access the Forest Way cycleway and other paths; hedgerow planting to screen parked cars from the wider landscape.
SL18/06	Access	Other non-profit	Kent High Weald Partnership	Access improvements to a town nature reserve involving 60 metres of boardwalk improvements, new steps and two benches made from locally sourced timber.
SL18/28	Mixed	Charity	Ashburnham Christian Trust	Surfacing of 200m of lakeside path to enable year round access and the purchase of 4 'moveable walls' to enable large scale compost management.
SL18/29	Mixed	Community Interest Company	EU ECOHUB CUC	Creation of stone pathways, an orchard and wildflower beds; annual maintenance of grassland and new planting.
SL18/31	Mixed	Private individual	Private Landowner	Purchase of charcoal burning equipment to allow production and sale of high quality charcoal; repairs to the leaking bank of a woodland pond.

Reference	Category	Applicant type	Organization	Project summary
SL18/32	Mixed	Private individual	Private Landowner	Regrading of 130 metres of access track and creation of hard standing for woodland management purposes; 65 metres of hedge-laying along the site boundary.
SL18/33	Mixed	Charity	RSPB	Tools and training for conservation interns and volunteers, and information panels and way marking posts to improve the visitor experience.
SL18/30	Mixed	Private individual	Rivendell Hideaway Ltd	Planting a new woodland to replace a woodland lost since the 1960s, creating a wildflower meadow, and planting a new hedgerow.
TOTAL				

Appendix 4

Project Locations - Beautiful Boundaries 2 and Wonderful Woodlands



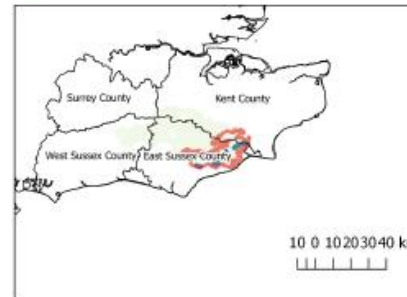
National Grid Visual Impact Provision
Landscape Enhancement Initiative



High Weald AONB Partnership LEI Schemes

Key

- High Weald AONB
- Viewshed boundary
- National Grid transmission line
- LEI Beautiful Boundaries 1
- LEI Beautiful Boundaries 2
- LEI Wonderful Woodlands



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Appendix 5

National Grid's VIP Landscape Enhancement Initiative – Indicative Grant Awards

Beautiful Boundaries

Owner	Farm	Project cost	Landowner @25%	Grant award @ 75%
Andrew Ward-Smith	Gardners Farm	£31,050	£7,762	£23,287
Andy Dyer	Telham Field	£15,201	£3,800	£11,401
Annie Latter	Brick Farm Lakes	£16,911	£4,228	£12,683
Christina Regendanz	Corkwood Farm	£11,235	£2,809	£8,426
Frank Langrish	Ludley Farm	£38,411	£9,603	£28,808
Fred Akehurst	Hockham Farm	£25,481	£6,370	£19,111
Jamie Ward-Smith	Parkes Farm	£15,132	£3,783	£11,349
John Barratt	Little Doucegrove	£7,285	£1,821	£5,464
Monty Worssum	Kitchenham Farm	£5,871	£1,468	£4,404
Tony Smith	Brownbread Sanctuary	£20,130	£5,032	£15,097
Total		£186,707	£46,677	£140,030

Wonderful Woodlands

Owner	Site	Project cost	Landowner @ 25%	Grant award @ 75%
RSPB	Fore Wood	£85,045	£21,261	£63,784
Woodland Trust	Flatropers Wood	£6,350	£1,588	£4,763
Forestry Commission	Garland Wood	£26,600	£6,650	£19,950
		£117,995	£29,499	£88,496