

Checklist for applicants and grantees for the 2026-7 Nature Park grant

This checklist is an **optional** tool that might help you manage your funded project. You do not need to send this in to us – it is only for your use. We strongly encourage you to use this checklist to ensure you are able to spend the whole of your grant in good time. If you have a printed version of this checklist, you can find an online version with all the website links at this QR code:



If you have questions, check the [FAQs](#) first, and send additional questions to natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk

Key dates for the grants programme

These dates are not flexible. Applications are reviewed and grants awarded on a rolling basis, so the sooner you apply, the longer you will have to spend the grant. Any portion of the grant not spent by 30 April 2027 must be returned.

Date	Stage	Relevant checklist sections
Monday 14 September 2026	Application opens	1-3 before you apply, then 4
11 November 2026	Last date to accept your grant offer if you want to be paid before Christmas. We suggest submitting your application no later than 3 November.	
Midday Thursday 11 February 2027	Latest date when applications will close – this may happen earlier, so early application is strongly recommended.	5 & 6
30 April 2027	Expenditure deadline	7
30 April 2027	Expenditure reporting deadline	7

Key to timescale advice

- This task probably only takes a few minutes
- This task may take one or more hours
- This task may take longer to complete eg because it involves getting input from stakeholders (children, SLT, contractors, finance colleagues)

Anything marked as **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT** must be done before you fill in the grant application.

1. Prepare for your project by starting your Nature Park journey

An **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT** is something that you must do before filling in the grant application. You will have to confirm in the application that you have done them.

Complete?	Task	Notes
Eg 5/10/26	Eg Registered on grants portal	Eg Headteacher has also registered
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Register for Nature Park. At least one teacher at your setting must be registered. https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Involve your young people in Nature Park activities. As the National Education Nature Park goal is for all young people to develop a connection to nature, the Nature Park 5 step process supports you to do this https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/how-it-works	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Create your site boundary it only takes a few minutes if you use a mouse and computer https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/site-boundary Take a screenshot of it – you will need to upload this to your grant application form	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Involve your learners in mapping your habitats https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/mapping-your-site Take a screenshot of it – you will need to upload this to your grant application form	
	● Read Success Stories from previous grant schools https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/success-stories	
	● Sign up to Nature Park webinars https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/news	

2. Plan your Nature Park grant project

Complete?	Task	Notes
	Use the Nature Park 5-step process to: 1. Get to know your space 2. Identify opportunities 3. Make decisions https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/how-it-works	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Plan a project that meets grant eligibility requirements, will add biodiversity to your site and enable your learners to monitor and measure it. You will need to explain this in the application form	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Check any planning permissions that need to be secured for your site	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Complete necessary risk assessments	
	● Find help and local expertise Find the contractors you will use and get quotes https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/finding-local-help Remember labour costs can be no more than £2,000 of your grant, so you should ask for labour and materials costs to be separated in quotes and invoices. Your regional Nature Park team can advise on your project and embedding it within the curriculum	
	● Check if all items you want to buy are eligible in the FAQ. If you still have questions after checking the list, contact natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk	
	● If you are going to carry out disruptive works on your site, check whether there is a school holiday that will enable you to do this. The grant expenditure deadline is 30 April 2027, and this can not be extended to after the summer holidays	

3. Prepare for your grant application

You should apply for the grant as soon as possible. Applications will close on Wednesday 11 February at the latest, but may close earlier.

It may take 6 weeks to receive payment and it must be spent by 30 April 2027.

Complete?	Task	Notes
	● Read the grant FAQs and the is it eligible? resource 	
	● Watch the grant webinar. This can be found in the FAQs	
	● Inform relevant stakeholders (eg learners, SLT, school governors) that you will be applying for the grant	
	● Contact natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk to tell the grants team who the lead contact will be for your application. This person will be sent the application form link. You won't be able to access the application form without this link	
	● Register on grant application portal. The grant portal is separate from the main Nature Park website and you will need to register for both to be able to access everything you need https://rhs.flexigrant.com	
	● Check your emails for the link to the grant application form. The direct link will be sent to the person you told us will be applying. You won't be able to see the application form in the portal unless you have followed the link we email you. If you can't find the email, contact natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk	
	● Use the Nature Park activity Write a vision statement with your young people. You may want to use this to create a project name which we will ask for in the application form	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Take a photo of the area(s) where you will spend the grant. You will need to upload this to the application form	
	● ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT Get a clear image of a bank document from the last 3 months showing the account name, account number and sort code. This can be for any relevant business account that you want the	

	grant paid into eg the school, local authority, diocese or multi-academy trust	
--	--	--

4. While applying for the grant

Complete?	Task	Notes
	● Take note of any Participants you invite to edit or sign off the application. They will need to complete their task in the portal before you can submit	
	● Only apply for the amount you know you can spend by the expenditure deadline 30 April 2027. Anything unspent after this date will have to be returned to us	

5. After applying for the grant

It may take 6 weeks to receive payment after you have accepted your grant agreement and the funds must be spent by 30 April 2027 or returned to us.

Complete?	Task	Notes
	● Find out who needs to see the grant agreement before you sign it off e.g. headteacher, multi-academy trust senior management etc. The agreement includes detailed terms & conditions and should be read carefully	
	● Look out for the email with the grant agreement and complete this – this has to be agreed before the payment is released.	
	● Inform the account holder of the grant amount and payment reference you put in your application form so they can look out for the payment and tell you when it arrives. Funds should arrive between 2 and 6 weeks after you have made your grant agreement	
	● Carry out any due diligence your parent organisation requires e.g. when choosing suppliers and contractors	
	● To avoid delays, add any new suppliers to your payments system while waiting for the grant payment	
	● Carry out any risk assessments needed for your project	
	Continue to follow the Nature Park 5-step process. Once you have received funds, you will be at step 4: Making change happen and can start step 5: Recording change https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/how-it-works	

6. While carrying out your project

Complete?	Task	Notes
	● If you would like to, take photos of your progress. If you are going to share photos of identifiable young people, fill in the release form before sharing them	
	● If you would like to, take “after” photos. If you are going to share photos of identifiable young people, fill in the release form before sharing them	
	● Keep all receipts and invoices. These must be kept until 30 September 2033 according to the grant agreement	
	● Record all expenditure. You may want to use the Expenditure record below	
	● Find out if your school or trust pause purchases and payments at certain times eg at the end of the financial year.	
	● If you are not exclusively an EYFS setting, keep using the Habitat Mapper tool, working through all eight habitat types https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/habitat-mapping-a-nature-park-guide	
	● For all settings, once you have completed your project, add it to the Nature Park map using the Tracking Change tool https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/resource/tracking-changes-your-site	
	● Consider this free online Nature Park course for the person who manages your site: Managing Schools for Biodiversity	

7. Reporting on your grant

Spend the grant and collect all receipts and invoices by the deadline 30 April 2027.

Complete?	Task	Notes
	● Find the reporting forms in the portal - Go to https://rhs.flexigrant.com/applications.aspx - Select the Reporting button - Find the report in the table - On the right side of the table, select the 3 dots and Complete Form	

	● If someone else is going to fill in your expenditure reports, have them register on https://rhs.flexigrant.com and then have them assigned to your grant by emailing natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk	
	● As part of your Annex G(ii) expenditure report, the “auditor” must sign off your expenditure. Your headteacher may have delegated authority to do this. See https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening/national-education-nature-park/grants/information-for-auditors	
	● If we have asked you to also fill in the expenditure audit reporting form, submit this by the deadline of 30 April. If you have been chosen for an audit, you can find this in the Application Portal from November.	
	● Email natureparkgrants@rhs.org.uk with the amount of any underspend to get instructions on returning this	

Expenditure record template

The expenditure deadline and the expenditure reporting deadline is 30 April 2027. Your project can carry on after this date, but you must have all receipts and invoices ready for reporting no later than 30 April 2027.

The spreadsheet below may help you keep track of the information you will need to include in your expenditure report due 30 April 2027 and the expenditure audit that some schools will be asked to fill in.

Note: you can change what you spend your grant on from your original application as long as you don’t go over the expenditure limits for the categories with limits. You don’t need to change your application – you will report these changes in the expenditure reports at the end of the project.

If you have a printed version of this checklist, you can find an online version with all the website links and the spreadsheet here:



Double click the table below to edit.

To add rows, right click on a row and select **Insert...** and **Entire row**.

Biodiversity enhancement		Supplier	Item
No expenditure limit for materials		Eg Smiths Garden Centre	200 ltr water butt
Total for Biodiversity enhancements			
Fieldwork equipment		Supplier	Item
£1000 expenditure limit			
Total for Fieldwork equipment			
Gardening resources		Supplier	Item
£1000 expenditure limit			
Total for Gardening resources			