**NATURAL NEIGHBOURS**

**EVALUATION BRIEF**

**Call for Expressions of Interest**

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust are looking for expressions of interest to carry out an evaluation of the Natural Neighbours project.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**Natural Neighbours is a partnership project, delivered by Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust working with community partners in Rotherham (including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council RMBC, Clifton Learning Partnership CLP, Kimberworth Park Community Partnership and Friends of Boston Castle).Working in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the town, we are challenging the problems of lack of community pride and trust, segregated and non-cohesive communities, misuse of greenspace, deprivation and disconnection from nature. All of these problems have been exacerbated by the recent child sexual exploitation events and the media attention which followed.

Working with the communities living around four parks (Sandhill Park, Winterhills, Boston Park and Eldon Road Recreation Ground), the aim of the project is to **put greenspace back at the heart of the community.** This will be achieved by improving confidence, challenging perceptions, building more positive behaviour, making green spaces busy, establishing volunteer groups and improving access. The benefits of this will be improved wellbeing, community cohesion, skills/training, physical activity, better greenspaces and improved community ownership and trust.

The difference this project will make (outcomes) are:
1. Local pride will be improved which will lead to more positive attitudes and increased community cohesion
2. Local people will gain skills to take ownership of their local community greenspaces
3. People will have improved health and wellbeing through taking part in more physical activity throughout the project
4. Access to local greenspace is improved so that more people can enjoy more biodiverse and healthier urban environment

Project staff will be collecting evidence that outcomes have been achieved in line with Big Lottery guidance. Evidence collected will be against agreed indicators as follows:

OUTCOME 1:
Local people take part in volunteering days
Local people feel more positive about their community/neighbourhood
Increased positive stories in media

OUTCOME 2:
Local people learn new skills
Local people complete certificated training
Local people use their new skills to take ownership of local sites/greenspaces

OUTCOME 3:
Local people take part in physical activity
Participants say they feel good at the end of a session
Participants say they are doing more physical activity than before they got involved in the project

OUTCOME 4:
Access routes, signage and information are improved
Children feel safer in local parks/greenspaces
Increased use of greenspaces

This project is funded over five years by Big Lottery Reaching Communities.

**SCOPE**

This brief is to measure the success of the Natural Neighbours project by evaluating whether the outcomes above are achieved.

This brief is for an independent evaluation which will add to the measures described above. We are seeking a qualitative and participative evaluation approach which will assess the impact of our project and evidence how effective the overall project has been. The evaluation should also review project sustainability: establishing evidence that the project or project impact will be sustained beyond the Big Lottery funding timescale.

We are aiming to achieve three levels of engagement and we would like to evaluate project impact at each of these levels:

Qualitative evaluation approaches will need to provide evidence at each of these levels of engagement – showing how the project has put greenspace back at the heart of the community by changing perceptions, engaging local people and inspiring action.

We would anticipate that the evaluation approach would include case studies to evidence best practice and achievements within the project. Whilst there will, of course, be a critical element to the evaluation, it is important that it celebrates individual and project success and provides a tangible output (report, film etc) which can be shared within the community and presented to individual participants.

We are particularly interested to explore approaches which enable the participation of a wide range of local people (e.g. through social media, focus groups, interviews etc) and present qualitative and personal accounts (not just ‘number crunching’). Whilst questionnaires have their place, they are not accessible to all and we are looking for new approaches which will be accessible to all including people for whom English is a second language and young children. We are especially keen to hear ‘people’s’ stories and understand how our interventions can be effective to most positively impact on the four outcome areas and the 3 levels of engagement.

**SPECIFICATION**

The independent evaluation will include:

* Advising project staff about appropriate questions/measures to effectively evaluate the success indicators (in line with Big Lottery guidance and original application)
* Agreeing an evaluation timetable
* Supporting project staff and volunteers to collect appropriate feedback and monitoring data
* Setting up new methods of data collection
* Interpreting all evaluation data
* Producing interim/summary reports on an annual basis
* Producing a well-designed, tangible evaluation output (e.g. photo album/film) which celebrates project success
* Producing a well-designed and accessible report which summarises project strengths/successes and challenges and makes recommendations for the future (to be aimed at future funders and stakeholders)
* Presenting an evaluation summary at a project celebration event in the final quarter of the project (Jan-Mar 2022)
* Presenting more detailed/critical feedback to the project steering group if required

The contractor will be required to provide regular updates to the Project Manager. Excellent communication will be required at all times. Any delays should be reported promptly.

**The total contract is for £20,000 inclusive of travel costs. It is expected that this will be spread across the remainder of the project (4 years), weighted towards the final 12 months when the report will be produced and with initial upfront support to ensure the evaluation process for data collection and feedback is thoroughly incorporated into the programme from the beginning.**

**Interested?**

If you are interested in this work please send an Expression of Interest to Owen Hodgkinson o.hodgkinson@wildsheffield.com by **12 noon on** **18th January 2019** Please include the following:

* An organisation/individual overview including contact details
* A short summary outlining your previous experience in carrying out similar pieces of work.
* A summary outlining why you feel you would be best placed to deliver this work in line with the specification above.
* A breakdown of costs and projected spend across the project years.
* An outline timetable of how you propose to carry out the work.
* Any references that can be contacted in relation to current work being carried out or recent successful work relevant to the above.

The selection process will be based on:

* Level of experience
* Value for money
* Availability and commitment to deliver within the timescales
* Further information via telephone if required
* Follow up with references

Please clearly mark your email as ‘Expression of Interest’.

If successful, we will require a contractual agreement that includes GDPR and confidentiality.