

GSA BIOSPHERE & AYRSHIRE TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME

SOUTH AYRSHIRE PILOT

TREE PLANTING GRANT INFORMATION

This pilot project is funded by the South Ayrshire Council and is administered by the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere (GSAB).

The purpose of these grants is to encourage the planting of individual or small groups of trees, which add landscape and biodiversity value to the South Ayrshire countryside for the benefit of people, communities and wildlife. We are losing trees to disease and old age and we wish to encourage people to plant more trees. Applications are invited from residents of South Ayrshire within the GSA Biosphere before **March 15, 2024**.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The grant is open to any individual or organisation who wishes to plant an area of land smaller than a quarter of a hectare with native trees to enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the GSA Biosphere in South Ayrshire. Please note that hedges are not eligible.

WHAT ABOUT FUNDING?

Grants are available to two types of applicants:

- For private applicants (farmers, landowners and individuals): Up to 100% of material costs (excluding VAT if reclaimable).
- For not-for-profit organisations (schools, community groups): Up to 100% of materials, labour costs and site preparation (excluding VAT if reclaimable).

The maximum grant available is £1,000 per applicant per year.

WHERE CAN I APPLY?

The application process is online and forms can be downloaded from the following websites:

GSA Biosphere:

<https://www.gsabiosphere.org.uk/natureandwildlife/biosphere-ayrshire-tree-planting-grant>

South Ayrshire Council:

www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk

The GSA Biosphere can give guidance and advice with the planting design. Before submitting your application, please:

- Obtain the landowner's consent if you do not own the land that you wish to plant.
- Check for presence of services such as: gas, water pipes or telephone and electricity cables (tree planting should not be located within 10m of a powerline.)
- Obtain the approval of South Ayrshire Council if planting is proposed within 5m of the edge of a public road or highway or might impair road safety.
- Check for any existing planning restrictions or site designations such as those relating to archaeology or deep peat.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

The site should normally be less than 0.25ha in size.

Examples of tree planting schemes include small copses, field boundary trees, tree lines, parkland trees and orchards.

The planting will normally be of native species and be appropriate to the locality (see eligible tree species list in the Tree Planting Guide).

Where appropriate, non-native species may be accepted. Planting to maintain a Tree Preservation Order will also be considered.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS ARE INELIGIBLE?

- Within private gardens
- Hedge planting
- On deep peat or wildflower rich grasslands
- Over archaeological sites
- On sites that are designated for existing conservation or historic interest (unless planting complements the designated features)
- Schemes where drainage is proposed
- If required as a condition of Planning Consent or other development related planting
- If required as a condition of a Felling Permission or License

WHAT ITEMS ARE ELIGIBLE?

- Purchase of plants, tree shelters, stakes and ties
- Protective fencing materials
- Labour costs (for not-for-profit groups only) including contract labour or applicant's own labour
- Site preparation (for not-for-profit groups only)
- Professional fees for project advice (no more than 10% of total cost)

WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS?

It is part of the conditions of the project that you maintain and replace trees as necessary for a period of 5 years after planting, at your own expense. You need to consider aftercare and maintenance such as weed control. Methods of weed control include: mulching, hand weeding and mechanical cutting. If considering using appropriate herbicide, please seek professional advice prior to use. The Steering Group reserves the right to visit the site for inspection purposes. If the planting fails due to neglect, the Steering Group will take steps to recover any monies paid. You will need to supply photographs of the planting site before commencing and after completion of works.

WHEN SHALL I HEAR IF I HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Applications will be registered on receipt and shall be assessed on a first come basis. You should hear within 4 weeks whether your application has been successful and when you can start planting. You must not commence any works until you receive an offer of grant. We strongly suggest you speak to GSA Biosphere staff before you submit an application.

HOW WILL I CLAIM THE FUNDS?

Applicants must pay for the works upfront and claim the grant back from the Programme administrator after completion of work. A claim form will be included with the grant offer letter. Payment of grant is usually within 4 weeks of the completed claim form and accompanying paperwork (such as photographs and copies of any invoices) being received. Please send the completed claim form to antoine@gsabiosphere.org.uk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere

Visits by appointment only

<http://www.gsabiosphere.org.uk>

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