

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group (P&DRSG) receives grant of £232,000 from the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund

- 68 projects have been awarded grants between £62k and £3.8 million to kick-start a pipeline of nature-based projects while creating and retaining jobs
- First funding round sees £40 million pot allocated, second round of funding to open in early 2021

The Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group 'GRCF2020 P&DRSG REDS' is one of the first environmental projects awarded a grant from the government's £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Defra announced grants between £62,000 and £3.8 million today, to help create and retain thousands of green jobs. The projects, spread across England, will see trees planted - 800,000 in total - and protected landscapes and damaged habitats such as moorlands, wetlands and forests restored, alongside wider conservation work. The projects will also support environmental education and connecting people with green spaces.

The 'GRCF2020 P&DRSG REDS' will deploy eight contractors to deliver direct and practical red squirrel conservation work in key woodlands within North Cumbria to protect this UK priority species.

"Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group is delighted that our application for a grant was fully supported. 2020 has been an exceptionally difficult year with virtually all fundraising opportunities lost due to Coronavirus. Like all charities, we rely on local support. This is a grant for 1 year only and a first under a government scheme for us. It will help us, in the short term, to provide essential work of protecting and conserving the iconic and endangered red squirrel. We must, as always, continue our usual fund raising efforts (where possible) as this is crucial for ensuring continuity of our work into the future".

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a key part of Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan to kick-start nature recovery and tackle climate change. The fund is being delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

**Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, said:**

"These projects will drive forward work across England to restore and transform our landscapes, boost nature and create green jobs, and will be a vital part of helping us to build back greener from coronavirus.

"I look forward to working with environmental organisations as these projects help address the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, while creating and retaining jobs as part of the green recovery."

**Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:**

“Supporting our natural environment is one of the most valuable things we can do right now. All these projects are of huge benefit to our beautiful countryside and wildlife, but will also support jobs, health and wellbeing, which are vitally important as we begin to emerge from the coronavirus crisis.”

The government’s forthcoming [Environment Bill](#) puts the environment at the centre of policy making to ensure that we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation. The fund is supporting a range of nature conservation and recovery and nature-based solutions projects, which will contribute towards government’s wider [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitments, including commitments to increase tree-planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025.