



**St Francis Fields CIC**  
**High Weald Nature & Community Fund Grant**

CIC 24/15

**To:** Northiam Parish Council

**Meeting Date:** 10/10/24

**Presented by:** Bill Maynard Director SFF CIC

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**Summary:** The Council is asked to agree to the acceptance of a grant of £5,439 offered by the High Weald Nature & Community Fund for tools & equipment to support nature recovery across the SFF estate.

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**Background:** The grant application was made by the CIC to provide support for a community led planning process for nature recovery, initially across the SFF estate and then more widely across the parish. The application envisaged developing a plan focusing on SFF in Year 1, other NPC land assets in Year 2 and the agricultural landscape in Year 3. It included a request for funding the purchase tools & equipment to be used in the clearing of ponds, establishment of hedges and training in the monitoring of biodiversity gain in a bid total of £14.5k. The application was made with support from Brian Banks, Jim Boot and Great Dexter.

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**Detail:** A wide range of disparate nature recovery projects are either in-hand or under discussion across the SFF estate and it is proposed to draw these together into a comprehensive overarching plan that can gradually extend from the 15ha of the estate to all of the NPC controlled land across the parish. The need for a level of consensus on the overall direction of travel and much wider community engagement would be part of the plan. Northiam has the potential to attract significant support if it is able to demonstrate it has a comprehensive nature recovery programme.

Phase one of the process is to demonstrate the community is working together in a wide range of activities to improve biodiversity and nature recovery. The work of Northiam Naturally to develop a robust baseline is a strong starting point for this and the grant from the Nature & Community Fund for tools & equipment will help to take this to the next level.

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**Finance:** Up to £5,439 worth of tools & equipment will be purchased for use in nature recovery across the SFF estate. The provisional schedule, which will be reviewed with the Fund, was as follows:

Kersten Knife Mower, DOME090H-K35	£2,650.00
Ryobi Cordless Pole Pruner (bare tool) RY18PLA-0	£263.99
Ryobi 36V Cordless Chainsaw (bare tool) RY36CSX35A-0	£240.99
Ryobi rechargeable batteries & charger for above	£384.97
Spear & Jackson Bill Hook 4516AZ , x2 @ £27.00	£54.00
Bulldog 685mm Hay/Leaf Rake	£57.59
Kimura 8" Pro Bypass Garden Secateurs	£20.99
Silky Gomboy Curve Professional folding saw	£47.39
Plastic Mesh Deer Fencing 1.8m x 100m, 3 @ £166.20	£498.60
Chestnut fencing posts x 60 @ £12.00 ea	£720.00
Mixed native hedging plants	£500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,438.52</b>

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**Key dates:** It is not yet known when funds will be released but it is hoped that activities can start early in 2025.

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**Other considerations:** Successful implementation of the plans for Year 1 is likely to mean that Northiam will be in a strong position for support from the High Weald Nature & Community Fund in subsequent funding rounds.

The High Weald Nature & Community Fund have already indicated that funding for improved wheelchair access to the permissive footpath across the SFF estate, which was included in the original bid, could be available on a short timescale from another of their 'funding pots' and if this proves practical a proposal will be brought to a future NPC meeting.