

## Grants Scheme

### Nature Conservation in the Mersey Forest in Vale Royal

#### The Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest is an initiative of the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission with the support of Vale Royal Borough Council. It is not a single area of trees but a large area covering 365 square miles of Merseyside and North Cheshire and including many different landscapes and habitats.

The Forest Project is breathing new life into the region with a programme of tree planting and mosaic of landscape improvements. The Forest is not about a continuous expanse of trees but a variety of habitats including ponds, wildflower meadows, hedgerows and street trees. It is also actively improving our degraded landscapes.

The Forest is improving the image of the area in addition to providing jobs. There are opportunities for people to visit the countryside on their doorstep with a network of paths, cycle routes linking existing parks and green spaces together, as well as creating new ones right in the heart of towns and cities.

#### The Grant Scheme

Vale Royal Borough Council is offering up to £1000.00 for nature conservation projects in the Mersey Forest.

The grant scheme aims to:

- Create new wildlife habitats
- Improve existing wildlife habitats
- Enhance public understanding or enjoyment of the natural environment
- Contribute to the aims of the Mersey Forest. These include
  1. Woodland creation
  2. Non-woodland habitat creation
  3. Planting more street trees
  4. Involving the community
  5. Improving access
  6. Providing local employment

To qualify for a grant, your project must contribute to one or more of the above aims.

If you require any assistance or would like to have an informal discussion about your ideas before filling in the application form please contact the Nature Conservation Officer on 01606 867748.

## Notes For Applicants

- a. The project must be within the Borough of Vale Royal
- b. The project should not include works necessary to comply with planning conditions
- c. Any community group, voluntary group or individual may apply
- d. The grant can pay for costs of the project such as materials, consultation, research and surveys, management plans, technical advice and training. It should not pay for core funding for a group and there will be restrictions on income earning projects.
- e. A nominated person must sign the application form accepting the conditions of grant on behalf of those involved in the project.
- f. The applicant must supply adequate survey information to justify the scheme and a sketch plan (if applicable)
- g. Applications must be received by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May or 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006. All applications will then be considered and successful applicants informed as soon as possible after the assessors have considered the application. Applicants should not start work on the projects until after receipt of an offer letter.
- h. All works must be completed, claimed for and inspected by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007
- i. Grants will be paid retrospectively based on a specific offer, satisfactory completion of the scheme and production of receipted invoices that clearly relate to those works outlined in the application.
- j. Any publicity for the project, including signage on site, must acknowledge the support of Vale Royal Borough Council.
- k. The applicant must show that an attempt has been made to secure additional funding from other sources
- l. The grant will normally be a maximum of 50% of the cost of the scheme. Match funding can include the cost of voluntary labour or gifts in kind.
- m. The maximum amount of the grant will be £1000.00
- n. Grants are not mandatory. They will be offered at the discretion of the director of the Environment and Sustainability Directorate. Whilst it would not be appropriate to publicise some sites of importance for nature conservation, a report on the general areas and types of projects given grant funding will be produced each year.