



22 September 2026

Dear National Lottery Good Causes Team,

I am writing to you on behalf of our members to express our deep concern that potential changes to the National Lottery Heritage Fund funding model may pose a significant risk to nature recovery across the UK. Due to a serious flaw in the way the online survey is worded, Scottish Environment LINK has chosen to respond to the call for evidence by email.

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 50 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. Members are involved in environmental issues from protecting our seas and coastlines, to promoting productive and sustainable land use, to restoring habitats and species, all with Scotland's people at the heart. Our members represent local communities from the Solway to Shetland, and Scotland's place within the global context. We facilitate change: we build collaboration, and support and enable partnership working to add value for the environment through leadership and engagement. As the voice for Scotland's environment, the LINK network exists to support our members in making change happen on the ground for a healthier environment, healthier societies and a healthier planet.

We note that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has launched a Call for Evidence on the National Lottery funding model, with the intention of '*fundamentally re-evaluating how good cause funding is distributed*'. Concerningly, in the Call for Evidence questionnaire, natural heritage is not mentioned as forming part of the NLHF. Heritage funding is instead described as covering 'historic buildings, public parks, community archaeology'.

[Polling conducted on our behalf in 2023](#) has shown that Scotland's natural environment is important to 92% of people personally. And [polling in 2024](#) reflected that over 75% of people worried about nature and the environment. We know that people in Scotland care deeply about their environment and wish to see more done to protect and restore it.

We are deeply concerned that the call for evidence survey has removed nature and the environment from the description of heritage, meaning that when respondents are asked to suggest the proportion of National Lottery funding which should go to different causes, they are unable to make an informed decision. If the National Lottery Good Causes arrangement is revised, based on information from this flawed survey, support for nature restoration could be significantly reduced, through a reduction in the Heritage Fund budget or the removal of heritage funding for nature.

Due to the way the survey is worded, people who want to say that National Lottery funding should support nature are likely to choose the 'environment' category. This could lead to more funding going to The National Lottery Community Fund in the future, and less funding going to The National Lottery Heritage Fund. While the Community Fund does support many valuable community-focused nature projects, projects that focus on saving threatened species and restoring nature across our landscapes aren't typically eligible for funding from the Community Fund.

National Lottery funding has always supported nature, with the Heritage Fund awarding more than £336 million to support the UK's landscapes, nature and parks in the last six years alone. The Fund has delivered over £1 billion to over 5,100 projects in Scotland since 1994. The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund, which enables communities to be more environmentally sustainable, makes up more than half of Scotland's green grants ([WTGGW 2021/22](#)). The Heritage Fund in particular supports projects at a scale for transformational change for Scotland's natural heritage – which many funders do not have the capacity to deliver. The Heritage Fund supports large nature recovery projects of regional and national importance which enables the voluntary sector to respond to the nature and climate crises. The support for the Solway Coast and Marine Landscape Connections Project and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority underlines the ambition that NGOs, local communities and National Lottery can envision and deliver when they work together for people and nature.

We need to work collaboratively in partnership now more than ever. Scotland faces an estimated funding gap of £20 billion over the next decade to meet its core nature and biodiversity targets. The need for players of National Lottery to invest in our natural heritage has never been more urgent. We believe nature connects our past, present and future and that it deserves continued support through the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Whilst we don't think nature has been missed out intentionally in the survey, we urge you to analyse the resulting responses in line with the concerns raised by ourselves and the wider sector. We cannot afford nature to be overlooked by National Lottery.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Deborah Long  
CEO



**Scottish Environment LINK** the voice for Scotland's environment

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