

**Project Title – Nature’s Tonic Pilot Project (Stage 2)**

**Invitation to Tender - brief for potential contractors (4 pages)**

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# Nature's Tonic Pilot Project

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

This one-year pilot project aimed to explore how statutory, voluntary and community organisations who work with groups of clients (e.g. memory café, brain injury, bereavement support, mental health groups, carer support groups etc.), can be enabled and supported to increase their access to and use of the natural environment and help people to connect with nature. The physical and mental health benefits of experiencing blue/green spaces and connecting with nature have been widely proven, but many of these groups have only operated indoors and their clients could benefit from both nature and getting outdoors. This project aimed to train and upskill the staff and volunteers who run groups, to deliver outdoors safely and confidently and to connect them with appropriate sites and wildlife volunteers across North Devon. After the initial three months of development and successful engagement with groups and site owners (Stage 1), the project was paused in March 2020 due to Covid-19.

Following community and agency consultations in the Autumn on whether to restart the project, it became clear there is an even greater need to facilitate delivery of activities and support in outdoor spaces, plus new needs whilst we learn to live with Covid-19. Organisations were keen to gain the necessary skills to have confidence in delivering more outdoors and to know more about the available sites within their towns, villages, the coast and more remote countryside. The inspiration provided by connecting with nature, getting involved in purposeful activities such as citizen science and beach cleaning, and contributing to nature recovery would be key elements of the 'offer' to their existing clients and possibly attract new clients. Local GPs have supported the need for more outdoor activities to attract a wider population group to get outdoors, get moving and get connected with nature, to complement the local social prescribing activity.

This is a partnership project between North Devon Coast AONB, North Devon Voluntary Services and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve. Both contracts will be supported by staff and resources from all partners and will be externally evaluated. With support from our funders and additional seed corn funding from Natural England, this is the Stage 2 of the pilot project and to meet funding and delivery deadlines, the project has been split into two contracts to run concurrently.

## **2. SPECIFICATION**

### **OVERALL OBJECTIVES**

- To train staff and volunteers from social support groups to deliver activities outdoors (risk assessments, taster visits, nature-based activities, information sources)
- To provide information audits on accessibility and opportunities of blue and green sites across North Devon
- To recruit and train nature guides to support group activities and 'community buddies' to support new people joining outdoor groups
- To monitor and evaluate this pilot project

### **Contract 1**

**Term: January to March 2021**

**Fee: £2,600**

**Location: North Devon**

#### **Tasks:**

1. Audit 18 green/blue spaces across North Devon in terms of physical access, facilities, services, opportunities, and risks for use by community groups and organisations
2. Engage with relevant landowners/owners regarding permissions/opportunities

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3. Produce downloadable audit reports

## **Contract 2**

**Term: January – June 2021**

**Fee: £7,400**

**Locations: Barnstaple, Braunton and Ilfracombe**

### **Tasks:**

1. Provide training and taster sessions to staff and volunteers from 24 community groups and organisations to deliver outdoor activities using green and blue spaces across North Devon
2. Recruit and train 9 volunteers to support 'connecting with nature' walks
3. Recruit and train 6 'Nature's Tonic buddies' to support isolated individuals in Braunton to get outdoors and connect with nature
4. Project coordination and liaison with partners, maintain monitoring records

### **For Both Contracts**

The AONB team and partners will: share the information, learning and contacts from Stage 1; provide communications and social media services; manage budgets and payments; coordinate the evaluation.

### **Skills and Knowledge Requirements**

For both contracts, there is a need for experience and understanding of:

- working with a diverse population of adults including those with physical and mental health issues, older people and those who may not be very active
- delivering outdoor activities and the associated risk assessments, access issues and information needs
- general knowledge of wildlife, habitats and the North Devon area

For Contract 2, there is a need for experience in delivering training, conducting risk assessments and managing volunteers.

## **3. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The contracts for this work will be with Devon County Council, as lead body for the project and the host organisation for the North Devon Coast AONB team and the North Devon Biosphere team.

Contracts for the work will be drafted. It is important to note at this stage that contracts will include:

- Agreement to provide all information secured through the contract to Devon County Council
- Agreement that all intellectual rights will be held by the North Devon Coast AONB Partnership (DCC)
- Agreement that the contractor will be bound by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and relevant employment law
- Agreement that the contractor will provide Public Liability Insurance for the contract

### **Set-up, monitoring and reporting**

There will be at least one inception meeting held with the contractor(s) to clarify the information needs and serve as a briefing meeting for the successful contractor(s). Milestones will be agreed at this meeting.

There will be regular monitoring meetings/performance reviews to attend with the Project Management team, to share knowledge and report on progress.

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## Contract Timetable

Due to funder requirements, the planned timetable for the works to start is in January 2021 with end dates as follows:

**Contract 1 - All work must be completed by 31 March 2021**

**Contract 2 - All work completed by 30 June 2021**

## Covid-19 Restrictions

Contractors must follow the guidance from Devon County Council on working practices and working with volunteers, to meet Covid-19 restrictions. Information and equipment will be provided to meet these restrictions, with group working following national guidelines on indoor and outdoor activities. These restrictions may change during the project and contractors will be expected to adapt their activities accordingly.

## Guidelines for tendering

Tenders will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Skills/knowledge/relevant experience\* – 50%
- Value for Money – 30%
- Capacity to deliver – 10%
- Proposed approach to delivery – 10%

\*Evaluation will be based on an assessment of the CVs held for proposed deliverers specified for each priority area (plus any supplementary information on these individuals contained in tender bids) against the skills/knowledge requirements for the contract (as set out in this specification).

Please note we are not obliged to accept the lowest tender, or any. The contract may be awarded to single or broken down to multiple suppliers.

### To submit a tender please provide a fee with:

- A brief outline methodology
- Indicative timetable / days per activity
- CVs of all personnel to be involved in the delivery of the contract - demonstrating the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to make it a success
- Full contact and Company information

## Target fee

The total available budget is **£10,000 for both contracts**, with a suggested split of £2,600 for Contract 1 and £7,400 for Contract 2. (The project has additional funds for group travel, volunteer expenses and equipment that will be administered by the AONB team).

Please provide all budget information exclusive of VAT. Reimbursements for travel expenses and all other costs should be included within the above figure.

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## Tender Deadline

The project activities need to commence during January 2021 so we request tenders are sent electronically to [Jenny.Carey-Wood@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Jenny.Carey-Wood@devon.gov.uk) by **Midday on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020**. Contractors may be invited to an online interview.

## For all queries please contact:

**Jenny Carey-Wood**  
**AONB Manager**

01271 388758

07773 245315

[Jenny.Carey-Wood@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Jenny.Carey-Wood@devon.gov.uk)