

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL - APPLICATION FOR A RENTAL GRANT SUBSIDY

please complete and return this form, together with your organisation's financial accounts for the last two years (i.e. profit and loss accounts and balance sheets)

Name of organisation*: Lingfield Nature Reserves Association	
Description of land / property*: Bloomers Field and Jenners Field, Lingfield	
Annual market rental assessment*:	
Please complete sections 1 to 5 below	
1.	Contact details
	Name: John Madden
	Position within the origination: Chairman of the Management Committee and trustee
	Contact phone number:
	Contact e-mail address:
2.	Role of the organisation / membership regime / community links
2A	Please describe your organisation's objectives and how it utilises the land / buildings leased from the Council.
	The stated aim of the Lingfield Nature Reserves is to encourage wildlife, education and amenity for the benefit of the community.
	The land has been used and managed for 25 years as a community nature reserve and has local nature reserve status.
3B	Is your organisation affiliated to a county / regional / national body? (if so, please dive details)
	Our constitution provides for representation by Lingfield Parish Council, Tandridge District Council and Surrey Wildlife trust on our management committee.
3C	How many paid up members does your organisation have?
	None. We are all volunteers.

3D Approximately what percentage of the paid up members live in Tandridge?
Not applicable but our volunteers mostly are residents of Tandridge. We would estimate 75%.

3E Are there any restrictions to membership?
No/not applicable. The reserves are public open space and accessible to all.

3F Please provide details of relevant membership and hire fees and any other charges
None/not applicable. The reserves are public open space and accessible to all. Anyone is welcome to attend our monthly work parties at no charge. Free guided tours are offered and are open to all.

3G Are discounts available on the grounds of financial hardship?
Not applicable. The reserves are public open space and accessible to all. Anyone is welcome to attend our monthly work parties at no charge. Free guided tours are offered and are open to all.

3H Are the facilities only available to members or can users 'pay on the day'?
Not applicable. The reserves are public open space and accessible to all. Anyone is welcome to attend our monthly work parties at no charge. Free guided tours are offered and are open to all.

3. Access to facilities and integration with the wider community

3A When are the facilities available for use during an average week?
The Lingfield Nature Reserves have full public access all year round and 24/7.

3B Does the organisation do anything to encourage wide ranging community use of the facilities? For example, initiatives to:

- achieve a diverse membership base (besides any membership fee concessions / hardship relief schemes referred to in 2B above); and / or
- allow use by non-members such as community taster sessions; training / coaching development programmes; or via partnerships with local schools

We do not have a membership. The reserves are open to the public 24/7 all year round.

Anyone is welcome to get involved and come along to our volunteer work parties usually held at least once a month and which regularly attract 15-20 people.

We encourage wide ranging community use appropriate to a nature reserve. We regularly write articles about the reserve which are published in Community News. We have a Face Book Group with 156 members. Our volunteer list stands at 58 contacts. Tandridge Volunteer Action regularly approaches us for opportunities for their volunteers on the nature reserves.

We regularly host guided tours and give presentations to interested organisations. Recent presentations have included the Lingfield Horticultural Society, Dormansland "Pro Us", East Grinstead Natural History Society, Butterfly Conservation Surrey, The Tree Council and Old Hunstanton Parish Council.

Every year we hold a National Tree Week event. These can be attended by up to 40 people of all ages. In March 2023 we plan to have a hedge laying event with the South of England Hedge Laying Society which will be raising money for charities for disadvantaged children. Pre Covid, Beacons Field was used for LingFest.

School and youth groups visit and use the reserves. Here are some examples over the past few years:

- Little Chums preschool nursery, Lingfield: regularly use the Reserves for Forest School activities (see their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/littlechumsforestschoo/>).
- Lingfield Primary School: there have been at least 10 visits by the school for Forest School activities, including an afternoon of pond dipping and meadow sweeping at which we provided equipment and volunteers to help the children with activities.
- Lingfield Brownies: pond dipping and meadow sweeping and a nature detectives walks, both supported by Reserves volunteers.
- Lingfield Rainbows: regular annual visitors for pond dipping/meadow sweeping.
- Dormansland Primary and Lingfield College have visited on an annual basis regularly.
- 4th East Grinstead Beavers have approached us for a visit (still to be arranged)

We know that an assortment of local groups visit the LNR independently of us including mental health groups, art groups, metal detectorists and Young Epilepsy.

We currently anticipate Warlingham School using the reserves as a volunteering opportunity for 6th form students.

3C Does the organisation fulfil any wider community roles (e.g. outreach work in schools or participation in community events such as fetes and shows)?

We regularly hosted Lingfest. A list of presentations given to interested groups and organisations is given above. We hosted a tree warden event for the Tree Council in 2022 and also hosted a rose planting event for the Soroptimists. We have accepted and planted 150 trees in 2022 on behalf of Lingfield Parish Council as part of the Queen's platinum Jubilee Celebrations as well as a beacon lighting event for the same purpose. We will be representing Lingfield Nature Reserves at Clarence House, the Quaker retreat in Dormansland, in September 2022.

4. Financial position / sustainability

4A Are financial reserves being accumulated for any particular purpose (e.g. future projects or specific contingencies)?

We set aside reserves for the repairs of the hardstanding footpaths, repair and replacement of benches and the maintenance of any other infrastructure each year.

4B Please give details of any commercial activities on the site which generates income (e.g. bar / catering operations)

There are no commercial activities. We are not a business. The reserves are free.

4C Please describe any fundraising activities undertaken by the group during a typical year

We do not actively fundraise for the management of the reserves as the haycut is currently paid for by TDC and LPC while Natural England contribute to habitat management creation and management through a Higher Level Stewardship agreement. This year we are applying to the Surrey County Council Members Allocation and have an ongoing submission to Your Fund Surrey for available funds.

Our guided tours and presentations often attract donations and these go into the reserve funds.

4D Does the organisation pursue any funding opportunities from other grant giving bodies?

Over the last 26 years we have secured funding in the way of a variety of grant body donations, awards, private donations and gifts. Some of the organisations who have given the reserves donations are listed below. Many individuals have given personal donations.

• The Co-op	• Surrey Community Foundation
• Tree Council of Great Britain	• Tandridge District Council " Small Grant Scheme"
• Shell Better Britain	• Lingfield Parish Council
• British Trust of Conservation Volunteers	• Surrey Tree Warden Network
• Surrey County Council " Pride of Place"	• Lingfield Marathon Fun run
• Brogdale Fruit, Faversham, Kent.	• Local Chamber of Commerce
• Common Ground (for Community Orchard)	• Natural England
• Gatwick Airport	• Forestry Commission
• The Lottery - "Wildspace" and "Breathing Places"	• East Grinstead Natural History Society
• Woodland Trust	• Surrey Hills Fund
• County Council Members allowances	

The amount of funding, grants and donations secured by the Lingfield Nature Reserves and invested in the reserves over the last 27 years is approximately £ 250,000.

5. Alignment with the Council's corporate priorities

5A In light of the information provided above, please explain how you think your organisation's activities align with the Council's corporate priorities/Strategic Plan (page 8 also refers).

1. **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services.

The reserves have invested over £250,000 in creating and maintaining its infrastructure and habitats over 27 years at no cost to the council. This success will continue.

The contribution of volunteers in maintaining and improving the reserves at no cost to the public is enormous. The total time given by volunteers at the monthly Sunday work parties alone since the reserves were created is estimated to be 9,000 person/hours. If the calculation was extended to attending meetings, organising contractors, monitoring butterflies and other wildlife, organising events, giving talks, giving guided tours, applying for funding and grants, writing reports, carrying out emergency repairs, additional maintenance and projects etc, etc it would equate to many times this amount.

We conservatively estimate that the significant effort in managing the reserves over the last five years equates to approximately 579 hours of volunteer time and a further 132 hours of

paid contractor time, the latter paid for out of funds raised by our volunteers and all provided for the benefit of the community.

2. Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need – both now and in the future

Having an exceptional nature reserve in the heart of Lingfield clearly improves the quality of life, provides an important safe route to school while preserving and increasing biodiversity and helping sequester carbon.

3. Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from

While we cannot seriously suggest Lingfield Nature Reserves plays a significant part in economic recovery in Tandridge, we can see its growing reputation attracts visitors to Tandridge. It contributes to Lingfield being a very desirable place to live and potentially helps attract the talent needed for a vibrant economy to live and stay in the area. The benefits of improved connection with nature and consequent improved mental health arguably contribute to economic recovery.

4. Becoming a greener, more sustainable District – tackling climate change

The reserves, through the vision of the volunteers, have developed into a rich mosaic of habitats which are now home to all sorts of important wildlife, trees and wildflowers, a significant proportion of which are of conservation importance in Surrey and some are nationally rare.

According to the Surrey Nature Partnership, only 33 hectares of neutral grassland remain in Surrey. This is compared to 43,446 hectares of agriculturally improved grassland. The Lingfield Nature Reserves meadows are restored examples of these lost neutral grasslands and are full of abundant wildflowers.

Our 10 hectares of species rich neutral grassland is the equivalent of 30% of the Surrey total of this hugely important habitat.

According to Plantlife, the UK wildflower conservation charity,:

A report published by RSPB and WWF UK shows the immense importance of permanent grasslands and rough grazing pasture for their carbon storage – even more than our woodlands. It recommends the protection and restoration of species-rich grasslands, lowland heath and other open habitats as a priority action.

As our meadows are species rich, they are making a significant contribution to carbon storage and help fight climate change. Our efforts to make the reserves wetter by impeding drainage and digging ponds, ditches and scrapes also contribute to carbon capture.

6. Required subsidy

6A What level of subsidy do you wish to apply for as a % of the annual market rental

assessment on page 1 above

100%

6B What, in your opinion, would be the consequences of the Council not providing the subsidy, both for your organisation and the community at large?

Without the subsidy the Lingfield Nature Reserves Association would not be able to afford rent and the land would have to be handed back to TDC to maintain at their cost or do with as they feel fit. This would then jeopardise the viability of the Lingfield Parish Council land as a nature reserve as the total area would have halved and alternative use of the TDC land could affect some of the overall biodiversity. The LNRA might then consider handing that land back to LPC depending on how viable the smaller area was to manage both practically and in terms of continuing to attract enthusiastic volunteers.

The TDC land which would need to be handed back is extremely important for wildlife. It is arguably of a quality that merits SSSI status not least because of a thriving colony of great crested newts. The legal protections and biodiversity net gain implications of this well documented wealth of biodiversity may limit any alternative uses for TDC after it was handed back.

If the LNRA hand back the reserve land, TDC would have to accept that providing amenity and educational opportunities as well as opportunities to engage with nature and conservation as currently offered by the LNRA would pass to them or cease. This change would obviously be visible to the community and possibly affect the community negatively.

Ultimately the withdrawal of subsidy would jeopardise the future of the nature reserve unless TDC continued the management themselves unchanged. As a well loved amenity for the village of Lingfield and the surrounding area, the potential loss would almost certainly provoke a reaction from local residents. In times of climate change, greater awareness of the need for carbon capture and the worrying collapse of biodiversity, this might be hard to show as consistent with TDCs corporate priorities/Strategic Plan.

Key Corporate Priorities for 2020/21 – 2023/24

5. **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services
6. **Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need** – both now and in the future
7. **Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge** – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from
8. **Becoming a greener, more sustainable District** – tackling climate change

Please see further detail on the Council's website:

<https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Your-council/Strategies-and-plans>