



# Traditional Boundary Fund

## Guidelines for Applicants

### 1. Introduction

Traditional field boundaries are a major element of the landscape character of the North York Moors National Park. They are also often of considerable wildlife value as well as being important historic features. The North York Moors National Park Authority has a Traditional Boundary Fund (TBF) to provide grant assistance towards the cost of rebuilding/restoring drystone walls and creating/regenerating hedgerows.

The TBF is delivered through an agreement between the Applicant and the North York Moors National Park Authority ('the Authority'). In signing the Agreement the Applicant agrees to undertake the agreed environmental improvement works ('the Works') in accordance with the guidelines given below and Authority specifications supplied. In return for the undertaking of the Works, the Authority agrees to pay a grant to the Applicant in line with the standard grant rates provided.

### 2. Works eligible for grant aid through the TBF

- The rebuilding/restoration of drystone walls
- Planting new hedgerows
- The regeneration of hedgerows using traditional methods such as laying, coppicing and gapping up
- Stockproof fencing for hedgerows; wall top/side wiring or wall top netting where this is necessary to protect a boundary that has been created/restored/regenerated using the Traditional Boundary Fund.

### 3. Maintenance Requirements

The Applicant must agree to maintain the Works in a sound and reasonable condition for **at least five years** after completion of the work.

For hedgerows planted/gapped up under the scheme, the Applicant must agree to control weeds during the first three years after planting as this is essential to ensure good growth and survival of hedge plants.

As they establish after planting/gapping up or laying or coppicing hedgerows must be protected from stock as well as rabbits/hares. Stockproof fencing should be erected **at least 1 m away from a hedge line**, this is the minimum requirement. Over time ideally

hedgerows should be managed as wide and tall as possible for the benefit of biodiversity.

For longer term management (beyond five years) of well managed hedgerows planted through the TBF (or the previous Traditional Boundary Scheme) the Applicant is invited to apply again for TBF funding in due course to help with hedgerow management e.g. laying, coppicing, gapping up.

#### **4. Grant Payment**

Grant will be paid on the Works agreed with the Applicant once the work is completed to the satisfaction of the National Park Officer. This may require a site visit by a representative of the Authority. The Applicant must complete the Works and submit a claim form within the timescale set out in the agreement. The Authority will endeavour to make the grant payment within 6 – 8 weeks of the claim deadline given in the agreement. **No grant can be paid for any works carried out prior to a signed offer of grant.**

The costs used to calculate grant for the Works will be based on standard grant rates set by the Authority for the TBF year.

Claims for grant payment must be accompanied by a signed claim form that will be supplied by the Authority once it has received notification that the Works are complete.

All Works should be completed to the standards contained or referred to in the specifications issued by the Authority. Such specifications are provided with the Agreement and are also available on request.

#### **5. Eligibility**

To be eligible for the TBF the proposed Works must meet the following criteria:

- The Applicant must not be in receipt of any other funding for the proposed Works.
- The Applicant must not have a statutory requirement or responsibility for carrying out the Works (for example works must not form a condition of a planning consent).
- The proposed Works must not relate to a feature that is included within a national agri-environment scheme (e.g. Higher Level Stewardship, Countryside Stewardship, Sustainable Farming Initiative) for maintenance payment or categorised as already being in a good condition.
- The applicant must not be in receipt of grant assistance from TBF for which the accumulated amount would exceed the maximum grant contribution of £5,000 per financial year.

Applicants should seek to ensure the entire length of a boundary, from node to node, will be in good condition after the work. A node can be a gateway, an intersection with another boundary or some other acceptable break in the length of the boundary.

To be eligible the Applicant's land must be within the North York Moors National Park. The Applicant must have secure tenure on the land for the duration of the Agreement (five years from agreement date), or else as a tenant applying in their own right must have notified their landlord of their intention to apply for grant aid and gained all necessary consents.

The TBF cannot grant aid works that are re-claimable through an insurance policy.

## **6. Breach of the Agreement**

If the Applicant fails to carry out or maintain the Works as set out in the Agreement, then all or part of the grant payment may be withheld or reclaimed at the Authority's discretion.

## **7. Statutory Requirements**

The TBF does not affect the requirement for any statutory consultations or notifications. These include, although not exhaustively, planning permission requirements, Environment Agency consultations, Environmental Impact Assessment requirements, felling licence requirements, Tree Preservation Orders, notification to Natural England of any operations affecting or adjacent to SSSIs and statutory obligations with regard to public rights of way.

## **8. Eligibility for Other Schemes**

The TBF does not automatically affect an Applicant's eligibility for other grants and subsidies. However, funding for the Works covered by the agreement must not be claimed from any other source during the duration of the Agreement (five years from agreement date) unless agreed in writing, in advance, with the Authority.

**Any land or features entered into an agri environment scheme for which an annual payment is received will not be eligible for payments under the Traditional Boundary Fund as this would constitute double funding.**

## **9. Data Protection, Disclosure of Information & Freedom of Information**

The Authority is subject to the provisions of prevailing Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation and regulations. The information contained in and relating to your Agreement will be used by the Authority for administration, evaluation and monitoring purposes. The Authority reserves the right to disclose all information (including financial information) contained in and relating to your Agreement to the Owner and to other Public Authorities and Statutory Bodies. The Authority reserves the right to publish information about the Works and Grant covered by the Agreement. Such information may be in the form of a map.

## 10. Grant Rates

Grant will only be payable on Works included when the Agreement is drawn up and will be subject to any financial ceiling set at that time.

The level of grant aid to be offered for the creation/restoration/regeneration of traditional boundaries will not exceed the levels set out in the TBF standard grant rates for that year.

## 11. Photographs

Grant applications must be supported by a minimum of three photographs which appropriately show the entirety of restoration works needed. It is acceptable for the photographs to be close-ups of small sections of repair, but **at least one photograph must attempt to show as much of the entire boundary as possible.**

Upon completion of the Works, photographs must be submitted alongside the Claim Form using the same criteria as above. These photographs should be taken from the same location/angle to allow adequate comparison of the completed Works.

## 12. Alternative funding

If looking for larger scale or non-standard works, please contact the National Park Authority to discuss the potential for a stand-alone project to restore/create boundaries in the National Park.