



Thriving in Nature Fund

Improving lives through green spaces

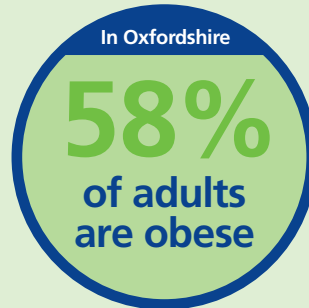
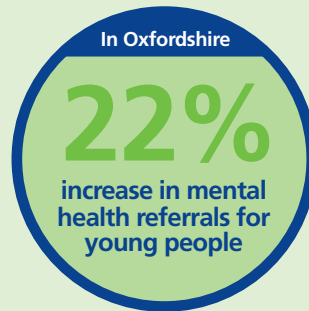
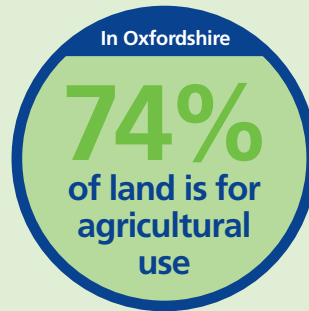
Oxfordshire is filled with stunning countryside, beautiful parks and rolling farmland. It is a wonderful asset, but the opportunities it offers are not necessarily reaching those most in need.

The Thriving in Nature Fund will help more people prosper by engaging with green spaces and the rural environment. The focus will be on improving health and wellbeing, and nurturing work opportunities, by supporting charitable organisations to unite people with nature.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

OCF is aiming to launch a Thriving in Nature grants programme in early 2024. The grants will empower grassroots local charitable organisations to help disadvantaged people access the benefits of nature. We aim to provide multi-year funding for the most effective initiatives to really make a difference.

Thanks to one of OCF's Patrons, we already have significant seed funding for this programme. We are now seeking a committed group of donors with a shared passion for this issue to come on board and support this fund.



THE BENEFITS OF NATURE

The natural environment is well documented as benefiting both **mental and physical wellbeing**. The positive effects of spending time in green spaces can range from reducing feelings of stress or anger, improving physical health, helping to become more active, reducing loneliness and improving confidence and self-esteem. Our countryside and green spaces are free to access – an affordable and sustainable way of improving wellbeing.

Our green spaces also provide an opportunity to promote **rural skills, training and employment**. Enabling people from disadvantaged communities to connect with these opportunities will help them to thrive, as well as contribute to addressing the workforce shortages.

ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES

Access to natural spaces can be challenging for several reasons. Lack of transport to quality green spaces may be a challenge for families unable to afford a car, and not having knowledge of the Countryside Code can make accessing them intimidating. For some groups, including vulnerable women, younger people, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities, natural spaces may feel inaccessible, havens for antisocial behaviour or less enjoyable because they don't feel familiar or secure. Having access to green spaces that are safe and visible helps nurture a feeling of accessibility for everyone.

In Oxfordshire

88,000
adults experience
depression

THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OXFORDSHIRE

Several of the most deprived areas in Oxfordshire match directly the areas where both obesity and mental health are the greatest challenges, and these areas tend to be in the urban parts of the county. Obesity means people are less likely to be in employment, and reduces life expectancy by an average of three years.

Example project: agricultural engagement

FarmEd engages with farmers, advisers, foodies, policy makers and researchers to build sustainable farming and food systems that promote agricultural careers to young people in rural West Oxfordshire, and regenerate the planet.



Example project: inclusive access

Oxford Community Action's hiking project supports people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to get out into nature, giving them the confidence and knowledge to navigate the countryside, and boosting their wellbeing.



Example project: mental wellbeing

Bridewell Organic Gardens provides a mental health recovery service via social and therapeutic horticulture in a working garden, helping people rediscover a sense of personal identity centred on health, strengths and wellness.



Example project: physical activity

Farcycles encourages people from all backgrounds to learn to cycle safely, building confidence through group cycle sessions led by experienced instructors, which start in a dedicated rural cycle park and progress to road routes in and around Faringdon.



GET IN TOUCH

With your help, we can improve the health and wellbeing of those most in need through the benefits of nature.

Please contact Kate Parrinder, OCF's Head of Development, for a discussion about your contribution.



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ABOUT OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) is a charity that improves lives and tackles inequality by investing in Oxfordshire's dynamic charitable sector. We build thriving communities through effective philanthropy.

We work with philanthropists, businesses and the public sector, pooling their funds so that they can make a bigger difference together. Funders can feel confident of a safe pair of hands for their contributions, as we implement strong governance processes; conduct thorough due diligence on all grant applications; and report back with inspiring stories on the impact of their support.



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