

News story: £450,000 of HS2 government funding to deliver woodland hub for communities in heart of Buckinghamshire

- HS2 Minister Nusrat Ghani announces £450,000 grant for Wendover Woods Recreational Development project near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
- Minister Ghani visits site today (8 March 2018) to see how it will benefit from a share of £40 million HS2 Phase One Community and Environment Fund

Plans for a new woodland hub with an adventure trail, café and parking for 600 visitors at Wendover Woods have been made possible thanks to a £450,000 government grant, HS2 Minister Nusrat Ghani announced on a visit to the area in Buckinghamshire today (8 March 2018).

Ms Ghani visited the Wendover Woods recreational development project near Aylesbury to see plans for a £4.45 million redevelopment of the site, one of the largest areas of publically accessible open spaces in the region. The £450,000 grant is the largest funding award given to any single project so far from a £40 million HS2 Phase One Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF).

Nusrat Ghani, HS2 Minister, said:

HS2 will be the backbone of our national rail network – supporting growth and regeneration and helping us build a Britain fit for the future. Whilst we know there will be disruption as we deliver one of Europe’s biggest infrastructure projects, we are absolutely committed to minimising the effects of building the new railway.

It is great to see so many exciting local projects such as the Wendover Woods recreational development project benefit from this fund, helping even more people access and enjoy our beautiful countryside. Funding such as CEF and BLEF will help to ensure that the legacy of HS2 is shared by everyone for generations to come.

The funds were established to support a diverse range of projects, from refurbishing community centres, nature conservation and measures to drive jobs and local economies, along HS2’s route from London to the West Midlands. A further £5 million has also been made available to help communities along the HS2 Phase 2a route from the West Midlands to Crewe, bringing the total available funding to £45 million.

The first round of funding in January, announced by the minister during a

[visit to Crewe](#), gave more than £245,000 of grants. These include funding for the renovation of Steeple Claydon Methodist Church in Buckinghamshire, helping a pre-school in Northamptonshire build their first playground and setting up schemes in Camden to engage residents in environmental and health issues.

Cathy Elliott, independent chair of CEF and BLEF said:

This latest round of funding is another milestone for us and I'm delighted to be showcasing the Wendover Woods recreational development project to demonstrate how this money can benefit communities along the line of route for many years to come. More funding is available for eligible applicants throughout the construction of HS2 Phase One and we look forward to announcing many more funded local projects in the future.

Joanne Mason from the Forestry Commission said:

Wendover Woods is a hugely popular recreation resource for families living across the Chilterns and further afield. This grant from the HS2 CEF fund will enable much needed new toilets, seating and expanded café facilities to be established ensuring that the forest can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

HS2 Ltd chief executive Mark Thurston said:

As we deliver HS2, we have the opportunity to leave a positive legacy for the communities along the route of the railway. Our Community and Environment Fund, and its twin Business Fund, are starting to support important local initiatives, including building renovations and environmental projects. We're encouraging local people to come forward with other opportunities, such as community-led nature projects for people and wildlife which could contribute to the 'green corridor' we're creating alongside the railway.

This grassroots activity is in addition to the national benefits of HS2, which will rebalance the economy by connecting 8 out of our 10 biggest cities, increase rail capacity on the current system and reduce journey times, while also creating thousands of jobs across the UK.

The CEF and BLEF funds are managed for the government by Groundwork UK, who published its [annual report](#) today.