

Updates for CELCA Application – TweedStart

About The Tweed Foundation and TweedStart

The Tweed Foundation, established in 1983, is dedicated to protecting and improving the natural environment of the River Tweed. The Foundation delivers a comprehensive programme of biological monitoring, habitat enhancement, education, and community engagement to protect the Tweed's valuable fish stocks and maximise the river's natural productivity.

Our educational outreach includes programmes such as TweedStart and Go Wild For Fish, alongside citizen science and conservation initiatives including Guardians of the Tweed.

The Tweed Foundation is committed to protecting and improving the natural environment of the River Tweed for the benefit of all communities and age groups across the catchment who wish to participate.

What TweedStart Offers

TweedStart is a progressive outdoor learning and community engagement programme that introduces young people, families, schools, and volunteers to the River Tweed and its natural environment.

The programme provides:

- Supervised outdoor learning sessions on the River Tweed and its tributaries.
- Introduction to river ecology, fish life cycles, habitats, and conservation.
- Practical angling instruction, including water safety and responsible practice.
- Hands-on activities such as river observation, species identification, and basic monitoring.
- Opportunities to participate in citizen science and conservation through Guardians of the Tweed.
- Volunteer development and pathways into accredited learning and coaching.

Participation is free, equipment is provided, and sessions are delivered locally to reduce travel barriers for rural communities. Activities are adaptable to different abilities and delivered by experienced staff with strong safeguarding procedures.

Progression Pathway for Young People and Volunteers

TweedStart is designed as a long-term progression programme rather than a series of one-off activities.

Young people are first introduced to the river environment through accessible TweedStart sessions delivered locally within schools and communities. From this early engagement, participants can progress into:

- Ongoing practical outdoor learning and conservation activities.
- Dynamic Youth Award accredited participation.
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award volunteering and skills sections.
- Guardians of the Tweed citizen science and conservation programmes.
- Volunteer assistant opportunities supporting younger participants and community sessions.
- Educational and recreational coaching qualifications and certification.
- Future Tweed Ambassador and community leadership roles within the Tweed catchment.

This progression model helps develop confidence, leadership, wellbeing, environmental understanding, and long-term stewardship of the River Tweed while building practical life and employability skills.

Specific Benefit to the CELCA Community

We appreciate the committee's concern regarding applications where only a small number of CELCA residents may benefit. TweedStart has been designed to ensure that the CELCA community receives direct and meaningful value from the funding requested.

The project would focus activity within communities across the CELCA catchment, including Duns, Greenlaw, Westruther, Swinton, Cranshaws, Ellemford, Longformacus, and surrounding rural communities connected to the River Tweed and its tributaries.

We would seek to work directly with schools and community organisations within the CELCA area, including:

- Berwickshire High School.
- Primary schools serving communities within the catchment area.
- Cranshaws, Ellemford and Longformacus Community Association.
- Local youth clubs and outdoor learning groups.
- Village halls and volunteer-led community organisations across Duns, Greenlaw, Westruther, and Swinton.
- Existing environmental and volunteer groups operating within the Tweed catchment.

The project would deliver practical environmental engagement, outdoor learning activities, volunteering opportunities, and community events that are accessible to local residents and young people within the CELCA area.

We anticipate engaging:

- Approximately 40–60 young people through school, youth, and outdoor learning activities during the first year.
- Around 5 local community groups and partner organisations.
- Between 50–100 wider community participants through events, volunteering opportunities, and public engagement activities.

How the Funding Would Be Used

The requested funding would directly support delivery of activities within the CELCA catchment area and help ensure participation remains free and accessible.

Funding would contribute towards:

- Staff time for delivery of supervised outdoor learning and engagement sessions.
- Equipment and safety resources required for practical river-based activities.
- Volunteer training and support.
- Delivery of accredited Dynamic Youth Award opportunities.
- Community outreach and partnership working with schools and local organisations.
- Development of progression routes into volunteering, conservation, and coaching certification.

The funding would therefore support an ongoing programme of community engagement, skills development, and environmental education rather than a one-off event.

Wider Community Impact

TweedStart delivers clear community benefit by investing in young people, strengthening wellbeing, and building long-term care for the River Tweed.

The programme strengthens community connections by bringing together young people, families, schools, volunteers, and local organisations around a shared local asset. It supports development of local volunteer assistants, builds pathways into conservation activity through Guardians of the Tweed, and helps ensure that environmental knowledge, practical skills, and stewardship remain within local communities.

Volunteers can also progress towards recognised coaching certification and develop specialist skills relating to aquatic invertebrates, freshwater fish ecology, river habitats, and environmental monitoring.

The programme benefits the community by improving young people's confidence, wellbeing, resilience, and understanding of the River Tweed while helping build long-term environmental stewardship and stronger community capacity across the CELCA catchment.

We hope this additional information demonstrates that the funding requested would provide direct and meaningful benefit to the CELCA community. While TweedStart supports wider communities along the Tweed, the programme is committed to ensuring that CELCA funding ensures residents have accessible opportunities to participate, develop skills, achieve recognised awards, volunteer locally, and contribute to the long-term stewardship of the River Tweed and its communities.