Organisation	Led by the Wild
Year founded	2018
Charitable status/registration number	Community Interest Company (CIC) 11650797
Presenter	Ali Body
Website	www.ledbythewild.co.uk

Organisation

Briefly describe your organisation (max 30 words).

Led by the Wild is a volunteer-powered community organisation restoring nature, transforming young lives and bringing people together to create thriving wildlife habitats and stronger, more connected communities.

What problem(s) does your organisation address? (max 150 words)

We are losing nature at an alarming rate. But we are also losing something equally precious: our connection to the natural world, to one another, and to our belief that we can make a difference.

Children grow up with fewer opportunities to experience wildlife. Young people facing disadvantage are too often excluded from meaningful opportunities to learn, contribute and belong. Communities want to help restore nature but lack the spaces, skills and support to act together.

These crises are interconnected. Nature loss, social isolation and inequality reinforce one another, while environmental action can feel overwhelming or inaccessible. Yet the problem is not that people don't care. It's that too often, they aren't given the opportunity to turn that care into action.

We exist to change that – creating places where people from different backgrounds can restore nature, build friendships, discover their capabilities and make a tangible difference together.

How do you address the problem(s) identified and how are the beneficiaries involved in developing the solution? (max 200 words)

Our 30-acre site in rural Kent is a living demonstration of what people can achieve together. We restore wildflower meadows, create ponds, protect ancient woodland, create wildlife habitats and nurture biodiversity.

But our volunteers bring their own stories. Many face loneliness, emotional wellbeing challenges or difficult life circumstances, including those seeking refuge and/or asylum. Through shared purpose, friendship and practical action, nature becomes a restoring force for people too.

The impact ripples outwards through our various programmes:
- Eco-Changemakers: supports children to actively learn about and restore wildlife habitats in their schools.
- Branching-Out: supports disadvantaged young people discover confidence, skills and

belonging.
- Our community conservation days, rural heritage craft workshops, family support activities and annual Wildcraft festival bring generations together, sharing skills, strengthening relationships and reconnecting people with nature.
All our projects are free at point of access, funded by philanthropic donations and supported by our volunteers.

Crucially, people aren't passive beneficiaries in any of our work. Children shape their projects, volunteers contribute their experiences and expertise, and communities help determine what happens next.

We provide the space, support and connections. Our communities create the change. And EVERY person involved has the potential to inspire someone else.

What relevant skills and experience does the leadership team have to achieve the organisation's objectives? (max 100 words)

Led by the Wild combines academic expertise, environmental leadership, practical conservation knowledge and deep community commitment.

Co-founder Dr Alison Body brings extensive experience in research, education, civic participation and environmental action, alongside senior charity leadership. Our wider team brings expertise in ecology, habitat restoration, rural heritage crafts, environmental education, community-engagement and supporting young people.

We are strengthened by skilled volunteers, conservation specialists and community partners who contribute knowledge, lived experiences and practical skills.

Our strength is combining professional expertise with grassroots commitment: a small, agile organisation capable of mobilising people, partnerships and resources to achieve impact far beyond its size.

Organisation at a glance:

Sustainable Development Goal addressed	**SDG 13 - Climate Action**
Theme(s) that best describe your work	**Education, Environment ,Health & wellbeing**
Beneficiaries	**Children & young people , Local community**
Country you work in	**United Kingdom, South East**
Number of FTE staff in your organisation	**2**
Number of volunteers in your organisation	**30**
Does you have a safeguarding policy in place?	**Yes**

Impact

How many people does your work directly benefit in a typical year? (number only)
2000

What evidence do you have that your solution is effective? (max 200 words)
Our impact can be seen in wildlife returning, landscapes recovering and people discovering what they can achieve together.

Nature is recovering. Five years of monitoring across our site show a 22% increase in recorded bumblebee numbers, a tripling in bird species and five fold increase in bio-density. Across the local community, volunteers have helped establish over 20 acres of wildflower meadow, plant more than 8,000 hedgerow trees, 6 edible gardens, 14 nature gardens and create 16 wildlife ponds supporting protected great crested newts.

Children are becoming changemakers. Last year, 329 children from ten schools participated in our year long Eco-Changemakers, helping reimagine their school grounds for wildlife, benefiting over 2,600 pupils. Of participating children, 96% loved or really enjoyed the experience, and 88% wanted to take further action.

Communities are connecting. We welcomed approximately 2,000 people last year, with 70% regular participants. Over 350 people joined traditional rural craft activities, sharing skills across generations. Participant rate us on average 4.9/5 and feedback shows over 90% report increased confidence, 86% increased wellbeing and 88% say they will take further action for nature.

Our volunteers underpin this impact, bringing experience, commitment and care, while finding opportunities for friendship, belonging and purpose themselves.

Finance

What was your total income, expenditure and surplus/deficit in the last three full financial years?

Financial year	Income (£)	Surplus/deficit (£)
31/10/2025	60,332	21,021
31/10/2024	53,051	18,891
31/10/2023	35,202	1,071

What is your projected income in the current financial year? (£)
75,000

What are your main sources of funding and how long are these secured for? (max 100 words)

Philanthropic sources:

Wates Foundation £10,000 (Restricted for Rural Ways - our Rural Heritage Crafts programme)

Reta Lila Howard Foundation £20,000 (Restricted Eco-Changemakers)

Kent Community Foundation £9,000 (Restricted for Community Conservation programme and volunteer programme)

Edina Trust £7,000 (Restricted for Eco-changemakers)

National Lottery Community Fund £19,800 (Restricted Branching Out)

Approx. £9,200 individual fundraising (unrestricted - from donations through annual Wildcraft festival (tickets are free, visitors can choose to donate), and community fundraising/ giving.

Our modest income belies our impact: community-based directors, including our CEO, voluntarily manage and lead the organisation, keeping overheads low and maximising resources for people and nature.

Do you have a reserves policy similar to as though your organisation was a registered charity?

Yes

What is your reserves policy and target level of free reserves? (max 100 words)

Led by the Wild maintains a reserves policy to support financial resilience and ensure continuity of our community and environmental programmes. We aim to hold £3000 in unrestricted free reserves, equivalent to approximately three months of essential operating costs. Given our volunteer model, this provides a modest financial buffer against unexpected expenditure, funding delays or fluctuations in income, helping us maintain our core activities and commitments. Our reserves target is proportionate to our size and operating model and is reviewed regularly as our programmes and financial responsibilities develop.

What were your actual free reserves in your last published accounts? (£)

3739

What is your current level of free reserves and date thereof? If applicable, please explain any material difference between current and target reserves levels (100 words)

Our current free reserves stand at £3900 as of 14/10/2026, against a target of £3,000. As a growing, community-led organisation, we have prioritised investing available resources directly into developing and delivering our environmental and community programmes. While we have successfully secured funding for specific projects, much of this income is restricted to programme delivery rather than supporting our core operating costs. Building our unrestricted reserves remains an important priority, enabling us to strengthen organisational resilience, support our volunteers and sustain the wider community impact of our work.

Connector funding proposal

Name of your proposal
The Ripple Effect: Restoring Nature, Restoring Lives

What is the purpose of the funding you are applying for?
Investing in organisational development / sustainability (staff capacity, fundraising etc)

How would you use the grant received from TFN? (max 450 words)
What if restoring a small patch of nature in a community space could change hundreds of lives? At Led by the Wild, we see how it can, everyday - with your help, we want to sustain and build that effect.

It starts with volunteers planting trees, restoring meadows or creating wildlife ponds. Nature recovers, but the impact reaches further. People work together, building relationships across social, economic and political divides. We nurture nature, and nature nurtures us.

Our adult volunteers range from 18 to 88, bringing diverse experiences, skills and circumstances. Some seek connection, wellbeing or belonging; others bring expertise they want to share. Alongside our young Eco-Changemakers (aged 5–18), they underpin our 30-acre nature restoration site in Kent and our work across surrounding communities.

Our volunteers expertise spans trees, bees, birds, dormice, reptiles and amphibians, alongside traditional rural crafts including willow weaving, flint knapping, natural pottery, green woodworking and spinning. Crucially, knowledge doesn't stay with the individual. We invest in volunteers developing new skills and support them to pass these on, particularly to the next generation.

While our wider conservation work welcomes everyone, our targeted programmes prioritise those facing the greatest barriers to accessing nature: disadvantaged schools, young people outside education and employment, refugees and people seeking asylum, and isolated communities. Through Eco-Changemakers, Branching Out, rural crafts and community conservation activities, volunteers share skills, build relationships and help people restore nature in their own communities.

This is our ripple effect: one person's knowledge, care and commitment creating opportunities for many others. Our impact evidence demonstrates that this approach already delivers measurable benefits for wildlife, children and communities.

Now we want to extend that impact, particularly into communities where opportunities to participate are most limited. But growing this work requires more than goodwill. Volunteers need coordination, training, equipment and ongoing support. Specialist knowledge needs developing and sharing. Building trusted relationships with disadvantaged communities takes time and resources.

We are asking The Funding Network to invest in the volunteer infrastructure that makes this all possible. Your support would enable us to recruit, train and retain more volunteers, develop specialist conservation and rural heritage skills, and equip volunteers to share their knowledge more widely.

It would strengthen our capacity to support more schools and community groups to restore their own green spaces, while creating opportunities for young people to develop confidence, practical experience and pathways towards green careers. Importantly, it would help us reach and sustain relationships with those who might otherwise be excluded.

Our ambition is to mobilise grassroots communities to take collective action on the climate and nature crises, building the skills, knowledge and confidence to drive lasting change – with benefits for both people and the natural world.

How does your proposal seek to achieve social justice? (max 150 words)

Environmental and social-justice are inseparable. Those facing the greatest inequalities often have the least access to nature, its benefits and opportunities to shape its future.

Our theory of change goes beyond providing access. We believe stronger, fairer communities are built when people discover what they share, recognise their own value and have opportunities to act together.

Our volunteers make this possible. They bring people together across generations, backgrounds and circumstances, sharing skills, building relationships and creating opportunities for collective action.

We deliberately prioritise disadvantaged schools, young people outside education and employment, refugees and people seeking asylum, and isolated communities. Our activities are free, removing financial barriers, while developing skills, confidence and pathways into further opportunities, including green careers.

By investing in volunteers, we extend this ripple effect into communities too often excluded from environmental action, not simply enabling people to benefit from nature, but empowering them to shape its future.

Sponsor Statement

“I know Dr. Ali Body as Director of Research and Development at Global Action Plan, and had no idea that she was running a charity on the side…

Led by the Wild started off with an extremely generous act – when Ali and her family inherited woodlands from an aunt but decided to not only use it for their own enjoyment but to open it to the public. Then going even further, they established a small charity which enables community, education and joy around this piece of land. Since 2018, Ali, her family, directors and friends have poured their hearts into creating opportunities for children, young or marginalised people to connect with nature – not just experiencing the wild but actively protecting and restoring it. I am so impressed by Ali, not just by her family’s first generous act, but by all that is done 100% voluntary, because she believes that wild spaces matter – for people, for wildlife and for the future of the planet.”