

Grantmaking and Climate Change: Our journey so far

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At John Ellerman Foundation, our environment category aims to contribute to greater harmony between people and the planet. We believe that a healthy and well-functioning environment is essential to the health and resilience of people and nature, and so concentrate our environment funding under two main headings:

- 1) Protecting the seas
- 2) Creating richer, more sustainable places on land.

Within these headings, we support work to reduce or prevent damaging effects of human activity, such as climate change, air pollution or pesticide use.

Our current climate related grants

We are proud to support climate related work within our grants portfolio. Our live grants portfolio is made up of 182 grants and 28% of these are for our environmental work. Last year we funded 16 climate related grants, this includes Climate Outreach, the Commitment, and the Climate Coalition. At present, our climate related grants equate to £618,000 in funds, with grants lasting around two years and worth on average £77,250. In the last four years, the number of climate related grants made has tripled. This growth mirrors the raised awareness within wider society about the urgent need for climate action. Within our wider environmental grantmaking, we are supporting work that also contributes towards climate change adaption and mitigation e.g., Marine Conservation Society and their Blue Carbon Economist post.

The majority of these grants are towards organisations that are considered to be medium-sized, with an income between £100,000 and £1m. However, we do fund one large organisation with an income between £1m and £10m.

We also fund a lot of work aimed at influencing the government and market. However, two grants are towards research (Campaign for Better Transport and Bright Blue), one is towards a climate training programme (Julie's Bicycle), and another focuses on expanding partnerships in the sector (Stop Climate Chaos Scotland).

The climate related grants focus on different aspects of climate change. Climate engagement is a common factor in them all, but their work is targeted towards issues like transport, air quality, land management, biodiversity, and sustainability.

What we hope to do in the future

On the face of it, it's easy to assume that the main way we address climate change is through our environmental grantmaking. By signing up to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change in November 2019, we have been taking a more holistic and strategic approach to the issue, which includes accelerating our work on improving the climate credentials of our endowment, which is invested in the markets, decarbonising our own operations, and investing in our own learning and understanding of this issue. In the future, we hope to make more grants related to climate change and support all our grantees across our three categories to become more sustainable e.g., by supporting those that haven't already to switch to renewable energy sources. Ultimately, we hope to use our influence and independence to work alongside others to tackle the climate emergency and continue our journey towards greater harmony between people and the planet.