



The Protecting the Wild Support Network

Fighting animal cruelty? We've got your back!

In 2023 Protect the Wild ('we/us/our') launched an Equipment Fund as part of our policy aim of '*empowering people to protect British wildlife*'. The fund provides hardware like body-cameras, radios, optics, trail-cams, camcorders and SD cards etc to otherwise unsupported groups to use in the field.

In the first nine months of the Equipment Fund we were privileged to provide equipment to thirteen groups up and down the country.

There is no cost whatsoever to the groups we've supported.

- '*Group*' means two or more individuals that regularly meet and go out into the field, and '*working on the ground*' means monitoring or sabbing hunts, shoots, or badger culling operations.
- '*Unsupported*' means largely voluntary, unfunded and not able to draw on the resources of a pre-existing funding Network.

The money for the equipment we provide comes entirely from paid subscriptions to our substack (<https://protectthewild.substack.com/>) – a blog/newsletter platform that lets us publish to the web, email, and the substack app simultaneously.

Substack is where we post our news, campaign updates, opinion pieces, and other articles/images/video.

While our content on substack is free, any supporter of Protect the Wild who wishes to can take out a monthly or annual paid subscription. **All paid subscriptions are ringfenced** and put into our equipment fund ‘pot’.

Funding for the equipment we provide comes entirely from that ‘pot’.

- **Funding for the Equipment Fund comes from a substack subscriber model and solely from our own audience.**

Our audience appreciates being kept informed. We post articles on Substack about every group we have funded and what equipment they have received (<https://protectthewild.substack.com/t/equipment-fund>). These articles are typically viewed more than 30000 times and almost always lead to new paid subscribers – so more money in the equipment ‘pot’ – and many motivating comments about the bravery etc of individuals and groups.

- Content is absolutely key to developing and building on what we can provide groups. We discuss this more below.

Building on the success of the Equipment Fund we launched the Protecting the Wild Support Network (‘Support Network’) in February 2024. We think of it as Equipment Fund 2.0 or Equipment Fund Plus!

The Support Network still provides equipment to groups via the Equipment Fund exactly as before, but we are now also offering groups in the Support Network **priority access** to equipment, **more promotion** through our own social media platforms, and **our help and support** whenever we are able to give it.

All we ask for in return is **the sharing of content** for our web platforms and social media (Why and what does that actually mean? Details are below.)

- **We are NOT looking for a formal arrangement.** We understand that groups value their independence and self-governance. We are not a 'club' or 'members group'. We have no interest in telling a group how to run itself and don't require a group to change their name or tactics.
- **There is no financial cost or charge** to be a part of the Support Network (in other words, no monthly or yearly subs, and no 'membership' fees). All costs are fully covered by Protect the Wild.
- Any group in the Network is of course entirely free to fundraise or accept donations from other sources without that having an effect on any funding provided by us.

The Support Network is managed by Protect the Wild and coordinated by Charlie Moores. Charlie can always be contacted via email (or WhatsApp, details on request).

Groups wishing to become a part of the Support Network must be approved by us.

- Groups can put themselves forward to be a part of the Support Network at any time by emailing Charlie at Network@protectthewild.org.uk or by using the Contact Form on our website at <https://protectthewild.org.uk/protecting-the-wild-support-network/>
- We welcome your suggestions on contacting groups you think might be interested in becoming a part of the Support Network.
- We will be publicising the Support Network ourselves, but we are fully aware of how sensitive some information is. We will always protect the groups we work with, refer only to group names not individuals, and will only ever name an individual with that individual's specific written permission.

We are determined to make good our vow that if you're fighting animal cruelty, we've got your back!



1) Why be a part of the Protecting the Wild Support Network?

No cost to groups. Prioritised access to the Equipment Fund. More support.

Our Support Network has no fees, gives prioritised access to the Protecting the Wild Equipment Fund, and ensures our ongoing support over the longer-term.

All costs are covered by Protect the Wild – always.

- The Support Network also acts as a 'pre-approval' system so that groups in the Network can be sure in advance that they have access to equipment or other support.
- Groups NOT part of the Support Network can still apply for equipment, but will be 'at the back of the queue' behind groups that are.

2) What will support look like?

Support for groups is offered in three key ways: Resource. Promotional. Personal.

1. **Resource Support** through the Protecting the Wild Equipment Fund (eg equipment, fuel vouchers),
2. **Promotional Support** through our platform (eg Substack, website, and our social media feeds).
3. and **Personal Support**.

Resource Support

Depending on the amount of funds in the Support Network 'pot' each group within the Network receives fuel e-cards at the start of each monitoring season and annual access to new equipment (eg radios, bodycams, trail cams, cameras etc) through the Protecting the Wild Equipment Fund.

- To try to ensure each group receives equal funding all equipment will be provided in terms of a calendar year. The year will begin from the first month the group receives equipment from us.
- Terms and conditions (including using any equipment we supply legally and in the manufacturer approved way) can be found at <https://protectthewild.org.uk/protecting-the-wild-equipment-fund/>.
- Fuel cards will be issued by Morrison's for use at their forecourts. We can't guarantee amounts at this stage but we hope a minimum of £100.
- To ensure fairness, all requests for equipment will still need to come through us as they do now. Any spending a group makes without prior approval will not be reimbursed as it will mean less funding being available to other groups in the Network.

Promotional Support

We have 500,000+ followers on Facebook, 77k followers on Twitter/X, 63k on TikTok, and 32k+ on Instagram. Over the 2023 Christmas period our messages on social media were viewed over **SIX million times**. Our longer-form news articles and opinion pieces posted on our Substack were viewed over **1 MILLION times** in January 2024.

A 'guest blog' could be hugely useful to create awareness about the work of a group or eg give details of a group's fundraiser. If you prefer to remain anonymous we could help you write a Secret Monitor post.

Again, there will be no cost to the group for this support whatsoever.

- While we can't publish all HIT reports and all incidents, we will typically promote the work of groups across our social media channels when material is sent to us.
- When a group sends us a link to their own site with a summary paragraph of their work it will be included in a weekly Protect the Wild recap 'Support Network' newsletter which is read by 35,000+ people.

- Specific incidents of eg a kill, a trespass, a conviction which we think will be of special interest to our supporters could be written up and posted on Substack (see eg **Derwent Hunt trespass** at <https://protectthewild.substack.com/p/caught-derwent-hunt-filmed-trespassing> or **Drone proves 'no trail laid' by Cheshire Hunt** at <https://protectthewild.substack.com/p/drone-proves-no-trail-laid-by-cheshire> – both those posts were each viewed over 40k times..
- If a group was interested in a publishing an 'end of season' summary we would publish that as an individual Substack post with links back to the group. We would also promote that summary across our social media platforms
- We will always help with formatting and editing etc, but to protect log ins and passwords from 'bad actors' we will publish any content ourselves.

Personal Support

While the Support Network will be essentially 'hands off', its success and your work matters to us a great deal so we will be available should you have questions, urgent requests etc, and will always respond as quickly as we can.

- We are not qualified to give legal advice but if we can use our experience and help as 'a listening ear' we will always do so.

3) How much funding might each group in the Support Network get?

While we can estimate levels of personal and promotional support, it is more difficult to say 'how much' each group will get over each calendar year in terms of equipment spend or fuel vouchers.

This is because:

- While we work hard to build up the number of our substack paid subscribers we can't be certain what that figure will be at a given point in time. In other words whilst we have £1,500/month going into the pot as of writing we can't know for certain what this figure will be in 6 months or a years time.

- We also don't know how many groups in total will be interested in becoming a part of the Support Network and how many times the 'pot' will need to be divided.

We will always make sure to be as fair as possible though and to ensure that every group is supported equally, regardless of size, location etc.

4) Might we provide cash to groups instead of equipment?

Sorry, no. As explained above all our funding for the Support Network comes directly from paying subscribers to our Substack.

We feel that providing fuel e-cards and equipment rather than cash allows us to report back to all our supporters exactly how that funding is being spent, and encourages more 'donations' – which of course benefits groups in the Support Network.

5) What is Protect the Wild asking for in return?

What's the catch? There really isn't one. Like you, we want to protect wildlife and we think supporting front line groups is a really good way to do that.

But as we say above 'content' is critical to the success of the Support Network because it will help drive up our paid subscriber numbers and grow the 'pot' of funding available to groups.

In return for our support we ask therefore that groups 'support' us by sharing content like blogs, HIT reports, or images and video footage for us to publish on our substack and/or social media feeds.

We think of it as a 'virtuous circle'. Sharing content means we support you, you support us, paid subscriber numbers go up, everyone in the Network benefits, and more wildlife can be protected.

Content also demonstrates to a wider audience the issues that we and groups in the Support Network are working to address (illegal hunting, raptor persecution, the badger cull etc).

- 'Sharing' works two ways. Posting on our platform helps grow the Support Network but is also a great way for groups to promote themselves and their work protecting wildlife to our audience.
- We will help with all formatting etc.
- Because we know our audience and what 'works' for them, we may suggest edits to content sent to us – we will not publish any edited content without checking it over with the author first.
- Copyright of all content remains with the group and will only be used with the group's permission, but we would hope to be able to use that content while the copyright owner is a part of the Support Network.
- Sharing in this way also helps us understand which groups are interested in working with us and helps us plan articles and campaigns.

6) Leaving the Support Network

Groups are not 'tied' to the Support Network in any way. Being a part of the Support Network is entirely voluntary and a group can leave at any time, but **prioritised support** will of course stop once a group leaves.

- To protect the integrity of the Support Network we reserve the right to ask a group to leave the Network: this would be only, for example, because of using equipment illegally, not fairly sharing content, or bringing the Network or Protect the Wild into disrepute etc.
- We may also have to close down the Support Network completely if it becomes apparent that it is not working as envisaged or there is little interest or interaction with groups. We'll work hard to stop that from happening, but were we to reach that point we would ensure no group is left 'out of pocket' or without equipment that has been promised to them.

Comments?

You're busy – we know that – but if you have any comments or suggestions, particularly on how we can help you or support you better, please let us know.

If you like the ideas behind this and don't mind saying so, we would of course be very grateful for any credited one-line 'endorsements' that we could use in emails and on our social media channels.

Thank you.