

Working with Nature Awards 2026

Terms & Conditions & Judging Criteria

Overview

The Powerscourt *Working with Nature Awards* recognise and celebrate individuals, community groups, small businesses and organisations across the island of Ireland who are actively contributing to the protection, restoration and promotion of nature.

The Awards aim to highlight impactful work and provide a platform to share stories that inspire wider environmental action.

Award Categories

1. Biodiversity & Rewilding

Recognising projects protecting and restoring ecosystems across land and water, including habitat restoration, regenerative farming, native planting and biodiversity initiatives.

This category recognises people, small businesses, small farmers or projects protecting & restoring biodiversity (all ecosystems - land & waterbodies). **Examples** – Nature restoration projects, designating areas for wildflowers, small farmers & community farmers - organic & regenerative farming, tree & native species planting and water protection projects. Community bee hives, wildflower meadows & community green spaces.

Subcategory options:

- Habitat restoration
- Pollinator initiatives
- Community biodiversity
- Housing Estates (community initiatives)
- Land management
- Restoring waterways (river catchment).
- Innovation / research

2. Nature Media

Recognising storytelling and creative work that raises awareness of nature and inspires connection, including film, photography, writing, podcasts, visual arts and digital media.

This category recognises people, small businesses, projects, initiatives or organisations creating any public facing media & storytelling - visual or other which highlights the biodiversity crisis challenges & solutions and inspires people's love of nature. **Example** – Documentaries, films, TV series, photography, visual arts, books, poetry, podcasts, craft, painting, dance, songs, music scores, musicals, creative writing, online media & exhibitions.

Subcategory options:

- Photography
- Film / documentary
- Journalism / writing
- Social media / campaign
- Podcast / audio / music
- Creative & visual arts.

3. Nature Education & Wellbeing

Recognising initiatives that educate and reconnect people with nature, including community programmes, guided experiences, nature-based wellbeing and learning initiatives.

This category recognises people, projects, initiatives, organisations or communities educating people on the wonders of nature, helping people reconnect with nature for health and wellbeing. **Example** - Community-based nature groups, community-based foraging walks, nature education programmes, nature & health education programmes, mindful experiences in nature.

Subcategory options:

- Schools / youth programmes
- Community engagement
- Workshops / experiences

Timeline – 2026

- **26th March, Thursday:** Nominations open online for 8 weeks.
- **3rd June, Wednesday:** Nominations close.
- **8th June, Monday:** Shortlist announced.
- **2nd July, Thursday:** Event at Powerscourt to announce winners.

Eligibility & Nominations

- Nominations may be submitted by individuals, organisations or members of the public for their chosen individual, project or organisation.
- Self-nominations can also be made.
- Previous nominees are encouraged to reapply and outline progress made in the past 12 months.
- Projects must be **beyond the concept stage** and demonstrate tangible impact.
- It is recommended that projects are established for a minimum of six months.

Projects may be relevant to multiple categories. Applicants should select the most appropriate category. Judges may reassign entries where necessary.

Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit:

- A completed application form

Additional submission material:

- A **60–90 second video submission***

Please note:

- *Video submissions do **not influence shortlisting decisions**
- Videos will be used to support promotion and onsite showcasing
- Short follow-up questions may be issued during judging for the shortlist

Use of Materials

By submitting an entry, applicants agree that all submitted materials (text, images and video) may be used by Powerscourt Estate for promotional and communications purposes.

Awards & Recognition

Each category winner will receive:

- A bespoke award crafted from Powerscourt Estate wood
- A €500 bursary

An overall “**Outstanding Nature Protector**” will also be selected.

Judging Process

Entries will be reviewed by an independent judging panel.

- A shortlist of **3-5 organisations / projects per category** will be selected
- Shortlisted projects will be assisted with filming videos of their project, organisation for showcasing onsite at Powerscourt.
- The judges’ decision is final

Core Judging Criteria (All Categories)

All entries are assessed using a consistent framework:

Criteria	Weight
Impact & Outcomes	30%
Action & Delivery	20%
Community & Engagement	15%
Understanding of Nature / Systems	15%
Communication & Clarity	10%
Future Potential	10%

Category-Specific Judging Criteria

Biodiversity & Rewilding

Judges will consider:

- Evidence of habitat restoration or species support
 - Measurable ecological impact (even small scale)
 - Monitoring or tracking of biodiversity
 - Community involvement
 - Long-term sustainability and systems thinking
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Nature Media

Judges will consider:

- Audience reach and engagement
- Ability to communicate environmental issues clearly
- Creativity and originality

- Influence on awareness or behaviour
 - Strength of storytelling
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Nature Education & Wellbeing

Judges will consider:

- Impact on learning and understanding of nature
 - Evidence of wellbeing benefits
 - Participation and inclusivity
 - Strength of programme or experience
 - Long-term engagement and behavioural change
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Judging Guidance

- Projects do not need to meet all criteria
 - Small-scale projects can score highly
 - Impact is prioritised over scale or budget
 - Judges may reassign categories where appropriate
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General

Powerscourt Estate reserves the right to amend these Terms & Conditions if required.

Powerscourt Estate also reserves the right to **review and decline the use of any submitted content**, including video, images or written materials, that is deemed inappropriate, offensive, misleading, or not aligned with the values of the Working with Nature Awards.