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31<sup>st</sup> October 2016

## Notice of meeting:

### Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm,  
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford

## AGENDA

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<b>14.</b>	<b>Proposed dates of meetings for 2017:</b>  JAC 2pm Monday: (TBC) 6 <sup>th</sup> March, 3 <sup>rd</sup> July and 6 <sup>th</sup> November.  To be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council, Coleford.	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

# **WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Local Authority Members with Voting Powers**

#### **Gloucestershire:**

P. McMahon  
P. Molyneux

#### **Herefordshire:**

P. Cutter  
B. Durkin  
J. Hardwick  
E.J. Swinglehurst

#### **Monmouthshire:**

D. Blakebrough  
D. Dovey  
E.J. Hackett Pain  
A.E. Webb

#### **Forest of Dean:**

G. Davies  
B. Hogan

### **Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers**

Councillor B. Evans – Gloucestershire Association of Town / Parish Councils  
D. Berry – Herefordshire Association Local Councils  
Councillor Trevor Phillips – One Voice Wales

### **Co-opted Members with Voting Powers**

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire  
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire  
Mr. B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire  
S. Dereham – Country Land and Business Association  
M. Price – National Farmers Union

### **Co-opted Members without Voting Powers**

B. Barron – Wye Valley Society  
S. Dereham – River Wye Preservation Trust  
A. Lee – Recreation Sector  
D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector  
A. Nixon – Local Wildlife Trusts  
D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

## **Public Information**

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### **Welsh Language**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Sustainable and Resilient Communities

### Outcomes we are working towards

#### **Nobody Is Left Behind**

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

#### **People Are Confident, Capable and Involved**

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

#### **Our County Thrives**

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

### Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

### Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee  
held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford  
on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillor: P. Cutter (Chairman) (Herefordshire Council)

**Elected Members (with voting powers)**

**Monmouthshire County Council**

Councillors: D. Blakebrough, D. Dovey and A. Webb

**Gloucestershire County Council**

Councillor P. Molyneux

**Forest of Dean Council**

Councillor G. Davies

**Co-opted Members (with voting powers)**

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire - Mr. A. Thomas

Country Land and Business Association - Mr. S.W.B. Dereham

National Farmers Union - Mr. M. Price

One Voice Wales - Councillor T. Phillips

**Co-opted Members (without voting powers)**

Recreation Sector - Mr. A. Lee

Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron

Local Tourism Sector - Mr. D. Broadbent

**Technical Advice Officers**

Wye Valley AONB Officer - Mr. A. Blake

Gloucestershire County Council - Mr. R. Niblett

Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. R. Williams

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor E. Hackett Pain, Councillor P. McMahon, Councillor B. Durkin, Councillor J. Hardwick, Councillor Ms. E.J. Swinglehurst, Mr. B. Nash, Ms. H. Stace, Mr. J. Bisset, Ms. H. McDowell, Mr. A. Nixon and Mr. M. Lewis.

**1. Election of Chairman**

We elected Councillor P. Cutter as Chair.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

We appointed Councillor A.E. Webb as Vice-Chair.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

The following Councillors declared interests as Planning Committee Members of their respective authorities in matters that may arise relating to development control issues:

Councillor P. Cutter

### **4. Confirmation of minutes**

The minutes of the meeting dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **5. Public Question Time**

No questions were raised by members of the public.

### **6. Future Landscapes Wales Programme**

We received a report regarding the outcomes and proposals to date of the Future Landscapes Wales Programme addressing the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM, Chair of the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, had delivered an interim report to the outgoing Minister for Natural Resources just before the Welsh Assembly election in May 2016.
- The Future Landscapes Wales Project Groups had recently presented their current findings to the Working Group.
- There is a new draft Vision for Wales' Designated Landscapes and a number of proposals that will be considered further in preparation for Lord Ellis-Thomas's final report later in the year.
- A provisional response to the main implications for the Wye Valley AONB is provided in the report.
- The new Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, has endorsed the Future Landscapes Wales Programme and attended part of the recent Working Group meeting.
- There is some concern that the term 'natural beauty' is not referred to in the vision, as this remains in the founding legislation. It was considered that this term should be included.



## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Feedback to Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM was required today in order to allow him to present his response to the Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, later in the summer.
- There will be opportunities in the future to feed into the process when the Minister responds in the autumn of 2016.
- Land management in the Wye Valley and other Designated Landscapes in Wales was an issue that needed to be addressed.
- There was a need to strengthen links with the voluntary sector.
- It was considered that the vision required some amendment as it was currently a statement of facts and did not state what was intended.

We resolved to:

- (i) note the report and the views expressed;
- (ii) welcome the options and proposals presented to the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group;
- (iii) endorse the provisional response to the Briefing Papers;
- (iv) support the continued involvement of the AONB Officer in opportunities to shape the future of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

#### **7. Annual Report AONB Unit 2015/16**

We received a report and table of achievements for the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the Annual Report on contracted Planning consultants' work for the AONB Unit for 2015/16.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The 2015/16 Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit.
- A number of staffing issues and illness had impacted on the achievements of the AONB Unit but a high standard of activity had been maintained.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning Department was contracted to provide advice to the AONB Unit on strategic planning documents and development issues, and where necessary prepare appropriate responses for the AONB Unit.
- The expectation that the AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, comments on Planning Applications has increased in recent years, as has the number of pre-application enquiries.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

Having received the report, it was noted that, the AONB Officer had been consulted with regard to the construction of the Water Monitoring Station between Redwood and Monmouth. However, this matter had not gone through the planning process but consent proposals had been issued.

We resolved to welcome the Annual Reports of AONB and the achievements for 2015/16.

#### **8. AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour**

We received a report regarding the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Traditionally the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is held on the last Friday of September, but in recent years this has clashed with various local authority meetings.
- This year the date is set at 23<sup>rd</sup> September where there appears to be no conflicting Council meetings.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- It was intended to invite the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) to join the Tour. However, the date clashes with a full NPA meeting. A separate invitation will be made to visit the Wye Valley AONB.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016, which is the second year of this week celebrating AONBs.

We resolved to:

- (i) note the date of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016 for the Study Tour.
- (ii) encourage a good attendance on the Tour.
- (iii) extend an invitation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for a hosted visit to the Wye Valley AONB.

#### **9. Undergrounding update**

We received a report regarding the undergrounding work of overhead powerlines.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Western Power Distribution (WPD) works in collaboration with the AONB Unit on identifying a programme of undergrounding electricity power-lines in the AONB.
- WPD requires the Joint Advisory Committee to approve new undergrounding schemes prior to further investigation and evaluation work taking place.
- The new proposed schemes requiring Joint Advisory Committee approval are for power lines across Coppett Hill and between Penterry and Reddings Farm near Tintern.
- Two previously approved schemes are still being investigated for potential undergrounding.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- It is not possible to provide details of the timescales involved before undergrounding work could commence, as Western Power Distribution needs to assess the schemes to ensure that they are viable.
- Western Power Distribution operates a rolling programme for assessment of potential sites for undergrounding.
- Undergrounding tends to be a relatively simple process of trenching, with public footpaths only likely to be blocked for a short period of time. However, public footpaths will be temporarily diverted, if required.
- In response to a Committee member's question, it was noted that 7,600metres of electricity lines had already been undergrounded in the Wye Valley AONB with an investment of £600,000 undertaken by Western Power Distribution and its predecessor.

We resolved to endorse the programme of undergrounding work including the new schemes at Coppett Hill, Reddings Farm and Penterry.

#### **10. Wye Valley River Festival 2016 initial evaluation**

We received a report regarding the achievements and the initial evaluation of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The Wye Valley River Festival journeyed through the AONB from Hereford to Chepstow between 29<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016, celebrating nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye, and the global connections that water brings us.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm

- There were over 28,000 visits or acts of engagement in over 30 Wye Valley River Festival events.
- This second Festival was organised by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and a professional Festival Management team with an overall budget of £200,000, working with arts professionals and conservationists in collaboration with local communities.
- A wide variety of organisations and communities supported the Festival including many hours of volunteer time and sizable financial contributions from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, Shire Hall Monmouth, Environment Agency, Ernest Cook Trust, Forestry Commission, New Grove Trust, Ross Town Council, and a significant range of smaller donations and commercial sponsorship.
- A great many people dedicated time and energy to making the Wye Valley River Festival such a broad, innovative and enjoyable series of events.
- A full evaluation of the Festival is being undertaken to appraise lessons learned and whether the original proposal to establish a biennial Festival remains a viable option.

Having received the report, it was noted that the event had been a success, especially the events that were connected to local communities. It was hoped that a further River Festival will be held in 2018.

We resolved to note the success of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

#### **11. National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI)**

We received a report in which the Committee was informed of the opportunities to develop projects in Walford, Goodrich and Marstow Parishes through the National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) and Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- National Grid surveyed all AONBs and National Parks which have National Grid overhead electricity lines or substations within their area.
- National Grid established the Visual Impact Provision (VIP) to mitigate the visual impact of National Grid's infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected landscapes in 30 National Parks and AONBs.
- The Wye Valley AONB has 4.1km of National Grid overhead high voltage powerlines, in the Parishes of Walford and Marstow and 2.5km of lines already undergrounded under the Wye in front of Goodrich Castle.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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- The Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) allows the AONB Partnership to apply for 75% funding to deliver significant benefits that enhance the landscape and reduce the visual impact on the ground of the National Grid infrastructure.
- The scheme does not relate to the smaller pylons that go through Walford and Marstow and over the river, as these are Wester Power Distribution cables.
- National Grid is working in four other National Parks and AONBs to underground dominant powerlines currently on pylons.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 12. National AONB Conference

We received a report in which the Committee were updated on the recent Landscapes for Life 2016 National AONB Conference.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Three representatives from the AONB Partnership had attended the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference, held between Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, based in Lilleshall National Sports and Conferencing Centre.
- Sharing, Learning, Inspiring were the themes of the conference, focusing on the case for natural beauty in relationship to the health and wellbeing of society.
- The Wye Valley AONB hosted a Field Trip on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016, a Briefing session was held on Greg Dunn's PhD work in the Wye Valley and there was a plenary presentation MindSCAPE project.
- The Conference had been very interesting and successful with a good turnout.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 13. AONB Reports / Partner Progress

We were provided with details of activity of the AONB Unit and other partners in respect of the following initiatives:

- LEMUR+ placements and Phase 1 Habitat mapping.
- Youth Rangers: 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort.
- MindSCAPES, into year 3.
- AONB Farming Awards 2016 – applications close on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm

- Ross Riverside, collaboration with Ross Town Council via the AONB LEMUR+ placements.
- Wye Valley Woodland project with Deer Initiative, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Natural Resources Wales and Woodland Trust.
- Potential historic / archaeological project along Offa's Dyke, in partnership with Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Nexus Heritage, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and University of Chester.
- Forestry Commission - Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Deer Project Area.

Having received the report, the following points were noted.

- Diane McCrea, Chair of Natural Resources Wales, visited the AONB and was taken around the Wye Valley. She was introduced to the work that the AONB Partnership was undertaking and was impressed with the progress being made.
- The AONB Officer informed the Committee that his presentation to the Brecon Beacons National Park had been well received and was webcast and available to view.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### 14. Next meeting

We noted that the next meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford, on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 2.00pm.

**The meeting ended at 3.45 pm**

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES' CONTRIBUTIONS 2017/2018

### *Purpose*

To request contributions from the four constituent local authorities to the budget for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership for 2017/2018 as outlined in the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC request from the constituent local authorities the agreed financial contributions for the Wye Valley AONB.

### *Key Issues*

- The AONB Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the AONB Partnership up to and including 2017/18.
- Prior to the MoU in 2015 the JAC annually recommended to the constituent local authorities the contribution required for the continued effective operation, management and governance of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- The contributions from the local authorities form the foundation to the budget managed by the AONB Unit.
- Defra and Natural Resources Wales grant offer letters are appended to the MoU, with offers up until 2020 and 2018 respectively.
- For every £1 of Local Authority contribution the AONB Unit has levered in over £8 on average in recent years.

### *Reasons*

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides a framework for the delivery of duties and obligations in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) arising from Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 including the operation and management of the AONB Partnership and the AONB Unit. The MoU is intended to give medium term security to the AONB Partnership and sets out a shared vision for, and commitment to, AONB management by the funding local authority partners. The MoU outlines the functions of the AONB Unit and the expectations on all parties to achieve the shared vision, which includes the understanding that:

- AONB management structures should be strongly supported by partners and relevant authorities.
- the statutory requirement to produce a Management Plan provides an important opportunity to strengthen partnerships and achieve better outcomes.
- security of funding and flexibility of funding for the AONB will deliver better outcomes.
- there should be a “can do” culture which is not risk-averse but where lessons from novel approaches are encouraged and learnt from, in both success and failure.
- monitoring of environmental outcomes is essential and needs to be undertaken to develop a sound, spatially-relevant evidence base.

- opportunities should be taken to maximise the synergies between the outcomes of the Management Plan with the plans of other Parties, and of the wider Protected Landscape network.

### ***Implications***

The following Local Authority partner contributions were outlined in the MoU. They are based on land area in the AONB in an established historical formula.

<b>Funding Partner</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Herefordshire Council	£23,860
Monmouthshire County Council	£15,716
Forest of Dean District Council	£5,826
Gloucestershire County Council	£3,600
<b>Total LA contributions</b>	<b>£49,002</b>

The proposed base budget for the AONB Unit for 2017/18 is £285,177 (down from £317,538 in 2013/14) and includes the anticipated Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Wales. The local authority contributions receive up to 75% match-funding for core AONB initiatives from Defra and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Defra and NRW have provided funding offers up until 2020 and 2018 respectively. For 2017/18 the Defra and NRW grants will be £126,234 and £52,210 respectively. The remainder of the AONB budget is made up from income from other sources.

In addition during 2015/16 the AONB Unit is managing partnership projects totalling £183,508, including MindSCAPES, the Wye Valley River Festival, LEMUR+ Trainees and the AONB Youth Rangers programme. These externally funded projects extend the work of the AONB Unit and allow project investment as well as some elements of cost recovery. Currently the contracts for the two LEMUR+ Trainees are being extended with funding from Natural England for project work on the Garren and Gamber brooks and works on Ross riverside with Ross Town Council. The development and delivery of externally funded projects will continue into 2017/18 and beyond. Over recent years for every £1 of Local Authority contributions the AONB Unit has levered in more than £8.

The AONB Unit is constantly reviewing the structure and delivery of services in the AONB alongside income streams. Some members of staff are already working reduced hours. However, based on current budget projections the AONB Unit will need to downsize during 2018/19 from 5 core posts to 4. It is hoped that this can be accommodated through voluntary redundancy or retirement. The AONB Steering Group ensures that staff and resources are maximised and operational structures are fit for the future in the face of ongoing budgetary pressures. However the focus remains on consolidating the activity of the core AONB Unit to maximise the leverage and spend on the delivery of initiatives that fulfil the statutory purpose of the AONB designation and benefit the landscape and local communities in the Wye Valley.

### ***Background***

Each Local Authority has a statutory Duty of Regard towards the purposes of AONBs under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. A considerable amount of the AONB Unit's core and project work (planning / promotion / advice / preparation & delivery of the Management Plan etc.) goes towards supporting each Local Authority in fulfilling its Duty of Regard. Through project delivery the AONB Unit also supports the Local Authorities' Statutory Duty for biodiversity under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.



TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2016 INITIAL EVALUATION

### *Purpose*

To present the Evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and seek endorsement to commence developing a Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC

- A. welcomes the evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and the conclusions and lessons learned
  
- B. endorses commencing the development process for a Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

### *Key Issues*

- The full evaluation reports of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 have been completed and are appended.
- There are a number of lessons learned and conclusions in the reports that are being assimilated by the AONB Unit and the Festival Development Team.
- The summary evaluation of the 2016 Festival is that it was a success, achieving, and in many instances, exceeding its targets and introducing several innovations and exemplars.
- The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was Highly Commended at the Visit Herefordshire Awards for Excellence 2016 in the Best Festivals & Events (Community) category, which was won by the Hereford River Carnival, part of the Wye Valley River Festival.
- The original proposal to run a biennial Festival in 2014, 2016 and 2018 remains a viable option.
- In order to repeat the previous levels of success, work needs to commence promptly on the research, development and fund raising for a Wye Valley River Festival in 2018.
- The proposed theme for a 2018 Festival is Trees and woodland, which shroud and define the Wye Valley in the AONB and follow the River almost continuously for 30 miles.
- Consideration will also need to be given to the most appropriate delivery model for any Wye Valley River Festival after 2018.

### *Reasons*

The Evaluation and Reflection Report of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was compiled by the Festival Director (attached) and concludes that the Festival exceeded its targets and overall was a considerable success. The Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at University of Gloucestershire produced the Final Evaluation report (also attached) based on the analysis of 148 audience feedback forms and 35 responses from Festival performers, participants and crew as well as 6 in-depth interviews. It is clear from the largely

positive comments of both audience and participants that the aims of the Festival were achieved: to create high quality inclusive art ‘of’ and ‘in’ the landscape which was immersive and interpreted the Wye Valley.

The Hereford River Carnival won the Best Festivals & Events (Community) and the Wye Valley River Festival was Highly Commended at the Visit Herefordshire Awards for Excellence 2016 at Eastnor Castle on Tuesday 20th September. That is double praise and recognition for all the creative effort that went into the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

The proposed theme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is Trees and Woodland. The AONB Management Plan identifies Woodlands, Ancient Trees and Orchards as three of the Special Qualities of the AONB. The woodlands shroud and define the Wye Valley throughout the AONB and follow the River almost continuously for about 30 miles from Goodrich to Chepstow. Meanwhile there are nearly 2,400 veteran trees recorded in the AONB. By 2018 the impact of Chalara / Ash Dieback may also be more pronounced and the importance. Therefore the River Festival would be an opportune moment to celebrate the significance of trees and woodland in the nature, culture, landscape and life of the Wye Valley.

### ***Implications***

There are many lessons to be learned, outlined in the evaluation reports. Importantly, the capacity of the Festival team was stretched during the Festival fortnight. However many of the best innovations were in the engagement processes with schools and community groups in creative events building up to the Festival itself. This also helped build anticipation, awareness and enhanced the local audiences through attracting ‘friends & family’ to attend.

A key finding is that the Festival research and development needs to start as early as possible and build more consistently throughout the run up to the Festival fortnight itself. Promotion and publicity also need to start earlier, with sufficient dedicated resources. Consequently the fundraising and application bids also need to start promptly.

The original Business Plan envisaged that by the 2018 Festival an international element would be introduced to the Festival.

### ***Background***

The inaugural Wye Valley River Festival was held over 2 weeks in early May 2014. The second Wye Valley River Festival was held over 2 weeks in late April and early May 2016. The original Business Plan envisaged establishing a biennial Festival initially in 2014, 2016 and 2018.



## WVRF 2016 Evaluation and Reflection Report

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*“Landscapes are living realities in continuous transformation ... a source of creativity and change.”* International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes ICOMOS-IFLA 2009

Compiled by Phillippa Haynes on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership

Photographs by Jack Offord, Paul Blakemore and Phillippa Haynes

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## Festival Overview

The Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) is an ambitious arts & environment festival that aims to celebrate, unite and excite the communities of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and enthuse and entice those beyond it.

The Wye Valley River Festival is a biennial festival inspired by the landscape and led by arts professionals collaborating with the people who live and work in the Wye Valley AONB. It is a festival with intentions to inspire and challenge, changing the way we look at ourselves and how we see things, how we relate to our environment, neighbourhoods and to each other. A stimulating and enthralling programme of shows, performances, spectacle installations and public debate that happen in exciting and unusual places - a combination of wonderful events, large and small interventions and sometimes international exchanges, with something new and exciting to move and stimulate us all. WVRF brings local people, environmentalists and talented artists together in an internationally important landscape, in a creative exploration of what is possible.

*“It is a very inspiring and imaginative combination that makes you see the world in a different way.”*  
Sue Parkinson - education co-ordinator WVRF2016

The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership initiative with funding from the Sustainable Development Fund, a Welsh Government Initiative in the Wye Valley AONB, The Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, supported by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, Environment Agency, Ernest Cook Trust, Forestry Commission England, New Grove Trust, Ross Town Council and in-kind support from Hereford River Carnival, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, Mon Teas, National Museum of Wales, Chepstow Racecourse, numerous volunteers and local communities; main business sponsor Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire, who also sponsored the Festival’s promotion at The British Travel and Tourism Show; media sponsors Sunshine Radio and Live 24-Seven; Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism Association and Old Station, Tintern. The Caravan of Myths and Legends was sponsored by Puzzlewood and the Caravan of Curiosities and Hydrosities was sponsored by Monnow Voice. Special thanks to land owners at Herefordshire Council, Ross Town Council, The Tump Lydbrook, the Slaughters Biblins, Vauxhall Fields Monmouth, Redbrook Bridge, Llandogo Riverside, Old Station Tintern and Chepstow Racecourse who granted access to make these events possible.



## The Vision “Landscape defines history and history defines culture”

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Landscape is about the relationship between people and place, the interaction between nature and culture. The Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) aims to create an arts & environment festival with landscape at its heart. By staging magnificent outdoor arts events that captivate and engage, we will celebrate and interpret the river, the countryside and its communities, using the arts to develop thinking, imagination and understanding, building new audiences and strengthening the vital role that culture will play in the future development and ‘place making’ of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our strategy is to create three biennial arts festivals in 2014, 2016 & 2018, and potentially beyond, that will challenge, inspire, amaze, and engage new audiences, whilst promoting positive change and environmental awareness. It will not be curated in the traditional way - buying in existing shows - but will develop and devise bespoke work with artists well versed in creative community engagement, consolidating these relationships and energising the wider partnerships, networks and connections. This is an ambitious and forward thinking long term project, which has quality, place and engagement at its heart. We believe that a quality arts and environment program will bring communities together to be inspired and learn about themselves and the world around them.

“Art is a great and inclusive way to deliver environmental messages” Audience Member

“The festival helped deliver some of the Environment Agency's aims and objectives to promote the River Wye for recreation and raise environmental awareness. The River Wye was the heart and soul of the festival and this was very much reflected in the events that took part.

Lynn Bulbeck - Environment Agency

“What is outstanding about the festival – the seriousness with which the integrity of the artistic quality is paralleled by the importance given to conveying environmental messages and engaging people with the environment”

Annie Grundy - Articulture WVRF2016

## Wye Valley River Festival 2014

The inaugural Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) was held in May 2014, launching in Hereford on May 3rd and finishing in Chepstow on May 18th. The first Festival celebrated nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye by presenting high quality and affecting arts events and activities and exploring the contemporary issues facing the river and its communities today. The main artistic programme reflected, enhanced and supported the parallel and integrated community arts and heritage based activities, and a wider community programme of smaller, local new and existing events that came under the WVRF brand. The Festival aimed to develop the capacity of communities, to progress the event in a meaningful way, develop partnerships for the future, test out ideas, concepts and possibilities, and this all succeeded in extraordinary ways. The issues around ‘invasive species’ drove a central narrative.

The WVRF2014 was a great success, it achieved its goals and many valuable lessons were learnt along the way which were taken into the second Wye Valley River Festival in 2016

WVRF2014 attracted audiences of nearly **20,000** and engaged over **1,500** artists and participants, plus over **150** people attended training or workshop sessions.

With a budget of £125,000 the estimated net contribution to the local economy was at least **£275,000**. The ‘Overall quality of the event’ was rated as Good or Excellent by 98% of respondents to feedback surveys. 65% learned something more about the area because of the event. 16% were inspired to ‘Attend other arts events’ and 99% thought the River Festival was a good idea.

‘The best interpretive event EVER’

Andrew Nixon – AONB Development Officer (2014)

“I think this Festival will develop within a few years to be a well-known ‘destination’ festival that visitors will look forward to, and that will inspire a lot of loyalty in participants and spectators alike”.

Jo Henshaw – Hereford River Carnival (2014)

The WVRF2014 evaluation produced invaluable base-line data and recommendations which we took forward into the second phase.

## Wye Valley River Festival 2016



The second Wye Valley River Festival again grew out of the collaboration between the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and the Artistic Directors, Desperate Men Theatre Company- Jon Beedell and Richard Headon and Festival Director, Phillippa Haynes. The objective of the 2016 Festival was to build upon our solid foundation and to grow at a reasonable and realistic pace. Water and the River as a Global Artery was investigated as the theme that was developed through the Research and Development (R&D) process. This brought together a number of artists with eminent local environmentalists and water specialists to debate issues, exchange watery experiences and explore opportunities. These were then proposed and refined with local community movers and shakers.

*95% of the world's water is salt water in the oceans, the remaining 5% fresh water-most of which is locked in ice or deep underground. Life on earth relies on 0.03% of the world's fresh water to survive.*

This fact inspired the artistic response from the core team; The Water Ones, the Wye Serai caravans and the magical tea making Samovar were born.

The artistic and environmental programme was extended to include expanded outreach and more installations. We aimed to increase audience engagement to 25,000 and encourage repeat visits throughout the Festival and also to strengthen the Festival identity.



*"I am inspired by creating theatre in unusual settings that engages ordinary people in extraordinary ways. I believe at its best, it can connect, inform and inspire"*

*Richard Headon - Desperate Men*

*"There is an intimacy with outdoor audiences in sharing a space and time where many things are beyond our control. This is what makes it exciting"*

*Jon Beedell - Desperate Men*



The Festival launched in Hereford on Friday 29th April 2016 and closed on Chepstow on Sunday 15th May. There was activity on all 17 days of the Festival. The Festival was a glorious creative series of outdoor events embracing innovative artistic work that inspired and challenged, with 23 core artists driving the content.

**WVRF2016** encompassed **28** events, at 28 venues on sites from Hereford to Chepstow. We exceeded all our targets: Achieving **29,800+** people attending events. **1,200** school children were involved in our workshop programme.

In addition **1,098** children had Wye Serai school visits with the Ensemble for half a day each. **539** young people worked with artists to create the flags which decorated the Festival sites. A further **300+** people participated in community training/workshops. **1000** origami birds were made by over **200** local people from a variety of community groups which were used in one of the installations. A whole community, young and old contributed to the other installation. **328** people took part in the walking/story project.

**220+** local singers, musicians and performers were involved in the performances

**250+** torchbearers were involved in the Llandogo procession with a further **50** volunteer torchbearers involved throughout the Festival.

In all **18** local youth theatre groups, choirs and bands took part in the performances.

**20** students from University of South Wales were involved with the project **15** of which went on to produce performances for the Festival as part of their degree assessments.

**4** young Festival apprentices, including one Erasmus student from Portugal, were engaged in all aspects of the Festival delivery and arts development and with the 1000 Birds project **9** emerging Welsh artists created **3** new outdoor dance commissions showcased/trailed in Monmouth (and later performed at the National Eisteddfod at Abergavenny).

**12** major Welsh landowning organisations participated in Articulture's 'Landowners & Landscape Outdoor Arts' conference, which was the first of its kind and a landmark event.

This all equated to around **21,600** workshop hours delivered pre-Festival, **3,234** hours of workshop engagement in schools. **18,300** hours of engagement in community training/workshops and 728 hours of workshop contact pre walk for the walking/story project.

The overall feedback from audience and participants was very positive. Of those interviewed, the location, organisation and entertainment of the events was rated between **91% - 93%** as excellent or good.

*"The fact that extraordinary, high quality arts/performance were taking place in, what are usually, quiet, rural locations is a hugely successful aspect of the River Festival. The events generated a sense of community cohesion - people could not quite believe what was happening on their doorstep!"*

Hannah Elton-Wall - Artspace Cinderford

*"To strive for artistic quality, alongside an excellent process, that engages the widest possible audience, challenging where appropriate, filling a need where necessary but always looking for the wonderful."*

Phillippa Haynes – Festival Director



The diversity of the audience, the quality of the engagement and participation, the opportunity of developing creativity and skills for children and young people all improved, compared to 2014. The range of places and ways in which people were able to engage with the arts activity was strengthened and was reflected in our increased audience numbers. The amount of amazing professional artist involvement in the Festival also grew, which enhanced quality and impact. It was a great success but the capacity of the Festival team was pushed and stretched.

The Festival marketing was better co-ordinated than in 2014. We improved much of the information dissemination, with enhanced digital and printed materials, both in terms of output and quality. But marketing was still perceived as the weakest aspect of the Festival. The complexity of the marketing needs, the diverse and dispersed nature of rural communities and the offer itself are all challenges which we are looking to address for WVRF2018. We also wish to improve our bilingual offer and include better signage for some performances.

The attendance and engagement for WVRF2016 of **29,800+** people would indicate that overall it was a success, outstripping targets. From the audience feedback surveys, **68%** of the respondents came to enjoy outdoor performances first and foremost, with **50%** saying that being entertained in a beautiful environment was a big draw and **44%** said they wanted to support their community.

“It brings all the community alive as it comes down the River, everyone is so proud and excited to be able to be part of it”

Rowena Barr, Lydbrook Tump Committee

“The Llandogo site encapsulated the spirit of the Festival the best” Audience Member

“The events I saw were highly imaginative and eye catching. I felt the artistic work really caught my attention and made me see places that I am familiar with in a totally different light. I loved the fact that the crowds were made up with all sorts of people – young and old. “

Lynn Bulbeck - Environment Agency

“I loved everything about the Festival, it’s amazing, brilliant”

Audience member

## WVRF2016 Core Arts Concept



The performances were centred around the ensemble of Water Ones: A collection of singing diviners, magicians, jesters, river people, dancers and storytellers, exploring the everlasting journeys of water, rivers and the people it connects. They both entertained and on occasion bemused the audiences throughout the Festival. The feedback we got from people was positive and the performances and characters developed as they went down stream.

The characters lived in and hosted the Wye Serai, which was a travelling experiential site where you could explore both the arts and the science. At its heart were three artist curated and designed Caravans which the audience were invited into for intermittent interaction / performances. Action spilt out of them on a regular basis whilst also serving as a stage set for bigger performances throughout the day, all with the commissioned Samovar at the centre. Each Caravan had its own theme and characters which explored different aspects of water, culture and peoples relationship to environment. One was a partnership with the National Museum of Wales, Natural History department, which is a new partnership and a possible future collaborator for WVRF2018.

A vital element of the Festival is to employ an ensemble of actors who can work in a variety of settings, understand the outdoors and the nature of working with the general public directly. This they did brilliantly. Some of the performers were new to the Festival and working with the team, others were a part of WVRF2014. The skills they all brought as individuals were diverse and strong, which allowed for a rich devising process. By having an array of nationalities and languages spoken by the cast it enhanced the cultural aspect of the Festival and brought the Global elements to the forefront. As in WVRF2014 characters developed a fan base who followed them down stream to various different locations which was a real honour and joy.

We invested more in live music for 2016 and the collaborations with local artists and experienced outdoor arts street band practitioners brought the depth, vibrancy and quality to performance that we aspired to. This was a great success as the music lifted and drove elements of the action and ceremony. The innovative Festival choir idea – inviting singers from existing choirs - was reasonably successful, but would have benefited from more rehearsal time to realise the ambition of a closer integration with instrumental players and performers throughout.



## Were our aspirations fulfilled?

Yes. There were people that followed the Festival down the river. I think that is testament to the ease that people felt with the process and where it is located. The passport seemed popular and I think encouraged continued participation. It did evolve into a travelling roadshow about water and of course rivers. I don't know if the term global artery was used a lot however there were clear connections made between rivers like the Wye and the Nile for example..

Mr and Mrs Clark -ensemble

Yes, I totally agree, from the educational side re the environment which is so crucial to children and communities, but to have the artistic side too which makes it fun and quirky and brings it alive. I think definitely works well. It brings all the community alive as it comes down the River, everyone is so proud and excited to be able to be part of it! Everyone said how much they enjoyed the Samovar tea making, the interaction between the public and actors, the storytelling etc it was an amazing atmosphere.

Rowena Barr – Lydbrook Tump Committee

The two locations with the best mix of stunning location and audience were Lydbrook and Llandogo. Hereford was overwhelmed by the carnival, and I think the River Festival suffered a little because of it.

William Wilding - ensemble

I found this Festival's artistic performances repeated at each site whereas 2 years ago the story 'progressed' as the Festival moved along to the different locations.

Bridget Vine - volunteer



It helped us to refine processes, learn and notice possibilities. We developed new equipment, the Samovar to be specific. (Commissioned by WVRF2016). We were disappointed that the idea of making tea from the river water in the samovar was not achieved, allowing an activity and learning about processes involved in cleaning, then drinking it.

Mandy Dyke And Now - ensemble

From an environmental perspective, using artistic collaboration provides the opportunity to convey our message to an audience we are otherwise unable to access, and to a larger number of people than is usually possible. Using multiple sites brings the Festival to communities who would otherwise miss out, but makes telling a story as in 2014 difficult as people miss aspects of it.

Nick Critchley - AONB Development Officer

“The overall theme of the Festival was clear from the start, and the educational elements brought this from the abstract idea to something that was clear to grasp. The educational elements were very successfully brought to realisation with several linked opportunities for schools to be involved in an art/science programme, which was exciting to be involved with.”

Sue Parkinson - education co-ordinator

“The Festival is incredibly ambitious given its mobility and diversity of audiences - and the energy and momentum of the journey is extremely impressive and must be a challenge”

Annie Grundy - Articulture

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## Lessons learnt

- You can't please all the people all the time! The Evaluation revealed some mixed reviews on the form that the Water Ones performance took. Some loved it, others found it harder to grasp and more challenging than the narrative form used in 2014.
- For 2018 we will need to examine the style and form for the main performances, continuing to create work that both challenges audiences and creates a space for them to experience new art. But they still need to feel 'safe'. Consider a story narrative that travels again.
- The Festival crew need to be adequately resourced, particularly if using a Wye Serai type logistically complex travelling caravan / multi-site circus form again in WVR2018.
- Being in control of our own site as opposed to working with existing or community 'day' events is easier, but is it on message? Need to scrutinise the pros and cons of each site and partner expectations.
- The value of performers who can really relate to people is crucial, not new, but worth remembering if we intend to do workshops programmes again.
- It is vital that all core artists are committed to the R&D and have time to do so.
- Look for new partners who bring a stimulating dynamic and innovation to the Festival.
- Live musicians and musical collaborations need to be invested in and allowed more time in the lead up and within the rehearsal schedule.
- Flexibility and complex juggling within the R&D and main budgets, along with robust contingencies and tight management, repeatedly deliver on time and on budget.

## Artistic and Delivery Partners



The success of a festival such as this is dependent on a complex raft of partners and organisations on both a local and regional level. WVRF2016 worked with in excess of 40 organisations to achieve its outcomes, all of whom play an important role, with some contributing vital skills and additions to the programme. In total there were 85+ professional artists involved in delivering the Festival programme. Each main event incorporated music, performance, circus, dance, singing, making storytelling and a variety of craft activities. Example feedback below has been compiled from evaluation forms, including some example questions.

### Arts Space- Cinderford



***Has the evolution of the Festival from Research & Development (R&D) to performance achieved the aims and objectives of the 'Global Artery' theme?*** “The initial discussions and ideas formulated during the R&D phase were followed through and came into fruition spectacularly! The River Festival was a great opportunity for Engage - our youth circus project. They developed their performance expertise, working for the first time with live musicians. The event was certainly a platform for our youth circus to promote and develop their skills and for us to promote ourselves as a local arts organisation. We met and networked with

artists that are new to Artspace. We were able to promote our projects. As a small arts charity, it is great to be part of a high profile event. We do not have much of a budget for marketing/promotion. Promoting events to small rural communities can be challenging, and I imagine the Festival finds this also.

“A favourite moment for me personally was the appearance of the Festival site/s with the Samovar and Caravans, the costumes of the actors/artists, the backdrop of the river - absolutely magical !!!

“The planning and effectiveness of the Festival was excellent. We would want to be involved again in all aspects of the Festival in future, yes!”

Hannah Elton-Wall

### Articulture Wales



***How did the Festival help develop you or your organisation's skills or activities?*** “The Festival provided a public rehearsal space for our 3, 2016 commissioned pieces; Richard of Desperate Men mentored one of the commissionees, which was amazingly valuable to their professional development.

Professionally I learnt about offering critical feedback to artists with works in progress; also made some new connections.

"I think a very effective aspect of WVRF2016 is its integration and community engagement. Our Landowners conference which we collaborated on as part of the Festival was a huge success and something I had wanted to achieve professionally for many years. The support from the team and the effectiveness of the Festival is excellent.

"A moving multi-sited festival is an incredible challenge but ensures that a number of different communities can participate at an intimate level.

"The Festival is incredibly ambitious given its mobility and diversity of audiences - and the energy and momentum of the journey is extremely impressive and must be a challenge. This is what is outstanding about the Festival – the seriousness with which the integrity of the artistic quality is paralleled by the importance given to conveying environmental messages and engaging people with the environment."  
Annie Grundy

### **Lydbrook Brass Band**



We have collaborated with this world famous award winning 20 piece silver band since the Festival's conception. This year their 10 piece 'small band' stepped well out of their comfort zone to work with Tim Hill from Tongues of Fire (our Musical Director) and three of his young protégés, and together became our Festival Band.

***Do you think the model of the Festival as an environmental and artistic collaboration works well?*** "Yes. Anything that encourages music, artistic development and collaboration always works well. The Festival team and the people with the vision to arrange such an event must be congratulated. Arts and music are dying out in some sections of the community and they must be encouraged otherwise we will lose part of our heritage very, very quickly. We had a number of meetings with Jon from Desperate Men before meeting Tim, so we were very happy and relaxed with the roles we had to play. We had the opportunity to perform with Tim Hill, the Festival musical director and his team to create and perform a type of music that we would not normally play and performed as the full Festival band at Monmouth, Llandogo and Chepstow.

"To work with others on a huge project and to be able to contribute to the overall musical effect that needed to be created for the audiences was a good professional challenge, and we gained new knowledge about community development work and collaboration. I would like us to reach into the schools of the Wye Valley and to be able to give young people the opportunity to play brass instruments; the Festival may be an opportunity to do this in future. To see so many people young and old enjoying the different type of entertainment by Desperate Men and their team was a highlight for me. Everything was such good fun and seemed to be enjoyed by everyone. A personal highlight for me was playing in the mist at Monmouth during the fireworks and torch parade - a very strange and quirky 30 minutes or so. Some of the best moments in life are never planned!! Coping with the extremely cold weather towards the end of each event provided the biggest challenge for us as brass performers. I didn't see anything that was unsuccessful."

**Do you think the model of the Festival as a multi-sited event works well?** “Yes. I do but I think that the length of each event meant that some people left the sites before the magnificent firework displays. The cold weather didn't help either and with the finale being on a Sunday evening it meant that many children had to leave to be ready for school the next day.”  
 Robert Morgan: Leader Lydbrook Band

### Lydbrook Tump community committee



This was one of our smaller but still significant weekend venues for a day time Wye Serai.

**Do you feel your role(s) and responsibilities were clearly defined?**

“Yes. As a small village community committee we so wanted to join in with the Festival celebrations, by bringing together the local community plus outside visitors to our annual riverbank fete, alongside the Festival organisation which was so successful. Everyone said how much they enjoyed the Samovar tea making, the interaction between the public and actors, the storytelling etc; it was an amazing atmosphere. I had meetings with the Festival team who are delightful and so enthusiastic plus the next village committee up the river, (Bishopswood), which brought our two fetes together. It was very exciting to see our plans develop together and meet a new group of enthusiastic volunteers. I think it definitely works well. It brings all the community alive as it comes down the River, everyone is so proud and excited to be able to be part of it!”

Rowena Barr

### Forestry Commission



The Forestry Commission were part of the R&D process and played many roles during the Festival including providing storage and work space for the Wye Serai caravans pre-festival and the event day at The Slaughters was delivered with them as the lead partner.

**Do you think the model of the Festival as a multi-sited event works well?** “Yes, I do think it was although it is not easy to keep the level of communication across all the various event managers/organisers. Logistics were a challenge for us, sometimes the communication of what we were responsible for and what the River Festival team were responsible for was confused, although we managed in the end. We gained insight into working with artists and although our event did not gain the numbers we had wanted, the atmosphere of the day was chilled and relaxed.”  
 Hayley Clayton

### Environment Agency



**How did the Festival help develop you or your organisation's skills or activities?** “The Festival helped deliver some of the Environment Agency's aims and objectives to promote the River Wye for recreation and raise environmental awareness. From a professional point of view the Festival helped with building networks and partnership working. From a personal viewpoint, it



helped develop my understanding and knowledge of the local area and the communities within it.”

***What do you think was the most successful aspect of the Wye Valley River Festival ?***

“Raising awareness of locals and visitors to the extreme beauty and special environmental qualities of the Wye and all that it has to offer. The River Wye was the heart and soul of the Festival and this was very much reflected in the events that took place.

“I think it is important that the events are throughout the Wye as each location has something unique to offer. It also enables the local communities to get involved and to raise appreciation of their local river.”

***What was your favourite moment in the Festival ?*** “Drinking the 'tea' at Tintern station while listening to the singers and watching the dancers /performers and people watching, a great setting”  
Lynn Bulbeck

**University of South Wales: Prifysgol De Cymru Faculty of Creative Industries:**

This new partnership allows the Festival to enrich the programme with students from the performing arts course making new work together as part of their course assessment. It is a great opportunity for skills development and showcasing young people’s work. They all wrote blogs and these are direct quotes from them:-



“Working outside has been one of the single most interesting experiences that I have had the pleasure of experiencing. I found it really motivating having to use the different activities to help benefit my ability to perform and adapt to the situation.”

“This weekend was by far the best way to not only be assessed, but also relax and really appreciate nature and learn”

“I was experiencing professionalism in creating outdoor arts, which I had never experienced before. We were all excited and extremely privileged to be part of the Festival “

“I felt so appreciative to have been part of such a special and unique outdoor event. Although we only contributed a small amount to the Festival, I was proud of our professionalism as university students.”



“This experience made me realise the importance of flexibility when doing improvisation and street art. You can never fully know how the audience will react until you’re in that moment. I would like to use this way of improvising with a more conventional audience.”

“We carried torches across a bridge and through the field. It was a massive honour for me personally as I was helping the Festival create a special moment for all the general public to see. As we

walked to the old oak tree I could not anticipate what I saw next, the firework display took me completely by surprise and made the event even better in terms of the aesthetics of the performance.”



“I honestly feel that I stepped up this weekend, not just in terms of acting quality but also in terms of attitude in the Festival itself and working in a team. At first, I found it extremely difficult to approach people. As a drama student, this was unexpected, however I learnt that hosting in character was completely different to performing on a stage in front of an audience. As time went on, I began to feel much more comfortable”

“It helped build my confidence and boost my mood, making it a happy memorable experience that taught me huge amount about how to work closely together. I honestly loved the time I was at the Festival and I would take any opportunity to do something like this again. This discovery is something that I will carry with me into my professional practise”



“It was interesting to see how a professional theatre company direct their actors - in comparison to how I have been directed previously”

“This weekend was one of the biggest learning curves for me in my life”

“Working with professionals: This project enabled students to really get to grips with realities of professional arts practices: organising, devising, rehearsing and performing art works, engaging with the public. The WVRF more than anything else has helped students to understand and locate their own ideas and practices not only within the field of performance but also within the world at large and with some of its most urgent issues; having to take the initiative, from finding bus times to taking charge of creating a performance”.

Hilary Ramsden, PhD Senior Lecturer, Drama & Performance

### **Mrs and Mrs Clark - Ensemble Members**



***Do you think the model of the Festival as an environmental and artistic collaboration works well?***

“Yes, it is a rare opportunity for us artists to work with environmental experts. In both 2014 and 2016 I felt this was a crucial collaboration and perhaps something that still needs to be developed. One of the highlights of 2014 was the trial and the direct inclusion of experts into the performance. This was lacking a little this year and

perhaps finding the right performance vehicle for this to happen should be an ongoing discussion. “

***Please elaborate on how the Festival helped develop you or your organisation's skills or activities.*** “Working in primary schools challenged us to be engaging and informative. This was an interesting challenge as we wanted the children to have fun whilst exploring some facts about water and rivers. I think this level of engagement with primary school students was our first experience with this age range and we both enjoyed the interaction and possibilities of doing more work like this.”

### **Rosalind Haf Brooks - Ensemble Member**



***What did you personally or professionally gain by being involved with the Wye Valley River Festival?*** “I have learnt new ways of creating and developing work having worked with new people from different artistic approaches. I also learnt more about the River Wye and the animals that live there and the activities you can do along the Wye. Working with more text and song than I usually do was great in developing those skills. The workshops with the children in schools were fantastic. The Fact and Wonder Caravan was a wonderful place to share and talk about the wonderful area we live in. More of that would be great.”

### **Dan Fox Artist – Sound Installation and member of the Festival band.**



***Has the evolution of the Festival from Research & Development (R&D) to performance achieved the aims and objectives of the 'Global Artery' theme?*** “Yes. As is often the case, the blue sky thinking had to be translated into a product. I think some of the wilder ideas were lost along the way but it was still good to have the process.”

***Please elaborate on how the Festival helped develop you or your organisation's skills or activities.*** “WVRF2016 gave me the opportunity to create a new piece of work in a beautiful location. To design a new installation for a bridge and realise it, which worked very well. For me, creating a piece of work in the heart of a small village and have it embraced by the locals, is a success. I received fantastic feedback. It was also ace to be able to include local children's voices during the week. I think it's a tough gig for the artists who had to move locations each day. I think the longer residencies may be more effective than the smaller one-day pop-up events. I think perhaps a slow journey by boat down the river would connect the locations in a more tangible way.”

### **And Now - Pyrotechnics, Samovar Installation and ensemble members**



***Do you feel your role(s) and responsibilities were clearly defined?*** “We worked very hard in the lead up and throughout the Festival at defining and communicating what we thought we were doing and what we expected to be facilitated in, this was hard work at times as the overall

moving element of the Serai was slightly under crewed. There was some lack of clarity around artistic intent at the beginning and how the rehearsed stories/actions were to happen. The idea of multi sited works appeals, but maybe not a travelling story. We think maybe multi sited installations with the audience travelling and discovering the sites over the period of the Festival, each installation having a long duration and being more off of the beaten track, sometimes with a punctuation event/transformation, not just working in places that are easy for people to park near.”

### **William Wilding - AKA Mr Cherry**



***Please elaborate on how the Festival helped develop you or your organisation's skills or activities*** “It gave me the chance to invent and then develop a new character and new ideas. I was able to create a whole area of work which I will be able to use in the future the bringing together of various communities along the river, and provided them with the opportunity to create various works together, for instance the choirs were a great

success of the Festival. But publicity was an issue - I do not think enough resources were employed.”

***Do you think the model of the Festival as an environmental and artistic collaboration works well?*** “Yes. There is however a danger that the artistic side of the collaboration suffers from taking too many of the environmental concerns on board. Because of that some of the performance was not as strong and hard hitting as it could be. Partly because there was not a large enough budget to create a massive spectacle.”

## Outreach Projects

The education outreach programme was the major development from 2014 and has proved to be a great success. There were three strands engaging local schools; Citizen Science, Flag making and Wye Serai visits. There were also workshops on Story collection & telling, Lantern making and the Festival Choir.

## Schools Engagement



Initially we held a training day in February 2016 with 12 artists and 25 local environmentalists to scope the outreach projects. We settled on a citizen science approach where the environmentalists visited schools engaging the children in pond dipping and surveying local water quality. These visits were followed by the textile artists, Becky and Faye – Prior Made, who created the Festival flags with the children. During the Festival a Caravan and members of the acting ensemble, as a mini-Serai, also visited each school.

**1,200** school children were involved in our workshops, **539** young people worked with artists to create **28** three meter tall flags which decorated the perimeter of all the outdoor Festival sites. Each young person had two sessions with the artists and environmentalists and **1,098** children had half-day Wye Serai school visits. So in all **3,234** workshop hours of professional engagement were delivered through this project.

The bringing together of artists and environmentalists through this process was another way the Festival helped share knowledge and skills ensuring that the science and the art were integrated. This is one of the innovative aspects of the Festival, bringing professionals from different backgrounds and specialisms together to create new pathways and understanding, fostering improved engagement.

*“We really enjoyed and found beneficial the training day in Monmouth with wildlife/Wye Valley professionals. It was great to learn from passionate people. We felt that everyone who was involved was enthusiastic in the Festival ethos and appreciated each other’s work”.*

*Becky Prior – Prior Made*

After each session the Artists asked the teachers to evaluate the session, **100%** of teachers rated **very good** and **excellent** for the following:

- \* Workshop suitable for the ages,
- \* Clear instructions from Artists,
- \* Creating a positive learning environment
- \* Engaging, educational and fun

"Extremely well organised, the afternoon was informative fun and creative. It will be something the children will remember"

Teacher

"Very hands on, all engaged, the children really enjoyed the scientific aspect of the workshop as well as the freedom to create their own art"

Teacher



**100%** of teachers circled **very likely** and **definitely** for the following:

- \* Young people have gained more knowledge about the River Wye and river life
- \* Young people more likely to visit the Festival as a result of workshop
- \* Teachers more likely to visit the Festival as a result of the workshop
- \* Teachers inspired to run a workshop using similar materials and knowledge without the artists.

"Fabulous. I enjoyed it all! The children had full participation from creating an individual piece and collecting natural resources. The children had to work as a team too"

Teacher

"I would like to thank you for offering us this amazing opportunity. The children really enjoyed the activities and they learned new skills. The staff were professional, highly skilled and very good at relating to primary school aged children. It was even better than we could have imagined! "

Head at Lord Scudamore School

"We really felt that we were supported, the wildlife professional visits and added to the young people's knowledge about the river Wye and surrounding area. After the first few weeks of delivery we become confident and efficient, educating and skill sharing with ease. It was great to have the opportunity to teach a cross-curricular process that linked art and science together."

Becky and Faye – Prior Made

After the Festival schools were involved in the overall evaluation. They were asked whether:

- Students gained greater knowledge and understanding on a range of river wildlife and natural habitats / landscape,
- Students gained a greater knowledge and understanding of the river Wye and rivers around the world
- Students were successfully engaged with issues regarding water and sustainability
- The staff /students felt involved in the Festival by taking part in the workshops
- The school would like the opportunity for more workshops when the Festival is repeated in 2018

To which **100%** replied **yes**

WVRF aims to develop professional artists through good working practice, exposing them to new skills and providing them an opportunity to try new things and experiment

“Personally I gained a greater knowledge about the river life and the communities along the Wye. I really enjoyed being part of the educators meeting because it supported the art workshops to be more informative and impactful”  
Faye

“We felt that Phill, Sue, Sarah and us were a fantastic team. All three were organised and were very interested and supportive in our workshops. We felt well managed and also trusted to do a good job – a perfect working environment.”

Becky and Faye – Prior Made

Becky also stated that her business has benefited - “We have gathered contacts for all of the schools as they wished to be sent our list of workshops so we hope to have work with them in the future. This was a great opportunity to gain more experience working with primary school children. Working with scientists and those involved in the environment was both informative and inspiring.”

## Babbling Brooks - Soundwork Community Project led by Roger Drury



In all **368** people took part in this project which collected, told and animated peoples stories about water, rivers lakes and life, some were very local and others from far away. **93** people took part in the animated story walks, with **52** people taking part in the pre walk workshops. There were **8** two hour workshops story/walking workshops, therefore **744** contact workshop hours. **40** young people took part as the project visited their school and **175+** experienced the project in the Caravan of Myths and Legends with Roger during the Festival. The legacy of this project is a collection of writings, a diary of events and a series of sketches by those visiting the Caravan of Myths and Legends. There are now **4** new ‘animated’ walks that have been researched and written, with a number of people trained as walking guides to deliver them in future.

***How did you benefit professionally from this collaboration?*** It built my confidence to develop story walks and to then build on this working with local people and communities. I will go back to these communities to work more. It was a real Buzz working with Artists and generating something from workshops.  
Roger Drury

## Lantern Workshops

Pre festival we ran community and school lantern workshops in and around Hereford with Carnival Arts, producing work for both the evening show on the 29<sup>th</sup> and for the Carnival on the 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition we ran lantern making workshops with Carnival Arts at the Llandogo event producing large scale work for the torchlight procession. In all around **300** young people took part in these events

### **Lessons learnt**

- Further develop the outreach programme ensuring its integration into the whole Festival securing enough budget to not have to 'skimp' on professional input, including artist time
- Ensure enough time is allowed for pre workshop and during workshop trouble shooting.
- Securing funding for a part time project co-ordinator to work alongside AONB's community and Festival Director to deliver the programme of work.
- Ensure selected artists are part of the R&D process, so selection must be early
- Start delivery earlier - so funding needs securing in the autumn of 2017
- Liaise with schools earlier and try to secure one secondary school, targeting Haberdashers and Monmouth Comprehensive
- Have clear Outcomes and Objectives for the work again, that feed the Festival programme/content

### **Festival Choirs**



We set the ambitious goal to create a mass Festival choir working with various groups throughout the valley, delivering workshops pre festival, run by a single choir leader, singing new and commissioned water related arrangements. We also wanted to encourage other choirs to take part in the Festival singing their own and the commissioned repertoire. We wanted to achieve this through singing networks and digital outreach. We did achieve this in part and learnt a lot along the way about developing and delivering such a project. A regular 35+ strong Festival Choir sang at all of the major evening shows and some of the daytime events and 5 other choirs participated at events throughout the Festival. The process was complicated and challenging and timescales were tight, so the aspiration for WVRF2018 would be to build from this experience. We worked with two great choir leaders Ellie Holliday & Helen Vincent who did a good job, creating a strong ensemble not used to



outdoor singing (in the rain!). By the second performance the choirs gained confidence and sounded fantastic. Over **50** people took part in **45** hours of WVRF singing workshops, equating to **2,250** workshop hours of engagement.



Feedback from some members of the choir was mixed but we believe everyone enjoyed their experience. Below is some of the feedback given by choir members.



***Do you feel your role(s) and responsibilities were clearly defined?***

“Yes, we were provided with written instructions about rehearsals and the arrangements for the performances.”

“I think that a festival of this kind requires longer-term planning, greater local networking, more engagement with local people and better communication and publicity.”

“I realise that I am not really a festival person. I joined

the choir because I enjoy making music with other people, but the music was mundane and the conditions under which we were expected to perform were so adverse that I only stuck with it out of a sense of loyalty. I am sorry to be negative but feel it is better to be honest. The massed choir - it just didn't really work!”



***What did you personally or professionally gain by being involved with the Wye Valley River Festival?***

“I learnt new songs and got to sing with different people.”

“Performing at a different venue and with different people to the choir I normally sing with”

“Simply, the enjoyment of singing with other people, whether in rehearsal or performance.”

“I enjoyed involvement in singing specifically but I feel that a different model of planning and participation may need to be envisaged.”

“Anything that encourages music, artistic development and collaboration always works well. The Festival team and the people with the vision to arrange such an event must be congratulated. Arts and music is a dying art in some sections of the community and it must be encouraged otherwise we will lose part of our heritage very, very quickly”

Robert Morgan leader Lydbrook Brass Band

**Lessons learnt:**

- There was a disjoint between the ambition and vision and the ability to make it happen. Consequently we engaged choir leaders and singers too late. We need to capitalise on networks better and sooner.
- We had communications and IT problems between the Festival Team, choir leader and choir members, and our capacity to pick up the shortfall was too limited and got confusing. So clearer roles and responsibilities, and contingencies, required.
- Some established choir leaders are reticent to let their choirs get involved, consequently promoting the workshops proved difficult.
- We need to attract more non-choral society singers, and younger people.
- We did not have enough time or budget to integrate the Festival Band with the Choir which was a missed opportunity.
- The Artistic Directors and Musical Director need to be more involved in the whole endeavour from concept to performance.
- Singers were not used to performing outside, so we need to get choirs to practice in the open air.
- Have two workshop leaders who work together in upper and lower Wye areas.

## Installations



WVRF2016 was able to realise the aspiration of having two durational installations as part of the Festival programme. Both involved communities contributing to the work. These installations augmented the artistic reach of Festival ‘set piece’ sites and the pyrotechnics displays at the main week-end events.

**Kathy Hind: Luminous Birds and 1000 Birds.** This was a reimagining of an existing piece in a rural location, Old Station Tintern. An estimated **7,100** people experienced the installations.



**200+** people, ranging from Care Homes to playgroups, made origami birds pre festival. The young boy (pictured left) made over 80 birds and became quite the origami expert. He and Kathy

had long conversations about paper.

**Dan Fox: Cymbals of Redbrook.** Staying in the local pub, walking the surrounding area, talking to locals and working with **34** children in the local primary school enhanced the recordings used in Cymbals of Redbrook. This installation, on the old railways bridge across the Wye joined two communities and two countries, was experienced by an estimated



**4,702** people.

“Redbrook bridge full of families just hanging out at night experiencing Cymbals of Redbrook, was very rewarding”

Dan Fox

Lessons Learnt:

- Fully spec and get permissions for a reserve location in case of adverse weather
- Where possible and appropriate get the artists to be in residence before and during the piece and/or include local involvement with the art in some way
- Keep the installations up for a minimum of a full week / 2 week-ends
- Try to avoid additional stewarding requirements due to cost

## WRVFestival 2016 Marketing



Marketing and promotion had been an issue for improvement from WVRF2014, so an enormous effort went into improving this during the R&D and through 2015 and onwards. The original Marketing Plan was updated and amended as required and more energy was put into the design and effective targeting of limited resources. The two most impactful changes were the return from sick leave of the AONB Information Officer, to augment the freelance PR contract, which both enabled better reach into the established media outlets and more capacity to explore less established routes and better quality design. The improvements took effect and paid dividends. But there is always more that can be done, a process of continued learning and improvement. It is a complex Festival both in its explanation and locations. However, the design of the printed material was greatly improved and has started to establish a brand identity and our ability to communicate and build relationships with local media has moved on greatly. We struck many 'contra' deals with various publications equating to around £2,500.



### **Festival Programme:**

There were **15,000** AONB Art Map and Guides produced and distributed in early 2016, which promoted the outline of the Festival and other year round arts attractions in the area.

We produced **10,000** a high quality Programmes which were distributed throughout the Festival and were designed as an informative and artistic keepsake.

We generated **£1,580** of paid adverts in publicity, which for a first time for a festival operating in locations like ours is not insignificant.

**2,000** original and fun Festival Passports were printed and given out during the Festival as part of the Mr Cherry's performance and digital capture piece. These encouraged repeat visits to receive a 'stamp' at each event.

The full programme was also on the WVRF webpages, along with a huge array of build-up and background information;

<http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/wye%20valley%20river%20festival%2016/>.

Our digital presence was greatly improved this year, with a lot of traffic on both Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/wyevalleyriverfestival/> and Twitter @wybeauty #wevalleyriverfestival. The website was vastly improved but we still need to do more work on that element of the promotion and identity of the Festival.

### Visitor Guides:

Festival adverts were included in

- the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Visitor Guide 2016 (an A4 publication **40,000** printed and available to download from website).
- Full page advert in Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire (**25,000** printed for distribution, plus electronic download and turn page with hyperlinks). This publication went to The British Travel and Tourism Show.
- Full page ad in Herefordshire & The Wye Valley Explore Guide 2016 (**30,000** guides distributed nationally, regionally and locally)

We had a media partnership with Sunshine Radio (estimated **56,000** listeners per week and website **20,000** monthly page views), which gave us enormous amounts of trailers and coverage.

Other local radio and BBC stations all extensively covered the Festival this year. We even had Wye Valley TV turn up to film at almost every event.

In all there were 21 press releases that got picked up and promoted by various outlets. 70 road side boards, 20 banners, 40 large posters and 800 post cards were distributed throughout the Festival area.



Word of mouth still comes out as a major way people heard about the Festival; 37% of people responding from the evaluation sample.

**For a full list of the media coverage please see appendix 1**

“It is a confusing event and the publicity was inadequate. The programme did not help because it was not sufficiently specific as to where and when particular events within the overall event would happen”  
Choir member.

**Lessons learnt:**

- No matter how much you do it will never be enough!
- Determine the exact nature and times of events earlier and promote
- Be even clearer on the message and invite
- Improve WVRF website but also make wide use of other social media
- Old fashioned posters work best in most of our target areas, but sufficient times needs to be found to ‘fly-post’
- Improve outreach networks and personal word of mouth promotion
- Investigate a high profile pre-festival promotional event

## Conclusions and Recommendations



- More time needs to be allocated if running a six days a week programme for two weeks. WVRF2016 was hard for the actors and even harder on the crew who did not get a day off. Running the last week’s rehearsal straight into the dress run, and on into the opening four day weekend was tough for a small team, especially when we had to move the site daily.
- Ensure there are enough paid crew to deliver main production tasks throughout pre Festival and during and post production.
- The Festival finale should be on a Saturday night, allowing Sunday as crew pack down as well as not being a back to school/work night for audience.
- Scrutinise the success and drawbacks for WVRF2014 structured narrative running down stream versus WVRF2016 more esoteric and evocative non-narrative events.

- Programming of the main events – ensure Festival event day are not so long for performers and crew, off-set by the audience needs and requirements for stalls and quality food outlets to be on site.
- If possible increase durational site specific installations to 3 or 4, and embed artists ‘in residence’ in local community, ideally in build up as well as for duration of installation.
- Review Marketing Plan, engage with local networks earlier and ensure improved Festival website
- Secure good Media partners again. The Radio was fantastic but a supportive newspaper that covers the whole area would also help to better reach those hard to reach communities and far flung rural areas.
- Invest in more ‘word of mouth’ promotion such as posters and banners.
- Maintain communication with existing partners and develop more, both strategic and local.
- Consider the need of an overall Festival Designer, especially if following the ‘Travelling Serai’ type of activity again, and build on the strong Festival Programme design.
- Broaden and deepen the very strong outreach and engagement programme, but start it earlier.
- All core artists and crew need to be involved and committed to the R&D process. Review the creative camp residential model for R&D. Due to time commitments some partners were not able to attend all of the days and this was reflected in the feeling of wanting more clarity of roles and ownership later. Ensure commitments to this are built into expectations at an early stage. Securing funding earlier would help mitigate some of this.
- Re-evaluate all sites, just because we have been there once or twice, we do not have to keep returning. The only exception to this might be Llandogo which is generally agreed to be a spectacular and eminently workable site in many ways.



- Facilitate core Festival team to have an ‘away day’ investigation / inspiration trip after R&D and before production starts.
- Investigate establishing the Festival as a CIC or separate entity for funding and sponsorship purposes post WVRF2018
- More resources are needed to deliver the calibre of festival that we aspire to. The outreach and engagement work which is so vital to the integrity of the Festival, the audience development and the capacity building within communities requires

additional support - and partly due to a lack of local authority arts or development officers the Festival needs to invest more to enable this.

- Continue strategic and logistical communication with Forestry Commission, HLF Foresters Forest Project and the potential new ACE investment program in the area, ensuring joined up thinking, planning and potential programme development as well as community capacity development
- The Festival is gathering a momentum, a following and an identity. It has inspired other spin off events and it is raising aspirations. We will be looking to deliver another Festival in 2018. We are starting the process of doing so earlier so we can implement the lessons learnt and ensure the continuation of quality arts in the landscape is delivered.

The Wye Valley AONB Partnership and Wye Valley River Festival Team are immensely grateful for all the funders, sponsors and supporters who made the Festival such an enjoyable and rewarding event for all those who participated.



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**Wye Valley River Festival 2016**

**Final Report**

To

**Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

By

**The Countryside and Community Research Institute**



Project Title: Wye Valley River Festival 2016 evaluation

Client Reference:

Start Date: April, 2016

Finish Date: July, 2016

Duration:

Project Manager (Research Team)

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## 1.1 Executive Summary

CCRI were commissioned by Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit to evaluate the effectiveness of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016. The evaluation methods used were a combination of both quantitative – surveys - and qualitative – interviews – and the sample populations were both the audience and the participants at the Festival.

It was clear, from the results, that people came to the River Festival to enjoy outdoor art and performances and both the setting and entertainment was crucial to this experience and scored highly. The findings also show that as well as being inspired by the outdoor entertainment people had a desire to learn more about the Wye Valley landscape and this is something that could be exploited at future Festivals.

From the participants' perspective the Festival was a positive experience with evidence that people grew in confidence as a result of being involved with the Festival. One way to improve the experience of participants would be to have a forum or support network so that people could make the most of the connections they made at the Festival by building on these relationships for future engagements. This would feed in well to a future Festival.

### Q14 Tell us what has been your favourite moment / thing in today's event.

Answered: 121 Skipped: 27

A word cloud of festival highlights in teal text. The words are arranged in several lines, with 'Performance' being the largest and most prominent. Other notable words include 'Music', 'Band', 'River', 'Choir', 'Fireworks', 'Sunshine', 'Children', 'Event', 'Water', 'Ones', 'Cider', 'Tea', 'Singing', 'Seeing', 'Samovar', 'Caravans', 'Playing', 'Atmosphere', 'Amazing', 'Family', 'Torchlit Procession', 'Entertainment', 'Lying', 'Eating', 'Storytelling', 'Cake', 'Cider', 'Stall', 'Floats', and 'Band'.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of the project was to measure the success or failure of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 by assessing both the audience and participant uptake of the core values of the Festival – to celebrate the intrinsic value of landscape. The aim of the project was also to assess if the Festival had succeeded in creating high quality inclusive art ‘of’ and ‘in’ the landscape which was immersive and interpreted the Wye Valley AONB. In addition the project also aimed to assess the success of the project management and delivery of the Festival.

## 1.3 Background context

The Wye Valley River Festival was conceived as ‘a gloriously creative series of outdoor events embracing innovative artistic work that inspires and challenges’ (Wye Valley River Festival Programme, 2016). The first festival took place in 2014 and it is intended as a biennial event. The theme of this Festival was about water and how it connects people both with the landscape and across the globe..

The Festival involved 28 events from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, including outreach work in 11 schools. The outreach work has been evaluated separately. The main Festival events are listed below:

Bishops Meadow, Hereford, Friday, April 29, Festival Opening, 7.30pm - 9.45pm

Bishops Meadow, Hereford, Saturday, April 30, Wye Serai Opening, 10.00am - 6.00pm

Rope Walk, Ross on Wye, Sunday, May 1, Wye Serai, 11.00am - 6.00pm

Village Hall, Bishopswood, Bank Holiday Monday, May 2, Family Breakfast Barbeque at Bishopswood 10.00 am - 1.00pm

Lydbrook Tump, Lydbrook, Bank Holiday Monday, May 2, Tump Fair and Mini Serai 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Redbrook Bridge, Redbrook, Thursday, May 5, Mini Serai 11.00 am - 7.00 pm

Old Station Tintern, Friday, May 6, Birds Wye Serai 11.00 am - 10.00 pm

Monmouth Town Centre, Friday, May 6, Mini Serai 12.00 - 4.00 pm

Monmouth, Vauxhall Fields, Saturday, May 7, Wye Serai, leading to a night performance  
12.00 - 10.15pm

The Slaughters, Sunday, May 8, Mini Wye Serai, 11.00am - 5.00pm

Wye Valley Sculpture Garden, Tintern, Friday, May 13, The Art of Sustainability: Rivers,  
Local meets Global - Talk 6.00pm - 8.00pm

Llandogo, Saturday May 14, Wye Serai, 12.30 - 10.30pm,

Chepstow Racecourse , Sunday 15 May, Grand Finale 2.00pm - 10.30pm

## **1.4 Methods**

There were two parts to this project – an audience and participant survey. The evaluation required evidence to be collected from two sources – the audience (these were members of the public that actually attended the event) and participants (these were people who provided the entertainment). The latter group – participants – fall into different categories; for example, those that have a deep relationship with the Festival and have been involved from Research and Development (R&D) through to implementation and those who have been involved in a specific element of the Festival and may have less knowledge of the whole. Additionally many participants dipped in and out of the process and may have a less comprehensive overview of the whole process.

The survey was conducted using two approaches: face-to-face questionnaires undertaken at the River Festival events; and, through an online survey that people were invited to complete after the events had taken place. Data were collected from 148 audience members at festival events and after the events through Survey Monkey. The face-to-face questionnaires conducted at the events were subsequently entered into an online repository through Survey Monkey so that all responses were in one place.

The participant survey was also offered in two distinct format: through telephone interviews and through questionnaires completed online through Survey Monkey.

The survey data was analysed, using SPSS software. This initially involved a process of 'cleaning' the data to make it more uniform in order to perform the analysis. Examples of this 'cleaning' process include, for example, converting all the disparate answers from the

question: 'how much money have you spent?' to standardised numerical answers and converting all the answers given to 'mode of transport' to one of five options.

Data collected in the participant interviews was analysed using a thematic approach by identifying key themes and supporting evidence from the interviews. These themes can be found in Tables 12 and 13.

The sample data consists of the following:

- 148 completed questionnaires from the audience survey
- 35 completed questionnaires from the participant survey
- 6 participant interviews

### **1.5 Audience survey**

When referring to numbers I have given both the percentage and the actual number in the format of n=27.

#### ***Analysis of results***

The greatest number of surveys (31% of the sample) were collected at Chepstow followed by Llandogo (21% of the sample) and Hereford (14.2% of the sample). Together these three events account for two thirds of the sample frame (see Figure 1). These three events tended to be the larger and more well attended events compared to the other five events.

Relatively smaller numbers of interviews were undertaken at the other events due to both a lack of resources and lower attendance numbers at those particular events. However, the general attendance number at all the events was estimated to be 27,500<sup>1</sup>

(Note tables contain both frequency – i.e. the number of people responding, and percentages – the proportion of the total sample responding).

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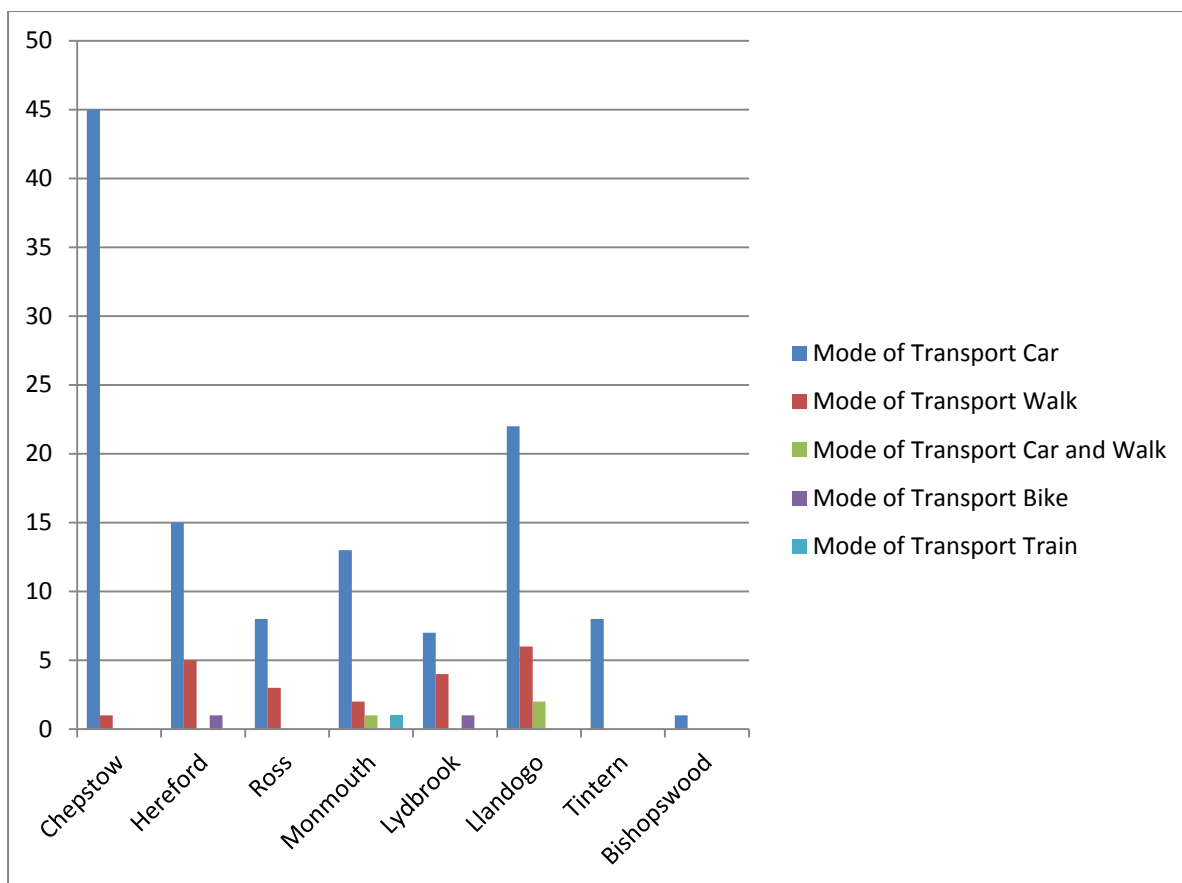
<sup>1</sup> From AONB Attendance Numbers spreadsheet (8<sup>th</sup> August, 2016)



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bishopswood	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Tintern	8	5.4	5.4	99.3
	Ross	11	7.4	7.4	52.7
	Lydbrook	12	8.1	8.1	72.3
	Monmouth	17	11.5	11.5	64.2
	Hereford	21	14.2	14.2	45.3
	Llandogo	32	21.6	21.6	93.9
	Chepstow	46	31.1	31.1	31.1
	Total	148	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 1 – number of completed surveys by event**

Figure 2 indicates that the most popular mode of transport to the events was a car, followed by walking. The relatively high levels of walking identify that the audience at many events was local. It is not unexpected that the majority of people tend to use cars rather than public transport. But it may also potentially indicate an issue in relation to provision or availability of public transport in the vicinity of Festival event locations. In future years it might be worth the festival organisers exploring whether the low use of public transport is a factor limiting access by specific sectors of the population (e.g. old people, those without access to cars), or whether it is due to lack of public transport in the areas where the events are held. There was some suggestion at Chepstow that more people would have walked if they had realised how close the event was to the town. Festival organisers might want to consider whether sufficient advance information is provided regarding access through alternative means.



**Figure 2 – mode of transport by event**

The greater majority of respondents were from the counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. However data indicates that 3% of respondents came from Cardiff, 2% from Bristol, Newport and Somerset respectively, and 1% Plymouth, There were also respondents from Bridgend, Chesterfield, Manchester, Newtown (Powys), Oxford & Stafford.

Data indicate that the majority of respondents are older with more than two thirds falling within two age groups: 35% were aged 36-49 yrs. and 34% aged 50-64 yrs. The gender breakdown of the sample was 66% male and 44% female.

Sample respondents reported finding out about the events through a range of channels, the most popular being 'word of mouth' (37% of the sample), followed by poster (17%), and facebook (16%). The least successful ways of disseminating information appeared to be postcards and email, with only 4.1% and 2.7% of respondents, respectively, indicating they had found out about the events through these channels.

### Motivation for attending the event

Sample respondents were asked what had motivated them to attend the event. Figure 3 illustrates that the overwhelming reason provided (67.6% of the sample) was 'To enjoy outdoor art and performances'. The two other main reasons for attending the events were 'to relax in a beautiful environment' (49.3%) and 'to show my support to my community' (43.9%).

Only 16.9% attended to see a particular performer, and only 12.8% indicated they attended to learn more about the Wye Valley.

	Frequency	Percent
to enjoy some outdoor art / performances	100	67.6
to relax in a beautiful environment	73	49.3
to show my support to my community	65	43.9
Other (please specify)	47	31.8
to see a particular group/performer	25	16.9
to find out more about the Wye Valley	19	12.8

**Figure 3 – Motivation for attending the event**

(Note: total adds to more than 100% as respondents could identify multiple reasons for attending)

## Thoughts on today's event

Respondents were asked for their thoughts on the days 'events'. Overall respondents tended to have favourable opinions about the event organisation, location, and entertainment, with high proportions of the sample indicating an 'excellent' score for these three categories. These findings can also be seen in the quotes from Festival attendees when asked to comment about the day's event:

*Lovely! Great to get Hereford's community outdoors and together! Great getting the kids out and engaged in some art.*

*Lovely atmosphere, interesting and different art, very nice.*

*Lovely idea, very different, as I'm interested in the environment*

Page 5

A smaller proportion of the sample indicated 'excellent' ratings for the categories of 'information' and 'promotion', which did not score as highly in the 'excellent' response, and this is reflected in some of the comments made by Festival attendees:

*Publicity / website could be improved. Difficult to glean what was actually happening from the little information on website. Nothing in this week's Ross Gazette.*

*It does not appear that the event was promoted or involved the Llandogo community as well as 2014.*

However, very few of the sample respondents indicated a 'poor' score for any of the items listed.

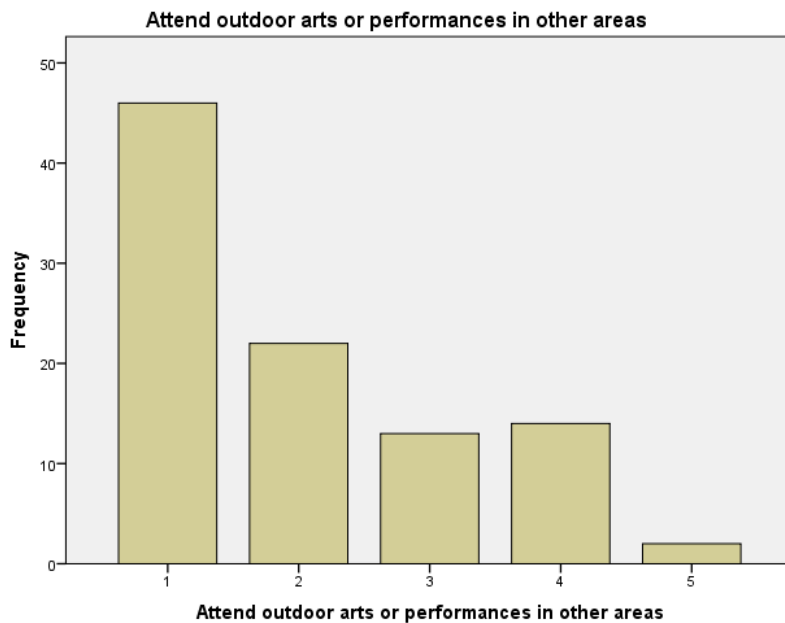
	Event organisation		Event location		Entertainment		Information available		Refreshments		Promotion		Overall quality of event	
	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent	Frequency	Per-cent
<b>Excellent</b>	83	56.1	110	74.3	82	55.4	50	33.8	54	36.5	33	22.3	75	50.7
<b>Good</b>	51	34.5	27	18.2	52	35.1	64	43.2	63	42.6	58	39.2	60	40.5
<b>Satisfactory</b>	3	2	8	5.4	7	4.7	18	12.2	17	11.5	23	15.5	8	5.4
<b>Poor</b>	3	2			1	0.7	8	5.4	7	4.7	15	10.1	1	0.7
<b>don't know</b>	3	2			3	2	2	1.4	2	1.4	6	4.1	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	143	96.6	145	98	145	98	142	95.9	143	96.6	135	91.2	145	98
<b>System</b>	5	3.4	3	2	3	2	6	4.1	5	3.4	13	8.8	3	2
	148	100	148	100	148	100	148	100	148	100	148	100	148	100

Figure 4 – Thoughts on today's events

## Inspiration from the event

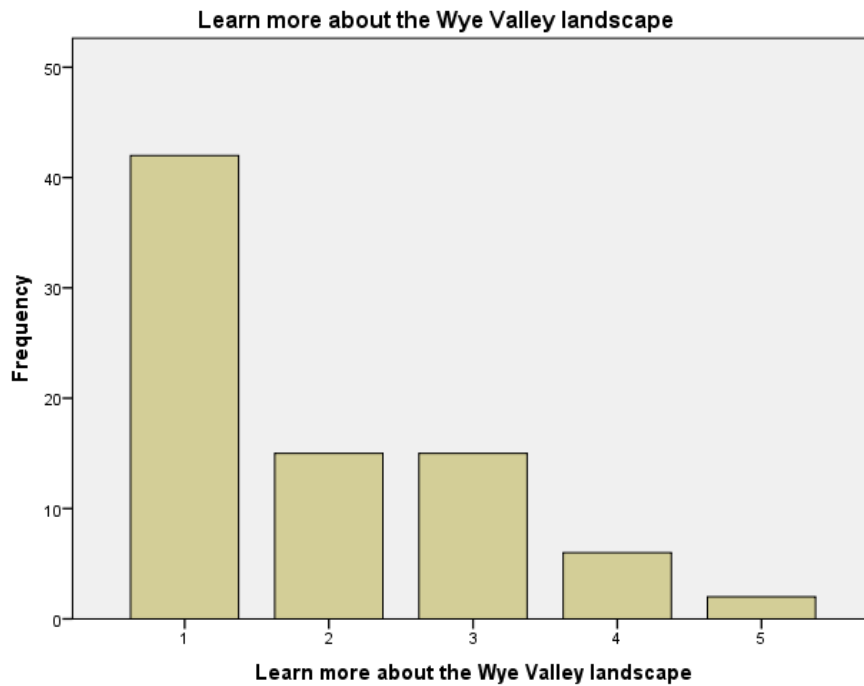
When asked to rank what the event had inspired people to do the sample respondents indicated that 'attend outdoor art or performances in other areas' was ranked highest most frequently (n=46) and the following quote from one participant suggests this is a sentiment that could be carried over to future Festivals:

*Join in with the float next year. Get more involved.*



**Figure 5 – Inspiration from the event – attend outdoor arts or performances**

Following on from attending outdoor events, the next ranked inspiration for people , was 'learn more about Wye Valley landscape' which was ranked highest by 42 respondents (52% of the sample). This is significant as it suggests that bringing people to an event of this nature does generate interest among some people to learn more about the Wye Valley landscape. In future years it would be worth exploring in more detail what people would like to know and how they might find it easiest to access the information.



**Figure 6 – Inspiration from the event – learn more about Wye Valley landscape**

### Event visitor spending

Just over half (51%) of the sample people spent between £5-20. Approximately one third of the sample (35.1%) reported spending between £10 and £20. However slightly more than one third (35.8%; n=47) of the sample spent £10 or less with 12.9% of the sample spending nothing. The mean amount of money spent per respondent was £16.44. Note that 29% of the sample spent more than £20 per person. The amount of money spent ranged from 90p to £150 and the standard deviation was £22.59.

The sample falls quite neatly into three parts – roughly one third spending under £10, one third £10 -20 and slightly less than one third over £20. The following table is ranked in order of responses:

**q1Event ^ amount spent ranges Crosstabulation**

Count		amount spent ranges							Total
		no spend	under £5	greater than £5 under £10	greater £10 under £20	greater than £20 under £50	greater than £50 under £100	over £100	
q1Event	Chepstow	8	1	6	13	13	2	1	44
	Llandogo	3	1	4	7	9	1	1	26
	Hereford	4	1	3	7	4	0	1	20
	Monmouth	0	2	1	4	4	1	0	12
	Ross	0	0	4	6	0	0	0	10
	Lydbrook	1	0	1	7	1	0	0	10
	Tintern	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	8
	Bishopswood	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total		17	9	21	46	31	4	3	131

**Figure 7 - Amount spent ranges by event**

## What people enjoyed most about the day's event

When asked what people enjoyed most about the day's event there was a clear preference with 52% (n=77) respondents ranking 'atmosphere/good day out' as their first choice. However 'performances/outdoor art' was ranked by people as their second (26%, n=39) and third (20%, n= 30) choices, which follows strongly the results of the previous question about what motivated people to attend events which strongly favoured 'to attend outdoor arts or performances in other areas'.

These findings are summarised in the sentiments of one Festival attendee when asked to comment about the day's event:

*As a family we have enjoyed seeing the event in some very beautiful but different surroundings. The children have loved the story telling and crafts. It has been delightfully engaging.*

### Atmosphere / good day out

	Frequency	Percent
1	77	52.0
2	17	11.5
3	10	6.8
4	1	.7
5	5	3.4
6	2	1.4
Total	112	75.7

### Performances / outdoor art

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1	22	14.9
2	39	26.4
3	30	20.3
4	8	5.4
5	5	3.4
6	1	.7
7	1	.7
Total	106	71.6

### Experiencing new things

	Frequency	Percent
1	6	4.1
2	18	12.2
3	13	8.8
4	12	8.1



	5	8	5.4
	6	9	6.1
	Total	66	44.6

**Being involved with activities**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	7	4.7
	2	11	7.4
	3	10	6.8
	4	17	11.5
	5	9	6.1
	6	5	3.4
	Total	59	39.9

**The setting**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	16	10.8
	2	27	18.2
	3	21	14.2
	4	16	10.8
	5	12	8.1
	6	1	.7
	7	1	.7
Total	94	63.5	

**The stalls**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	1	.7
	2	5	3.4
	3	5	3.4
	4	7	4.7
	5	9	6.1
	6	22	14.9
Total	49	33.1	

**Other.....**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	4	2.7
	2	2	1.4
	3	2	1.4
	4	3	2.0
	5	3	2.0
	7	6	4.1
	Total	20	13.5

**Figure 8 – What people enjoyed about the day’s events**

## Knowledge of the AONB

The vast majority of the sample respondents – over 79% - did know that the Wye Valley is an AONB. This is encouraging as a large proportion of the respondents are local whereas possibly the wider population may not know about AONBs, nor where their boundaries lie. There was a mixed response to the question ‘did you learn more about the Wye Valley?’ with 37.8% (n=56) agreeing and 38.5% (n=57) neither agreeing or disagreeing.

There was a more affirmative response to the question ‘did you learn more about water issues?’ with 40.5% (n=60) agreeing. This is also encouraging given the focus on the river and water in the promotional materials and activities at events.

### More about the Wye Valley

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	agree	56	37.8
	neither agree nor disagree	57	38.5
	disagree	17	11.5
	Total	130	87.8
Missing	System	18	12.2
Total		148	100.0

### More about water issues

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	agree	60	40.5
	neither agree nor disagree	49	33.1
	disagree	18	12.2
	Total	127	85.8
Missing	System	21	14.2
Total		148	100.0

**Figure 9 – Sample responses to the question: ‘did you learn more?’**

## Experience of attending the Festival

More than three quarters of the sample (77%) responded positively to question 17 – about their experiences of attending the festival events – choosing ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree to the item about the positive effect that taking part has had on them.

Care must be taken in interpreting responses to these statements as some of the replies could be attributed to the tendency for people not to want to be seen to be disagreeing with

positive statements. The only variance in this pattern was that respondents 'strongly agreed' that 'taking part in this event has had a positive effect on me' with 31.1% (n=46) responses.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.7
	Disagree	2	1.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	10.8
	Agree	68	45.9
	Strongly agree	46	31.1
	Total	136	91.9
Missing	System	12	8.1
Total		148	100.0

**Figure 10 Responses to the statement: 'taking part had a positive effect on me'**

Following on from this, there was a positive response by respondents when asked if they would attend the Wye Valley River Festival in 2018 with 80% saying they would. It is interesting to note, however, that only 48% (n=71) of the sample said they would attend another event at the current festival. This could potentially be interpreted as suggesting that people only attend local events, and are unlikely to travel far to attend what they might perceive as a similar event. However, this may also be affected by the high number of respondents (31.1%) at the finale in Chepstow and the penultimate event at Llandogo (21%), who could not attend further events at the current festival.

## 1.6 Participant Analysis

There were a total of 35 responses (22% response rate) to the questionnaire from participants, with the majority 57.14% (n=20) being Arts performer / practitioner (including musician / singer) and they were mostly 57.14% (n=20) volunteers.

A total of six telephone interviews were conducted with key participants involved in the Wye Valley River Festival, all of whom had been involved in the previous Festival in 2014. A summary of these interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

Overall, participants indicated a positive interaction, particularly in the organisation of the event and their role with 71.4% (25 people) responding positively to q3 asking if they felt that their roles and responsibilities were clearly defined. However, factors such as the weather and some low audience numbers affected their overall experience of the events. It should be noted that most respondents were volunteers and the weather was at times wet and/or windy which particularly affected some participants less used to participating in an outdoor arts festival.

There was some evidence that the participants gained from being involved in the event, for example, Mandy Dyke stated:

*“It furthered my thinking and the focus was on different ways of engaging with people and landscape”*

There was evidence that participants even grew in confidence as a result of their involvement with the Festival as the following quotes illustrated:

*‘It was fulfilling to be working with such a lovely bunch of people, it gave me confidence to take people on journeys’*

Roger Drury, Soundworks

*As we have now had two of these River Festivals, our village committee are totally up to scratch on what works to bring the community together and to make sure we are fully part of the whole Festival moving down the River Wye.*

Rowena Barr, Lydbrook Tump Committee

Another participant – Jonathan Beedell – spoke of how his involvement gave him a “*sense of satisfaction and achievement and connection between people and places*” and how this, in turn, led to the sense that he had proved himself not just to his peers but also to Arts Councils that could fund future work.

It was also clear, however, that for some participants the original aspirations of what the Festival could potentially provide may not have come to fruition. One of the telephone

survey participants responded to the question ‘did your experience meet expectations?’ in the following way:

*“There were a mix of different sorts of people involved – scientist, environmentalist, creatives – so I hoped that would inform the process but I don’t feel that translated all the way through.”*

Dan Fox, Redbrook Installation

A total of 40% (n=14) felt that they didn’t know if the evolution of the Festival from Research & Development (R&D) to performance achieved the aims and objectives of the 'Global Artery' theme (Q4). This could be attributed to the complexity of the question and participants’ level of involvement in the Research & Development and/or knowledge and understanding of the ‘Global Artery’ theme. Some 26% (n=9) confirmed that the evolution of the Festival from Research & Development (R&D) to performance achieved the aims and objectives of the 'Global Artery' theme, while 31% (n=11) responded that they were not part of the R&D phase.

For Q5 - **has the Festival helped in developing you or your organisation's skills or activities in the following? (Please mark all that apply)** – a total of 12 people skipped this question with 23 responding. From those that did respond it was clear that ‘networking /collaboration’ (70%, n=16) and ‘environmental understanding &/or appreciation’ (48%, n=11) were skills that participants felt that the Festival helped them the most.

Answer Choices	Responses
artistic work	43.48% 10
environmental understanding &/or appreciation	47.83% 11
community development	34.78% 8
networking / collaboration	69.57% 16
event management	17.39% 4
Total Respondents: 23	

**Figure 11 – Responses to Q5 Has the Festival helped in developing you or your organisation's skills or activities in the following? (Please mark all that apply)**

The following comments reinforce these findings as people cited tangible ways in which their involvement in the Festival had enhanced their learning:

*'I learned a bit more about testing water through doing experiments with groups of children and families. I also found out more about the range of species that can be found. I worked with/talked to/learned from other local artists/practitioners.'*

*'Working in primary schools challenged us to be engaging and informative. This was an interesting challenge as we wanted the children to have fun whilst exploring some facts about water and rivers. I think this level of engagement with primary school students was our first experience with this age range and we both enjoyed the interaction and possibilities of doing more work like this.'*

Looking at the range of answers for Q.7 and Q.8 **'What did you personally or professionally gain by being involved with the Wye Valley River Festival?'** and **'What do you think was the most successful aspect of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016?'**, there were certain themes that came out and the following tables show a summary of illustrative quotes under those themes:

**Figure 12 – key themes from Qs 7 & 8**

<b>Sense of community</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Raising awareness</b>	<b>Working with others</b>
<i>Greater awareness of the community infrastructure in the area.</i>	<i>I have learnt new ways of creating and developing work having worked with new people from different artistic approaches. I also learnt more about the river Wye and the animals that live there and the activities you can do along the Wye.</i>	<i>from a professional point the festival helped with building networks and partnership working</i>	<i>raising awareness to locals and visitors of the extreme beauty and special environmental qualities of the Wye and all that it has to offer</i>	<i>To work with others on a huge project and to be able to contribute to the overall musical effect that needed to be created for the audiences.</i>
<i>Enjoyment of interplay between artistic, environmental and community themes.</i>	<i>What I learnt at the school education sessions I can go on to deliver to other classes at the school.</i>	<i>The opportunity to meet and work with new and interesting partners.</i>	<i>Raising awareness of the diversity of the Wye Valley environment</i>	
<i>It's integration and community engagement</i>	<i>Personally I gained a greater knowledge about the river</i>	<i>We met and networked with artists that are new to Artspace. We</i>		

Sense of community	Learning	Networking	Raising awareness	Working with others
	<i>life and the communities along the Wye.</i>	<i>were able to promote our projects. As a small arts charity, it is great to be part of a high profile event. We do not have much of a budget for marketing/promotion.</i>		
<i>Community engagement with the aims and objectives of the festival</i>	<i>Over the two festivals I have come to understand my own abilities and limitations better.</i>	<i>I was able to create a whole area of work which I will be able to use in the future</i>		
<i>Bringing the community together in a fun way at the festival river sites to appreciate the river and its surrounds and to teach them something about water and the environment at the same time.</i>	<i>The educational aspect was very successful and reached children across the Wye Valley AONB.</i>			
<i>the bringing together of various communities along the river, and provided them with the opportunity to create various works together. for instance the choirs.</i>				

**Figure 13 - Q. 9 What was least successful and/or provided the biggest challenges?**

<b>Weather</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>The performances</b>	<b>Event information</b>
<i>The weather. Hereford was too cold to stand around watching the show although I did and would have liked to watch the procession but had to leave due to cold.</i>	<i>Sometimes the organisation seemed a little disjointed.</i>	<i>I did not understand the meaning of the samovar. It all seemed very whacky and as if the performers were enjoying it more than the crowd</i>	<i>Without a Ross organiser there was not much local engagement. Information about the Ross event (layout, timetable) was scarce .</i>
<i>The weather is also always impossible to predict in advance - it was very cold at the start of the Festival.</i>	<i>Attracting significant business sponsorship; attracting support and engagement from business and local communities; maintaining interest in the programme; attracting audiences</i>	<i>Some of the theatre activity seemed a bit random/incomprehensible</i>	<i>Not being able to provide the public with more detailed information on schedules or information about the theme possibly harmed visitor numbers.</i>
<i>Some communities did not engage with it. The attendance seemed poor, due to the cold weather and some lack of clarity as to the detailed programme. The timing of publicity seemed to be too late in the process. I think the timing of the festival needs to be reviewed , it seems too early in the festival season and the cold weather may have put people off.</i>	<i>Llandogo school was offered a pond dipping session but the people delivering it did not have DBS checks so it had to be cancelled. It made us look unprofessional. DBS checks should be discussed at the education meeting next time to ensure they are in place before approaching schools</i>	<i>The Desperate Men were not at all my idea of community theatre. Their performance was embarrassing.</i>	
<i>The extremely cold and wet weather at the beginning of the festival. There was no contingency plan for bad weather.</i>	<i>I think that a festival of this kind requires longer-term planning, greater local networking and local knowledge, more engagement with local people and better communication and publicity than was evident at the festival</i>		
<i>Rain was a challenge.</i>			



Weather	Planning	The performances	Event information
<i>Coping with the extremely cold weather towards the end of each event provided the biggest challenge for us as brass performers.</i>			

There was a favourable response to Q 10 - **How do you rate the support from the Festival Team?** – with over 50% of respondents choosing good or excellent for both phases i.e. during the planning phase and during the actual Festival:

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Useless	don't know
During the preparation and planning for the Festival	31.43% 11	22.86% 8	20.00% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.71% 9
During the Festival	38.24% 13	20.59% 7	17.65% 6	2.94% 1	0.00% 0	20.59% 7

**Table 14 – Responses to Q 10 - How do you rate the support from the Festival Team?**

People also saw the effectiveness of the Festival in providing a platform for the issues listed in the following table, with over 70% of respondents choosing ‘somewhat effective’ and ‘highly effective’ in their responses and no one choosing ‘no effect’:

	Don't know	No effect	very little effect	somewhat effective	Highly effective	Total
landscape & environmental issues	14.29% 5	0.00% 0	8.57% 3	48.57% 17	28.57% 10	35
outdoor arts	2.94% 1	0.00% 0	8.82% 3	35.29% 12	52.94% 18	34
up-skilling of participants / performers	17.65% 6	0.00% 0	5.88% 2	50.00% 17	26.47% 9	34
the Wye Valley as a special place	2.86% 1	0.00% 0	11.43% 4	40.00% 14	45.71% 16	35

**Table 15 – Responses to Q 11 - In your view how effective is the Festival in providing a platform for the following**

Responses indicated that participants thought that the model of the Festival as a multi-sited event worked well (Q.12) with 59% (n=20) replying yes and 26% (n=9) replying 'don't know' and 15% (n=5) responding 'no'.

Respondents strongly agreed that the the model of the Festival as an environmental and artistic collaboration worked well with over 70% (n=24) replying yes.

When citing a favourite moment in the Festival visual performance moments stood out for participants as the following quotes demonstrate:

*Llandogo was a beautiful site, the sun shone on the water as it was thrown around in a playful way, the pots and performers shone out.*

*The performance in Monmouth with the mist settling on the riverside Meadows as it went dark - performers, amazing music, fireworks and a magical atmosphere.*

*Fireworks at the end.*

*The appearance of the festival site/s with the Samovar and Caravans, the costumes of the actors/artists, the backdrop of the river - absolutely magical!!!*

*Sunset in Monmouth with hot mist rising after a wet day*

*The feast at the end event of the festival plus the torch and firework displays*

There was uncertainty in response to Q.15 - **Looking towards a possible Wye Valley River Festival in 2018, what training opportunities would you like a 2018 Festival to provide as part of an outreach programme?** demonstrated by comments such as 'Don't know since I've not been involved in this aspect. Perhaps develop further what's been on going?' and 'unsure at present' .

There was an interest in being involved in aspects of the 2018 Festival with the options of 'networking with performers, artists and local communities' 37% (n=11) and 'performing' 33% (n=10) being the most popular responses:

## Q16 Would you be interested in being involved in aspects of a 2018 Wye Valley River Festival?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 5

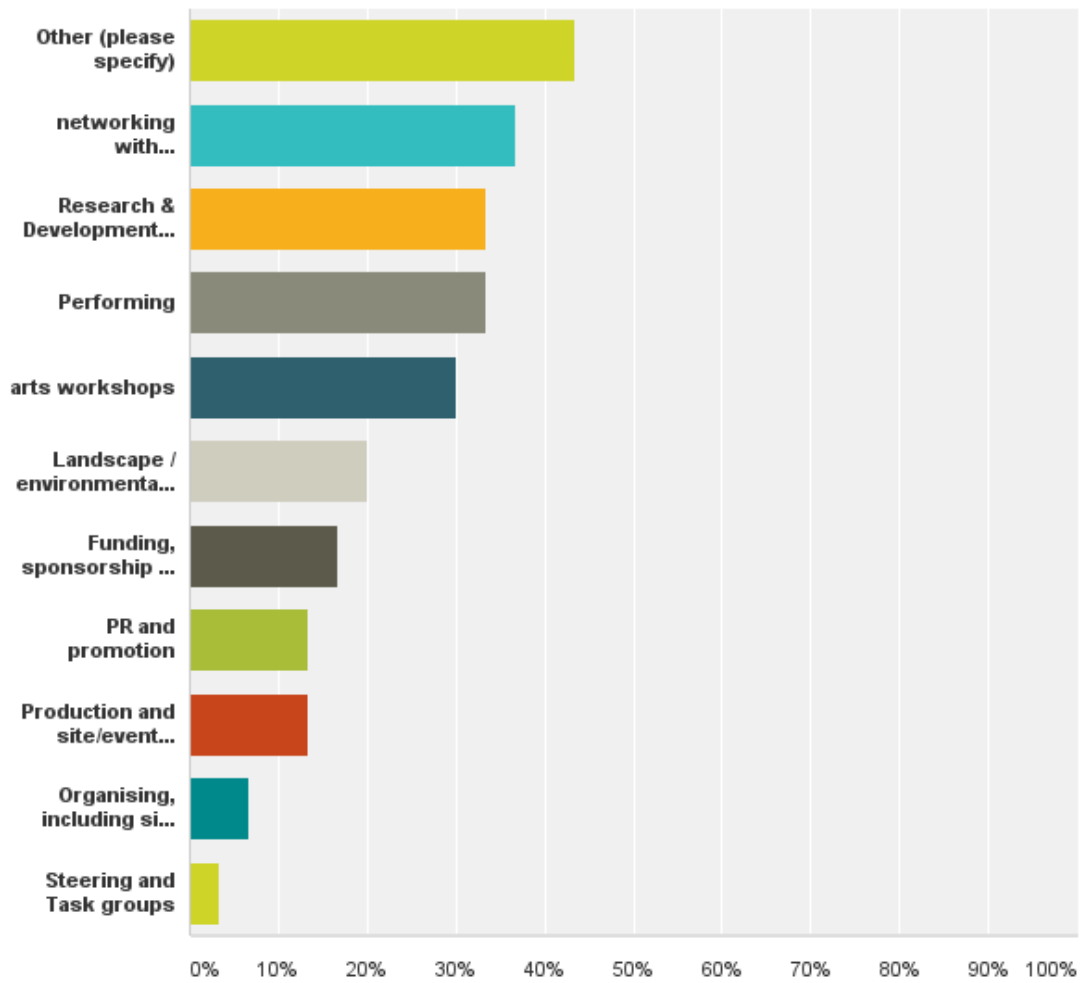


Figure 16 – Q 16

## 1.7 Summary

The aim of the project was to measure the success or failure of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 by assessing both the audience and participant uptake of the core values of the Festival – to celebrate the intrinsic value of landscape. It is clear from both audience and participants' comments that the aims of the project - creating high quality inclusive art 'of' and 'in' the landscape which was immersive and interpreted the Wye Valley - were achieved as shown by audience members comments about the Festival:

*Engage Circus in front of Severn/Wye view, music, setting. I love the 'Water Ones' and the samovar tea stall!*

*Performances giving strong environment message about water*

While there was some criticism about certain aspects of the Festival's organisation, such as promotion and publicity, it was clear that both participants and audience members had a good day out and engaged with both the art and environmental messages of the Festival.

Appendix 1 Phone Questions	Robert Morgan – Lydney Brass Band	Dan Fox – Redbrook Bridge installation	Mandy Dike – And Now pyrotechnics	Roger Drury – Soundworks, 4 story walks	Phill Haynes – Festival Director	Jonathan Beedell – Artistic Director, Desperate Men.
<b>Motivation for being involved in the River Festival?</b>  Page 71	Do something different from what we normally do. We formed something different, playing different music than we would normally play...it was very enjoyable.	I was invited to do an audio/visual installation on the railway bridge at Redbrook. I recorded kids at the local school and then played these back through the symbols all through the day. This was effective at getting kids to bring their parents to the installation. I got good feedback from the residents.	I was involved in the first festival. We love the Wye Valley, it's good for the soul and it's relatively local for us.	Observed and took part in previous festival, didn't feel like the Forest of Dean got involved in that one. We don't have a lot of arts events here so it's good to get involved. Good opportunity to work with arts professionals. Challenge to connect with communities hasn't worked.	Always involved in this type of work – to be sustainable needs artistic quality, more in tune with community. I believe these things need to come from bottom up and work with artistic professionals. Good chance to work outdoors and something that is genuinely about the environment.	To have something long term that we could work at over months to give steady income. To do something outdoors in that wonderful landscape for naive audiences.
<b>Have you attended previous River Festivals?</b>	Yes, in 2014	Yes, in 2014	Yes, in 2014	Yes, in 2014	Yes, in 2014	Yes, in 2014
<b>What activities were you engaged in at the Festival?</b>	I am responsible for organizing the band.	The installation and I played in the band (Tim Hills band).	Samavar (tea) and fireworks. Painting of caravans.	Walks –Ross, Lydbrook, Llandgo, Coleford. Run story telling vans.	Running the festival	Attended all the events as a performer.
<b>Why is it important ?</b>  16   Page	It's about heritage, we've seen a huge deterioration in numbers of brass bands so it's important to get out and about so people can hear us and our music. We go into these things whole heartedly...I try to pass on to the band my experiences	It was about crossing borders because the bridge was between England and Wales. I also introduced sound of steam trains and people responded to this in a positive way – I tried to respond to requests.		Buzz working with artists. Generating something from workshops  	I get paid! I have personal investment in this festival, it's a festival that continues to challenge me professionally. Gives me an opportunity to work in a beautiful environment. Nice to work with someone who isn't an arts	Sense of satisfaction and achievement and connection between people and places and to prove ourselves to arts council and peers that we can deliver on this scale.

					organization.	
<b>Did your experiences meet expectations.</b>		A mix of different sorts of people e.g. scientist, environmentalist so I hoped that would inform the process but I don't feel that translated all the way through.		Weather didn't help. More work needed to be done with communities before event e.g. Chepstow.	Learning about environment. I like working in different environments.	Networked communities – either virtual or geographical – put different artists together and see them grow.
<b>How did you benefit professionally from being involved?</b>	A lot, we can now say we can do this and we can do this for other events, it's uplifting and I'm happy with how the band performed.		More understanding of working in AONB	Built confidence to develop story walks, build on this and work with local community. I'm going to go back to those communities and work with them.	Yes, totally. Great connected festival which was very chilled.	Yes and no, yes in the sense that the collaborations we set up worked well but no, disappointed with numbers of audience. Programming was perhaps too wide and open, people needed clearer idea of timings. People were spread out.
<b>What do you feel you benefited from personally?</b>	I can say I never experienced that before so it was a wonderful occasion.	Good opportunity to carry on a strand of work that I'd already developed. Make a stand alone piece that had to have rigour.	Working in beautiful places, produce a dialogue about serious issues – how artists can engage in important rural issues. Not sure this happened.	As I live here, I'd like to see those ideas develop more.	Weather, nice day in Monmouth. The fact that we are hosts, not stewards, this affects attendees experience so they feel safe and welcomed.	The weather. Exhaustion! Some people's nervousness about what might happen. Could have done with more production staff.
<b>Did your experience meet your expectations?</b>		I think it got simplified from the original idea so I think it lost its edge.	I think more work could be done to engage physical aspect of landscape Understand space more and build something.		It did broaden my experiences around working with the environment.	Learnt more about fireworks and how to put them together. Learnt about water.

<b>What factors affected your overall experience of event?</b>	We got wet and cold, especially at Chepstow!! The experience at Monmouth, when the mist came up and we went along the field with our festival band to where the fireworks were going on and the torch procession...it was a strange and wonderful experience.	The weather was good. Nice to have the opportunity to do a residency.	Lack of audiences. Hard physical work – moving kit. Why was there so little public engagement for so much effort in some events e.g. Chepstow?	Weather and lack of engagement.	I'd like to engage with performers who work locally in the next festival and other work.	Yes, definitely. I will carry working with brass band. Roger Drury.
<b>To what extent did your involvement broaden your experiences?</b>		Not sure I developed anything new but I was pleased with how my installation worked out.	Furthered my thinking, focus of different ways of engaging with people and landscape.		Spending time working in the beautiful outdoors – on mental well being job level it's brilliant! I'm very proud of this festival.	More knowledge about how to do it next time, new ideas for next time.
<b>Did you meet people at Festival with whom you might collaboratively.</b>		No	Already knew people e.g. Dan Fox and Tim Hall	Performer who lives in Ross. Needs a mechanism for carrying on the collaborations formed during the festival. I don't think the website or the postcards worked.		
<b>Are there any other ways you feel you gained from being involved in the Festival?</b>		I got some nice documentation from it. I regretted not putting a comments book out. Nice to be involved in a festival that engages people, makes you feel confident.	Learning about work in AONB. Deeper understanding of AONB and other artists.	It was fulfilling to be working with such a lovely bunch of people, confidence to take people on journeys. Hope there is a de brief or a follow up.		





## Press and media coverage for Wye Valley River Festival 2016

### Press Releases:

#### **PR1. Launch press release 18.9.15**

##### **South Wales Argus**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/13779484.Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival\\_plans\\_revealed/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/13779484.Wye_Valley_River_Festival_plans_revealed/)

##### **BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester**

Interview with Andrew Blake

##### **Ross Voice**

<http://www.rossvoice.co.uk/wye-valleys-watery-extravaganza-launched-on-world-rivers-day/>

##### **Chepstow Voice**

<http://www.chepstowvoice.co.uk/wye-valleys-watery-extravaganza-launched-on-world-rivers-day/>

##### **Monnow Voice**

<http://www.monnowvoice.co.uk/wye-valleys-watery-extravaganza-launched-on-world-rivers-day/>

#### **PR2. Dive into river festival now! Call for singers to get involved 2.2.16**

##### **South Wales Argus**



##### [Singers needed to join Wye River Festival choir](#)

South Wales Argus-3 Feb 2016

SINGERS of all abilities are invited to take part in the second **Wye Valley River Festival**. The festival was last held in 2014 and attracted 20,000

visitors [http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14250472.Singers\\_needed\\_to\\_join\\_River\\_Festival\\_choir/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14250472.Singers_needed_to_join_River_Festival_choir/)

##### **Ross Gazette**



<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103257&headline=Join%20in%20the%20River%20Festival&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

##### **Free Press Series**



##### [Singers needed to join Wye River Festival choir](#)

Free Press Series

SINGERS of all abilities are invited to take part in the second **Wye Valley River Festival**. The festival was last held in 2014 and attracted 20,000

visitors [http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14250472.Singers\\_needed\\_to\\_join\\_Wye\\_River\\_Festival\\_choir/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14250472.Singers_needed_to_join_Wye_River_Festival_choir/)

##### **Hereford Times 11.2.16**

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14269156.Singers\\_practise\\_ahead\\_of\\_water\\_festival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14269156.Singers_practise_ahead_of_water_festival/)

**Singers practise ahead of water festival**



SINGERS are set to line the banks of the River Wye as part of this year's annual water festival.

**Penallt Village website** [www.penallt.org.uk](http://www.penallt.org.uk)

**Ross Town Council**

[http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk/notices/river\\_fest\\_0.pdf](http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk/notices/river_fest_0.pdf)

**Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/dive-in-to-river-festival-now/>

### **PR3. Half Term Intrigue at Puzzlewood 8.2.16**

**Forester**



**Ross Gazette**

Half term holiday fun at Puzzlewood thanks to the **Wye Valley River ...**

Ross Gazette-11 Feb 2016

Plans for this year's unique, watery extravaganza, the **Wye Valley River Festival** are well underway, and this year will feature The Caravan of ...

<http://www.ross->

[today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103324&headline=Half%20term%20holiday%20fun%20at%20Puzzlewood%20thanks%20to%20the%20Wye%20Valley%20River%20Festival&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016](http://www.ross-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103324&headline=Half%20term%20holiday%20fun%20at%20Puzzlewood%20thanks%20to%20the%20Wye%20Valley%20River%20Festival&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016)

**Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism website**

[http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson/all/e-1168-Half\\_term\\_intrigue\\_at\\_Puzzlewood](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson/all/e-1168-Half_term_intrigue_at_Puzzlewood)

**Gloucester News Centre**

<http://gloucesternewscentre.co.uk/half-term-intrigue-at-puzzlewood/>

**Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire – now removed**

<http://www.eatsleepliveherefordshire.co.uk/half-term-intrigue-at-puzzlewood/>

**Sunshine Radio website**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/half-term-intrigue-at-puzzlewood/>

**Wherewego website**

Wye Valley River Festival | Chepstow Monmouthshire | Fri ...

<https://www.wherewego.com/event/...wye-valley-river-festival/events.as...>

Apr 29 There will be tales from the deep at the magical ancient woodland site of Puzzlewood in the Forest of Dean this half term holiday, when

### **PR4. Follow up to Puzzlewood: Take the plunge into creativity 22.2.16**

### **Gloucester Citizen**

Families at Puzzlewood in Forest of Dean get first chance to dip toes in **Wye Valley River Festival**

Gloucester Citizen 23.2.16

Families got their first chance to dip a toe in the rising waters of the **Wye Valley River Festival**. "The Caravan of Myth and Legends – Babbling Books" ... <http://www.gloucestercitizen.co.uk/Families-Puzzlewood-Forest-Dean-chance-dip-toes/story-28790039-detail/story.html>

### **Visit Heart of England website**

[www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12358](http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12358)

The official tourism information website for The Heart of England Region which covers: Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Ironbridge, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country. They also published the item on facebook and twitter and put up again in April:

### **Arts project's flying visit to Wye Valley**

[www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12383](http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12383):

### **Shirehall website**

<http://www.shirehallmonmouth.org.uk/plans-river-festival-take-shape/>

## **PR5. Luminous Birds installation/Origami bird making 3.3.16**

### **Monmouthshire Beacon**

['Luminous Birds' exhibition offers a chance to add a feather to your cap](#)

Monmouthshire Beacon-8 Mar 2016

... Luminous Birds, wings its way to Tintern Old Station as part of this year's **Wye Valley River Festival**, which runs from 29th April to 15th May.

### **Monnow/Chepstow/Ross Voice March editions.**

Targets 18000 residents in the core festival area – Monmouth, Chepstow, Forest of Dean, Ross. Delivered the last weekend of the month to households and stands in Co-ops, Morrisons Tesco, dentists, doctors, leisure centres etc

– covered Luminous Birds and other opportunities to get involved – full page in each and covered it in the editor's intro.

### **Monnow/Chepstow/Ross Voice April editions.**

Targets 18000 residents in the core festival area – Monmouth, Chepstow, Forest of Dean, Ross. Delivered the last weekend of the month to households and stands in Co-ops, Morrisons Tesco, dentists, doctors, leisure centres etc

Also coverage specifically for Luminous Birds in April issue (see below p 79) Plus full page ad <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A3z5ss/MonnowVoiceApril2016/resources/index.htm?referrerUrl=>

### **Monnow Voice website:**

Featured entry: <http://www.monnowvoice.co.uk/arts-project-wye-valley/>

**The Beneficial** – parish newsletter, Dormington and Mordiford

### **Visit Heart of England:**

<http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12383>

Also put up again in April and on facebook and twitter

Take the plunge into creativity: [www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12384](http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12384)

**Chepstow Drill Hall newsletter** – circulated by email

## **PR6. Storytelling workshops 4.3.16**

### **Free Press article 9.3.16**

#### **Hereford Times**

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14337785.Story\\_walk\\_planning\\_workshops\\_for\\_the\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14337785.Story_walk_planning_workshops_for_the_River_Festival/)



#### **Story walk planning workshops for the River Festival**

Hereford Times-11 Mar 2016

The workshop sessions invite walkers of all experiences to work alongside writers from the area to plan walks that will become part of the **Wye Valley River ...**

#### **Ledbury Reporter**

[Story walk planning workshops for the River Festival \(From ...  
www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/.../14337785.Story\\_walk\\_planning\\_worksh...](http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/.../14337785.Story_walk_planning_workshops_for_the_River_Festival/)

THE **Wye Valley River Festival** committee is holding workshops in Ross-on-Wye to create story walks.

#### **Ross Gazette**

<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103528&headline=Ross-on-Wye%20workshops%20for%20River%20Festival&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

#### **Coleford Hub**

<http://www.thecolefordhub.info/wye-valley-river-festival-workshops-start-things-running/>

#### **Ledbury Reporter**

[http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14337785.Story\\_walk\\_planning\\_workshops\\_for\\_the\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14337785.Story_walk_planning_workshops_for_the_River_Festival/)

### **PR7 Choirs call out 21.3.16**

#### **Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review, Circulation 46,034**

<http://www.theforestreview.co.uk/article.cfm?id=102013&headline=River%20festival%20%20call%20to%20choirs&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

#### **Hereford Times, March 24**



#### **Choirs urged to take part in Wye Valley River Festival**

Hereford Times-24 Mar 2016

CHOIRS from across Herefordshire are urged to perform as part of the **Wye Valley River Festival**. The festival which takes place between April 29 and May 15 ...

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14384074.Choirs\\_urged\\_to\\_take\\_part\\_in\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14384074.Choirs_urged_to_take_part_in_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

**Shirenewton Village Magazine** April issue

#### **Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/volley-of-voices-along-the-valley/>

#### **SlapMag April 2016 p 11**

<http://www.slapmag.co.uk/Slap-Issues/Issue-57-April-2016.pdf>

### **PR8 Schools outreach programme 30.3.16**

**South Wales Argus**



**Monmouthshire children preparing for Wye Valley festival**

South Wales Argus 1.4.16

Over 500 children, including some from Chepstow, Llandogo and Trellech, are pond-dipping and surveying water quality ahead of the **Wye Valley River Festival**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14397565.Monmouthshire\\_children\\_preparing\\_for\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_festival/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14397565.Monmouthshire_children_preparing_for_Wye_Valley_festival/)

**Then updated April 18:**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14433229.Schoolchildren\\_look\\_at\\_pond\\_dipping\\_and\\_water\\_surveying\\_as\\_part\\_of\\_festival\\_project/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14433229.Schoolchildren_look_at_pond_dipping_and_water_surveying_as_part_of_festival_project/)

**Free Press Series**



**Monmouthshire children preparing for Wye Valley festival**

Free Press Series-31 Mar 2016

Over 500 children, including some from Chepstow, Llandogo and Trellech, are pond-dipping and surveying water quality ahead of the **Wye Valley River Festival**.

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14397565.Monmouthshire\\_children\\_preparing\\_for\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_festival/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14397565.Monmouthshire_children_preparing_for_Wye_Valley_festival/)

**Hereford Times**

Mention at end of this copy March 31 :

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14396191.Hereford\\_Rotary\\_Club\\_s\\_famous\\_charity\\_duck\\_race\\_to\\_form\\_grand\\_finale\\_to\\_the\\_2016\\_River\\_Carnival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14396191.Hereford_Rotary_Club_s_famous_charity_duck_race_to_form_grand_finale_to_the_2016_River_Carnival/)

**Ross Gazette**

<http://www.ross-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103680&headline=Wye%20Valley%20River%20Festival%20education%20programme%20involves%20Ross-on-Wye%20schools&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

**Free Press, p 6 April 20**

half page with pic: Testing the festival water

**PR9 Programme launch 15.4.16**

**South Wales Argus**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14440123.Final\\_preparations\\_are\\_underway\\_for\\_river\\_festival/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14440123.Final_preparations_are_underway_for_river_festival/)

**Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/wye-valley-river-festival-brings-a-huge-splash-of-events/> includes audio link to Sarah Sawyer interviewed by Shaun Moore

**Ross Gazette**

<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=104812&headline=More%20details%20about%20the%20fabulous%20River%20Festival&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

**Free Press**

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14440117.Final\\_preparations\\_are\\_underway\\_for\\_river\\_festival/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14440117.Final_preparations_are_underway_for_river_festival/)

**Ross Gazette Bank Holiday Fun special April 20, p 13**

Approx eight page on overall programme

**The Forester, April 20, p 25 What, When, Where Guide est circulation 7203-9791 mainly Cinderford; Coleford; Lydney' Newent**

Approx half page with pics on full festival programme

**Ross Gazette, What's On, April 20, p 8**

Approx eight page regarding events at Bishopswood and Lydbrook

**Gloucester Citizen April 30**

<http://www.gloucestercitizen.co.uk/event/Wye-Valley-River-Festival-Hereford-River-Carnival/event-29172631-detail/whatson/event.html>

**Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review**

<http://www.theforestreview.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103153&headline=Wye%20River%20Festival&sections=news&searchyear=2016>

**Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire**

<http://www.eatsleepliveherefordshire.co.uk/torrent-entertainment-wye-valley-river-festival/>

**PR10 Mr Cherry 21.4.16**

*Hereford Times, April 25*

**Watch out for Mr Cherry at Wye Valley River Festival**



THERE will be a regular visitor throughout the Wye Valley River Festival documenting the event.

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14449708.Watch\\_out\\_for\\_Mr\\_Cherry\\_at\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14449708.Watch_out_for_Mr_Cherry_at_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

**Ledbury Reporter website**

[http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14449708.Watch\\_out\\_for\\_Mr\\_Cherry\\_at\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14449708.Watch_out_for_Mr_Cherry_at_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

**Cotswold Journal**

[http://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/regional/herefordshire/14449708.Watch\\_out\\_for\\_Mr\\_Cherry\\_at\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/regional/herefordshire/14449708.Watch_out_for_Mr_Cherry_at_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

**Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/wandering-the-wye/>

**Monmouthshire Beacon 27.4.16**

Article in Bank Holiday special plus ¼ page ad

**PR11 Diary Marker 1 and follow-up phone calls in week before launch 21.4.16**

*To encourage attendance at events – resulting in attendance at Hereford by Hereford Times, at Ross by Ross Gazette and at Bishopswood and Lydbrook by Forester and Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review. Plus:*

**Free Press 27.4.16**

Report on full programme with pic

**Ledbury Reporter 29.4.16**

**Wye River Festival launches in Hereford tonight**

Ledbury Reporter- 29.4.16

THE **Wye River Festival** looks set to start with a bang in Hereford this ... There will also be a performance by the specially-formed **Wye Valley Festival Choir**

[http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14461369.Wye\\_River\\_Festival\\_launches\\_in\\_Hereford\\_tonight/?ref=rss](http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/14461369.Wye_River_Festival_launches_in_Hereford_tonight/?ref=rss)

**Hereford Times 29.4.16**

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14461369.Wye\\_River\\_Festival\\_launches\\_in\\_Hereford\\_tonight/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14461369.Wye_River_Festival_launches_in_Hereford_tonight/)

¾ page edit on River Festival p 20.

**PR12 Fishy Goings-on in Ross 26.4.16**

**Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/fishy-goings-on-in-ross/>

**Play Ross – online guide to events in and around Ross**

<http://www.playross.com/events.html>

**Caroline Utting facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10206423246687608&set=a.1746119100414.2086124.1461893732&type=3&theater>

**Hereford Times**



**Wye River Festival launches in Hereford tonight**

Hereford Times-29 Apr 2016

THE **Wye River Festival** looks set to start with a bang in Hereford this ... be a performance by the specially-formed **Wye Valley Festival Choir**.

**Hereford Times, 29.4.16**

Short column p3 on River Festival in Ross

**Ross Gazette 27.4.16**

Article in Whats On

**Ross Gazette website follow-up May 1**

<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=104876&headline=River%20Festival%20brings%20colour%20to%20the%20Ropewalk%20in%20Ross-on-Wye&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

**River Festival brings colour to the Ropewalk in Ross-on-Wye**

Making a splash along the river, from Hereford to Chepstow, The **Wye Valley River Festival** .

**Hereford Times May 3**

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14467733.Town\\_s\\_beer\\_and\\_cider\\_festival\\_attracts\\_a\\_good\\_crowd/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14467733.Town_s_beer_and_cider_festival_attracts_a_good_crowd/)

**PR13 Events in Gloucestershire 26.4.16**

**Gloucester News Centre**

**Forest of Dean hosts Wye Valley River Festival**

APRIL 26, 2016



Watery celebrations come to the Forest of Dean from May 2 to 12 as The Wye Valley River Festival wends its way down river...

<http://gloucesternewscentre.co.uk/forest-dean-hosts-wye-valley-river-festival/>

### ***BBC Radio Gloucestershire 7.15am to 9am, Friday April 29***

Interview with Phil Haynes and repetition of mentions and interview during the Mark Cummings show

### ***Forester 27.4.16***

Full round up plus pic

### ***Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review 29.4.16***

Full round up supported by advertising

## **PR14 Schools workshop follow-up – Festival Flags**

### ***South Wales Argus***

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14456004.Festival\\_flags\\_fashioned\\_by\\_pupils/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14456004.Festival_flags_fashioned_by_pupils/)

### ***Free Press 27.4.16 Paper and online***

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/monmouthshire\\_news/14455997.Festival\\_flags\\_fashioned\\_by\\_pupils/?ref=rss](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/monmouthshire_news/14455997.Festival_flags_fashioned_by_pupils/?ref=rss)

## **PR15 Events in Wales**

***Wales Online (Media Wales website) 4,025,111 unique visitors monthly***

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/event/wye-valley-river-festival/>

## **PR16 Soundbites for Sunshine**

***Sunshine Radio estimated 56,000 listeners per week; \*\*\*\*\*Mentions for daily events every day on 10.30am show through the festival***

## **PR17 Follow up to Hereford Launch and events in Ross and Lydbrook**

### ***BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester***

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcherefordandworcester/photos/pcb.1083503758388698/1083503525055388/?type=3&theater>

Was also assured by newsroom 29.4.16 that BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester were covering the Hereford events

### ***Hereford Times***

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14465362.Photo\\_gallery\\_Hereford\\_River\\_Carnival\\_2016/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14465362.Photo_gallery_Hereford_River_Carnival_2016/)

### ***Worcester News***

[http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/regional/14465362.Photo\\_gallery\\_Hereford\\_River\\_Carnival\\_2016/](http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/regional/14465362.Photo_gallery_Hereford_River_Carnival_2016/)



**Worcester News 3.5.16**

**Town's beer and cider festival attracts a good crowd (From Worcester ...**

[www.worcesternews.co.uk/.../14467733.Town\\_s\\_beer\\_and\\_cider\\_festiv...](http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/.../14467733.Town_s_beer_and_cider_festiv...)

18 hours ago - The **Wye Valley River Festival** in Ross took place on Sunday. The festival's travelling caravan Wye Serai provided family entertainment at the Rope Walk and ..

**Hereford Times**

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/county/14467733.Town\\_s\\_beer\\_and\\_cider\\_festival\\_attracts\\_a\\_good\\_crowd/?ref=rss](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/county/14467733.Town_s_beer_and_cider_festival_attracts_a_good_crowd/?ref=rss)

**Ross Gazette May 1**



**River Festival brings colour to the Ropewalk in Ross-on-Wye**

Ross Gazette-1 May 2016

Making a splash along the river, from Hereford to Chepstow, The **Wye Valley River Festival** runs from April 29 to May 15 – it's more than a

**Sunshine Radio 2.5.16**

<http://s.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/wye-valley-river-festival-gets-underway/>

**Abergavenny Chronicle 3.5.16**



**Spectacular start planned for Wye Valley River Festival**

Abergavenny Chronicle-3 May 2016

A fire and flame spectacular around a ceremonial Giant Samovar heralded the start of the **Wye Valley River Festival** in Hereford on Friday April ..

**Evesham Journal**

[http://www.eveshamjournal.co.uk/news/regional/14465362.Photo\\_gallery\\_Hereford\\_River\\_Carnival\\_2016/](http://www.eveshamjournal.co.uk/news/regional/14465362.Photo_gallery_Hereford_River_Carnival_2016/)

**Visit Heart of England**

<http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12414>

**South Wales Argus 3.5.16**



**River festival gets underway**

South Wales Argus-

THE second **Wye Valley River Festival** is under way and will arrive in Monmouthshire on Friday. A fire and flame spectacular around a ceremonial Giant ...

*Plus Argus tweeted this and have been doing regular tweets*

**Monmouth Beacon 4.5.16**



**River Festival launches with fire and fun**

Monmouthshire Beacon-3 May 2016

A FIRE and flame spectacular around a ceremonial Giant Samovar heralded the start of the **Wye Valley River Festival** in Hereford on Friday .

[www.monmouth-today.co.uk/article.cfm?...River%20Festival%20launch...](http://www.monmouth-today.co.uk/article.cfm?...River%20Festival%20launch...)

### **Chepstow Beacon 4.5.16**

<http://www.chepstowbeacon.co.uk/article.cfm?id=105019&headline=River%20Festival%20launches%20with%20fire%20and%20fun&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

River Festival launches with fire and fun ... ceremonial Giant Samovar heralded the start of the **Wye Valley River Festival** in Hereford on Friday April 29th, setting

### **Free Press 3.5.16**

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14467904.River\\_festival\\_gets\\_underway/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14467904.River_festival_gets_underway/)

THE second Wye Valley River Festival is under way and will arrive in Monmouthshire on Friday.

3:53pm Tuesday 3 May 2016

THE second Wye Valley River Festival is under way and will arrive in Monmouthshire on Friday.

### **Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Review website 4.5.16**

Flagging up more in this week's paper :

<http://www.theforestreview.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103229&headline=Celebrating%20the%20Wye&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

### **Ross Gazette 5.5.16**



#### **River Festival fun at Bishopswood**

Ross Gazette-1 hour ago

The watery festival with a "wow" came to Bishopswood and Lydbrook on Bank Holiday Monday (May 2nd) as The **Wye Valley River Festival** ..

### **South Wales Argus The Guide Out and About (in paper May 6)**

1/3 page with pic promoting weekend's events in Monmouth

**BBC Radio Gloucestershire May 16:** Follow-up to Redbrook sound installation and Lydbrook – interview with Phill Haynes:

Two pieces broadcast on Sunday May 16, one at 9.45 ish and another at 11.35ish

Hear the programme here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03t3y0c>

### **Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire**

<http://www.eatsleepliveherefordshire.co.uk/hereford-river-carnival-2/>

AND

<http://www.eatsleepliveherefordshire.co.uk/spectacular-launch-wye-valley-river-festival/>

## **PR 18 Diary Marker 2**

***To encourage press interest in attending events May 5-8***

### **South Wales Argus May 7**

Photographer attended events in Monmouth and Tintern May 6 resulting in following coverage:

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14477638.River\\_festival\\_makes\\_its\\_first\\_stop\\_in\\_Monmouth/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14477638.River_festival_makes_its_first_stop_in_Monmouth/)



#### **River festival makes its first stop in Monmouth**

South Wales Argus-7 hours ago

The **Wye Valley River Festival** reaches Monmouth with Richard Headon from The ... THE second **Wye Valley River Festival** made its first stop in ..

## **PR 19 Slaughters – Magical Woodland Outing**

## Sunshine Radio

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/magical-outing-at-symonds-yat-this-sunday/>

### Ross Gazette May 6

Discover the woodland life of the **River Wye** at Symonds Yat

Ross Gazette-4 hours ago

A special **Wye Valley River Festival** event is being held in conjunction with Forest Research to help people find out more about the health of our ...

**Interview with BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester**, May 8, 8am – Phill Haynes talking about event at The Slaughters

**Visit Heart of England website:** <http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12416>

## **PR 20. Follow up to Events in Monmouth; Tintern and The Slaughters**

**Visit Heart of England website:**

<http://www.visitheartofengland.com/news/article/?id=12425>

### Herefordshire Live:

<http://www.herefordshirelive.co.uk/culture/great-outdoors/photo-gallery-fire-and-water-at-wye-valley-river-festival>

Fire and water: photos from the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 ...

[www.herefordshirelive.co.uk/.../photo-gallery-fire-and-water-at-wye-vall...](http://www.herefordshirelive.co.uk/.../photo-gallery-fire-and-water-at-wye-vall...)

1 day ago - The **Wye Valley River Festival** 2016 ran from Hereford to Chepstow. ... at **Wye Valley Sculpture Garden** in Tintern, events in **Llandogo** and the

**Chepstow Beacon May 11 Article: The River Festival Keeps On Flowing**

**Free Press Series May 11: Article: Water Themed Festival Visits**

### **Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire**

<http://www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival-continues-wye/>

## **PR21 Press Diary Marker Week 3**

### **Visit Monmouthshire**

[Wye Valley River Festival Finale at Chepstow Racecourse | Festival ...](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&feature=1062&venue...)

[www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&feature=1062&venue...](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&feature=1062&venue...) Come and join us at **Chepstow Racecourse** for the fantastic **finale** to the **Wye Valley River Festival**, featuring games, a **Beast Feast**, A **Wye Serai**, a **fire sculpture**,

### **Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism website**

[Wye Valley River Festival - Grand Finale - Forest of Dean](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

[www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk) › **Whats On** - Sunday May 15, 2pm to 10.30pm.

**Grand finale. Chepstow Racecourse. Finale** includes interactive games; a **Beast Feast**; an evening .

### **Visit Wales**

[Wye Valley River Festival Finale at Chepstow Racec, Show/Display ...](http://www.visitwales.com/event-search/event-search.../event-search-details?id...51...)

[www.visitwales.com/event-search/event-search.../event-search-details?id...51...](http://www.visitwales.com/event-search/event-search.../event-search-details?id...51...) Come and join us at **Chepstow Racecourse** for the fantastic **finale** to the **Wye Valley River Festival**, featuring games, a **Beast Feast**, A **Wye Serai**, a **fire sculpture**, ..

### **South Wales Argus, May 16 photographer attended and immediate follow up:**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14495436.The\\_sun\\_set\\_beautifully\\_on\\_the\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/14495436.The_sun_set_beautifully_on_the_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)



**The sun set beautifully on the Wye Valley River Festival**

South Wales Argus

THE FINALE of the bi-annual **Wye Valley River Festival** took place in Llandogo and Chepstow over the weekend. For two days swing bands, a torch light ..

**And this was tweeted by the Argus**

**Free Press Website May 16**

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14495405.The\\_sun\\_set\\_beautifully\\_on\\_the\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14495405.The_sun_set_beautifully_on_the_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

[http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14495436.Music\\_and\\_a\\_light\\_parade\\_mark\\_end\\_of\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.freepressseries.co.uk/news/14495436.Music_and_a_light_parade_mark_end_of_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

## **PR22 Finale follow-up with pics**

**Sunshine Radio**

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/wye-valley-river-festival-goes-out-with-a-bang/>

**Chepstow Beacon May 18,**

front page strapline photo and full page article and photos

**The Forester May 18,**

front page strapline photo and full page article and photos

**Free Press May 18,**

around two pages of article and photos

**June issues Monnow Voice/Ross Voice/Chepstow and Forest of Dean Voice**, Targets 18000 residents in the core festival area – Monmouth, Chepstow, Forest of Dean, Ross. Delivered the last weekend of the month to households and stands in Co-ops, Morrisons Tesco, dentists, doctors, leisure centres etc

**June issues: full page follow-up article and photos**

<http://content.yudu.com/Library/A3zrgw/MonnowVoiceJune2016/resources/index.htm?referrerUrl=>

## **PR Magazines – targeted articles**

**Live 24-Seven January,**

readership 45,000+ Powys; Monmouthshire; Herefordshire

Link to January issue (coverage in preview of the year p 89, pre-sponsorship deal)

<http://tinyurl.com/zsdr9as>

**Live 24-Seven February,**

readership 45,000+ Powys; Monmouthshire; Herefordshire

Link to February issue (free ¼ pg ad; coverage of walks programme p 75)

<http://tinyurl.com/zlk9nsu>

**Live 24-Seven March,**

readership 45,000+ Powys; Monmouthshire; Herefordshire

Link to March issue (free ¼ pg ad; article p 90; coverage in feature on Monmouth p 57)

<http://tinyurl.com/zwr7gjm>

**Live 24-Seven April,**

readership 45,000+ Powys; Monmouthshire; Herefordshire

Free ¼ pg ad p84. One and a half pages of edit ps 88-89. <http://tinyurl.com/zxrblfy>

**We Are Voice April:**

17000 readers, Newport, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Bleanau Gwent; website 68870 page impressions

April's Day Out of the Month

On [We Are Voice website: www.werevoice.co.uk/](http://www.werevoice.co.uk/)

Plus magazine full page A4 : Family Day Out of the Month

From its spectacular launch in Hereford on April 29 to the fabulous finale at Chepstow on May 15, The **Wye Valley River Festival** promises an artistic outpouring ...

### **Welsh Border Life, April**

10,000 are sold in supermarkets and newsagents and there are 4,000 subscribers. Circulation area is Herefordshire, Shropshire, Monmouthshire, Powys, north Wales. Estimated readership 35,000 (2-3 readers per copy)

### **Broadsheep, April:**

5000 copies distributed throughout Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Powys and they also put the mag on their website

Full listings day by day for April events:

[http://issuu.com/rumbajax/docs/april\\_2016\\_broad\\_sheep/35?e=5064747/34643327](http://issuu.com/rumbajax/docs/april_2016_broad_sheep/35?e=5064747/34643327)

### **Broadsheep, May:**

5000 copies distributed throughout Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Powys and they also put the mag on their website

Full listings day by day for May events: [https://issuu.com/rumbajax/docs/may\\_16\\_broad\\_sheep](https://issuu.com/rumbajax/docs/may_16_broad_sheep)

### **Primary Times ,Easter issue of Hereford and Worcester edition.**

30,000 copies distributed. Read by teachers, parents and carers across the two counties. Specially for families. Distributed with the support of local primary schools, a copy of the magazine goes home with each child to their parents or carers

1/8 page listing.

### **SlapMag (Supporting Local Arts and Performers) April 2016 p 6**

Slap Magazine is a free printed and on-line magazine distributed throughout Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire.

Slap Magazine aim to support Local Arts & Performers by giving them a platform to raise their awareness in the local region. <http://www.slapmag.co.uk/Slap-Issues/Issue-57-April-2016.pdf>

### **Monmouthshire County Life, May/June edition,**

**double page spread with pics:** [http://edition.pagesuite-](http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?eid=259aab5f-1107-4cb4-b35b-ec413f82c195)

[professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?eid=259aab5f-1107-4cb4-b35b-ec413f82c195](http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?eid=259aab5f-1107-4cb4-b35b-ec413f82c195)

Ad p 29

Double page spread ps 28 and 29

10,000 copies circulated in Monmouth, Cwmbran, Newport, Caldicot, Raglan, Abergavenny and Usk. Also online.

### **Live 24-Seven May, readership 45,000+ Powys; Monmouthshire; Herefordshire**

Link to May issue Live 24-Seven Page of edit in Diary. <http://tinyurl.com/hvcaqwt>.

**Plus regular tweets in run up to and during festival**

### **Buzz Magazine April and May,**

leading monthly entertainment and listings magazine in Mid and South Wales, covering Cardiff to Swansea, Chepstow to Brecon. 25,000 Buzz Magazines are distributed to over 400 venues every month, creating an estimated readership of 100,000 people. Buzz also has a huge online readership.

### **Buzz Magazine, May, Festivals guide**

[http://issuu.com/buzzmagsouthwales/docs/buzz\\_may\\_online\\_2/11?e=12590602/35181453](http://issuu.com/buzzmagsouthwales/docs/buzz_may_online_2/11?e=12590602/35181453)

Ad in April issue, distributed April 1

Front page edit in May issue Festivals Guide available online April 26, distributed April 29: Special general theme: Festival Guide

Plus daily events listings for individual events: <http://www.buzzmag.co.uk/uncategorized/may-events/>

### **Monnow Voice; Ross Voice; Chepstow and Forest Voice, May issues**

Targets 18000 residents in the core festival area – Monmouth, Chepstow, Forest of Dean, Ross.  
Delivered the last weekend of the month to households and stands in Co-ops, Morrisons Tesco,  
dentists, doctors, leisure centres etc  
Full page ad, full page article and mention in editor's welcome.

## Website listings and listings magazines targeted

### **Countypost Magazine, Herefordshire and the Forest of Dean, April-May,**

Over 20,000 copies and up to 100,000 readers – distributed to major supermarkets, retail outlets,  
hotels, restaurants and information points. Distribution area covers Ross-on-Wye, Hereford,  
Ledbury, Leominster, Leintwardine, Monmouth, Newent, Longhope, Mitcheldean, Cinderford and the  
surrounding areas.

Listing in Whats On

### **Monnow Voice website**

<http://www.monnowvoice.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival-2016/>

### **Show Me Wales**

<http://www.showmewales.co.uk/thedms.aspx?dms=3&feature=47&venue=1010867>

### **Show Me Hereford April Newsletter with link**

### **Show Me Hereford May newsletter with link to:**

<http://showmeengland.co.uk/hereford/events-entertainment/wye-valley-river-festival/>

### **Show Me England website**

<http://showmeengland.co.uk/hereford/events-entertainment/wye-valley-river-festival/>

### **Visit Wales**

<http://www.visitwales.com/event-search/event-search-results/event-search-details?id=1866088&industry=Events&location=Chepstow%2C+Monmouthshire&toDate=31%2F01%2F2016+00%3A00%3A00&fromDate=30%2F01%2F2016+00%3A00%3A00&radius=10&filterIds=PartySubType-5&city=&price=&latitude=51.64376&longitude=-2.67485&ref=BF1442EFAC4D48ACBD15FC39E0612D03>

### **Plus used photos of festival on twitter during festival eg:**

<https://twitter.com/visitwales/status/730087681930170369>

### **Glos Info – full listings**

<http://www.glos.info/advertisers/wye-valley-aonb/>

### **Sunshine Radio**

estimated 56,000 listeners per week;

Website 20,000 monthly page views

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/> flip page now there and links direct to festival website

### **Regular posts on facebook throughout the festival and in the lead up**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sunshineradiouk/posts/1265325410149381>

All events on their daily events calendar eg: <http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/local/calendar/event/831/>

### **Gloucestershire YFC Blog site**

GFYFC Blog! - Gloucestershire Young Farmers

[www.gloucestershiredyfc.co.uk/gfyfc-blog/](http://www.gloucestershiredyfc.co.uk/gfyfc-blog/)

This year's **Wye Valley River Festival**, which starts from now with its spectacular launch on April 29th provides lots of fabulous opportunities for members of the

### **Pinterest**

<https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/378372806173135843/>

### **Mon4u**

<http://mon4u.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival.html> and festival film

#### **Britevents**

<http://www.britevents.com/whats-on/herefordshire/ross-on-wye/>

<http://www.britevents.com/whats-on/monmouthshire/hereford-to-chepstow/wye-valley-river-festival-2016/732922/> 100 plus views

#### **Herefordshire Live**

<http://herefordshirelive.co.uk/what-s-on/music-festivals/wye-valley-river-festival>

**And, from early April:-** <http://herefordshirelive.co.uk/culture/great-outdoors/top-5-things-about-the-wye-valley-river-festival> plus social media push

**And just before festival** <http://herefordshirelive.co.uk/hot-lists/whats-on-april-25-may-1>

Plus social media push

#### **Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire**

**Also social media coverage and LinkedIn**

**Full programme details:** [Wye Valley River Festival 2016 » Eat. Sleep. Live ...](#)

[www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival/](http://www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival/)

Ahoy there! From its launch in Hereford on April 29 to its finale near Chepstow on May 15, don't miss The **Wye Valley River Festival 2016**, a watery extravaganza ..

<http://www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival/>

**News: The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 Sponsored by ESL ...**

[www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/the-wye-valley-river-festival/](http://www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/the-wye-valley-river-festival/)

A mixture of Watery Extravaganzas, Music, Fire & Flame, Choirs, Shows, Art Installations and much more the **River Wye** from Hereford to Chepstow.

#### **Pics:**

<http://www.eatsleeliveherefordshire.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival/wye-valley-river-festival-entertainment-jim-ozanne/>

#### **Wherewecanwego**

<https://www.wherewecanwego.com/event/939741-wye-valley-river-festival/events.aspx>

<https://www.wherewecanwego.com/event/978721-wye-valley-river-festival-2016/events.aspx>

<https://www.wherewecanwego.com/whats-on-wales/monmouthshire/events.aspx>

#### **Visit Monmouthshire**

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/events-in-monmouthshire.aspx>

Updated 8.4.16 with full programme here:

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1010867&feature=47&nd=1&w=100%25&rgn=Monmouthshire&startdate=1+May+2016>

Also, separate entries for Monmouth, Llandogo, Tintern and Chepstow, the Monmouthshire stops on the tour.

Monmouth:

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1121329&feature=1003>

Llandogo:

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1252510&feature=1000>

Tintern: <http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1014497&feature=1020>

Chepstow:

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1010592&feature=1062&festival=4484&easi=true&aspcaptcha=9HBHV5>

Luminous Birds:

<http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1014497&feature=1015>

***Chepstow Walkers are Welcome website***

<http://www.walksinchestow.co.uk/events-diary--charity-walks.html>

***Visit Herefordshire***

***The official tourism organisation for Herefordshire & The Wye Valley***

<http://visitherefordshire.co.uk/event/wye-valley-river-festival/>

Plus detailed individual event listings with pics/logo linked to this page and in date order.

<http://visitherefordshire.co.uk/event/wye-serai-llandogo-wye-river-festival/>

***Penallt website***

<http://www.penallt.org.uk/events/wye-valley-festival>

***Tintern Village News***

<http://www.tinternvillage.co.uk/news/2016-wye-valley-river-festival/>

***Visit Heart of England***

Social media platforms regularly updated on the run up to the festival and throughout. Full listings

here: <http://www.visitheartofengland.com/newdetail.aspx?id=1028084>

***South Wales Argus Whats On***

<http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/events/search/?EventTypeID=&keyword=&StartDate=29-Apr-2016&EndDate=&CityTown=la>

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/events/Monmouth/1103769.Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival\\_2016/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/events/Monmouth/1103769.Wye_Valley_River_Festival_2016/)

- current Whats On during festival

***Visit Forest of Dean – overall listing and individual event details by date***

[http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson/all/e-1154-Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival#](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson/all/e-1154-Wye_Valley_River_Festival#)

<http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson>

***Gwent News – full listings***

<http://gwentnews.co.uk/preparing-for-the-wye-valley-river-festival/>

***Chepstow What's On May 16***

Listing for finale in Chepstow

***Primary Times website listing during festival:***

[http://www.primarytimes.net/hereford\\_worcester/listings/wye-valley-river-festival-79544](http://www.primarytimes.net/hereford_worcester/listings/wye-valley-river-festival-79544)

***Monnow Voice website***

<http://www.monnowvoice.co.uk/wye-valley-river-festival-2016/>

***Other coverage***

***Sunshine Radio***

*estimated 56,000 listeners per week; website 20,000 monthly page views*

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/news/local-news/10000-fishes-set-to-sparkle-at-2016-river-carnival/>

***Daily Listings in Sunshine Radio events calendar:***

<http://hm.sunshineradio.co.uk/local/calendar/>

***Hereford Times, February 22***

**Thousands of origami fish set to line River Wye bank**



THOUSANDS of origami fish are set to line the bank of the River Wye during the city's annual river carnival.



Organisers of this year's Hereford River Carnival are asking ... a huge role in this year's Hereford River Carnival and **Wye Valley River Festival**

**Ross Gazette**

<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103321&headline=Plans%20for%20Ross%20ongoing&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

**Ross Gazette**

<http://www.ross-gazette.co.uk/article.cfm?id=103511&headline=Hedgehog%20Festival%20logo%20competition%20winners&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

**Hereford Times**

Hereford Rotary Club's famous charity duck race to form grand finale ...

Hereford Times-31 Mar 2016

Members of Hereford Rotary Club with members of the River ... of this year's free **Wye Valley River Festival**, which the River Carnival is part of,

[http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14396191.Hereford\\_Rotary\\_Club\\_s\\_famous\\_charity\\_duck\\_race\\_to\\_form\\_grand\\_finale\\_to\\_the\\_2016\\_River\\_Carnival/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/14396191.Hereford_Rotary_Club_s_famous_charity_duck_race_to_form_grand_finale_to_the_2016_River_Carnival/)

**Brockweir Village News**

Brockweir Village News have given coverage as relayed by a local 29.3.16

**South Wales Argus**



**Preparations underway for Wye Valley River Festival**

South Wales Argus-6 Mar 2016

MORE details of an arts festival which will run for just over a fortnight along the River Wye have been released. The second **Wye Valley River ...**

**South Wales Argus website April's Day Out of the Month**

[http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/wearevoice/14395637.April\\_s\\_family\\_day\\_out\\_of\\_the\\_month\\_Wye\\_Valley\\_River\\_Festival/](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/wearevoice/14395637.April_s_family_day_out_of_the_month_Wye_Valley_River_Festival/)

**Forest Activities Festival website**

Exhibitors – Forest Activities Festival

[forestactivitiesfestival.co.uk/exhibitors-2/](http://forestactivitiesfestival.co.uk/exhibitors-2/)

Now firmly established as an annual event the fifth Coleford Busking Festival will .... **Wye Valley River Festival 2016** central theme of 'Global Arteries' connect .

**Visit Forest of Dean**

<http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk/whatson/all/e-1086->

Free\_Origami\_Bird\_Making\_Workshops\_Origami bird making workshops

**Hereford Times April 27**



15 family events in Worcestershire to enjoy during Bank Holiday  
LOOKING for something to do with your family over the Bank Holiday?  
**Hereford Times 29 April.**

**Visitor Guides**

**Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Visitor Guide 2016**

A4 publication - 40,000 printed and available to download from website [www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

[www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

Copy to accompany advert

***Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire Visitor Guide***

***Full page advert in as sponsorship contract***

*25,000 printed for distribution, plus electronic download and turn page with hyperlinks  
– this publication ready in time for The British Travel and Tourism Show.*

***Herefordshire & The Wye Valley Explore Guide 2016***

*30,000 guides distributed nationally, regionally and locally*

***Full page ad***

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## LOCAL AUTHORITY CHANGES AND PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY

### *Purpose*

To outline the changes in three of the four constituent local authorities and the proposed relationship to the alternative delivery models developing in Monmouthshire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC:

- A. Acknowledges the move in Herefordshire Council of the 'AONB Officer' to the Built & Natural Environment Service and change of job title to 'AONB Manager'.
- B. Notes the proposed changes and alternative delivery models developing in Monmouthshire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council.
- C. Endorses the Core Messages for AONBs and AONB partnerships and the 18 questions for services relating to the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- D. Supports repeating the 2011 survey of AONB Partnership members on their perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) & the AONB Unit.

### *1. Key Issues*

- The Wye Valley AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, provides services across the designated AONB in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire.
- AONB line management in Herefordshire Council has moved to the Built & Natural Environment Service, having previously been in the Parks and Countryside Service which has been disbanded and outsourced.
- As employer of the AONB lead officer, Herefordshire Council have retitled the post to AONB Manager, similar to many AONBs including the Malvern Hills AONB Manager.
- Both the Monmouthshire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council are developing alternative delivery models for significant parts of their services (see Appendix 1 & 2 respectively).
- These alternative delivery models are likely to impact on the relationship of these local authorities and their services with the AONB Partnership.

- A number of other AONBs have encountered similar reviews and have developed a series of principles and questions that align with core messages of the National Association for AONBs, to evaluate the appropriateness of proposals.
- A repeat of the 2011 survey of the AONB Partnership would seem timely.

## 2. *Reasons*

- 2.1 The Wye Valley AONB Unit is the lead delivery agent for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership dedicated to conserving & enhancing the nationally designated Wye Valley AONB, guided by the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and staffed by employees of the representative local authorities; Forest of Dean District Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The AONB Partnership is led by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee with the key funding partners, being DEFRA, Natural Resources Wales, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, making up the AONB Steering Group. The Host Authority responsible for the AONB Unit's finances is Herefordshire Council. The AONB Steering Group annually review and agree the budgets for the AONB Unit. The constituent local authorities are committed to the purpose and functions of the AONB and supporting the locally accountable and locally representative JAC working to maintain a sustainable, stable, resilient AONB staffed service, delivering conservation and enhancement in and around the Wye Valley AONB primarily through facilitation, collaboration and delivery of the AONB Management Plan.
- 2.2 The AONB Partnership is operating in a period of wholesale public sector reform and enhanced devolution. The constituent local authorities are undergoing significant change internally whilst supporting a transition in public service delivery across their areas. There are likely to be further reductions in public spending both nationally and locally. To ensure a future for the AONB Partnership there must be a focus on building critical skills, capabilities and broadening the funding base.
- 2.3 Herefordshire Council, employing the AONB lead officer, have disbanded and outsourced the Parks and Countryside Service and moved AONB line management to the Built & Natural Environment Service. In the interests of consistency Herefordshire Council have also retitled the post of AONB Officer to AONB Manager, similar to many other AONBs including the Malvern Hills AONB Manager.
- 2.4 Monmouthshire County Council are addressing constrained resources and considering new ways of working to maintain locally available services by reviewing a variety of Services and Delivery Options (see Appendix 1 below). Their favoured option, agreed by Cabinet on the 5th October, is to move to the next stage of developing a new Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) for the Tourism, Leisure and Culture (TLC) and Youth Services. A Full Business Case will now be prepared to agree the scope of the ADM and which services will be transferred at inception and those Services which will be considered for future phases.
- 2.5 The Forest of Dean District Council are also developing alternative delivery models for significant parts of their services. On 20<sup>th</sup> October their Full Council agreed to form a

local authority owned Company with 2020 Partner Councils; Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and West Oxfordshire District Council (see Appendix 2 below). Under the proposed model, each Partner Council would specify the particular outcomes in terms of service delivery that it wishes to be provided by the company/s, in line with each Council's budget decisions.

- 2.6 The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) established the following core messages with regards the AONB Family. These were presented to the JAC originally in July 2014. These have carried forwards and included in the NAAONB Strategic Plan, Communication Plan and Business Plan 2015 - 2019:

#### **AONBs - Core Messages**

- People are passionate about Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and care deeply about their future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. They need to be cared for, now and in the future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are dynamic, living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are vibrant landscapes, which offer a wealth of opportunities for everyone to enjoy them and help look after them.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated as special landscapes which provide a range of benefits for people and wildlife.

#### **AONB partnerships - Core Messages**

The 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are nationally protected landscapes cared for by locally accountable partnerships that promote and support effective long term management to keep them special.

AONB partnerships, with dedicated teams

- make things happen, translating vision and national policy into local action,
- work with local communities and value their skills, knowledge and energy,
- provide value for money by securing additional funding, resources and project partners,
- develop innovative approaches to achieve beneficial results through collaboration,
- promote a sustainable rural economy that conserves and enhances the natural environment for the benefit of society.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 Herefordshire Council employ the AONB lead officer, whose job title has been modified to AONB Manager. This does not change any terms and condition, roles or responsibilities. The post continues to be line managed by Herefordshire Council's Principal Countryside Officer but both have now moved to the Built & Natural Environment Service, from the disbanded Parks and Countryside Service. However both services were under the Environment and Place Division and remain in the Economy, Communities & Corporate Directorate. Consequently there are no significant changes for the AONB Unit.
- 3.2 Most of the Herefordshire Council sites managed by the former Parks and Countryside Service have now been transferred to other organisations, usually the local Town or Parish Council. Ross Town Council has taken over the Ross Riverside, Walford Parish Council has taken over the Kerne Bridge site and Woolhope Parish Council has Broadmoor Common. It is believed that the asset transfer of the Backney Bridge site may be made over to Bridstow Parish Council.
- 3.3 Monmouthshire County Council's Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) may involve several services that relate closely to the work of the AONB Unit. These include Countryside Services and Rights of Way, including managing access to the countryside, visitor sites, biodiversity issues, outdoor learning; Tourism Marketing and Tourism Development, Visitor Information provision and Events; and visitor attractions such as Tintern Old Station and Shire Hall, Monmouth. There may also be implications for the hosting of certain aspects of the AONB Unit and JAC operations. MCC's Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager, Matthew Lewis, who is also chair of the AONB Technical Officers' Working Party, is also providing part time support to the development of the ADM. Longer term implications will depend ultimately on which services are encompassed by the ADM.
- 3.4 Forest of Dean District Council's 2020 Partnership may similarly affect various hosting arrangements for the AONB Unit and JAC.
- 3.5 Several AONBs nationally have had to deal with significant changes within their host and constituent local authorities. These include Cornwall, Shropshire Hills, South Devon and Tamar Valley AONB. Between them, and in consultation with the National Association for AONBs, they have drawn up a list of critical questions that if satisfactorily addressed would not indicate any significant detrimental impacts on the delivery of AONB purposes and functions:-

1.	Will local authorities cooperate in publishing the AONB Management Plan in accordance with statutory requirement and government guidance ?
2.	Will the AONB Management Plan be implemented jointly by partners in a coordinated and strategic way ?
3.	Can the condition of the AONB and the implementation of the Management Plan be monitored and reported upon ?

4.	Does AONB management have a distinctive public profile which reflects the area's statutory designation, the policies of the Management Plan, and the statutory "duty of regard" for the AONB ?
5.	Is AONB management independent of the profile of any one organisation or sector ?
6.	Will this provide an independent broad-based formal AONB Partnership of organisations that reflects the breadth of interests in the AONB, to support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan ?
7.	Will there be a dedicated AONB staff which have the conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape as their primary role ?
8.	Can there be AONB management that coordinates and promotes AONB activity on behalf of the Partnership and acts as an "honest broker" ?
9.	Will this give AONB management that attracts a wide range of external funding sources that add value to core funding contributions ?
10.	Are AONB management services delivered in a way that is efficient, cost-effective and provide good leverage and value for money for the funding bodies ?
11.	Will Public bodies be supported in meeting their statutory duties to have regard for the purposes of the AONB ?
12.	Can timely and independent advice & guidance still be provided to the local planning authorities in respect of significant development proposals and policies in the AONB ?
13.	Will the broader communities of the AONB be actively involved in the understanding, care and management of the area ?
14.	Can AONB management services be provided in a coherent way across the full extent of the AONB ?
15.	Will a wide range of organisations be advised and influenced to ensure that their strategies, plans and programmes have due regard for the AONB ?
16.	Will AONB management add value to the work programmes of other organisations ?
17.	Will the AONB management actively collaborate with other AONBs at national, regional and local level ?
18.	Will AONB management be proactive, innovative, flexible and responsive to changing circumstances, and be open to new opportunities for partnership, funding streams, activities and delivery ?

3.6 In 2011, as part of the Wye Valley AONB's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the AONB Unit carried out a survey of people involved in the AONB Partnership. The 'Questionnaire on your perceptions of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) & the AONB Unit' provided some valuable insight into the effectiveness of the designation, the JAC and the AONB Unit. It would seem timely to repeat the survey and compare the results 5 years on.

### ***Background***

The Wye Valley AONB Partnership membership, terms of reference, structure and operation is set out in the 'Agreement as to the establishment and functions of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee' dated 10th November 2000 and the Variation Agreement dated 14th January 2009, between Monmouthshire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council. The Wye Valley AONB Unit is a joint unit of the four constituent local authorities and subject to the Wye Valley AONB Memorandum of Understanding.

The Wye Valley AONB Unit delivers a wide range of actions to support and enable the implementation of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. These include:

- AONB Management Plan preparation and monitoring
- Input into Planning Applications and strategic planning
- Support the AONB Partnership; Joint Advisory Committee; Technical Officers' Working Party, Steering Group, Topic groups, seminars and annual study visit etc.
- Managing the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in the Wye Valley on behalf of Welsh Government
- Undergrounding power lines working with Western Power and National Grid to develop schemes
- Promoting the AONB including through website, the AONB newsletter, events etc.
- Developing landscape conservation and enhancement projects
  - Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring Project
  - Habitat Conservation, including surveys, projects and volunteering
  - Landscape scale conservation
  - AONB Farming Awards
- Developing access, appreciation and well-being projects
  - MindSCAPE and InsideOUT initiatives reconnecting people with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities.
  - Wye Valley River Festival
  - Youth Rangers (14-16 year olds)
  - Wye Valley Walk - supporting Wye Valley Walk Partnership

Service limits are based around an annual action plan / budget agreed with the local authorities and the two grant providers Defra and Natural Resources Wales and the overall delivery capacity (currently 5 core posts but planned to diminish to 4 in 2018).



## **Appendix 1: Monmouthshire County Council - Alternative Delivery Model**

In 2014, Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Cabinet approved a comprehensive review of the Council's Cultural services to identify future delivery options with an overall objective of improving, sustaining and developing local services to enable them to become more self-reliant and resilient. MCC are moving a step closer to changing how it delivers some of its Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth Services.

Through this summer work has focused on the sourcing and gathering of information to assist the consultants, Anthony Collins, in producing a Strategic Outline Case report to present the options available to the local authority. MCC also held a service user survey getting over 1200 returns from the public. The information was analysed and the top 5 headlines of what matters to their service users were:-

- 28% - Staff: were approachable; knowledgeable; friendly and welcoming
- 24% - Accessibility: services were local; open regularly and open to all
- 13% - Cleanliness: sites and facilities were clean; had good hygiene
- 12% - Equipment: maintained; up to date; accessible for all and available
- 9% - Cost: prices are as low as possible; fair and worth the service receiving

The Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and the Engagement data was finalised in August and was presented to a joint-select committee on 19th September. The list of services in scope include: Leisure, Fitness and Outdoor Education; Youth services; Countryside services to include managing access to the countryside, visitor sites, biodiversity issues and outdoor learning and play; Tourism Marketing, Development, Visitor Information provision and Events; and Management and marketing of Monmouthshire's Visitor Attractions to include Caldicot Castle, Tintern Old Station and Shire Hall, Monmouth; and Museums (to transition at a later phase).

The objectives of Anthony Collins have been to consider the right mix of Services and the best new Delivery Option to help the Council address these service' projected £542k funding shortfall over the next four year period. Following the political processes, this Strategic Outline Case was then presented to Cabinet on the 5th October.

The 4 options presented within the SOC were:-

- Delivery Option One: Do nothing and manage decline of services
- Delivery Option Two: Transform the Services 'in house' – making changes to service delivery and stay within the local authority
- Delivery Option Three: Move the Services into an Alternative Delivery Model (ADM);
- Delivery Option Four: Outsource the services to a third party (private sector run services on behalf of the LA).

The result of the appraisal and subsequent recommendation from Anthony Collins is Delivery Option Three which is to establish a new Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) for the Tourism, Leisure and Culture (TLC) and Youth Services based on the financial savings and income generation potential that this offers as well as opportunity for the Council to still direct future Service delivery. The ADM presents a radically new way of working for the Council but one which has been tried and tested in other Local Authorities. Whilst there are risks, the ADM does present the best opportunity to sustain and potentially improve services during this period of financial uncertainty. A successful move of the TLC and Youth Services

to an ADM could also herald a way forward for other Council services with the advantage that structures and experience are already in place.

The recommendation accepted by Cabinet was to go to the next stage of drafting the Business Case on the above options. This will form the basis of the work for the next 3 months, which will require a huge amount of work from the teams, and one that must be right, fit for purpose and presents the most appropriate model for the services in scope, and most importantly is inclusive for all staff. The draft Business Case will then be presented to Members in early 2017 to seek their approval and make the decision on one of the options above to be taken forward.

#### Engagement

- In late November and December all staff will be brought together to look at a shared vision for the future service model. This process will help shape the values and culture of a future service model, whatever the shape will be.
- A 'Big Conversation' will capture the voices of the younger community members, the children and young people within each service area.
- The core team will be visiting all Community and Town councils in the coming weeks to share with them information to date and to seek their outlook on this piece of work.

The Full Business Case will address the following:

- To agree the scope of the ADM and which services will be transferred at inception and those Services which will be considered for future phases;
- To continue the staff, community and service user consultation process;
- To agree to the internal recruitment of a shadow core staffing structure to take the process forward;
- To produce a Full Business case

In addition, at the point when the Full Business plan is presented for approval then some further key decisions will be required in relation to:

- The level of control required by the Council;
- The level of funding that will be required from the Council and the identification and availability of alternative funding;
- The organisational support for combining these Services;
- Whether assets are to be transferred or licensed.

In agreeing to establish the proposed flexible group structure the Council will also need to consider what type of vehicles (companies) will best serve its aims, a full list of which can be found in Appendix Three of the Strategic Outline Case. The recommended options for the Council will be presented as part of the draft business plan to be submitted for approval early in 2017.

For further details see:

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=144&Mid=949&Ver=4>  
and

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s6556/4.%2020160927%20Draft%20Cabinet%20report%20re%20Proposed%20New%20Delivery%20Options%20for%20TLC%20Services.pdf>

## **Appendix 2: Forest of Dean District Council - 2020 Partnership**

In June 2014 the four GO Shared Services Partner Councils, Forest of Dean District Council, Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, approved an Outline Business Case for a “2020 Vision for Joint Working” and subsequently a “Report on Options for Future Delivery Models and Interim Management Arrangements” prepared by Activist Ltd.

Consequently, the “2020 Joint Working Business Case” was agreed and approved by the four Councils in October 2015 along with a number of joint strategies including a Commissioning Strategy. The 2020 Joint Committee was established in February 2016 with a number of shared services being established from April 2016.

On 20 October 2016 The Forest of Dean District Council, Full Council agreed to form a local authority owned Company with 2020 Partner Councils; Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

Detailed legal advice concerning the establishment of the company model has been sought from Trowers & Hamlin’s. It is proposed to initially establish Teckal Companies Limited by Guarantee using agreed structure and governance principles. There would be a co-ordinating/commissioning company owned by CDC, FoDDC and WODC. A shared regulatory services company would also be created for these same shareholders with a view to trading the services being provided. A third shared-services company would be created to provide shared services to all four partner councils (Cheltenham Borough Council are limiting their involvement in shared services to only ICT and GO Shared Services).

The key criteria for the 2020 Partnership are to develop a company structure framework that delivers the flexibility to meet both current and future needs and can be implemented incrementally over time, whilst enabling trading opportunities to be fully exploited. Partner councils as ‘shareholders’ in the local authority-owned company/s will have the same voting rights, regardless of their size or financial stake in the company/s. Under the proposed model, each Partner Council remains entirely free to specify the particular outcomes (in terms of service delivery) that it wishes to be provided by the company/s (in line with each Council’s budget decisions). Any underspend (or income) arising from the companies’ delivery of services would be returned to the funding Partner Council. Meanwhile it is anticipated that other Local Authorities will be able to ‘buy-in’ to the structure on a piecemeal basis, if desired, to participate in only some services rather than to take a share in the overall model.

The partner Councils already have experience of both successfully establishing and operating Ubico Ltd. as a ‘Teckal’ company. The Teckal exemption (named after the EU case that established the principle) provides for an exemption to EU procurement rules in certain circumstances. The Councils as owners will have control over the Company through a governance structure of directors sitting on the Company Board, which will form the operational management and decision making body for the company. A contract or service level agreement will be in place between each Council and the Company, setting out the required service specification and standards. The Company and its directors are not able to alter the service and standards set by the Council.

Once the company structure has been finalised and agreed, work will be completed on the governance and management of the partnership. This will ensure that a strategic approach is

taken to the delivery of each Council's objectives with clear accountabilities and responsibilities.

There is great potential to improve the customer experience through the customer-focussed redesign of services, which is also an essential component of the efficiency savings. Consequently a programme of targeted service redesign will be developed and resourced as part of the next phase development of the partnership. Work will also be undertaken to consider how property assets can be managed more effectively across the partnership with a view to developing a Property and Assets Action Plan to drive future property benefits.

For further information see:

[http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=8630&tt=graphic](http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=8630&tt=graphic)

[http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=7081&tt=graphic&externalurl=meetings.fdean.gov.uk:80/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=286&Year=0](http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7081&tt=graphic&externalurl=meetings.fdean.gov.uk:80/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=286&Year=0)

[http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=7081&tt=graphic&externalurl=meetings.fdean.gov.uk:80/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=120&MIId=1480&Ver=4](http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7081&tt=graphic&externalurl=meetings.fdean.gov.uk:80/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=120&MIId=1480&Ver=4): Agenda Item 9:-

<http://meetings.fdean.gov.uk/documents/s15682/SD.221%202020%20Company%20model%20-%20Council%20201016.pdf?>

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)**

### ***Purpose***

To endorse the allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2016/17.

### ***Recommendation***

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) being awarded direct from Welsh Government and notes the new Purposes and Targets
- B. endorses the recent allocations of the SDF for 2016/17
- C. supports apportioning any unallocated funds to contribute towards Wye Valley AONB partnership initiatives that support the SDF Purposes and Targets.

### ***Key Issues***

- The 2016/17 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is being administered direct from Welsh Government, with revised purposes (see Schedule 1 below)
- The Wye Valley AONB is awarded £55,000 of SDF of which £ 34,923 has already been allocated (see attached table).
- The SDF Assessment Panel meets on 23<sup>rd</sup> November to consider a further round of projects.
- The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of allocating any remaining SDF at end of year to specific AONB projects that meet the SDF criteria.
- The SDF Panel will be reviewed in the New Year to will align with the establishment of the AONB Fund with the Herefordshire Community Foundation.

### ***Reasons***

The SDF provides a good opportunity for local communities, businesses and organisations within or adjacent to the AONB in Monmouthshire to establish innovative initiatives that benefit the Wye Valley AONB as outlined in The Purposes (see Schedule 1, below).

The award of SDF by Welsh Government is for The Purposes and The Targets (see Schedule 2, below) and must be claimed in full by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017, otherwise any unclaimed part of the Fund will cease to be available.

The AONB Manager has been negotiating with Herefordshire Community Foundation over finalising the establishment of an AONB Fund, as previously agreed by the JAC.

### ***Implications***

The SDF has been running in Wales for sixteen years, administered by Natural Resources Wales (and previously Countryside Council for Wales) on behalf of Welsh Government. From this year Welsh Government are awarding the SDF direct to each AONB. The Purposes and Targets for the SDF have also been modified in line with recent Welsh Government legislation.

The JAC has previously endorsed the principle of directing unallocated SDF towards significant AONB projects with major community benefits such as Overlooking the Wye and the Wye Valley River Festival. In some years SDF underspends have been offered to other AONBs if they had appropriate projects that could make use of the funds within that year. In order to continue to ensure full spend of the SDF that benefits the Wye Valley AONB it is proposed that the principle is continued of unallocated funds towards the end of the claim period being used to contribute towards Wye Valley AONB partnership initiatives that support the SDF Purposes and Targets.

The AONB Unit and other partners promote the availability of the SDF to as many sectors as possible in Monmouthshire. Members are similarly encouraged to do so. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, is available to discuss and advise on potential applications (contact [community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk) or call 01600 710844).

The review of the SDF Assessment Panel will commence shortly, combining processes with the establishment of the AONB Fund with the Herefordshire Community Foundation.

### ***Background***

The SDF has been running successfully in Wales for sixteen years and ran for ten years in England.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **The Purposes**

The Purpose of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is, through partnership, to develop and test ways of achieving sustainable development in areas of outstanding natural beauty in which the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community are conserved and enhanced.

- To explore innovative ways of contributing as far as practicable to the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales, and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability.
- To integrate sustainable development with the special qualities of the AONB, and demonstrate the contribution of a strong sense of place and local identity to sustainable living.
- To build capacity in local communities and to develop and support community-based projects promoting sustainable development objectives.
- To generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability amongst residents and visitors, and facilitate positive behaviour change.

The Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. There are 5 things that you will need to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle in administering the fund. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing.

**Long Term** - The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

**Prevention** - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

**Integration** - Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

**Collaboration** - Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

**Involvement** - The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

## Well-being Goals

The seven well-being goals ('the goals') show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards.

They are a set of goals; the Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. Therefore the projects supported will need to demonstrate how they contribute to the goals

- **A prosperous Wales**

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- **A resilient Wales**

A nation which maintains and enhances a bio diverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

- **A healthier Wales**

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

- **A more equal Wales.**

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

- **A Wales of cohesive communities.**

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

- **A globally responsible Wales**

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.



## SCHEDULE 2 The Targets

Description of the Target	Date by when it should be achieved?	Evidence required
Create 5 jobs and volunteering opportunities.	31 March 2017	Individual AONB report and project breakdown.
Deliver 3 training or awareness raising sessions on sustainability.	31 March 2017	Individual AONB report and project breakdown.
Ensure that all projects supported support at least two of the sustainable development principles as set out in the Welsh Government, Sustainable Development Charter.	31 March 2017	Individual AONB report and project breakdown.
Look to maintain high level funding levered in from public, private and voluntary sector. Currently at a 6:1 ratio.	31 March 2017	Individual AONB report and project breakdown.
Ensure that at least 40% of projects retain community participation post year 1, 2 and 3.	31 March 2017	Individual AONB report and project breakdown.

**SDF Wales Summary 2016/2017**

<b>Ref.No</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project total</b>	<b>SDF Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>SDF % of total</b>
WV00 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB unit	Scheme Administration		£5,500.00	~	~	~
<b>WV01 YR16W</b>	<b>Savoy Youth Theatre</b>	<b>Promenade Sensory Theatre</b>	<b>£4,700.00</b>	<b>£1,250.00</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>27/5/15</b>	<b>27%</b>
WV02 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Youth Rangers (Year 2 of 2)	£37,050.00	£3,000.00	Approved	16/7/15	8%
WV03 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley River Festival (Year 2 of 2)	£190,000.00	£21,500.00	Approved	16/7/15	11%
WV04 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	WVRF education strand (Year 2 of 2)	£9,900.00	£1,700.00	Approved	16/7/15	17%
WV05 YR16W	Deer Initiative	Deer Monitoring & Impacts Project (Year 2 of 2)	£11,090.00	£245.00	Approved	16/7/15	2%
WV06 YR16W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Cattle Project (Year 2 of 2)	£29,772.54	£1,028.08	Approved	16/7/15	3%
WV07 YR16W	Bee Friendly Monmouthshire	Bee Friendly Monmouthshire Hedgerow Manifesto	£1,400.00	£700.00	Approved - delegated	28/9/16	50%
		Sub total	£283,912.54	£34,923.08			average 17%

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
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7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **AONB FARMING AWARDS**

### ***Purpose***

To seek approval for a broadening of the AONB Farming Awards eligibility criteria.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC agrees to the broadening of the AONB Farming Awards to include organisations and individuals managing land that also make an outstanding contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.

### ***Key Issues***

- The Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards have been running for nine years and are presented at the Monmouthshire Show.
- From 2017 the Monmouthshire Show day changes from late August to early July.
- Farmland covers 65% of the Wye Valley AONB and the AONB Farming Awards are a good opportunity to promote the work that farmers and land manager do in keeping the Wye Valley such an outstanding place for so many people.
- Since 2008 twenty seven farms have entered the competition, however numbers of entries have been reducing over recent years.
- Increasing promotion and broadening entry to include land management organisations and individuals should help reinvigorate the Awards.

### ***Reasons***

The AONB Unit annually seeks nominations of farms that make an outstanding contribution, in any shape or form, to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. Farms in or adjacent to the Wye Valley AONB are eligible to enter. The winner receives a cheque for £400, the prestigious Farming Award Trophy and the winner's certificate, presented at the Monmouthshire Show.

The ninth Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards were presented to winning Herefordshire farmer and cider producer Mike Johnson of Broome Farm, Peterstow. The JAC Chairman presented the Award at the Monmouthshire Show on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Square Farm near Mitchel Troy, was selected for the Highly Commended Award and received a cheque for £200 and a certificate. Last year's winners Ann and Jim Herbert from Lewstone Farm, Whitchurch in Herefordshire won due to their contribution to the Wye Valley landscape with their provision of educational visits alongside their free range egg production and environmental work. Previous winners are listed below.

The Farming Awards were devised to recognise the value of good farming and reward excellence in land management practices which conserve and enhance the landscape. Management of the land, with reference to the AONB purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape and the social and economic needs of local communities are important factors in the judging. Twenty seven farms have entered the competition over the 9 years. Numbers of entries have been declining in recent years suggesting that the Farming Awards may have reached most of the interested or eligible farmers.

It therefore seems appropriate to both broaden the entry criteria to include organisations and individuals that are actively involved in land management and to increase the marketing and promotion of the Awards.

### ***Implications***

There would be no need to alter the current application, shortlisting or judging procedures for the Farming Awards. The nomination or application process has always been designed to be as simple as possible. Applicants simply have to be nominated by anyone or express an interest in applying themselves. The AONB Development Officer then visits the farms and completes a simple evaluation form with the farmer to gather the necessary information and take some photos etc. A shortlist is determined by the AONB Unit and shortlisted farms are visited and judged by an experienced panel. This currently includes Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB Manager, David Price, NFU Wales and Caroline Hanks, farming and conservation consultant. Usually the previous winner also joins the judging.

The change in date of the Monmouthshire Show will bring forward the application, shortlisting and judging process. The enhanced marketing and promotion of the Awards will accommodate the programme shift. A small increase in time and resources will be required to achieve this.

### ***Background***

The Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards started in 2008. This followed on from the AONB Producer Award that was run for a couple of years as part of the AONB Savour the Wye campaign. It was decided to change the annual award to focus on farming rather than just local food as that better reflected the purpose of AONB designation which is to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape'.

Originally the Farming Awards entry criteria were:

- The farm must be situated within or adjoining the Wye Valley AONB
- The farm must be run as a business enterprise and producing a commodity from the land
- The individual farm owner/tenant must be making a full or part time living from the land
- The winning farm may be required to provide an event in conjunction with Open Farm Day the following June.

Scoring of farms was based on: landscape benefits; environmental benefits; economic benefits; and community benefits.

In 2009 the Farming Awards were alternated between large farms one year and small farms the next. This was because the judges found it difficult to compare a 35 hectare farm with a 440 hectare farm. Farms up to 100 hectares were considered small and anything over 100 hectares were large.

In 2013 the entry criteria was modified again. Most of the complicated scoring system was dropped as well as the categorisation by farm size. A farm could be nominated by anyone and the criteria was simplified to any farm 'that makes an outstanding contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley'. This was because we found that many farms were doing excellent work within a single area of operation i.e. they may have made a huge commitment to conserving their historic buildings, but still failed to score highly because they were weak on other areas. Selection was now based on the merit of a farm based on a specific strength or combination of aspects.

Previous winners are:

2008	Henry and Esther Rudge, Ballingham Court Farm, Ballingham
2009	Alan Morgan, Gadr Farm, Monmouth
2010	Gareth Williams, Caplor Farm, Fownhope
2011	Mark O'Brien and Liz Vice, Mabley Farm, Woolhope
2012	Henry and Esther Rudge, Ballingham Court Farm, Ballingham
2013	Simon Cutter, Home Farm, Courtfield Estate, Welsh Bicknor
2014	Lyndon Edwards, Severndale Farm, Tidenham
2015	Ann and Jim Herbert, Lewstone Farm, Whitchurch
2016	Mike Johnson, Broome Farm, Peterstow

The prestigious Farming Award Trophy was designed by Forest of Dean ironwork sculptor and blacksmith Steve Bluett.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

### *Purpose*

To seek members' support for two forthcoming landscape enhancement projects.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC:

- A. Supports the Coughton Enhancement Project application to National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).
- B. Support the development of a wild Venison Feasibility Study in the lower Wye Valley.

### *Key Issues*

- The National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) allows the AONB Partnership to apply for 75% funding to deliver significant benefits that enhance the landscape and reduce the visual impact on the ground of the National Grid infrastructure
- The Coughton Enhancement Project is our first proposed application under the LEI.
- There is currently a lack of information on where and how wild venison is sold locally and little marketing of the local landscape benefits of wild venison.
- The proposed Venison Feasibility Study will investigate the current situation of where wild venison, primarily from Fallow deer, is processed, sold and marketed in and around the Wye Valley AONB.
- The AONB Partnership plays a key role in facilitating and enabling collaborative funding applications and projects on a landscape scale.

### *Reasons*

At the last JAC members were informed of the opportunities to develop projects in Walford, Goodrich and Marstow Parishes through the National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) and Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI). The Coughton Enhancement Project is the first project proposed under the LEI. The settlement of Coughton is dominated by views of the nearby pylons which are considered to have high combined landscape and visual impacts. There is a relatively dense network of public rights of way locally, which are also affected by the views the electricity infrastructure.

Much of the woodland in the lower Wye Valley is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The current high Fallow deer population, and subsequent high levels of browsing, are having a significant detrimental impact on woodland in the Wye Valley AONB. Wild Deer are managed by landowners through a variety of organisations and individual stalkers. There appears to be little evidence of venison being taken through local sale or of

marketing that highlights the provenance and conservation value of local venison. Therefore a study into venison marketing is proposed for the lower Wye Valley.

### ***Implications***

Collaborative funding bids that the AONB Development Officer has been co-ordinating are:-

#### ***A. The Coughton Enhancement Project***

The project will take place primarily on two sites owned and managed by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust; Coughton Marsh and Parish Field in Walford. The two sites together cover approximately 2 hectares and are both approximately 400m from National Grid pylons and lines, which runs between the two. The entire project will take place within half a mile of the electricity transmission infrastructure. Coughton Marsh is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is the last remnant of the much larger peaty wetland area that existed in the 19th century. Parish Field is a remnant of what was originally an extensive area of wet common meadow between Old Hill Court and Coughton, from which the National Grid Infrastructure is highly visible.

This project will provide the opportunity to increase the current level of positive conservation management on the sites and provide opportunities for long term sustainable management to take place for the benefit of the habitat and species they support, as well as the appreciation and enjoyment of people who visit them. Public enjoyment and appreciation of these important sites will be enhanced through improved waymarking of access routes and interpretation on site and in the village of Walford. Coppicing will take place in Coughton Marsh. Stock proof fencing will be installed around Parish Field to allow for light seasonal grazing and wet grassland management. Volunteers will assist with practical management work. Guided walks and school educational activities will complement the conservation works. Herefordshire Council Archaeology Unit will assist with the production of interpretation and delivery of the community engagement work. The project will contribute toward improving public access and enjoyment of the area, and has been unanimously supported by Walford Parish Council who “considered [the project] to be a positive and exciting one, to provide useful information and better access to local sites”.

The total cost of the project is estimated as £38,957 with an application for National Grid LEI funding for £29,100 (74.7%) with a mixture cash and in-kind match funding anticipated from Severn Waste and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Herefordshire Council, the Wye Valley AONB Unit and volunteer time.

#### ***B. Venison Feasibility Study***

The Wye Valley AONB Unit, in partnership with the Deer Initiative, are proposing to study the feasibility of the production, marketing and sale of locally supplied and processed wild venison in and around the Wye Valley AONB. Natural England and Monmouthshire LEADER have both been approached to ensure there is a cross-border, landscape scale approach as the wild deer do not adhere to administrative boundaries.

The feasibility study will investigate the current situation regarding wild deer, primarily Fallow, in and around the Wye Valley AONB, where venison is processed and sold, and how it is marketed. It will also investigate whether there are opportunities to develop a local market for wild venison. It will assess what stages of the supply chain need to be developed. Also whether wild venison can be supplied, processed, distributed and marketed locally using the benefit to woodland habitats as a marketing tool.



Recommendations produced within the feasibility study will form the basis of future applications for funding to enable the development of the route to market. This further work will provide economic benefit locally to all those within the supply chain, including woodland managers, stalkers, butchers, distributors, retailers and consumers.

Similar studies into wild venison processing and marketing have taken place elsewhere in the UK, for example Lincolnshire and the east of England. There are also many examples of studies into production, marketing and promotion of local farmed products that benefit the natural environment. Such a comprehensive study into wild venison has not been undertaken in the Wye Valley AONB before and will make use of good practice examples from similar work.

Natural England has offered funding towards the study. Welsh funding is currently being sought for the study in Monmouthshire, primarily through LEADER and the SDF. Other partners include Natural Resources Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust. The study area will encompass the Lower Wye from Symonds Yat to Chepstow, and extend across to Wentwood in Monmouthshire. The estimated project cost is £9,5 00.

### ***Background***

The landscape scale approach identifies the four landscape management strategies of Conserve, Enhance, Restore and/or Create. This, and an understanding of landscape character, is a guiding principle of the AONB Management Plan and the AONB Partnership's work. This helps to direct conservation and enhancement of the features and Special Qualities that maintain the uniqueness and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
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## LYDBROOK BRIDGE AND WYE VALLEY WALK CONSIDERATIONS

### *Purpose*

To inform members of the current situation with Lydbrook railway bridge and other aspects of the Wye Valley Walk long distance trail.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC

- A. Supports the continued promotion and development of the Wye Valley Walk as a long distance regional recreation trail co-ordinated through the Wye Valley Walk Partnership.
- B. Supports Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in finding a viable solution to reopen the former Lydbrook railway bridge on the Wye Valley Walk.
- C. Welcomes the investment of the Welsh Government in aspects of the Wye Valley Walk in Monmouthshire.

### *Key Issues*

- The first 52 miles of the 136-mile Wye Valley Walk go through the length of the Wye Valley AONB.
- The Wye Valley AONB Unit co-ordinates the Wye Valley Walk Partnership consisting of representatives from the counties of Herefordshire (Balfour Beatty), Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Powys.
- The Public Rights of Way sections in each county manage and maintain the physical infrastructure of the route, although some of the Walk is on permissive paths.
- Lydbrook Bridge is one of the three remaining rail bridges spanning the River Wye in the AONB that provides a strategic crossing for walkers.
- Gloucestershire County Council had to close Lydbrook Bridge earlier this year due to safety issues with the structure.
- There are a number of other infrastructure issues along the Wye Valley Walk that may become critical over the next few years, requiring a strategic approach and review of the route.
- Welsh Government have awarded Monmouthshire County Council £48,500 for improvements to access in the Wye Valley AONB.

### *Reasons*

The Wye Valley Walk Partnership manages the strategic co-ordination and promotion for the Wye Valley Walk. The aspiration of the Partnership is for the Wye Valley Walk to be of equivalent standard to a National Trail.

Lydbrook Bridge, also known as Stowfield Viaduct or The Black Bridge, spans the river between Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. The decked walkway is used as a footpath forming part of the Wye Valley Walk and provides key pedestrian access to the Wye Valley Youth Hostel at Welsh Bicknor. The footpath is a designated Public Right of Way on the Herefordshire half of the Bridge but not for the Gloucestershire part. Under mutual agreement Gloucestershire County Council have responsibility for maintenance of this bridge.

Gloucestershire County Council had to close the footpath over Lydbrook Bridge in February 2016 due to safety issues with the structure. Herefordshire Council / Balfour Beatty implemented a Path Closure and Diversion for the Wye Valley Walk which crosses the bridge. On behalf of Gloucestershire County Council, Amey commissioned a Principal Inspection Report for Lydbrook Bridge. The report covers visual and tactile inspection of the visible areas of the structure, using rope access and an Underwater Inspection.

There are several other places along the Wye Valley Walk where infrastructure issues may become critical over the next few years. For example Redbrook Bridge is not dissimilar to Lydbrook, however a £1 Million Lottery Bid for its restoration was unsuccessful in 2013 as it was not deemed 'under imminent threat'. There are also locations where the Walk is along the riverbank and river erosion threatens the route.

Welsh Government have secured capital funding to support access projects that deliver network creation &/or improvements to paths, car parks and access to the outdoors in the AONBs and National Parks. In liaison with Monmouthshire Rights of Way Section it was agreed to submit an application primarily focused on resolving a number of issues along the Wye Valley Walk.

### ***Implications***

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) have recently received the Lydbrook Bridge Principal Inspection Report. They are currently reviewing it with their Amey Structural Engineers. It is anticipated that Amey will complete a feasibility exercise to come up with some costs and solutions for the Bridge that should be available early in the New Year.

In the meantime a security barrier closes off the Bridge for health & safety reasons. GCC will share the potential plans and costings for a viable solution to reopen the bridge with the Wye Valley Walk Partnership and other interested parties, when known. However based on the experience and estimated costs from Redbrook Bridge in 2013, any solution is likely to require between £300,000 and £1million. There is no intention to permanently close the Lydbrook Bridge if a viable solution can be found to reopen it, but currently the Wye Valley Walk must remain diverted and the bridge is unsafe to walk across.

The Wye Valley Youth Hostel report experiencing a negative impact on their business as many of their customers including school groups used to use the bridge. This has resulted in coaches having to use the narrow Goodrich / Welsh Bicknor road.

Welsh Government's Access funding of £48,500 will be invested primarily to resolve a number of issues along the Wye Valley Walk and is being managed by Monmouthshire's Rights of Way Section. Projects include:

- Resurfacing of a stretch of the Wye Valley Walk at Chepstow
- Fingerpost repair or replacement along the Wye Valley Walk and across the Wye Valley AONB in Monmouthshire
- Minor improvements at three locations to ensure accessibility of overall routes: Bridge replacement at Trellech; minor works at Devauden and resurfacing a bridleway at Whitelye

A strategic review of issues and infrastructure along the Wye Valley Walk is needed along with a strategy to secure funding to resolve critical blockages.

### ***Background***

The 136-mile Wye Valley Walk, way-marked by the distinctive 'leaping salmon' logo, starts at Chepstow Castle, near the mouth of the River Wye, and follows the valley to the source of the river on Plynlimon in mid-Wales. The first 52 miles (83 km) of the Wye Valley Walk go through the heart of the Wye Valley AONB. In 1975 the first 14 miles were opened between St Arvans and Monmouth. The route was extended over the years reaching Rhayader by the 1990s and finally concluding at the river's source in 2002.

The Wye Valley Walk Partnership has representatives from the local authority Rights of Way officers for the four counties covered by the Walk and is serviced by the Wye Valley AONB Unit. Current Member organisations are:

- Herefordshire (Balfour Beatty)
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Powys County Council
- Wye Valley AONB Unit

Each partner gives a discretionary contribution to the Wye Valley Walk Partnership. The Wye Valley AONB Unit hosts and services the Partnership and manages its finances through an account with Herefordshire Council. The Wye Valley Walk Partnership is 'the author' of the Official Wye Valley Walk Route Guide, published by Cicerone. From time to time, the Partnership bids for extra funding and sponsorship to carry out additional work.

Most of the Wye Valley Walk follows public rights of way, but the land they cross is private, and there are some permissive sections of path, particularly through woodlands.

Lydbrook Bridge, constructed circa 1869-1873, is one of the four remaining (of the original ten) rail bridges to span the River Wye and was constructed to carry the connection between the Ross-Monmouth Railway and the Severn and Wye Railway at Lydbrook junction station, for the Edison Swan Cable works. The bridge is not listed and is currently maintained by Gloucestershire County Council.

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7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **NAAONB UPDATE**

### ***Purpose***

To advise members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM is on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and will be attended by the AONB Manager.
- The AONB Manager represented the NAAONB at the launch of the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) by Natural Resources Wales.

### **NAAONB Chairman's Conference**

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference which will take place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in London. The theme for this year's conference is "Landscape post Brexit".

Lord Gardiner MP, Under Secretary of State for Environment, Defra will be keynote speaker and along with other guest speakers talking about the implications of Brexit on environmental legislation, UK agriculture post CAP and legislation affecting the historic environment.

The one day conference will look at the UK's Protected Landscapes Family's work as dynamic living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society. It will provide a timely and valuable opportunity to take Post Brexit thinking forward together as a Protected Landscape Family.

There will be a short Q&A after the Minister's address. Therefore please advise whether there are any questions that should be asked on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

### **State of Natural Resources Report**

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have produced the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR). On 3<sup>rd</sup> October Lesley Griffiths AM, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, launched NRW's State of Natural Resources Report in Cardiff. The report sets out the state of Wales' natural resources. It assesses the extent to which natural resources in Wales are being sustainably managed, and recommends a proactive approach to building resilience. It also links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales. The AONB Manager represented the NAAONB at the event and expressed the importance of landscape and the role it can play in managing natural resources in an integrated way.

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## AONB REPORTS

### *Purpose*

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and other partners.

FOR INFORMATION

The AONB Manager will give a brief verbal report on the following AONB initiatives, outlined below:-

- a. Future Landscapes Wales & Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales
- b. AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback
- c. Chalara update
- d. LEMUR+ extensions
- e. Europarc visit
- f. MindSCAPE

### **a. Future Landscapes Wales & Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales**

The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group will be convening once again on 10<sup>th</sup> November to review the final report on the Future Landscapes Wales programme. This is then due to be signed off by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM and Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM, chair of the Working Group, on 8<sup>th</sup> December as part of the Gower AONB's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

The AONB Manager has been part of the drafting group working with Welsh Government officers on assimilating the material presented to the last Working Group in June and the subsequent responses.

### **b. AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback**

A total of 31 people participated in the annual AONB Partnership Tour, with a good turn out of Town, Parish and Community Council representatives. There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused on the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. The Tour visited Tintern Abbey, Old Station Tintern, Kingston Brewery, lunched at Abbey Mill, then visited Upper Wyndcliff and Penterry Church. Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

Of the 31 participants on the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour, 7 came from Gloucestershire, 11 from Monmouthshire, 6 from Herefordshire plus 6 others. 12 were from Town/Parish/Community Councils, 9 were JAC members or officers, and 10 others.

**c. Chalara / Ash dieback update and Natural England National Nature Reserve Summit**

The AONB Unit has been involved in observations and investigations into the extent of Chalara / Ash dieback in the Wye Valley AONB. There has been a noticeable increase in the presence of Ash dieback in the AONB as this year has progressed. Further eastwards in England 80-90% of Ash trees appear to be infected with this disease in some woodlands. Kent has experienced a devastating impact from Ash Dieback.

Woodland extent in the AONB is 8,954 Ha (27% of the AONB), of which 6,083 Ha are Ancient woodland. There is not an easy way to identify how much Ash is in those woods. It was reported to the JAC last November that “Approximately 30% of the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is Ash dominated woodland”. The AONB Veteran Tree Survey has 2,389 veteran trees logged, of which 162 (7%) are identified as Ash. The number or extent of individual field, hedgerow, garden and road side Ash trees is currently not known. However, these are likely to be the more significant trees in terms of landscape impact and public safety. A number of local authorities are developing Chalara / Ash dieback strategies, particularly for Ash trees along highways and in public open spaces. Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council are assessing the value of producing similar documents.

The AONB Unit are contributing to ‘The Ash Project’, a culturally led response to Ash Dieback which seeks to record and celebrate ash trees and ash landscapes before they are lost. This has been piloted by the Kent Downs AONB with the Woodland Trust and Archie Miles, well-known author and photographer of trees (and Herefordshire resident). A number of AONBs across the country are now collaborating in this project.

Natural England hosted a summit for the three National Nature Reserves (NNRs) on the English side of the Wye Valley AONB. These are Lady Park Wood, Highbury Wood and The Hudnalls NNRs. About 20 woodland managers and experts met in Redbrook on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October, spending the 1½ days visiting each NNR and debating the most appropriate management strategies for the 3 woodlands in the context of the Wye Valley and the series of NNRs across the country. The AONB Manager attended and gave a presentation to the group on the Wye Valley AONB.

**d. LEMUR+ (Learning Environments in Marine, Urban & Rural areas) placements**

The two LEMUR+ trainees have been carrying out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys predominantly in the south Herefordshire part of the AONB, along with other tasks supporting the work of the Wye Valley AONB Unit.

The 4 month LEMUR+ placement completed her contract in September. However, the trainee has accepted an extension to their contract supported by funding from Natural England for project work on the Garren and Gamber brooks and works on Ross riverside with Ross Town

Council. Similarly it is anticipated that the contract for the 9 month LEMUR+ trainee will be extended when their placement formally ends in late November. These extensions add valuable capacity to the AONB Unit, which is currently suffering from reduced staffing due to long term sickness absence.

**e. Europarc visit**

On 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> October a delegation of nine people from 6 German National Parks and Europarc Germany spent 1½ days in the AONB focusing primarily on ‘Regional development and sustainable tourism’. The AONB Manager had assisted with developing their itinerary and on arrival gave a presentation to the group on the Wye Valley AONB. The AONB staff met with the group and assisted with their transport to Yat Rock. The group stayed in The Royal Hotel at Symonds Yat East. On the second day the AONB Manager guided them on a walk via Biblins Bridge and the Symonds Yat hand ferry. They then visited Redbrook Bridge, Tintern Abbey and Old Station Tintern. They were also visiting the Cotswold AONB and Brecon Beacons National Park.

**f. MindSCAPE**

The Annual Report has been published for the second year of the four year Big Lottery funded project. Artspace Cinderford continue to deliver the on-going activities with Dementia sufferers and their carers.

Hannah Elton-Wall, General Manager Artspace Cinderford, will be giving a presentation on the mindSCAPE project at the ‘Delivering the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment’ seminar in Bristol on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016. This event is jointly hosted by the South Region Sustainability and Health Network and the South West Local Nature Partnerships. The event aims to demonstrate how to incorporate evidence based examples of natural therapy into service provision in health and social care. The AONB Manager and Community Links Officer will also attend the event.

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