

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2018

### *Purpose*

To inform members of the outline programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

### *Recommendations*

That the JAC welcomes the funding to date for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and the evolving programme.

### *Key Issues*

- The Wye Valley River Festival presents high quality, original art works in the landscape with an inspiring, collaborative & vibrant programme of unique, provocative & spectacular events. The Festival is led by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and contracted independent arts practitioners.
- Sufficient funding for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 to proceed has been secured from Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and several other sources (see table below).
- Additional funding applications are being submitted along with campaigns on sponsorship, advertising and sales planned for the remaining parts of the programme.
- The programme of events between 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018 is being finalised and is outlined below, based on the theme of 'Woods & Trees'.
- The future of the biennial Wye Valley River Festival is also being considered in the context of the three Festivals in 2014, 2016 & 2018.

### *Reasons*

In 2013 a six year Business Plan covered three biennial festivals of which the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is the last. The 2014 & 2016 Wye Valley River Festivals were recognised as successes, creating the opportunity to engage new audiences with the AONB's work and to broaden appreciation of the landscape. The JAC has previously recognised the value that this Festival and the arts have in helping deliver the AONB Management Plan by engaging people with their environment and the Special Qualities of the Wye Valley in a fresh way. The general aims and objectives of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 remain:

To celebrate nature, culture, landscape and life along the Wye Valley

- Create a high quality arts programme with artists to reflect the unique qualities of the area and its people, that brings communities together
- Increase participation in the arts and the AONB Partnership's work, building new audiences
- Invest in professional development for artists, enabling them to create work beyond their normal range and cultivating positive working partnerships and new collaborations
- Work with local partners, organisations and businesses and to provide a platform for local artists, groups and voluntary sector organisations

- Foster community cohesion, social and cultural capital between individuals, groups and communities, including new networks for artists within the region.
- Creatively engage schools and colleges and encourage volunteer involvement in the event organisation
- Encourage sponsorship, promotion and engagement of the event by local business
- Promote the profile of the Wye Valley as a premier destination, encouraging visitors to visit more frequently and stay longer, helping to support and develop cultural tourism in and for rural communities.
- Develop a sustainable, nationally recognised biennial Wye Valley River Festival that complements the areas and the AONB's purposes
- Increase awareness of the local and global conservation & environmental issues that affect the Wye Valley landscape
- Vigorously market and promote the Festival through social media and tourist and destination organisations to reach wider audiences and build the Festival profile.

### ***Implications***

In early 2017 the Research and Development (R&D) process elaborated on the theme of 'Woods & Trees' for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 with various partners, environmentalists, artists and local communities. Discussions have continued and funding has been secured sufficient to lay on a Festival in 2018. Confirmed offers of funding to date have been received from various organisation (see below), including Arts Council England, SDF, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Shire Hall Monmouth and the Woodland Trust of both in-kind and/or cash match funding. Applications for funding have also been submitted to Arts Council for Wales and Lottery 'Awards for All'.

| <b>Income:</b>                              | <b>£</b>        | <b>Secured</b> |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Arts Council England                        | £59,000         | ✓              |
| Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)          | £50,000         | ✓              |
| Arts Council Wales                          | £25,000         |                |
| Lottery - Awards for All                    | £10,000         |                |
| AONB (contingency)                          | £9,000          | ✓              |
| Shire Hall, Monmouth (in kind)              | £9,000          | ✓              |
| Woodland Trust (in kind)                    | £9,000          | ✓              |
| Environment Agency                          | £5,000          | ✓              |
| Forestry Commission                         | £5,000          | ✓              |
| Foresters' Forest - Landscape Partnership   | £5,000          | ✓              |
| Cadw  | £4,800          | ✓              |
| Ticket sales (Tintern / Museum of the Moon) | £3,700          |                |
| Sponsorship, concessions and advertising    | £3,500          |                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>£198,000</b> |                |

The Wye Valley AONB Unit, together with the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, have been developing the marketing and programming for the Festival, along with the various artists and environmental professionals. The evolving programme of events between 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> May is outlined below.

## Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Draft Programme

### Outreach Workshops: in schools and communities from January 2018:

- Making and designing flags, banners, lanterns, masks and a ‘community connectivity machine’ for use in the Festival, working with and training local artists.
- Music Workshops with Lydbrook and Monmouth brass bands, Open Up Youth Orchestra and young musicians, creating new pieces and developing outdoor music skills
- Filming of content for projections and performance plus CPD for professional artists and amateur film makers.
- Veteran Trees Walks with environmentalists and community volunteers developing walks routes, designing maps and collating images.
- Arborealists ‘long draw’ and exhibition for the Festival
- CPD for ensemble performers, exploring outdoor poetry recitation and further research & reflection regarding trees and woods
- Creation of two additional large animal puppets
- Youth Performers workshops to integrate material into central shows
- Creative Canopy, Forest of Dean partners, working to develop additional content and opportunities for local and professional artists

### Main Festival:-

- ✚ **May 5<sup>th</sup> – Hereford: The Hereford River Carnival:** Giant Puppets in the daytime Carnival procession plus the WVRF Ensemble ‘Pub Show’. Anticipated audience of 10,000
- ✚ **May- September - Monmouth Museum: The Arborealists’ Art Exhibition.** Anticipated Visitors 1000
- ✚ **May 5<sup>th</sup> - May 7<sup>th</sup> - Symonds Yat Rock: The Town in the Trees.** A participatory, immersive and interactive site exploring and re-imagining the future of the forest, and the resourceful use of woodlands. Installations from local & national artists (in pictures, sound & sculpture), performances, music, parade, dance, workshops and activities for families and adults, hands on building and construction of dens and forest ‘dwellings’ with investigations into how we might inhabit the woods again in the near future. Conservation and environmental organisations, woodland crafts and forest food outlets. Artefacts and objects created during these four days will form part of the installations when The Trees Go to Town.
- ✚ **May 7<sup>th</sup> - Bishopswood Village & the Lydbrook Tump fetes:** Ensemble Pub Show, music, canoe procession.
- ✚ **May 10<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc: Sylvia Rimat ‘Tree’ Immersive digital Installation**
- ✚ **May 9<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 10<sup>th</sup> - venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 11<sup>th</sup> – venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show.
- ✚ **May 12<sup>th</sup> - Monmouth: The Trees Go to Town.** Installation in the Shire Hall turning the building into a living breathing Tree; street installations, Ensemble Pub Show, music, performances including University of South Wales drama students, Monmouth Band and Open Up Youth Orchestra. Day time conference on new woodland thinking. Evening finale, light and video projections.
- ✚ **May 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon. Luke Jerram Museum of the Moon installation** <https://my-moon.org/> from 7:30pm – 10pm
- ✚ **May 14<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon Press Night**
- ✚ **May 15<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon Opening Night.**
- ✚ **May 15<sup>th</sup> - venue tbc:** Ensemble Pub Show
- ✚ **May 16<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon + Under One sky,** Walkers converge on the Abbey from a variety of start points (afternoon into evening).
- ✚ **May 17<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon**

- ✚ **May 18<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon + Under One Sky.** Community picnic, Wye Valley River Festival ensemble of actors and fire garden
- ✚ **May 19<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon**
- ✚ **May 19<sup>th</sup> – Llandogo: Festival Finale.** A day and night time jamboree with stalls, food outlets, picnics and family entertainment, with animations and interventions from many of the Festival artists, workshops and performance, local musicians, dancing, Ensemble Pub Show, street band and Lydbrook Band building to a night time show with fire torch procession and ‘fire tree’
- ✚ **May 20<sup>th</sup> - Tintern Abbey: Museum of the Moon & Sacred Site and Sound.** Orchestral music funded separately and ticketed separately.

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Expenditure:</b> |                 |
| Artistic Activity   | £111,500        |
| Marketing           | £12,000         |
| Evaluation          | £1,500          |
| Outreach            | £18,000         |
| Running costs       | £28,000         |
| In-kind             | £18,000         |
| Contingency         | £9,000          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>£198,000</b> |

The Festival Team, the AONB Unit the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, retain the supervisory overview of the programme. Over the next 6 months the Festival will become the dominant focus for the work of the AONB Unit.

The enthusiasm and energy that the Wye Valley River Festival receives from all quarters continues to impress and motivate the Festival Team. As with 2014 & 2016 a considerable amount of monitoring is planned for the Festival and a full evaluation and will be undertaken to appraise whether there are sufficient benefits to continue with the Wye Valley River Festival after this third of the original 3 Festival Business Plan.

### ***Background***

The River Festival provides a unique opportunity to engage new audiences with the AONB, broadening understanding through art and reaching a more diverse public. Before the 2014 Wye Valley River Festival there was nothing of this kind in the area and the 2014 & 2016 Festivals showed that there is an appetite for quality arts and community led events that link communities throughout the valley that also attract visitors.

The Wye Valley River Festival is a direct legacy of AONB Partnership’s success in delivering the £3.1m Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership scheme 'Overlooking the Wye' between 2008 – 2012 and the AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 from which the idea for a festival spanning the length of the river emerged.

