

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th March 2018

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2018

Purpose

To inform members of the developing programme and sponsorship for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the sponsorship and funding secured to date for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and endorses the developing programme and the work of the AONB Unit and Festival Team.

Key Issues

- The programme of events for the Wye Valley River Festival is being finalised for the main festival fortnight between 5th & 20th May 2018 based on the theme of 'Woods & Trees'. Programme highlights are attached below.
- About 300 people will be engaged in a range of school and community workshops planned for the run up to the Festival to create props and build engagement.
- AONB Volunteers and the AONB Youth Rangers have been working in the woods making hurdles and walking staves for the Festival.
- The Arts Council of Wales grant aid has been approved and a number of sponsorships have been secured and further opportunities are being negotiated.
- A new Wye Valley River Festival website is about to go live and tickets for events will be available through the TicketSource website.

Reasons

The Wye Valley River Festival 2018 gets underway in 2 months on 5th - 20th May 2018. The programme of events, as well as the pre-Festival workshops, are progressing well. Sponsorship deals are falling into place and marketing and promotion is gaining reach locally, regionally and (inter)nationally. The core ensemble group of artists have had a further meeting with local environmental experts to 'ground' and refine the Ensemble theatrical shows that permeate the Festival and provide a narrative to the Woods & Trees theme.

The Festival Team, Artistic Directors –The Desperate Men, Festival Director – Phillipa Haynes and Production Manager – Netty Miles, all worked on the 2014 & 2016 Wye Valley River Festivals. They continue to work through a creative dynamic with the AONB Team on fashioning fresh opportunities to engage new audiences with the AONB's work and to broaden appreciation of the landscape through a high quality arts programme, that brings communities together.

Implications

The last part of the main Festival funding has been secured with the approval of the Arts Council of Wales grant aid. Sponsorship deals have been agreed with County Marquee, Alun

Griffiths Contractors, Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire and SARA. Further sponsorships are being negotiated. Mentoring discussions have been held with The Hay Festival and the Visit Wales Major Events Team and Herefordshire's Great Place team.

Marketing and promotion is progressing with a new Wye Valley River Festival website being launched www.wyevalleyriverfestival.co.uk. The River Festival Facebook page www.facebook.com/wyevalleyriverfestival has over 1000 followers and a reach of over 2,000 people. Partners and tourism providers are publicising the Festival, including the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire, Visit Herefordshire, Visit Monmouthshire, Sunshine Radio and Big House Holiday Lets in the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean. There's been interest in the Festival from America and beyond.

Most of the River Festival events are free. However tickets are being sold for the guided walks and activities associated with Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon at Tintern Abbey. Outside of Cadw's normal opening hours for Tintern Abbey, entry tickets for the Museum of the Moon will be charged at £3.80 for a standard adult, £3 for children and £12 for a Family ticket. Tickets are available from www.ticketsource.co.uk.

Four Pilgrimage Walks are planned for Wednesday 16th May all leading to a light supper hosted by Tintern villagers followed by entry to the Museum of the Moon in Tintern Abbey. The walks are being led by Chepstow, Monmouth and Abergavenny Walkers are Welcome groups and the National Trust, with walks of varying lengths from Chepstow, Brockweir and The Kymin. The AONB Volunteers and the AONB Youth Rangers have been coppicing in local woodlands and making walking staves for some lucky walkers on the Pilgrimage Walks.

Schools' workshops will take place in the week of 16th April led by PriorMade, who worked with schools in 2016 to produce the Festival Banners. About 200 children in 7 Primary Schools will work with the visual artists to create woodland automata for the Festival. The schools are Ashfield Park (Ross), Goodrich, Fownhope, Llandogo, Lydbrook and Whitchurch.

Community workshops are planned for Coleford and Monmouth during the Easter holidays to make lanterns and puppets for the procession in Monmouth on the evening of Saturday 12th May.

Programme highlights

Saturday 5th May Hereford River Carnival

large puppet parade & Festival Theatrical characters

Saturday 5th May, Symonds Yat Rock 5:30pm – 10pm

Woodland Activities, Art Blast, Youth Circus, The George Choir, Herbalist, Forest bathing, Forestry Commission & Foresters' Forest Meet the Festival Theatrical characters

8:00 – 10:00pm Theatrical show & Jony Easterby Show

Sunday 6th May, Symonds Yat Rock 5:30pm – 10pm

Woodland Activities, Art Blast, Youth Circus, Berry Hill Brass Band, Herbalist, Forest bathing, Forestry Commission & Foresters' Forest Meet the Festival Theatrical characters

8:00 – 10:00pm Theatrical show & Jony Easterby Show

Monday 7th May, Lydbrook Tump 1:00 -5:00pm

Festival Theatrical Show & fete events including Lydbrook Band and Passing the Baton performance.

Wednesday 9th May, Fownhope 7:30pm

Festival Theatrical Show

Thursday 10th May, Hoarwithy 3:00pm
Festival walk: Timber trade on the Wye with Heather Hurley
(Tickets £5 including tea)

Thursday 10th May, Ross on Wye 7:30pm
Festival Theatrical Show

Friday 11th May, Monmouth/Wyesham
Festival Theatrical show

Friday 11th May, Chepstow 7:30pm
Festival Theatrical Show

Saturday 12th May, Shire Hall Monmouth 11:30am – 9:30 pm
Arborealists Film Premiere
Shire Hall ‘The tree comes to town’ art installation, Sculpture Trust,
performers & Theatrical Show, Monmouth Band,
Talks on woodland ‘On the stump’ & Court room session
Arborealists Exhibition Opening Night, Monmouth Museum
Evening Theatrical Show and parade

Sunday 13th May, Monmouth Sports club
Wild Swim

Monday 14th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon
7:30pm – 8:00pm Press night, VIPs, sponsors & invited guests.
8:00- 10:00 Museum of the Moon opens to public
(Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

Tuesday 15th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon 6:00pm – 10:00pm
First night (Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

Tuesday 15th May Tintern Anchor 7:30-8:30
Illustrated presentation The Moon: It’s meaning through the ages with
Professor John Clarke (Tickets £5 including admission to Museum of
the Moon)

Tuesday 15th May, Redbrook 7:30pm
Festival Theatrical Show

Wednesday 16th May, Tintern Abbey Pilgrimage Walks. Various start times
meet Tintern: 11.30 for Kymin, 2pm for Chepstow, 6pm for Brockweir
(Tickets £5 including transport, light supper & Museum of Moon)

Wednesday 16th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon 6:00pm – 10:00pm
(Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

Thursday 17th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon 6:00pm – 10:00pm
(Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

Thursday 17th May, Tintern Abbey 7:30pm
Passing the Baton (2 performances)
(tickets £5 include entry to the Museum of the Moon)

Friday 18th May, Llandogo 4pm-7pm
Trapeze workshops

Friday 18th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon Picnic 6:00pm – 10:00pm.
Festival show, picnic and musical entertainment. (Tickets £6)

Saturday 19th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon 6:00pm – 10:00pm
(Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

Saturday 19th May, Llandogo Festival Finale 2:00pm – 10:30pm
Woodland Activities, Festival show, lots of music, food, stalls, circus
skills, Trapeze workshops, canoe ballet, dancing and singing.
Fire Procession & Finale!

Sunday 20th May, Tintern Abbey Museum of the Moon 6:00pm – 10:00pm
Last chance to see the Moon (Tickets £3.80 / child £3 / Family £12)

May – September: Arborealists Exhibition, Monmouth Museum.

Background

The Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is 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, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission England, Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership, and in-kind support from Cadw, County Marquees, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, numerous volunteers & local communities; main charity sponsor Severn Area Rescue Service (SARA). For a full list of sponsors see www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk

The Wye Valley River Festival celebrates nature, culture, landscape and life in the Wye Valley AONB. It aims to

- 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.

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.

