

## LOWER WYE CATCHMENTS (NFM & GI) PROJECT

### *Purpose*

To introduce the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project Officer.

FOR INFORMATION

### *Key Issues*

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Collaboration Funding has enabled the recruitment of a Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project Officer until Dec 2019.
- The Project Officer is employed by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and seconded to the Wye Valley AONB Unit.
- The project aims to deliver a catchment based partnership approach, covering 4 Wye tributaries and 54km<sup>2</sup> of the Wye Valley AONB in Monmouthshire (see attached map).
- Chris Radford commenced work as the Project Officer on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October.
- The first Project Steering Group meeting is on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October.

### *Reasons*

The Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) project takes a catchment approach in 54km<sup>2</sup> of the Wye Valley AONB, focusing on 4 Wye tributaries between Penallt and St Arvans. It is a partnership between the AONB Unit and MCC with National Farmers Union (NFU) Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW, Monmouthshire Meadows and the Woodland Trust. The intention of the project is to develop practical sustainable solutions addressing land management, water run-off, access and invasive weed issues through an Integrated Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure Strategy. A key focus is on resolving where surface water run-off and flooding impact on people's ability to access and enjoy the countryside.

### *Implications*

Chris Radford has been recruited as the Project Officer, employed by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) and based with the AONB Unit in Monmouth. Chris aims to work with landowners, land managers, interested parties and the public to develop practical sustainable solutions to address land management, water run-off, countryside access and invasive weed issues. The post is supported by a project steering group including MCC, National Farmers Union (NFU) Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW, Monmouthshire Meadows, Woodland Trust and the Wye Valley AONB Unit. The Project Officer will be able to draw on technical advice through these partners covering biodiversity, countryside access, farming, forestry,

local flood management and natural resource management and other related issues. The Project Steering Group has its first meeting on Monday 29th October.

Landowner and local community involvement will commence shortly. Through the project advice will be available on catchment sensitive farming and natural flood management. There will also be 12 good practice events, walks and talks etc. The project will engage local farmers and NRW's local forestry team about how to deliver a more joined up approach to resolve some of the NFM & GI issues. There is a modest budget to deliver smaller scale actions during the project and/or to support complementary action. The project will also seek to address issues through the development, specification and costing of potential solutions to be delivered through future funding bids.

### ***Background***

In 2017 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) launched a collaboration funding stream up to December 2019 to support the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR). The AONB Unit worked with MCC, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Meadows, NFU Cymru, Woodland Trust and NRW to develop a project covering 4 catchments of the Lower Wye Valley. The Lower Wye Valley Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management project secured £68,000 from the NRW SMNR funding towards a total project of £136,400 until December 2019. The AONB Unit and MCC are contributing £12,600 direct funding towards the project and staff time in-kind estimated at approximately £43,000.

The watercourses in the Project area primarily rise in the rolling, more intensively farmed land on the Trellech Plateau, which leads into more heavily wooded steep valley sides of the Wye Gorge. The land and water management on the Plateau directly effects the volume and rate of flow downstream toward the River Wye and villages of Whitebrook, Llandogo and Tintern.