

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF) & WYE VALLEY AONB FUND  
WITH HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (HCF)**

***Purpose***

To inform members of the status of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2019/20 and the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation.

FOR INFORMATION

***Key Issues***

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and confirmed for 2019/20 at £55,000 per annum.
- The agreement with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has been signed for the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund, with the criteria attached in Appendix 1.
- The current allocation of SDF grants is also appended with £8,875 remaining to be allocated in 2019/20.
- There remains a vacancy on the SDF Assessment Panel for a co-opted public sector representative. Suggestions are welcome.

***Reasons***

Welsh Government (WG) provide the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) which is administered by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the SDF Assessment Panel. The SDF for 2019/20 is £55,000 per annum, similar to the previous 3 years. There may also be the opportunity to bid for underspends from other AONBs later in the year, subject to available funds and prospective applications.

The SDF Assessment Panel is made up of co-opted public, private and voluntary sector representatives with 2 appointees from each sector to ensure a balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests, with additional officers' support. The JAC has nominated 3 members, one for each sector. One public sector place remains to be co-opted to the Panel and another seat is for a trustee from the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) following the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund with HCF. The SDF Panel will advise HCF on the assessment of projects and the allocation of the AONB Fund. The current SDF Assessment Panel membership is attached (Appendix 2).

## ***Implications***

The establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has approved by Herefordshire Council, as treasurers for the AONB Partnership. The funds are shortly to be transferred as a legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme. There will be a £10,000 'immediate impact' fund and a £50,000 Endowment Fund from which the income generated each year will be used to award grants. The latter will be able to receive donations and legacies and it is hoped that the AONB Fund will grow over time. The Fund criteria are in Appendix 1.

The current SDF allocations in 2019/20 are also listed below in Appendix 3. Grants to date total £40,625 with an average grant rate of 34% towards projects with a value of £146,177. There is £8,875 remaining from the £55,000.

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, and 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)). Similarly promotion and publicity will commence for Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) once the funds are transferred.

There is a vacancy on the SDF Assessment Panel for a co-opted Public Sector representative.

## ***Background***

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available in the Wye Valley AONB for 18 years in Wales and but was a casualty of austerity in England, where it ran for 10 years.

The establishment of a Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has been previously approved by the JAC as a legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme.

## **APPENDIX 1.**

### **Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)**

- 1.1 The Fund will prioritise support for projects which benefit communities and the environment of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the area adjoining the AONB boundary (where the majority of benefit is within the AONB) that is within Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire.
- 1.2 The funds generated each year will be used to award grants to support projects, programmes and activities that meet the fund criteria.
2. Grants will be awarded to support community and voluntary groups and the non statutory activities of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, including projects, programmes and project staff within the following criteria:
  - 2.1 **Conservation and enhancement of the landscape**

Activities could include landscape conservation grants to organisations, landowners, land managers and community groups for:

    - (a) Conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (as identified in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan)
    - (b) Maintenance and management of natural features including coppicing, tree and hedgerow planting, pond restoration, grassland and wetland management and heathland conservation
    - (c) Maintenance and management of historic features including viewpoints, former industrial sites, drystone walls and historic settlements or buildings
    - (d) equipment to undertake conservation activities
  - 2.2 **Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the Wye Valley AONB**

Activities could include grants for:

    - (a) Education visits and activities
    - (b) Information and interpretation projects, eg information boards, walking leaflets, websites, public transport promotion etc
    - (c) Outreach projects, eg targeting disadvantaged groups
  - 2.3 **Support the social and economic well being of the Wye Valley AONB**

Activities could include grants to landowners, business and communities for:

    - (a) Enhancing community facilities, eg village halls
    - (b) Start up enterprises, eg farm shops, local food initiatives
    - (c) Community enterprises, eg village shops, village play schemes
    - (d) Community well-being initiatives, eg walking groups, ‘green gym’ health & exercise groups simultaneously using and conserving the natural environment
3. The criteria can be varied at any time in the future by written agreement between the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee and the Herefordshire Community Foundation. For example, to add a further area of special concern or to change a priority.

## APPENDIX 2.

### Members of the SDF Assessment Panel

#### **Public Sector representatives:**

Cllr Mrs Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council (JAC)

*vacant*

#### **Private Sector representatives:**

David Price, NFU Wales (JAC)

Antony Smith, Wyastone Estates Ltd.

#### **Voluntary Sector representatives:**

Ashley Thomas: Monmouthshire voluntary conservation sector representative (JAC)

*tbc – Herefordshire Community Foundation*

#### **Local Authority officer:**

Colette Bosley: Principal Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer,

Monmouthshire County Council

#### **Statutory Agency officer:**

Sarah Tindal, Partnerships Officer, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

#### **Wye Valley AONB officers in attendance:**

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager

Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer

## APPENDIX 3

### 2019/20 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) grants approved to date

<u>2019/20</u> Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	%
			This	Total			
WV00 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV01 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Trainees	1	2	£2,192	£900	41%
WV02 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Machinery & Habitat Management Project	1	1	£35,360	£7,500	21%
WV03 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2020	1	2	£106,300	£25,000	24%
WV04 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Japanese Knotweed Control Tintern	2	2	£2,325.00	£1,725	74%
<b>TOTALS (to date)</b>					<b>£146,177</b>	<b>£40,625</b>	<b>Av36%</b>
<i>Remaining from £55,000</i>						<i>£8,875</i>	