

## WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2020

### *Purpose*

To inform members of the provisional programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.

FOR INFORMATION

### *Key Issues*

- Funding for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 has been secured from Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Visit Wales, Arts Council of Wales, and many other sources (see attached appendix).
- The programme of events for the Wye Valley River Festival is being finalised for the main festival fortnight between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020 based on the theme of 'Time'. Programme highlights are attached below.
- A range of school and community workshops are 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 walking staves for the Festival.
- The Wye Valley AONB Unit recently won a South East Wales Tourism Innovation Award for the Wye Valley River Festival.

### *Reasons*

The Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership project, led by the Wye Valley AONB unit, Desperate Men and Phillipa Haynes in a unique and creative collaboration between arts and environment professionals, who develop, produce and deliver the Festival with stakeholders and the communities in and around the Wye Valley AONB.

The Festival is supported and funded by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, Arts Council England, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) from Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales, Visit Wales, Forestry England, Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Environment Agency, Cadw and in-kind support from The Shire Hall Monmouth, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome and numerous volunteers & local communities.

During 2019 an extensive Research and Development (R&D) process brought environmentalists, artists and communities together to explore the theme of the Time. Subsequently grants and funding have been secured for the 4<sup>th</sup> Wye Valley River Festival, between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February, the Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, presented a South East Wales Tourism Award for Innovation to the Wye Valley AONB Unit for its work with the Wye Valley River Festival. This is the third award that the Wye Valley River Festival has received, after the national AONB Bowland Award in 2018 and the 2016 Festival being Highly Commended at the Visit Herefordshire Awards for

Excellence in the Best Festivals & Events (Community) category, which was won by the Hereford River Carnival, also part of the Wye Valley River Festival.

### ***Implications***

Wye Valley AONB Unit, together with the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, have been developing the programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 together with a wide range of environmental professionals and artists. The evolving programme of events between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May is outlined below.

There is a vibrant partnership of actors, singers, musicians, dancers and community groups that will sweep downstream creating magic, mayhem and mischief, under the artistic directorship of the Desperate Men, bringing to life the Festival theme of 'Time'. Because, 'now is the time to act' in the climate and biodiversity emergency.

An element of the Festival will be to get audience members to sign up to an 'AONB Pledge' to *Discover - Explore - Act - Share - Pledge* and to commit to taking the time to:-

- Get outside and enjoy your natural health service
- Become an active ecological citizen
- Take pride in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Help nature to recover and flourish across the whole landscape
- Get involved and make your voice heard

The Festival also hosts two significant conferences;

- 'Art in Landscape' on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> May; with the NAAONB and fellow AONBs coming together for a day of knowledge transfer and networking to consider future national & local collaboration. The NAAONB have Arts Council England funding to explore the relationship between arts and landscape and the engagement of artists and producers, in order to ensure our most precious landscapes are more accessible and more widely understood and appreciated by the nation.
- 'Creative Landscapes' on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May; with land stewards and creatives from across England and Wales sharing ideas and experiences in co-creating transformational and inclusive arts experiences, with a particular focus on diversity, access, sustainability and climate change.

The AONB Unit retain a core focus and supervisory overview of the programme and the Festival Team. The Festival will be the dominant focus for the work of the AONB Unit over the next 3 months.

### ***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. Outdoor art has been called 'the most egalitarian form of art'. It's often free to access and invites people to have their own experience of both the art and its setting. The creative exploration of place, through music, painting, poetry, and dance opens up the experience of landscape beyond the world of science and policy and helps us better understand our place in the world. With better understanding comes better stewardship; the basis of a more sustainable future.

## Wye Valley River Festival 2020 - Outline Programme

### *Pre-Festival*

**April/ May: Outreach Workshops in schools and communities**, a series of workshops for schools, communities and volunteers in the run up to the Festival. These include 5 artistic workshops, 4 community lantern workshops, 5 school visits with Museum of Flax and 5 with the Ensemble of actors.

There are opportunities to volunteer <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/volunteering/> as part of the Festival, including hosting the event at Tintern Abbey and other locations. There is a meeting in the Shire Hall Monmouth on the 5<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm.

### *Festival Fortnight*

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May & Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May: Symonds Yat Rock.** A participatory, immersive and interactive site - spend time in the woods, and follow a wolf pack! Explore the Festival themes of Time in the trees, re-imagining the future of the woodlands and an exploration of the natural processes.

**Festival Walks** Clocking up the miles – slowly!

A series of walks with local guides from Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome, accompanied by local historian Heather Hurley and visiting artists Harriet & Rob Fraser <http://www.somewhere-nowhere.com> with the opportunity at the end of each day to meet artists and participants.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May: Hereford to Little Dewchurch**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May: Little Dewchurch to Ross-on-Wye**

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May: Ross-on-Wye to Lydbrook**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May: Lydbrook to Monmouth**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May: Paddling through time on the Wye**

As the walks commence in Hereford with a flotilla of artists in vintage boats make the journey by river in a modern day Wye Tour. They include artist Helen Shackleton and ecological construction expert Lloyd Turner <https://www.wildmurals.co.uk/about>. Rowing the traditional Irish Curragh will be Simon and Anne Copper, flax experts. <http://www.flaxland.co.uk>. They will journey down the Wye from Hereford to Brockweir.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> May: The Ensemble show - Cuckoo Time** touring outdoor venues; pubs, schools, village greens, etc. throughout the festival – in places (TBC) such as Trellech, Devauden, Ross, Fownhope and Goodrich.

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May: 2.30pm Tintern Abbey – Fantastic Planet: VIP launch** with Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: Tintern Abbey – Fantastic Planet:**

<https://www.parerstudio.com/fantastic-planet/> Ticketed event.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May: Monmouth Shire Hall & streets – ‘No Time to Waste’** Free Events, including; *Congregation* - an interactive sound installation; Ensemble Show – Cuckoo Time out and about; Shire Hall indoor Time installation; street interventions and animations; ‘avant bard’ roving poet; magical happenings in Nelson Gardens; street band. **‘Timely Talks’ at the Shire Hall:** Invited speakers from quantum physics, geology, astronomy, archaeology, and cultural organisations will gather for lectures and exchanges about the nature of Time, our place in it and how much of it we waste or can use. Soapbox: Poetry for the Planet & good news stories around the environment to inspire community action around the pledge.

**Festival torchlight procession** (evening) along Monnow Street ending with outdoor performances with light and video projections on the Shire Hall

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May:** Installation open in Shire Hall day time

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May: Lydbrook - Tump fete** Ensemble show and guests

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May: (Daytime) Poetry and Pilgrimage in Tintern.** a morning Pilgrimage Walk following the old monks path from Tintern Abbey to their grange farm at Penterry, followed by an afternoon Poetry Workshop in Tintern.

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> May: Art in Landscape Conference - Monmouth/ Wye Valley locations,** Artists and National AONB arts collaborators, plus conservation sector & land managers come together for a day of knowledge transfer and networking to consider future national & local collaboration

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: Creative Landscapes Seminar - Shire Hall, Monmouth,** Articulture & the Wye Valley River Festival team host a day-long seminar for land stewards and creatives to explore co-creating transformational and inclusive arts experiences. The event is intended to nurture common ground, inspiration, new friendships and expanded knowledge around key challenges including diversity, access, sustainability and climate change. The programme includes interventions from artists [Rhys Trimble](#), [Rose Popay](#), [Desperate Men](#), Deasy Bamford, and [Tin Shed Theatre](#). There will also be active workshops and open space discussions with guests [Migrations](#), [Diverse City](#), [Wye Valley AONB](#), [Natural Resources Wales](#), [Marc Rees](#), [Citrus Arts](#) and [Cadw](#), as well as a walk through the beautiful Wye Valley, shared food, and culminating with a visit to the international renowned '[Fantastic Planet](#)' - giant illuminated humanoids by Amanda Parer - at dusk in Tintern Abbey.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May: 'Pilgrimage walks in a day'** Five pilgrimage walks converge on Tintern Abbey for community gathering and journey to experience the Humanoids in the Abbey.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May: Tintern Abbey Community Picnic & torchlight parade** among the Fantastic Planet Humanoids with theatrical surprises and a gathering of lanterns.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May: Llandogo - Festival Finale,** the much loved riverside eclectic mix of festival artists, workshops, performances, music, dance, children's activities, Cloudscapes, locally sourced food and drink outlets, craft making and the denouement of the Ensemble narrative - ending with fire torch procession and fire sculpture.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: Tintern Abbey** – the last chance to visit the Fantastic Planet & enjoy Cloudscapes.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May: Monmouth Great Wye Swim**

**The Wye Valley River Festival has secured funding from the following sources:-**

Arts Council England	£70,000
SDF	£50,000
Visit Wales	£50,000
AONB & WVRF	£26,135
<i>Ticket Sales*</i>	<i>£26,020</i>
Arts Council of Wales	£25,000
Welsh Government	£22,500
Cadw	£9,600
Environment Agency	£5,000
Forestry Commission	£5,000
Foresters' Forest	£5,000
<i>Sponsorship/Town Councils*</i>	<i>£3,000</i>
<i>Advertising*</i>	<i>£2,520</i>
<i>Food Concession*</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£302,475</b>
<i>* unsecured</i>	<i>£34,040</i>