

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

Purpose

To endorse the recent allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Assessment Panel and update on the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

Recommendation

That the JAC endorses the recent allocations of the SDF for 2021/22 and 2022/23 subject to minor variations and funds being available.

Key Issues

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) delegated by Welsh Government is £100,000 for 2021/22 and is yet to be confirmed for 2022/23.
- The SDF Assessment Panel has allocated £99,138.75 for 2021/22 and £25,000 for 2022/23 to date, subject to funds being made available (see attached table).
- Negotiations are on-going with some applicants and full project delivery and spend may not be achieved this year leaving up to £5,000 unallocated and a commensurate transfer of grant offer to next year, subject to funds being available from Welsh Government.
- The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of allocating any remaining SDF at end of year to specific AONB projects that meet the SDF criteria.
- The first of a number of podcasts on successful SDF projects has been produced.
- The Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) Wye Valley AONB Fund latest balances were £966.19 remaining in the immediate impact fund and £58,554.32 in the Endowment Fund. There were no applications in the current round meaning £9,520 is available for grants.
- Applications are welcome for both sets of funding, including under the Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grant element.

Reasons

Welsh Government allocated £100,000 of SDF again in 2021/22. This is the 21st year of the SDF which continues to provide an exceptional opportunity for organisations, individuals and community groups to apply for grant aid for innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which benefit the Welsh part of the AONB.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) was established in 2019 with a £10,000 Immediate Impact fund and a £50,000 Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund is currently growing at a modest rate and is open to receive donations and legacies. Opportunities will be sought to grow the AONB Fund further over time. The HCF AONB Fund Agreement identifies that interest and income from the Endowment Fund may be utilised for project grants, retaining a base Endowment Fund of £50,000.

Implications

The SDF Assessment Panel met in August and nearly fully allocated the available SDF for 2021/22. The Welsh Government have not yet determined the level of SDF for 2022/23. However, the SDF Assessment Panel have provisionally approved £25,000 of SDF grant aid for 2022/23 on the assumption that the Welsh Government will not decide to decrease the SDF below this level. All SDF offers to date for 2022/23 are conditional on the funding being available.

Some SDF applicants have subsequently identified that they may not be able to complete or fully spend the grant this financial year. AONB staff are negotiating with relevant applicants to ensure maximum spend and project delivery. However it may necessitate some realignment of grant offers and modest transfer of grant allocations into 2022/23. This may release about £5,000 this year for further SDF grants.

The AONB Community Links Officer has been working with a number of SDF recipients to produce podcasts about the SDF and successful projects. The first podcast is available on the AONB website here: <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/grants/>.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has, based on the last account balances, £58,554.32 in the Endowment Fund and £966.19 remaining in the Immediate Impact fund. Once the Immediate Impact fund is exhausted income generated each year from the Endowment Fund can also be used to award grants. There were no applications in the current round although Herefordshire Community Foundation has awarded grants to projects in the AONB from other funds they manage. Consequently under the HCF AONB Fund there is £9,520 available for grants for environmental, community and cultural projects in the AONB. The Endowment Fund is able to receive donations and legacies so it is intended that the AONB Fund will grow over time, including donations via text messages by texting 'WVAONB' to 70085 to donate £5. The SDF Assessment Panel recommends applications to the HCF Trustees for funding.

Background

The AONB Unit and other partners promote the availability of the SDF to as many sectors as possible in Monmouthshire, and throughout the AONB for the HCF AONB Fund. Members are similarly encouraged to do so. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, is available to discuss and advise on potential applications (contact community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk or call 01600 710844).

SDF Wales Summary 2021/22 & 2022/23						
Ref.No	Applicant	Project Name	SDF Amount	Project %	Status	Decision
2021/22						
WV00 YR21W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Admin 10%	£10,000.00			
WV01 YR21W	Monmouth Climate Futures Festival	Monmouth Climate Futures Festival	£6,968.00	44%	Approved	10/3/2021
WV02 YR21W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Friends of the Falls - Wordsworth Walk	£25,000.00	£49%	Approved	10/3/2021
WV03 YR21W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Pine Marten Monitoring and survey project	£1,355.25	£33%	Approved	10/3/2021
WV04 YR21W	The Narth Footpath Group	Narth Footpath Project	£500.00	16%	Approved	10/3/2021
WV05 YR21W	Jamie's Farm, Monmouth	Environmental Improvements	£11,500.00	45%	Approved	9/8/21
WV06 YR21W	Monmouthshire Meadows	Scything for meadows management	£1,228.00	63%	Approved	9/8/21
WV07 YR21W	Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) CIC	WVRF 2022 (yr1 of 2)	£25,000.00	41%	Approved	9/8/21
WV08 YR21W	Peter Lloyd	Tintern Angling Club	£2,149.50	48%	Approved	9/8/21
WV09 YR21W	Monmouthshire Meadows	Trellech Wet Meadow Pond Restoration	£5,280.00	47%	Approved	9/8/21
WV10 YR21W	Busy Bees	Garden Project	£10,158.00	62%	Approved	9/8/21
		Sub total	£99,138.75	45%		
2022/23						
WV00 YR22W	Wye Valley AONB	Admin 10%				
WV01 YR22W	Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) CIC	WVRF 2022 (yr2 of 2)	£25,000.00	16%	Approved	9/8/21
		Sub total	£25,000.00			