

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2022

Purpose

To inform members of the progress of the Wye Valley River Festival Community Interest Company (CIC) with the Wye Valley River Festival 2022 scheduled for 27th May - 5th June.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The JAC supported the establishment of the Wye Valley River Festival Community Interest Company (CIC) to take forward the Wye Valley River Festival.
- The Wye Valley River Festival CIC has been successful with various grant applications to enable it to plan for a Wye Valley River Festival 2022 on 27th May - 5th June 2022.

Reasons

The JAC endorsed the continuation of the Wye Valley River Festival through an independent management and delivery body. The Wye Valley River Festival CIC was established with 3 Directors who had all been involved in previous Wye Valley River Festivals.

The Wye Valley River Festival CIC subsequently secured Arts Council England funding for Organisational Development. This enabled the consolidation of the new CIC, developing systems and communications along with planning and discussions on all aspects of the CIC's ambition and aspirations. The CIC has written successful applications to the Community Renewal Fund UK, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Welsh Government Major Events -Festival Growth Fund, Arts Council England (ACE), Arts Council of Wales (ACW) and others. The CIC has been advertising for and interviewing a new team to set up and run the new Festival.

Implications

The CIC has secured nearly £300,000 for the Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) 2022 programme. The main festival is being planned between 27th May - 5th June 2022 with the theme of HUMAN⇌NATURE. There will be additional outreach work in the run-up to the Festival and further events later in the year.

Over recent months the CIC has recruited four new staff to the core Festival team and six freelance artists for the performance ensemble plus an artist in residence. Four Creative

Community Champions have been selected and contracted until June 2022 to be cultural and artistic emissaries for the WVRF to galvanise activities in communities along the valley. They will be co-creating work with communities throughout the region, 'following their own artistic noses' and exploring their practice and interests by inviting local people to collaborate with them in a myriad of ways, creating new community based work for presentation and display during the Festival and beyond.

Thus far the CIC has created 9 part time freelance jobs/contracts to deliver various elements of the Festival, 7 of which have been awarded to creatives living within an 8 mile radius of Monmouth.

The Core Festival team consists of

Festival Director - Phillippa Haynes

Artistic Director – Jon Beedell

Company Manager - Rachel Buchanan

Festival Producer - Claire Teasdale

Marketing and Social Media manager - Mabel Moll

Outreach Co-ordinator - Natalia Colville

Production Manager – [recruitment underway]

CIC Directors are Phillippa Haynes, Jon Beedell and Mijanou Blech. The intention is to recruit two more Directors to the CIC. Accountant for the CIC is Hannah Winman, Current Accountancy Ltd.

Combined with the successful funding, these appointments create a capable, experienced and motivated team with both artistic and management skills which give confidence that the Wye Valley River Festival has a successful future.

The main Wye Valley River Festival 2022 events between 27th May - 5th June are currently being developed. It is acknowledged that these dates coincide with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and half-term. The Festival Ensemble will co-create elements of the performance with identified communities (and partners) in Llandogo, Redbrook, the Forest of Dean area including performance at Symonds Yat Rock, plus other locales. A series of Hyper-local events are proposed for Llandogo, Tintern, Redbrook and Symonds Yat. Permission is being secured for two installations, one at Tintern and another at Yat Rock. A third event in the Autumn, when the evenings are darker, is proposed in partnership with Cadw at Tintern Abbey, which will be ticketed.

Other community groups that the CIC is working with include Artspace Cinderford, Artsblast, Redbrook Art Angels, Monmouth Lantern Parade, Monmouth Transition Group and the Climate Futures Festival and the Savoy Youth Theatre.

Background

Wye Valley River Festivals in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020 have been Wye Valley AONB Partnership projects, led by the Wye Valley AONB Unit, Desperate Men and Phillippa Haynes in a unique and creative collaboration between arts and environment professionals, who developed, produced and delivered the Festival with stakeholders and the communities in and around the Wye Valley AONB.