

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND AND HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
WYE VALLEY AONB FUND**

Purpose

To update members on the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

Recommendation

That the JAC endorse the allocations of the SDF for 2022/23, including allocation of any remaining funds to the Wye Valley River Festival.

Key Issues

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) currently has £54,453 allocated from the £100,000 offered by Welsh Government for 2022/23, with £45,547 remaining.
- At least two more applications are expected to be appraised imminently, with a combined value of about £35,000.
- The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of allocating remaining SDF at end of year to specific projects such as the Wye Valley River Festival.
- The National Association for AONBs have commissioned an independent evaluation of the SDF for Welsh Government.
- Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) host the Wye Valley AONB Fund for which the 2022/23 Quarter Three balance was £65,399.70. This included a £10,000 donation to the Endowment Fund from Bad Wolf Productions.
- Applications are welcome for both sets of funding for 2023/24.

Reasons

Welsh Government have allocated £100,000 of SDF each year for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. This enables the SDF to continue 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.

With the support of Welsh Government, the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) has commissioned an independent evaluation of the Sustainable Development Fund across the 5 AONBs in Wales.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) was established with a £10,000 Immediate Impact fund and a £50,000 Endowment Fund. The Immediate Impact fund has now been fully allocated to projects. The Endowment Fund had been growing at a modest rate but has also received a donation of £10,000 from South Wales TV production company Bad Wolf. Opportunities will be sought to grow the AONB Fund further over time.

Implications

The SDF Assessment Panel is delegated with deciding on each application over £3,000. Application under £3,000 are determined by the AONB Manager. The list of approved grants during 2022/23, totalling £54,453, is in the table below.

Catrin Evans Consultancy has been commissioned by the NAAONB to carry out an independent evaluation of the Sustainable Development Fund across the 5 AONBs in Wales. The evaluation is looking at how the SDF delivers against individual AONB priorities and objectives (as set out in the Management Plans) and also how it delivers against national priorities. As part of this process, a number of projects grant aided between 2018 and 2021 have been selected for a visit. Project selection has been based on ensuring that a wide a range of themes, outcomes and scale have been selected, to try and capture the full scope of the Fund.

2022/23 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) grants approved

Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant
			This	Total		
WV00 YR22W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Admin 10%	1	1	n/a	10,000.00
WV01 YR22W	Jamie's Farm	Monmouth Environmental Improvements	2	2	£25,679.28	£3,300.00
WV02 YR22W	Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) CIC	WVRF 2022	2	2	£60,500.00	£25,000.00
WV03 YR22W	Monmouthshire Meadows	Wet Meadow Pond Project	1	1	£11,354.00	£5,280.00
WV04 YR22W	Busy Bees Toddler Group	Sensory Garden	2	2	£8,308.00	£5,158.00
WV05 YR22W	Chepstow school	Wildlife Garden etc.	2	2	£3,274.70	£1,500.00
WV06 YR22W	Tintern Village fete	Child Creative engagement	2	2	£3,973.00	£1,915.00
WV07 YR22W	Jamie's Farm	Carbon Management Plan	1	1	£2,736.00	£2,300.00
WV08 YR22W	One Planet Matt Dun	Dôl-Wen hedgerow restoration	1	1	£4560.20	£1952.60
TOTALS (to date)					£115,824.98	£54,453.00
					<i>Remaining from £100,000</i>	<i>£45,547.00</i>

Lucinda James, AONB Community Links Officer, is currently assisting two applicants with projects totalling approximately £35,000. It is anticipated these will be presented to the Assessment Panel shortly, within 2022/23.

The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of directing unallocated SDF towards significant AONB projects with major community benefits such as the Overlooking the Wye scheme and the Wye Valley River Festival. It is proposed that any remaining unallocated SDF is likewise allocated to specific AONB projects and/or to the Wye Valley River Festival Community Interest Company.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has a balance of £65,399.70 (as of the last statement dated 31st December 2022). This includes a £10,000 donation to the Endowment Fund from Bad Wolf Productions, a South Wales TV production company that often makes use of locations in the Wye Valley. Bad Wolf credits include His Dark Materials and Doctor Who. Their donation is primarily for drawdown to support the re-establishment of the AONB Youth Ranger programme, but they are willing for the interest on their donation to be used to contribute towards other projects. The SDF Assessment Panel recommends applications to the HCF for funding.

For more details on grants and the application process see <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/>. For further advice or to discuss any project ideas, please contact Lucinda James, AONB Community Links Officer, on community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk.

Background

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) supports living and working more sustainably in association with enhancing natural beauty, wildlife, culture, landscape, land use and community within the context of the Wales sustainable development goals and principles in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Wye Valley AONB Unit administer the fund on behalf of Welsh Government.

The Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) host and manage the Wye Valley AONB Fund on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.