

**FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES (FIPL) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)
AND HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (HCF) WYE VALLEY AONB FUND**

Purpose

To update members on the progress of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, 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 grants under the FiPL programme, SDF and HCF AONB Fund to date for 2023/24 and encourages the sound uptake of the remaining funds.

Key Issues

- DEFRA has provided a revised and increased allocation for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in England of £339,063 for 2023/24 and £362,384 for 2024/25.
- Currently FiPL grants & payments for 2023/24 total £239,552 with £99,510 remaining. For 2024/5, which is the last year of the programme, £85,972 has already been allocated.
- The AONB Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, Anna Stankiewicz, is able to assist farmers and land managers applying to the FiPL programme.
- The allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) currently has £63,108 allocated from the £100,000 offered by Welsh Government for 2023/24, with £100,000 also available for 2024/25.
- The AONB Community Links Officer, Lucinda James, is able to assist organisations, community groups and individuals applying for the SDF.
- Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) host the Wye Valley AONB Fund, which currently has a balance of £64,500.
- Applications are welcome for all three sets of funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 announced the extension of the delivery of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, following the success of the first 2 years of the programme. DEFRA have subsequently increased the overall allocated funding for FiPL and made some other minor changes to the programme.

Wye Valley AONB budgets for 23/24 and 24/25 are confirmed, with a significant uplift in FiPL budgets to £339,063 in 23/24 and £362,384 in 24/25. This includes an allocation for Advice & Guidance/Administration, including the employment of the FiPL Officer and overhead & administration costs. If these Advice & Admin allocations are not fully required they can be transferred to the FiPL grant budget. DEFRA have also confirmed that the programme will not be extended beyond March 2025, when the full Environmental Land Management (ELM) agri-environment scheme becomes active.

FiPL applications approved to date in 2023/4 are as follows:

Code	Applicant	Project	year	Grant £
WV003	Wye & Usk Foundation	Farm Natural Capital Assessments	3 of 3	19,125.00
WV012	Wye & Usk Foundation	INNS control	2 of 2	11,569.60
WV013	Brampton Orchard	Restoration planting	2 of 2	2,843.40
WV014	AONB Unit	Noble chafer project	2 of 2	2,655.00
WV016	The Dingle, Checkley	Hedge planting	2 of 2	4,069.21
WV018	Tump Farm	Access and Species rich grassland restoration	2 of 2	8,024.33
WV020	Bicknor Court Farm	Hedge & Tree planting, pond restoration	2 of 2	14,384.70
WV021	LEAF education	Farm education training	2 of 2	13,500.00
WV022	Ballingham Court Farm	Pond restoration	2 of 2	659.24
WV024	Grazing Management Ltd	Conservation grazing animal handling	2 of 2	804.20
WV027	Benhall Farm	Meadow restoration	2 of 2	3,223.26
WV029	Dryslade Farm	Grassland & Access enhancements	2 of 2	6,309.78
WV031	Haynes Farm	Meadow restoration	1 of 1	1,516.52
WV032	Dryslade Farm	Grassland enhancement	1 of 1	975.19
WV033	Caradoc Estate	Hedges. Rotational grazing. Enhancing soils	1 of 1	5,695.08
WV034	Lower Witherstone	Hedges, parkland trees, wood pasture	1 of 1	24,706.78
WV035	Townsend Farm	BOKASHI composting. Aerobic compost-teas	1 of 1	8,009.33
WV036	Fownhope PC	Access enhancement	1 of 1	4,742.46
WV037	Kilforge Farm	Maize undersowing	1 of 1	395.20
WV038	Lower Penalt Farm	Maize undersowing	1 of 1	490.00
WV039	Bearse Farm	Access improvements	1 of 1	1,320.00
WV041	Townsend Farm	Heritage grain milling/pasta making	1 of 1	10,430.79
WV042	Lower Penalt Farm	Orchard planting	1 of 1	14,447.50
		Grant sub-total		159,896.57
		Advice/Guidance /Admin budget		79,656
		Total eligible expenditure		239,552.57
		<i>Total FiPL allocation</i>		<i>339,063.00</i>
		Currently remaining		99,510.43

DEFRA have also amended and increased in the level of FiPL grants that can be approved by the AONB team, from £5,000 to £10,000. The Wye Valley AONB team's opinion is that whilst this is a sensible move for Protected Landscapes with much larger budgets, here it would have a significant impact on the number of applications being considered by the Local Assessment Panel. It was therefore proposed that the Panel would continue to receive applications over £5,000 for consideration. However, the Panel gave the AONB team discretion to make decisions on applications between £5k and £10k if it was the most appropriate and expedient course of action to take.

For further advice or to discuss any project ideas, please contact Anna Stankiewicz, FiPL Officer on farming@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk.

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

Welsh Government have allocated £100,000 of SDF each year for 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.

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 202/24, totalling £63,108.40 is in the table below.

Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	
			This	Total			
WV00 YR23W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Admin 10%	1	1	NA	10,000.00	
WV01 YR23W	ACE Monmouth	Climate Festival	1	2	£7,605.00	£2,885.00	
WV02 YR23W	Coed Lleol-Small Woods	Nature-based Wellbeing in the Wye Valley	1	1	£30,000.00	£14,665.00	
WV03 YR23W	Diverse Artists Network	Walk out West	1	2	£6,130.00	£3,000.00	
WV04 YR23W	Wye Coppice CIC	Coppice Training & Community Outreach Programme	1	2	£57,397.00	£16,860.90	
WV05 YR23W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Restoring The Wern	1	1	£17,961.00	£8,172.50	
WV07 YR23W	Wye Valley Community Council	Tintern Village Hall Retaining Wall	1	1	£12,800	£6,400	
WV08 YR23W	Wye Valley Community Council	The Pound Wall	1	1	£2,150.00	£1,125.00	
		TOTALS (to date)			£134,043.00	£63,108.40	
		<i>Remaining from £100,000</i>					<i>£36,891.60</i>

Lucinda James, AONB Community Links Officer, assists applicants with projects and application development for presented to the Assessment Panel. If you are interested in applying please contact Lucinda on community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk.

Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) was established with a £50,000 Endowment Fund. Project grants are awarded from the interest and any growth or donations above that base Fund. The most recent donation was of £10,000 from South Wales TV production company Bad Wolf. Opportunities are always being sought to grow the AONB Fund further.

The HCF Wye Valley AONB Fund had a balance of £66,501.97 as of the last statement dated 31st March 2023. Since then one award has been made for £2,000. The AONB Unit &/or SDF Assessment Panel, as appropriate, reviews and comments on applications to the AONB Fund to advise HCF on grant funding.

Background

For more details on grants and the application process see <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/>.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme allows farmers and other land managers in England to apply for DEFRA funding via the AONB Unit to improve public access and deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment, for people and for places. Applications need to demonstrate that proposed projects help deliver the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan against at least one of the four key themes of Climate, Nature, People and Place.

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.