

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

***Purpose***

To update members on the progress of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

***Recommendation***

That the JAC

- A. Endorse the recent allocations of grants under the FiPL programme, SDF and HCF National Landscape Fund.
- B. Note the revised Guidelines for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) from Welsh Government and the necessity to amend the membership of the SDF Assessment Panel in line with the new Guidance.

***Key Issues***

- DEFRA have not advised whether the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in England will be renewed for 2025/26, therefore this is currently the last year of FiPL grant allocation.
- The FiPL Assessment Panel had previously approved grants utilising the full amount available, however, due to a number of project variations and unspent grants returned some additional applications have been accepted before the end of the financial year.
- The Welsh Government Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has fully committed the £100,000 available for 202/25.
- Welsh Government has provisionally allocated £95,000 for the SDF in 2025/6 and 2026/7, subject to the Spending Review and Budget settlement.
- The SDF Guidance has been updated requiring 60% of funds to be allocated towards nature and climate outcomes (appended). The membership of the SDF Panel therefore needs to be modified accordingly.
- The Wye Valley National Landscape Fund hosted by the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) remains closed for applications while opportunities to grow the Fund are sought. HCF have revised their administration fees.

### ***Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)***

The Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) grants programme currently terminates in March 2025. Wye Valley National Landscape FiPL allocation for 24/25 was increased from £362,384 originally up to £841,264 including the Historic Building Restoration Grant (HBRG) scheme and various additional allocations from the National Pot. This was fully allocated by the Local Assessment Panel by November 2024. However a number of projects have not been able to proceed so grant monies have been released and reallocated.

The FiPL Assessment Panel is delegated with deciding each application over £5,000. Application under £5,000 are determined by the National Landscape Manager.

The FiPL Assessment Panel is meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February with 6 new applications to consider. Meanwhile the following applications have been approved since the JAC in November:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant £</b>	<b>Approved</b>
WV101	S M Anderson	Wood Meadow Wildflower Enhancement Works	1,799.80	Delegated
WV102	J W Litchfield	Jay's Orchard - restoration and maintenance of a traditional cider and perry orchard	4,836.91	Delegated
		<b>TOTAL this period</b>	<b>6,636.71</b>	

DEFRA have not confirmed whether the FiPL grants programme will be extended beyond March 2025. However, the FiPL Officer post has been extended by 2 years to continue farm liaison and engagement, whether the grants programme is renewed or not.

### ***Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)***

Welsh Government allocated £100,000 of SDF for 2024/25 for the Welsh part of the National Landscape. The SDF Assessment Panel is delegated with deciding on applications over £3,000. Application under £3,000 are determined by the National Landscape Manager. All the funds have now been approved and committed for the Financial year. The Community Links Officer is aware of a potential application in development that may apply for all the remaining funds.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>SDF Grant</b>	<b>Approved</b>
WV11 YR24W	Grazing Management Ltd / Monmouthshire Meadows Group	Conservation Grazing at Trellech Wet Meadow	£10,783.00	Panel
		<b>TOTAL this period</b>	<b>£10,783.00</b>	

Welsh Government have confirmed the intention to continue the SDF in 2025/26 with a 5% reduction subject to the settlement of their budgets. The 'Guidance for the Operation of the

National Landscape Sustainable Development Fund' (attached) has been revised and with a key objective updated:

“To assist in tackling the Biodiversity loss and Climate Change Emergencies. To give precedence to these twin emergencies, 60% of programme funding must be ringfenced for projects whose primary aim is to address and mitigate against biodiversity loss and climate change”

The Guidance also defines the Constitution of SDF Panels (section 6.2). This necessitates some changes to the Wye Valley National Landscape SDF Assessment Panel.

### ***Wye Valley National Landscape Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)***

The Wye Valley National Landscape 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. There is currently £10,000 also donated specifically for the Youth Rangers programme. The HCF Wye Valley National Landscape Fund had a balance of £67,628 as of the last statement dated 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The fund is currently restricted to allow the value to grow.

Meanwhile HCF have requested an increase in their administration fees. Originally the Fund had reduced fees as it was intended to be managed through the AONB Unit and SDF Panel, which subsequently hosted an HCF Trustee to authorise decisions. But in recent years the HCF Board of Trustees have tended to determine applications within the wider portfolio of their grant schemes, while seeking comments on applications from the National Landscape Team. Therefore, it seems appropriate to accept the increase in HCF fees to cover their administrative work on the Fund and remove the necessity for an HCF representative on the SDF Panel, which would align with requirement to revise the SDF Panel.

### ***Background***

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