

Sustainable Development Fund

Annual Review 2021-22



Sustainable Development Fund

**Report for the year:
1st April 2021 to
31st March 2022**



Contents:

Chair's Foreword

**Members of the SDF
Committee 2021-22**

**About the Sustainable
Development Fund**

2021-22 Overview

**Performance Indicators &
Output Measures**

Grant Awards

Project Summaries

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Over yet another challenging year, communities across Brecon Beacons National Park have continued to impress and inspire us with their creativity and resilience. Despite everything, local people and groups – volunteers in the main - have worked tirelessly to develop and safeguard community halls and services, they have run health and wellbeing programmes, promoted local heritage and tackled energy efficiency and climate change. With the support of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), they have brought forward and delivered a wide range of projects that collectively make a huge contribution to the quality of our day to day lives – you can read more about them in this report. It has been a privilege to witness all this creativity and commitment and it has made my role as Chair of the SDF Committee hugely enjoyable and rewarding. My thanks and admiration to you all.

The Fund couldn't operate without the dedicated support of its Officers.

We are hugely grateful to Helen Roderick and Ceri Bevan, who have worked closely with applicants to offer all the help they can and signpost to other experts and guidance when needed. We were very sad this year to have to say goodbye to Ceri, who left the National Park Authority after many years' service – she was highly regarded by both colleagues and communities, and we wish her every success in her new role.

We were delighted though to welcome two new Officers to the Sustainable Communities Team – Barbara Anglezarke, SDF Officer and Ben Geeson-Brown, Sustainable Communities Officer and Ceri's successor. We look forward to working with them over the coming year.

Sincere thanks are due too to my fellow Committee Members, whose enthusiasm and commitment have continued, despite only being able to see and work with each other virtually. Your knowledge, skills and experience are invaluable.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the projects supported by the Fund – if you are inspired by them and have ideas of your own, we would love to hear from you – please get in touch with Fund Officers! sdf@beacons-mpa.gov.uk

Cllr Michael J Jones, SDF Chair



Cronfa Datblygu
Cynaliadwy

Sustainable
Development Fund

SDF Committee Members 2021-22

The Committee is made up of 6 National Park Authority Members, and 9 local subject experts who provide support through the Grants Advisory Panel. We are grateful for the knowledge, insight, and commitment that all Committee members bring.

National Park Authority	Grants Advisory Panel
Cllr Michael J Jones SDF Chair	Mike Wright The Charter Group
Cllr Malcolm Colbran Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Cllr Bernard Watkins Maescar Community Council
Chris Coppock Welsh Government	Sarah Coakham Natural Resources Wales
Aled Edwards Welsh Government	Abi McCullough Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust
Cllr Edwin Roderick Powys CC	Andrew King Brecknock Bird Recorder
Cllr Ann Webb Monmouthshire CC	Cllr Chris Walsh Brecon Town Council
	David Jones Farmers' Union of Wales
	Cllr. Richard Dixon Llanelly Community Council
	Margaret Underwood Voluntary Sector



About the Sustainable Development Fund

The Fund was established to support activities that help us to achieve a more sustainable way of living in a countryside of great natural beauty and diversity. Projects awarded grants are working to deliver benefits that link social/cultural, environmental, and economic issues. Hopefully, they will result in people changing the ways in which they behave – even small tweaks can help.

Successful SDF projects also:

- demonstrate that they have community support
- help to deliver National Park Management Plan priorities, the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act, and other local and national strategies.
- bring organisations together in partnership to make a positive difference
- treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality in dealings with the public

£134,138 was paid out to 29 projects in 2021-22. £6,729 (5%) of this went to the Pine Marten Conservation Volunteer Project led by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

The Fund is managed by the Park Authority's Sustainable Development Team. Applications are considered by a joint meeting of the Grants Advisory Panel, made up of members of the community and the SDF Members Committee. The Grants Advisory Panel vote initially on applications and final decisions are made by the six Members of the Authority.



2021-22 Overview

In challenging times, the groups, communities and individuals delivering their SDF supported projects continue to raise the spirits!

Despite everything, they continue to think first of what will improve quality of life for their communities and support nature recovery. Many projects are managed by enthusiastic and skilled unpaid volunteers who give up considerable time to make things happen – overcoming all kinds of obstacles. They are an inspiration and tonic, and we are very grateful to them!



This year continued to be affected by the ongoing pandemic, and communities emerging from lockdown were still working out what was possible. Grant allocations and spend reflect this uncertain situation. Delivery and creativity continued however, and it was great to see projects supported over several years reach their conclusions successfully:

The Pine Marten Conservation Volunteer Project finally captured Pine Martens on film doing well in the National Park!

PhD student Rebecca Clarke's thesis research into the benefits of outdoor activity for young victims of stroke is almost complete – you can read the positive and moving comments from participants below.

The Conservation Farming Trust has made progress on securing land for small scale, high productivity food growing in and around the National Park.

The Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru has continued to make amazing community connections and undertake valuable nature recovery work in the Amman Valley.

It was also exciting to see many new projects coming through – read on to find out more!

Performance Indicators & Output Measures

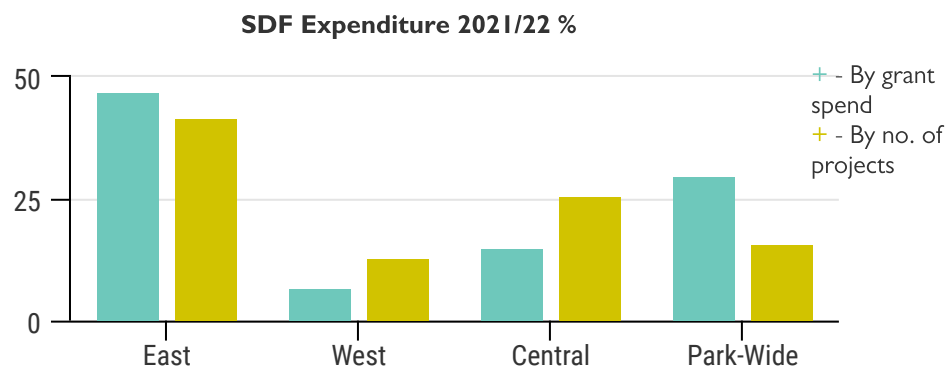
April 2021 – March 2022

Performance Indicators	April 2021 - March 2022
% of decisions on completed applications notified to applicant on time – target is 95% within 14 days of consideration by Panel for applications over £2,000	100% of all applications (under & over £1k) notified within 14 days of Panel.
Under £1,000 – 28 days from receipt of completed application.	100%
Number of jobs created & safeguarded (Full or part-time incl. temporary & permanent)	14
Volunteer hours generated	13962 hours

Output Measures	April 2021 - March 2022
Funding levered in from other sources	Ratio 1: 2.3 (on grants paid)
Value of in kind & volunteer donations	£198,272
Public: Private ratio of match funding	1:2.6
No. of projects which support two or more of the key principles of sustainable development as set out in the operational guidelines	100%

The projects supported in 2021-22 have provided volunteering opportunities of more than 13,962 hours, which represents a significant contribution to life across the National Park.

By area within the Brecon Beacons National Park the expenditure was as follows:





Pine Marten Conservation Volunteer Project – BBNPA	£6,729
Stroke in Young Adults – Manchester Metropolitan University	£18,552
Conservation Farming Trust – Land and Entrepreneurs	£9,359
Fathom Trust	£6,250
Cwmdu Allotments	£747
Waterfalls Charitable Incorporated Organisation	£3,120
Black Mountains College	£4,917
Brecon Buzz	£5,000
Brecon Climate Change Festival	£3,677
Brecknock Young Farmers Club – Eisteddfod Chair	£1,600
Brecon Story	£1,250
Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru	£3,229
Brecon Festival Ballet	£10,400
Pobl Bakery	£1,941
Boat Servicing on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal	£3,000 (2020-21)
Llangattock Woodland Group	£5,694
Big Pit Apprenticeship Team	£11,281
Canal & River Trust – Goytre Wharf Access for All	£11,100



Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings



Built Heritage

Severn Wye Energy Agency and The Green Valleys – Energy Audits	£7,500	Brecon Rugby Football Club	£5,000
St. Catwg's Church, Llangattock	£1,013	Evans & Wilkins Shop, Brecon	£2,000
Glangrwyney Village Hall	£2,000	Ystradgynlais Heritage Interpretation	£850
Clarence Hall, Crickhowell	£3,740	Remarkable Churches Near Hay-on-Wye Booklet	£508
Siop Llangors Shop	£3,000	Bull's Head, Brecon	£2,841
Llangors Youth & Community Centre	£840		

Project Summaries

1) Pine Marten Conservation Volunteer Project – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Total SDF Grant £24,251 over 4 years

Grant Payment made in 2021-22: £6,729

This collaborative conservation project is now in its 4th year. A further grant award in November 2021 enabled increased camera trap coverage to the west of the National Park - within the Glasfynydd forest and smaller Natural Resource Wales managed forestry blocks. Portable cameras and hides added further value, allowing volunteers to cover other areas - increasing wildlife recording and improving engagement with nature.

Following this additional work, Pine Martens were recorded on camera for the first time on 3 separate occasions in April and May 2022! The camera traps also caught images of Otter, Hare, Red and Roe Deer and a female Sparrowhawk, elusive creatures in their own right. Whilst collaboration with Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service has been temporarily reduced due to a staff restructure, partnership working with University Trinity St David's has flourished, with many student volunteers gaining valuable experience in wildlife conservation and recording, and some students using the project in their theses. All sightings are reported to the Biodiversity Information Service and collaboration with the Vincent Wildlife Trust continues.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Resilient Wales

Healthier Wales

Cohesive Communities



2) Stroke in Young Adults – Manchester Metropolitan University

Total SDF Grant £46,546 over 4 years

Grant Payment in 2021-22: £18,552

Stroke is the leading cause of severe adult disability in the UK. The Stroke Association reports that each year approximately 150,000 people have a stroke and one in four of these is under 65. Most young adults who have had a stroke are unable to complete activities of daily living, return to work, participate in social activities or outdoor activity, leading to increased time indoors, lack of independence, social isolation, and depression.

The PhD research project with Manchester Metropolitan University has now concluded in its fourth and final year. Student Rebecca Clarke has investigated a new form of stroke rehabilitation which uses the positive impact natural outdoor environments have on health and wellbeing. At the time of writing, she is still completing her thesis, with plans to also publish a number of other research papers as a result of this project.

Ms Clarke's initial findings have shown that "stroke survivors that exercise in natural outdoor environments show an increase in walking performance parameters (e.g., walking speed, walking efficiency, reduction in energy expenditure and biomechanics) and quality of life can be improved after taking part in a ten-week outdoor-walking rehabilitation programme, with more scope for future research."

Despite the impacts of Covid and various lockdowns throughout the project, the benefits of using a local outdoor centre (Gilwern outdoor education centre), was extremely beneficial. Ms Clarke describes the long-lasting effects of the project: "Following on from this research project, I hope to build more working relationships with outdoor providers who have the capacity to run this model of rehabilitation programme. This is to increase opportunities and accessibility for young stroke survivors who wish to take part in outdoor physical activity. It is also important to highlight and promote the impact of natural environments on physical and mental health of young stroke survivors to healthcare providers and clinicians. This could be done through written reports and published research, which I am currently working on to achieve."

Programme participants gave useful and positive feedback:

P1: Being able to have participated on the walking research project was an enjoyable, rewarding, valued and greatly appreciated opportunity having suffered my stroke in January 2020 with resultant left side weakness to my upper and lower limbs my recovery period coincided with the coronavirus pandemic. This therefore did not enable me to receive the routine expected & planned course of post stroke physiotherapy rehab. Being able to participate on the research project therefore provided me with an alternative course of rehab both with the experience and guidance of outdoor walking and the program of home-based exercises.

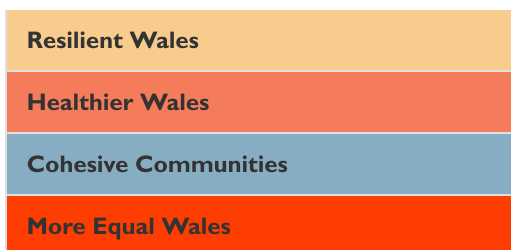
P2: The selected base for the study at Gilwern outdoor education centre was in my opinion an appropriate and ideal location. Being so close to the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Wye valley it provided an abundance of varied walks and terrains/ gradients to re familiarise-stroke survivors with varying conditions for walking and re-testing balance abilities and quickly re-establishing walking confidence.

P3: Overall being able to participate on the outdoor research project provided me with a unique opportunity to receive monitored & assessed rehabilitation outside the usual health care setting of a hospital or clinic and has significantly assisted in improving & sustaining my overall well-being including my mental well-being which had faltered in my post stroke rehabilitation.

P4: This type of study, outdoors in beautiful countryside, promotes awareness, of not just ourselves but others and nature. It wakes up part of the brain, to say, " hey, all is not lost, this is a major setback in your life, but LOOK around you, you are definitely not alone "

P5: Can I first thank you and everyone involved in Gilwern Outdoor Education Centre and the Brecon Beacons National Park project for the positive experience I got in my efforts to recover from the effects of the Stroke I suffered March 2021.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



3) Land & Entrepreneurs – Conservation Farming Trust

Total SDF Grant £15,264 over two years - grant payment in 2021-22: £9,359

This sustainable farming project completed its final SDF funded work in March 2022. Working with stakeholders, the overarching vision of the project is that one third of the food consumed in the BBNP area is grown locally. There is growing interest in shorter, local food supply chains - reducing the emissions impact of transportation and providing local jobs and opportunities. The Trust believes that 1200 acres farmed on a small scale using regenerative farming techniques could supply seasonal fruit and vegetables for each of the 56,000 households in Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons. A plot the size of a football pitch can produce enough for 80 families.

Project aims at the beginning included:

- recruiting new farming entrepreneurs
- working with farmers across the region to make land available to new farming entrepreneurs who do not have land.
- working to secure public and private investment funding for new enterprises.
- promoting skills in high-productivity sustainable small farming methods, starting with on-line resources and peer support

It is hoped that the next 10 years will see:

- local shops and local on-line sales as the norm – first port of call for locally grown produce.
- producers selling directly - increased customer engagement and farm profits.
- family farms secure and supported by their local communities.
- communities in the BBNP better able to feed themselves and remaining resilient
- ecological farming as the norm – fixing carbon, restoring biodiversity, preventing floods
- local food distribution – producers having sustainable access to local markets



Outcomes and activities to date include:

- 1) Creation of a Land Service: this was registered as a Community Benefit Society 'Our Food 1200' - Home - Our Food 1200 in January 2022.
- 2) Promotion of knowledge of high-productivity sustainable small farming methods: a website showcasing how to start such a farm was launched in November 2020. This, together with the development of an online conversation (regular events to discuss relevant issues) is helping raise awareness of policy makers, potential growers, and residents about this kind of farming and how it might work in our region. A communications strategy for a wider audience ready for the next phase of the project has also been formulated.
- 3) Recruitment of Farming Entrepreneurs: links were made with organisations representing growers (Black Mountains College, Landworkers' Alliance, Soil Association, Tyfu Cymru and others), ready for potential matching with land when it becomes available and supporting new growers as they get started.
- 4) Development of a financing strategy: building blocks were put in place to host a new fund with the Community Foundation once finance is identified.
- 5) Development of stakeholder advisory group: regular online events were held to identify those in the region interested to help shape efforts to rebuild the local food economy. A core group self-selected itself to become the inaugural board of directors of the new community benefit society, Our Food 1200.

The Trust did encounter challenges, however. It had been anticipated that the land service would emerge from the experience of an on-the-ground trial of matching land and growers, but no landowners came forward. Instead, alternative approaches were taken including a series of stakeholder meetings to identify and engage those with relevant experience in the region. Without the land, the Trust was unable to facilitate the development of any new enterprises before the end of the SDF supported phase. Happily, a further call for land in May 2022 resulted in 21 offers, 8 of which are proceeding following assessment.

Potential growers interested in land are enthusiastic:

"This initiative sounds very exciting and I'm sure there will be huge demand from would-be regenerative growers like myself. Thank you."

"What you're doing sounds wonderful, thank you."

"Thanks so much for all you are doing, it's truly wonderful, power to you, OurFood1200 acres and all us growers!"

"This is an excellent initiative and I'm very excited to have come across it! Thanks"

"Really excited to see this initiative up and running, exactly the direction that is needed. For myself this creates essential opportunities for communities to re-establish a cultural and social collaboration with the land."

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Resilient Wales	Prosperous Wales
Healthier Wales	Globally Responsive Wales

4) Fathom Trust

SDF Grant £6,250

Founded in 2020, the Fathom Trust's philosophy is rooted in the well-being connections made when people encounter the beauty of nature and traditional crafts, and they are passionate about creating ways for others to experience this for themselves. The Trust is working to build a network of educational and therapeutic communities to help people suffering with stress, fatigue, and physical and psychological conditions to learn to live well and create social, economic, and spiritual renewal.

This SDF grant helped to deliver two activity programmes with around 20 participants referred by their GPs, mental health team, or Mind. The individuals came with a background of schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, bipolar affective disorder, substance abuse, anorexia and domestic violence. The programme involved 40 contact hours of one day a week for eight weeks, and included green woodwork sessions, willow weaving, therapeutic horticulture, body and breathing exercises. Sessions were led by three local makers with an occupational therapist and an embedded ethnographic researcher, as well as a team of four local volunteers who helped with hospitality.

Trust founder William Beharrell was encouraged by the outcomes 'the results from the six-month pilot included a social return of £4.80 for every £1 invested. Individual health and wellbeing improved for everyone by an average of 40-50% and most participants have asked to stay in touch, with six of them attending a weekly gardening group and four others setting up a tool sharpening club. Others will be helping to run a weekly crafters cafe with the Hours Bookshop and Cafe in Brecon Cathedral Tithe Barn.'

Next steps will involve the establishment of a centre for nature-based healthcare with four eight-week courses a year, extending to groups supporting cancer recovery and trauma recovery. The Trust has also been asked by Powys Teaching Health Board to provide courses for families bereaved by suicide.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Resilient Wales	Prosperous Wales
Healthier Wales	Globally Responsive Wales

5) Cwmdu & District Allotment Society

SDF Grant £747

With SDF support, the Society has provided a water supply to the village allotment site, linking to a local spring. It has been a complex and time-consuming operation, involving installing a pipeline under the road at the top end of the site, then down across a field to the plots themselves – liaising with Powys County Council Highways and Cwmdu Water Undertaking all the while. Six 1,000 litre water containers with rain collector funnels now gravity feed taps distributed throughout the site.

Previously, allotment holders had to carry or push water containers up to nurture growing plants. 'Having a supply literally on tap will transform our lives!' said Patience Rowden, Society Secretary. 'Taking on a plot is now a much more attractive option for people of all abilities.'

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Resilient Wales

Healthier Wales

Cohesive Communities

6) Waterfalls Country Cymru Charitable Incorporated Organisation (WCC CIO)

SDF Grant £3,120

Established in February 2021, the community led CIO aims to find positive ways to manage and secure community benefit from the estimated 300,000 annual visitors to the ever-popular Waterfalls Area. The group will be working to deliver a range of actions agreed as a result of extensive consultation, set out in a Business Plan developed with the support of Severn Wye Energy Agency.

Activities were severely curtailed by Covid lockdowns and are at an early stage. The SDF grant has enabled further mentoring support from Severn Wye.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Resilient Wales

Prosperous Wales

Cohesive
Communities

Vibrant Culture &
Welsh Language

7) Black Mountains College

SDF Grant £4,917

The College aims to empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to become agents of change as the impacts of climate breakdown mount. Its development has been supported by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority alongside many other local and national funders.

Having received National Lottery Community Fund support in 2019 to develop and launch an initial vocational training programme, the courses were due to launch in September 2020 but were delayed due to the impact of the pandemic. The first training sessions eventually took place in September 2021, supported by an SDF grant which helped to cover the costs of additional equipment, PPE and chainsaw training as a result of a welcome increase in student numbers.

Chief Executive Ben Rawlence said, “the grant assisted us in provisioning our inaugural courses, in particular the materials and tools needed to provide quality training. The teaching year is now drawing to a close and we have had higher than expected retention rates. The impact of the teaching and the comments from the students have been very positive and word of mouth has spread such that this year we expect to be over-subscribed once again.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



8) Brecon Buzz

SDF Grant £5,000

Brecon Buzz was established by local independent businesses in January 2021. The group works in partnership to run initiatives and projects that showcase what Brecon has to offer, encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy the town more. Visitor numbers have increased significantly since the pandemic, but sustainability relies on return visits, longer stays and promoting local business spend. Feedback from members of the public and business owners highlighted the out-of-date, shabby, insufficient signage and lack of coherent information, so the SDF grant supported a comprehensive review of this.

The resulting report, which had good engagement across the town, formed the basis of a further successful grant application by Powys County Council to the Brilliant Basics Fund, bringing £48,000 to enable the implementation of many of the review proposals by March 2023. Brecon Buzz have also been awarded a grant by PAVO to support the project via the Locality Initiative Fund for tourism development.

Buzz partners and members are convinced that the work will have a significant impact on the town, its visitors and businesses. Fiona Williams, Brecon Town Council Clerk said "the signage project has been, and continues to be, a successful collaboration lead by Brecon Buzz and supported by the Town Council, to achieve improvements to the signage and messaging throughout Brecon. The detailed report commissioned has provided a knowledge base upon which a further significant grant has been secured to deliver the visions and needs identified in the report, so the initial funding has proved invaluable."

Leigh Hendra, Brecon Buzz Director and owner of The Hours Bookshop and Cafe added "The global pandemic proved the fatal blow for many businesses, organisations and service providers already juggling with the economic hardships of the post-Brexit landscape. Recovery will be long and hard-won. Tourist towns and destinations are under more pressure than ever before to augment and enhance their surroundings to ensure they remain attractive, viable and sustainable places to live, work and play. The SDF has proved a lifeline to ensure that Brecon can continue to evolve and adapt to serve its residents, visitors and businesses."

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Resilient Wales	Prosperous Wales
More Equal Wales	Healthier Wales

9) Brecon Climate Change Festival

SDF Grant £3,677

The 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly referred to as COP26, was held in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021.

At the same time, a group of local artists held a parallel Brecon COP26. Groups, organisations, and individuals were brought together in a range of activities to explore ways of reducing carbon emissions and look at how we might work towards more sustainable ways of living. Using drawing as both a playful and seriously engaging activity, the Big Draw weekend was placed at the centre of a fortnight of activities that included displays, talks & discussions.

Those taking part included Y Gaer, Neath Port Talbot Group of colleges which includes Brecon Beacons College, Penpont Conservation Youth in Action, Ty Mawr Lime who installed a display in Y Gaer atrium foyer, Llangynidr Brownies and Guides, Brecon Buzz group of local businesses and Theatr Brycheiniog.

Due to the impact of the pandemic engagement with schools was challenging, but 3 school groups joined in involving 60 individuals who were given individual material packs to work with and involve family members. A further 5 different groups of students at Brecon College were also involved, engaging across a broad spectrum of interests: Social Care, Engineering, Sport and Public Services, Hairdressing & Beauty and Catering, two of these groups were Gateway students.

During the Big Draw weekend, members of the Brecon Repair Café and Men's Shed also joined in alongside 10 artists and volunteers.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



10) Brecknock Young Farmers Club – Eisteddfod Chair

SDF Grant £1,600

In 2021, Brecknock Young Farmers Club was delighted to host the Wales YFC Eisteddfod, promoting the heritage, history, and environment of the Brecon Beacons National Park through the performing and creative arts. Hosting brought with it responsibility for designing, creating, and producing the awards including the Bardic Chair. A competition was held with YFC members to design the Chair, and the winning design, featuring the iconic Pen y Fan skyline, was made by a local craftsman from locally sourced oak.

“The Eisteddfod offers an unparalleled stage for YFC members to perform and gain confidence as well as preserving and promoting Welsh culture in our communities” said Marc Williams of Brecknock RFC. “The event was a resounding success and it definitely put Brecknock on the map particularly as it is not a very Welsh speaking county. It was the first time Brecknock YFC have hosted the Eisteddfod since 1983, and they hope not to wait another 38 years for the next one!”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Cohesive
Communities

Vibrant Culture
& Welsh
Language

11) Brecon Story

Total SDF Grant £2,500 over two years
Grant payment in 2021-22: £1,250

This project brings together organisations, businesses, and volunteers, to capture, raise awareness of and celebrate Brecon’s rich heritage and its cultural and artistic life. Its public facing name is ‘Brecon Story’ – accessed via a bi-lingual website portal telling the many fascinating stories of the people and places within and around the town – all owned and created by them. The organisation behind the project is the Brecon Heritage and Cultural Network.

Before the Covid pandemic, much valuable work had taken place on gathering and publishing stories digitally – enabling people to share and exchange knowledge, history and information through the website portal. An SDF grant supported post Covid activity, focussing on building capacity, increasing promotion activity, and developing a three-year business plan for the network. These actions also help to deliver key targets in the Brecon Town Plan. Achievements include:

1) Training the volunteer Management Team to create, record and share these stories (all available on the website) in both English and Welsh:

- Bryn Terfel’s concert at Brecon Cathedral
- Yn y Lhyvyr Hwnn
- Many paths to Brecon for Gurkhas
- First Female Mayor of Wales
- Illuminate
- A solitary and beautiful performance of The Cresset Stone

2) Securing the services of the retired Welsh headmaster of Ysgol y Bannau as a volunteer to translate our Brecon Stories and social media posts into Welsh.

3) Successfully raising a further £10,000 – a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant award to deliver volunteer training, develop story-telling skills, and run peer to peer sessions to recruit and train new volunteers.

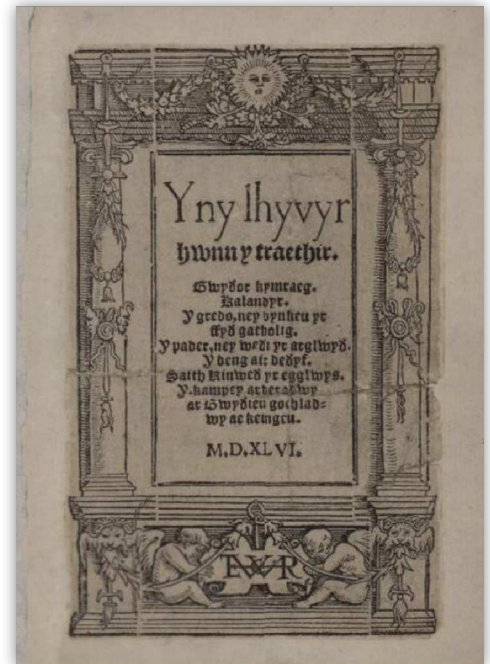
4) Establishing baseline data for the websites www.breconstory.wales www.storiaberhonddu.cymru and for related social media activity.

Volunteer and Lead Officer Elizabeth Jeffreys is excited about how the project is evolving:

–
“We’ll continue to increase and strengthen volunteer support and coordination, grow our social media, and build on what we’ve all achieved so far. Our website offers a real insight to the ‘fabric’ of the town – what makes it special, both now and because of the stories that have shaped its history and the heritage buildings that we are so proud of.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Resilient Wales	Prosperous Wales
Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language



12) Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru (INCC)

Total SDF Grant £8,252 over two years
Grant payment in 2021-22: £3,229



Established in 2018 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, the INCC's aims are to:

- promote the conservation, protection, and improvement of the natural environment of Wales
- advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection & improvement of the natural environment of Wales

Following the success of the previous SDF supported 'Community Connections Project', this Aman Valley initiative focussed on further community engagement. A range of activities was undertaken aimed at promoting understanding of, recording, and caring for the species in the area. Equipment such as moth traps and bat detectors were purchased for long-term use.

The first phase of the project, in common with many community initiatives, was severely affected by Covid restrictions, with walks and activity events being on hold for most of the first year. Despite that, work continued in different ways. Expeditions were held with family groups in partnership with Gwaun Cae Gurwen library. 57 people signed up to the project newsletter, with each issue prompting a good response and email questions and comments – local people provided their own stories and photos.

Moth traps and bat detectors (and training packs) were loaned to around 15 families. They returned details/ID of species identified, which were then logged and submitted to the Biodiversity Information Service. The INCC has close links with Cwmaman Town Council and has a high profile in the area – invaluable in promoting engagement. Now that the kit has been purchased, the project and engagement work can continue.

As Rob Parry, INCC CEO, explains “the project was essentially about bringing local people together to look for and record wildlife. However, when Covid hit, restrictions meant that bringing people together to do this was impossible. We had to change the way the project was delivered, and we still managed to do lots of community wildlife surveys. The project was on budget, and we were able to work with local ecological consultants as well as purchase materials to help the project deliver more in future.”

Participants in the project are enthusiastic:

“Volunteering for the INCC has really opened my eyes to the biodiversity within our local area. It has been fascinating and thrilling, and I look forward to being involved in future projects”.

“It’s been great finding out more about the wildlife on our land and getting to see some of it ourselves through surveys and wildlife cameras. Knowing that we have some of the most diverse wildflower meadows in the Amman Valley has been a real eye-opener and we look forward to finding out more about them, and other wildlife over the coming years”.

The project’s next steps are simple - to keep doing it over again. As Rob says, “now we have a lot more survey tools and more people in the valley interested in wildlife it is important that we keep monitoring and we keep letting people know what species they share the valley with.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Resilient Wales	More Equal Wales
Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language
Healthier Wales	

13) Brecon Festival Ballet

SDF Grant £10,400

Brecon Festival Ballet (now a CIO) was formed in 2019 to stage popular full-length ballets at Theatr Brycheiniog with live orchestra during normal times. This gives the community access to see and take part in high quality dance and music that otherwise is unavailable regionally; helping to overcome poverty of opportunity in rural Wales and building a new cultural legacy in the National Park. In the inaugural year of 2019, over 2,000 local people either saw the five performances of 'The Nutcracker' (sell-out performances receiving national coverage by the critics) or were involved onstage as dancers and actors, or behind the scenes, making props, costumes and scenery.



Unfortunately following this triumph, the Covid pandemic meant that no performances were possible in 2020, but in December 2021 (with the contribution of an SDF grant) the company was able to present six live performances of 'Christmas Treats from the Nutcracker' at the Theatr, featuring 15 professional dancers (10 based in Wales and 5 originally from Brecon), 4 apprentice dancers and 27 local children. A dedicated team of supporters, chaperones, backstage crew, costume and scenery makers gave generously of their time and expertise to enable this production to happen. Theatr Brycheiniog donated studio space and technical support and almost 1000 tickets were sold.

Given the challenges of the pandemic in the previous 20 months, this can be seen as a great achievement. Brecon Festival Ballet believes that it is crucial to people's well-being to keep the arts alive, and this was clearly illustrated by how many people turned to the arts during the lockdowns.

"As the curtain came down on the sixth and final performance on December 19th, the overwhelming feeling among the cast, crew, children and administrative team was relief!" said Artistic Director Catherine Sinnadurai, "relief that we had negotiated countless obstacles to bring live ballet back to the Theatr Brycheiniog main stage again after a 2-year Covid-enforced absence. It's great to know that the SDF and other funders recognise the value of our work to the people of Brecon and the surrounding area and the additional income and interest our productions bring to our town."

Audience members were thrilled and appreciative too:

We wanted to write to say how brilliant the whole experience of "Christmas Treats from the Nutcracker" was. We saw it twice and thought it was truly magical.

Saw the opening night last night, it was amazing.

Well, what an absolute treat. A fabulous uplifting evening watching such talented dancers. Thank you, Brecon Festival Ballet.

What a triumph I don't know where to start and knowing the challenges and the problem solving you've had to do - I'm in awe!! I particularly liked the way you programmed the evening, I felt so proud of Brecon Festival Ballet."

A full-scale production of 'The Nutcracker' is booked in at Theatr Brycheiniog for December 2022.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Prosperous Wales	More Equal Wales
Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language
Healthier Wales	

14) Pobl Bakery

SDF Grant £1,941

Pobl is a new artisan bakery based in popular Talgarth Mill, baking Tuesday through to Saturday - supplying fresh bread and cakes to the cafe and selling to the public.

An SDF grant supported the purchase of essential equipment to enable the business to launch successfully, baking at scale from the start.

This made a big difference to bakers Alex and Evan – “we were able to purchase all the things we needed to get us up and running. We have quickly - far more quickly than anticipated - gained a loyal following who appear to really enjoy the products we are making. Both of us are working full time in the bakery, developing our product range, and we are helping to support other local businesses through our supply network.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Resilient Wales

Prosperous Wales

Cohesive Communities

15) Boat Servicing on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

SDF Grant £3,000 in 2020-21 (Included in this year’s report as Ian Cooper’s training had yet to be completed)

The 500+ boats active on the glorious Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, weaving its way through the National Park, bring much needed income to local businesses and communities. Every single boat is required by law to have a current safety certificate, so the services of fully qualified examiners are in great demand.

Examiners are few and far between however - there are only two hundred and fifty fully qualified practitioners in the UK and few people are undertaking the demanding training. When the only one in south Wales was due to retire, a back-up plan was needed. Luckily, self-employed Ian Cooper was already operating a local repair service, and he stepped forward. The SDF grant supported Ian’s training, helping to keep all the Mon and Brec boats on the move and his business to thrive!

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Resilient Wales

Prosperous Wales

16) Llangattock Woodland Group

Total SDF Grant £7,000 over two years

Grant payment in 2021-22: £5,694

The Woodland Group leases its site from the Canal & River Trust and its volunteers have been working to create better access into the site and provide accessible compost toilet facilities. The need for these has been growing now that so many different groups are involved in all-day group sessions, including the Alzheimer's Society (volunteers received training to help become dementia-friendly), Forest School, MIND and Llangattock Community Woodlanders - a 'club' aimed at younger volunteers between the ages of 5 and 16.

Although the project was delayed by the pandemic, the Group is thriving and expanding its activities. Work now underway includes selling sustainable wood fuel and charcoal, developing Green Wood Craft, developing a Fuel Bank supporting local Food Banks, enabling more vulnerable adults to engage with outdoor activities for wellbeing, monitoring and recording seasonal changes in flora and fauna – all while being as inclusive as possible, providing good activities and a safe space for all.

Jackie Charlton, Chair, says “we are particularly proud of the way the volunteers have stuck with us especially the women who were promised a compost toilet some time ago. Everyone has pulled together to get the work done. Additionally, our volunteer numbers have increased enabling us to achieve much more on a weekly basis with a regular turnout of about 15 volunteers both men and women. The future looks very good.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



More Equal Wales

HealthierWales

Cohesive Communities



17) Museum Guides Apprenticeship Scheme - Big Pit

Total SDF Grant £67,684 over 4 years

Grant Payment made in 2021-22: £11,281

Funding had been due to end in 2020/21, but the museum was closed due to Covid for most of that time. The balance of £11,281 was carried forward to 2021/22 so that the programme could be completed as planned.

The grant support not only enabled initial recruits Lee and Emma to complete all necessary training to be mine guides and join the staff team but resulted in the creation of a further seven mining craft apprenticeships. This has been a vital part of Big Pit's staff succession plan – supporting its long-term sustainability.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Prosperous Wales	More Equal Wales
Resilient Wales	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language

18) Canal and River Trust – Goytre Wharf Access for All

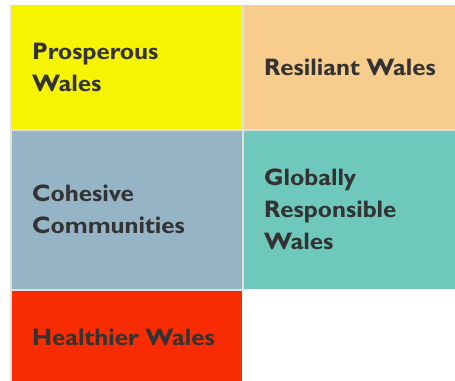
SDF Grant £11,100

This grant supported the preparation of essential preliminary study reports (ecological, arboricultural and geotechnical surveys etc.), before work started to create an all-ability access ramp at this popular site. Capital funding had been secured for the construction work.

Although the reports were completed, the project is now unfortunately on indefinite hold as a result of the significant increase in the price of materials and construction costs, with further steep rises anticipated. The Canal and River Trust decided that the risks of incurring a funding shortfall were too great. This issue is likely to affect many projects in the year ahead.

Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings

These projects support the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



19 & 20) Severn Wye Energy Agency & The Green Valleys

SDF Grant £5,500

SDF Grant £2,000

Energy Audits



Between them, Severn Wye Energy Agency and The Green Valleys CIC undertook 20 community building energy audits during the year, supporting effective delivery of the Energy Efficiency Fund. Work undertaken included:

- delivery of an online workshop for building managers
- analyses of current energy demand based on billing data
- gaining an understanding of how the building is used
- assessment of the building fabric to identify sources of heat loss
- assessment of heating and hot water systems to identify efficiency and operational improvements
- assessment of lighting systems and controls to identify efficiency improvements
- assessment of kitchen appliances and other electrical goods
- overview of potential options for renewable energy generation
- identification of building management processes to improve energy efficiency
- action/implementation plans for no cost, low cost and capital costs items
- general guidance on undertaking the proposed improvements

Armed with their audit reports, community groups were able to work on applications to the Energy Efficiency programme to implement priority recommended measures.

21) St. Catwg's Church, Llangattock

SDF Grant £1,013

Saint Catwg's church was founded in the early sixth century but the oldest part of the present building, the Tower, dates from the twelfth century. For the last 10 years the church has been working hard to reduce its carbon footprint, and to promote biodiversity and care for the environment - managing the churchyard ecologically. They have been actively involved in A Rocha's Eco Church project and have recently gained a Bronze Award.

The grant contributed to the installation of new LED light fittings and bulbs, in line with an energy audit recommendation – reducing energy costs and the use of fossil fuels. A local electrician was employed to carry out the work.



22) Glangrwyney Village Hall

SDF Grant £2,000

Following an extensive community consultation exercise, major upgrade works are underway at this Hall, so the timing of an energy audit carried out by Severn Wye Energy Agency was excellent. The report identified a significant lack of roof insulation in the main hall area – the top priority for action. 170mm of Rockwool Flexi insulation quilt and YBS Superquilt has been installed by contractors already on site.



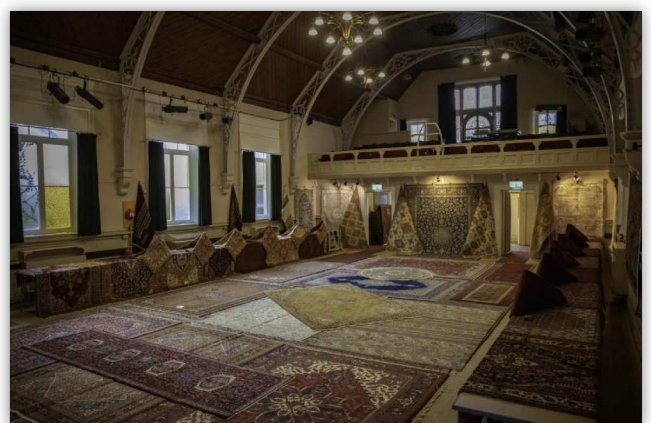
“The roof insulation will make a big difference in terms of energy efficiency when we eventually re-open. The energy audit that prompted this work was really useful and we will work to implement more of the recommendations. The audit report includes many simple practical suggestions based on experience, good data and sound science - for example, the suggested temperature levels for different areas of the hall for the different age profile of users, are things that are easy to implement, and I think will surprise many lay, volunteer managers of halls like ours.”

23) Clarence Hall, Crickhowell

SDF Grant £3,740

Built in 1890 for £2,500, Crickhowell's Clarence Hall has been home to town celebrations, family gatherings, cultural events, meetings, trade fairs and sales for more than a century. The foundation stone was laid by Prince Albert, Duke of Clarence and Avondale and Grandson of Queen Victoria. At the time he said that nothing had contributed more to the cultural wellbeing of the nation than the building of public Halls. Money was raised for the Hall from the sale of £1 shares. It was intended to be used as a public meeting place and drill hall for local army Volunteers, who stored their weapons in the caretakers' house next door.

The Hall is run by a team of local Trustees, all bringing a wealth of experience and enthusiasm. As part of a major upgrade project, it was identified that new rear doors were urgently needed – not only were they too small for scenery and props, but they were also in a poor state of repair, energy inefficient and posed a security hazard. The SDF grant contributed to the installation of new doors, which will help to reduce energy use and running costs.



24) Siop Llangors Shop

SDF Grant £3,000

The last shop in Llangors closed in 2005 and having been thought about many times in 2019 a small team of volunteers decided that something needed to be done about it. A survey of residents covering the villages and settlements of the community around Llangors Lake confirmed that a well-stocked local convenience store would provide a welcome opportunity to significantly reduce road travel for shopping and be a community focus for all ages.

A Steering Committee drew up plans to build the shop using two donated portacabins on the vacated playground site next to the Youth and Community Centre in Llangors village. They secured planning and building permission for the proposal and successfully applied for the many grants needed for the work, with extra funds generated by the sale of shares in the business to local people. The SDF was pleased to award funding for shop roof insulation – helping to reduce energy costs and the use of fossil fuels.

Construction of the shop and cafe was completed in October 2021, and it welcomed its first shoppers on the 17th November. The shop employs an experienced Manager and a Deputy Manager with all other roles drawn from an enthusiastic team of volunteers. The shop is managed by a Community Benefit Society, with the shareholders owning the business, electing the Management Committee and influencing many aspects of how it is run.



25) Llangors Youth & Community Centre

SDF Grant £840



The Centre is a hub for the educational and recreational needs of the Llangors community and the wider area, user friendly and open to all groups and individuals. It is regularly used as a Post Office, by a range of interest groups, for social events and to host refugee welcome days. The grant contributed to the cost of replacing six large, double-glazed windows – all had misted and blown, greatly reducing their effectiveness and energy efficiency. The work will help to minimise heating needs and costs and reduce fossil fuel consumption. A local glazing contractor carried out the work.

Built Heritage

These projects support the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales
Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language

26) Brecon Rugby Football Club

SDF Grant £5,000

Brecon Rugby Football Club is one of the 11 founding member clubs of the Welsh Rugby Union, formed in 1881 at Neath's Castle Hotel. The Club moved to its current home, the former Blue Boar Inn on The Watton, in 1993. It is a much loved and popular facility, a focal point for a wide range of community organisations in the town.

An SDF grant contributed to the cost of replacing the failing roof of the 18th century Grade II listed building in natural slate. The building retains much of its historic character, with group value alongside neighbouring buildings. A local contractor carried out the work, safeguarding the building for years to come.



27) Evans & Wilkins Shop, Brecon

SDF Grant £2,000

Evans & Wilkins is a well-established family clothing business based in a prominent building in Brecon's Bulwark. A built heritage grant contributed to the cost of painting and repairing the front elevation of the shop - upgrading a building of significance in the town centre and contributing to the delivery of actions set out in Brecon's Town Plan - Brecon 20:20 - Our Town, Our Future - Section 3: Retail and Market.

28) Ystradgynlais Heritage Interpretation – Ystradgynlais District Heritage & Language Society: SDF Grant £850

The grant contributed to the development and installation of an interpretation panel at Coronation Park, Ystradgynlais, focussing on the Park's historical significance and complementing the four panels already erected in the area. Together, they create a rich heritage trail for Ystradgynlais and the satellite villages of Upper and Lower Cwmtwrch, Glanrhyd, Cwmgiedd, Penrhos and Abercraf.

The Society is a well-established and much valued community group working to promote the fascinating history and culture of the Upper Swansea Valley. Society member John Owens said, "our work on projects to date has been appreciated by members of the community and we have received numerous positive comments."



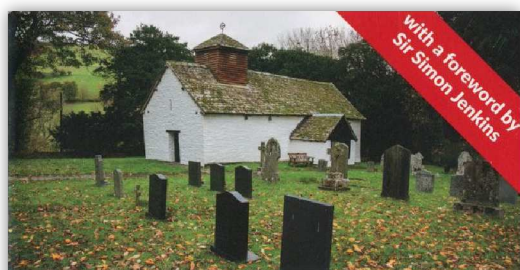
29) Remarkable Churches Near Hay-on-Wye Booklet

SDF Grant £508

The beautifully presented booklet is a labour of love by members of Boughrood Parish Church Council. Aimed at visitors and residents alike, the booklet features the 23 best small churches and chapels within 15 miles of Hay on Wye, focussing on architectural and historical aspects. Four of them are in the Brecon Beacons National Park - Llanelieu, Capel y Ffin, Pen Yr Heol and Capel y Ffin chapel, so the SDF contribution was proportionate.

A professional photographer's work transformed the bare texts meticulously researched by volunteers, and the Boughrood church organist turned out to be a brilliant designer and software expert and was responsible for the layout of the booklet. Copies are being sold for £7.50, and income generated will be used to build a kitchenette and accessible toilet in Boughrood church. Any remaining funds will be distributed between the featured buildings.

The booklet was launched in June 2022 on the Hay Festival's Starlight stage, to a packed-out audience.



REMARKABLE CHURCHES
NEAR HAY-ON-WYE
EGLWYSI SYLWEDDOL
GER Y GELLI



30) Bull's Head, Brecon

Total SDF Grant £5,000 over 2 years

Grant payment in 2021-22: £2,841

Built in the early 19th century, the Grade II listed Bulls Head Hotel is a prominent three-storey building on the corner of Priory Hill and The Struet, next to Priory Bridge over the River Honddu. It is marked and named as the Bull's Head Inn on the 1834 Brecon Town Map. Until it shut a few years ago, it was one of the town's landmark pubs and it still retains much original character, although it has deteriorated in recent years.

The owner is working to restore the building to its former glory and retain it as a public house with accommodation above. The roof will be replaced with reclaimed Welsh slates, the original sash windows will be repaired, and the exterior walls and woodwork will re-painted.