

S U S T A I N A B L E D E V E L O P M E N T F U N D

Report 2021



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Chair's Foreword

I have very much enjoyed Chairing the Sustainable Development Fund Committee for the past year – my first in this role. Despite the significant challenges presented by Covid 19 over the past 18 months, the Fund has continued to operate effectively, bringing tangible benefits to local communities throughout the National Park. Although we have not been able to meet face to face as a Committee for some time, I have been very impressed by the commitment, collective hard work and resilience of my fellow Committee Members, and NPA Officers Helen Roderick and Ceri Bevan – my sincere thanks to you all. We know from applicant feedback just how much the support offered by Helen and Ceri is valued, and what a difference it makes.

I would also like to congratulate and thank the project initiators and managers of the exciting projects you will read about in the following pages. You too have continued to be creative and resourceful, ensuring that work carried on as much as it possibly could over the past year – often in ways you could never have imagined at the outset.

I hope that you enjoy reading the 2020-21 annual report, and like me, are encouraged, uplifted, and impressed by the extraordinary and wide-ranging activity the Fund continues to support.

Cllr Michael J Jones, SDF Chair



Executive Summary

This has been a challenging and difficult year for everyone to say the least. Inevitably, Fund delivery has been affected, with repeated Covid-19 lockdowns affecting all supported projects. Many of those underway had to stop work or devise new delivery plans, and new proposals have been slower to come forward. This is reflected in the reduced grant payments and allocations this year.

Projects have continued to rise to new challenges however – coming up with highly inventive responses to the world changing around them. Their resilience and continued enthusiasm have been inspiring. Online delivery can't replace outdoor activities, but it has often meant that participants have been able to keep in touch, and others have joined in who might otherwise not have.

The aim of the fund is to develop and test ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in a countryside of great natural beauty and diversity in which the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community are conserved and enhanced.

The objectives of the Sustainable Development Fund are to:

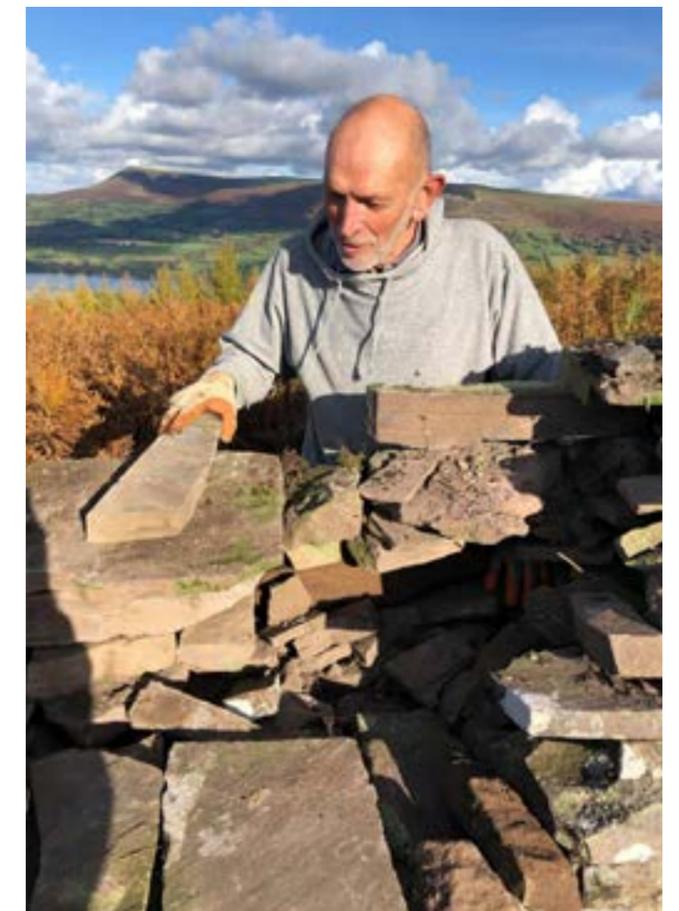
- explore innovative ways of contributing as far as practicable to the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales and of breaking down barriers that can act as obstacles to sustainability
- integrate sustainable development with the special qualities of the National Park and demonstrate the contribution of a strong sense of place and local identity to well-being and sustainable living.
- build capacity in local communities and to develop and support community-based projects promoting



SDF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020-21

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



sustainable development objectives.

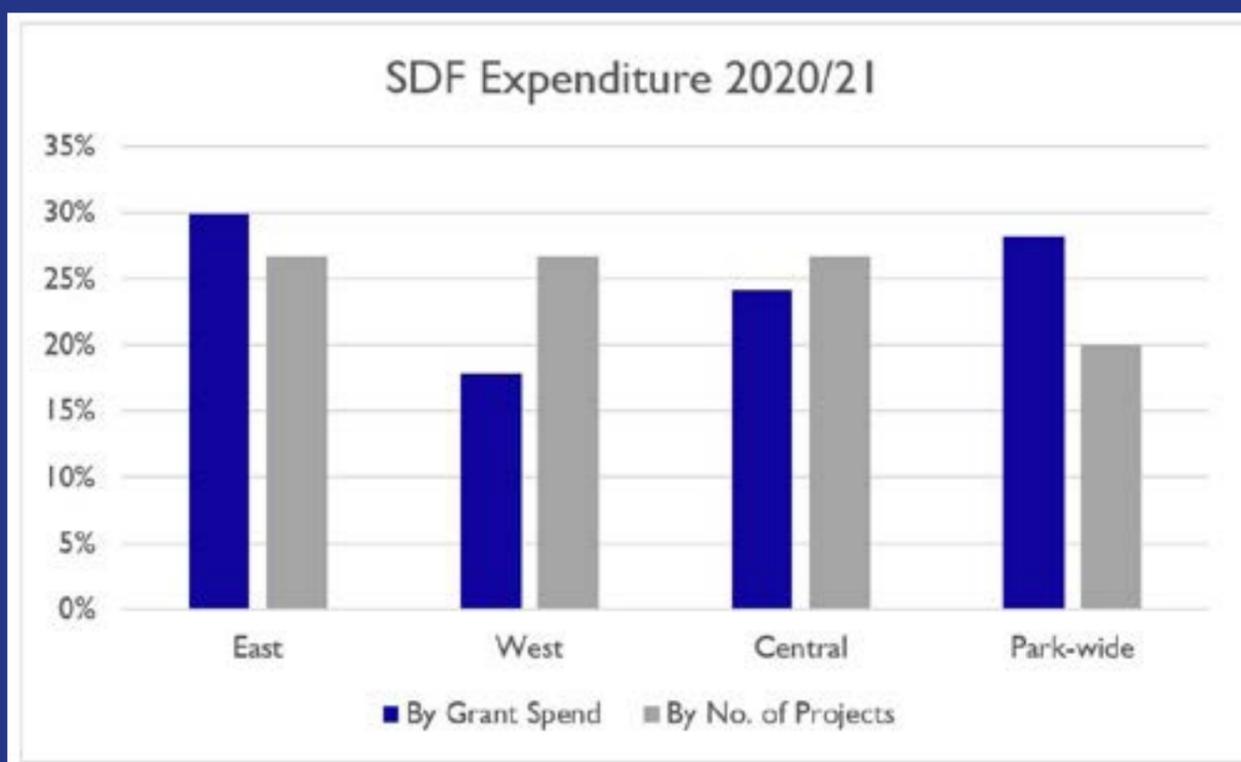
- generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability amongst residents and visitors and facilitate positive behaviour change.

Successful SDF projects are those which:

- demonstrate sustainability by linking social, environmental, cultural, and economic issues through public participation
- demonstrate that they have genuine support or involvement of communities within the Park
- support one or more of the objectives of the fund
- demonstrate that they contribute to the National Park Management Plan themes, the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act, and other relevant local and national strategies.
- bring organisations together in partnership to tackle problems.
- treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality in dealings with the public

£75,575 was paid out to 15 projects in 2020-21. £14,475 (19%) of this went to four projects led by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. In addition to the budget allocated to SDF by the Authority the Welsh Government allocated an additional £42,100 for SDF capital projects undertaken during the year. The effect of Covid 19 on project development and implementation was profound with £49,439 of the budget unallocated at the end of the year and £57,492 allocated to projects which will now be spent during 2021/22. The total grant spent in the year of £75,575 represents a 66% fall in expenditure from the 2019/2020 level.

Expenditure by area within the Brecon Beacons National Park



Performance Indicators & Output Measures April 2020 – March 2021

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	April 2020 – March 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % 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 • Under £1,000 – 28 days from receipt of completed application. 	100% of all applications (under & over £1k) notified within 14 days of Panel. 100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs created & safeguarded (Full or part-time incl. temporary & permanent) 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteering opportunities 	8,566 hours

OUTPUT MEASURES	April 2020 - March 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding levered in from other sources • Value of in kind & volunteer donations • Public: Private ratio of match funding 	Ratio 1:1.6 (on grants paid) £128,487 1: 4.398
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2020-21 have provided volunteering opportunities of more than 8,566 hours, which represents a significant contribution to life across the National Park.

Fund Management

The scheme is administered by the 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.

Conclusion

Covid 19 has been detrimental to both the development and delivery of projects in the community. It will take time for communities to regain the confidence to pursue creative sustainable development projects again. With climate change and the biodiversity crisis at the forefront of the emerging Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan for 2022 to 2027, we will focus on encouraging and advising our applicants in developing projects which deliver the change we and they desire.



Project Summaries

Pine Marten Conservation Volunteer Project – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Total SDF Grant £15,370 over 4 years
Grant Payment made in 2020-21: £548

The Vincent Wildlife Trust and Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) continue to be active partners; the former providing expertise and GDAS contributing workshop facilities, staff, and volunteer time. The Covid pandemic affected this project as it did many others and work effectively ceased over the past year. Volunteers from GDAS managed to complete construction of all the den boxes just before CV-19 lockdown and they are now being installed. Participants in their new men's mental health project will be going through the camera trap images over the coming months, helping to identify the different animals captured on film.

The volunteers are starting to put the camera traps back out and already have video footage of a Red Stag in the east of the National Park, and of a Woodcock - a red listed bird species. It's still hoped that Pine Martens will be spotted! All sightings are being reported to the Biodiversity Information Service (BIS).

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Museum Guides Apprenticeship Scheme - Big Pit

Total SDF Grant £67,684 over 4 years
Grant Payment made in 2020-21: nil due to Covid

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 has been carried forward to 2021/22 so that the programme can be completed as planned.

“The apprenticeship programme at Big Pit like most of the world was seriously affected by the Covid-19 pandemic that struck in March 2020. Underground visits ceased, and the museum has only been able to open the museum as a surface attraction on two occasions for a few weeks each time. This severely hampered all our training programmes and income streams but thankfully we were able to utilise the UK Government's 'Job Retention Scheme' to safeguard our operations for the future. Apprentices Emma and Lee were both included within this process along with most of our staff for large periods of the year. Thankfully we are now fully open again – over and underground.” Huw Jones, Mine Manager

Emma and Lee have completed all training to maintain their competence as underground guides. Both successfully passed their Level 2 NVQ from the MPQC (Mineral Products Qualification Council) in escorting mine visitors. They have progressed to become Underground Guides and regularly take visitors



on tours. They are both now full-time employees.

The SDF grant aid without doubt helped Big Pit to continue to offer the unique experience of going underground in a real coal mine in South Wales. The apprenticeship programme which is a vital part of our staff succession plan has gone on to employ seven mining craft apprentices, one mining mechanical apprentice and one mining electrical apprentice. We will be recruiting further apprentices shortly. I honestly believe that the funding we received from BBNPA sustainable development fund and the tremendous support from Fund Officers at the perfect moment in time spurred the museum into action which was essential if Big Pit was to continue to offer a real underground experience to our thousands of visitors in the future.”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Stroke in Young Adults – Manchester Metropolitan University

Total SDF Grant £46,546 over 4 years
Grant Payment in 2020-21: £9,522

The PhD research project with Manchester Metropolitan University is now in its third year. Despite Covid restrictions, student Rebecca Clarke has continued her work in the National Park, investigating a new form of stroke rehabilitation, using the positive impact natural outdoor environments have on health and wellbeing.

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.

Covid 19 had a significant impact on the project’s outdoor walking rehabilitation programme. However, measures are in place to reduce the risk of infection between participants, Health Boards are happy with these, and the programme restarted in July 2021 – based at Gilwern Outdoor Education Centre with 12 participants.

Following review, Rebecca has submitted a paper – ‘Physiotherapy Theory and Practice’ - to the journal Disability and Rehabilitation, and she continues to work on her thesis – aiming to write up results and conclusions later in 2021. She has also experimented with using the various software for data analysis, including Visual 3D (digitises walking biomechanics data) and MATLAB (generates graphs specific to the pelvis, hip, knee, and ankle).

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Livestock Handling System – Glanam, Pedol & Twrch Graziers Association

Total SDF Grant £7,200
Grant Payment in 2020-21: £7,200

Wooden handling pens installed some time ago at Brynaman by Gelli Aur Agricultural College with the support of BBNPA Wardens were so popular, that when they came to the end of their useful lives the local community decided to replace them. They were used by a wide range of groups on Mynydd Du SSSI (graziers, the RSPCA, Lluest Horse and Pony Trust for example) for holding and sorting stray sheep and horses and treating sick animals.

Following community meetings, Glanam, Pedol, and Twrch Graziers Association applied for an SDF grant

to re-build and extend the pens in steel – able to withstand harsh and challenging mountain conditions. The facility, built by a local contractor, now includes a larger race and a cattle crush - along with a water supply. The higher sides help to contain animals safely, enabling the checking of ID/chips and delivery of any necessary treatment.

The work of the grazing associations is invaluable - helping to minimise the risk of arson and wildfires - essential in this hotspot area. Having a range of grazing animals – cattle as well as sheep and ponies – helps to reduce the incidence of Molinia (purple moor grass), which creates carpets of dense, dry material when it dies off – a perfect fuel. Sustainable habitat management is essential - the ecology of the mountain has a direct bearing on the likelihood of it being destroyed by fire.

Strategic installation of livestock handling pens around the Black Mountain (and hopefully future support on other commons forming part of Mynydd Du) is a positive step towards joint working, and better long-term management.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Muddy Care

Total SDF Grant £9,180 over two years
Grant payment in 2020-21: £3,000

Talgarth based Muddy Care is a Community Interest Company providing outdoor education, ecotherapy and long-term rehabilitation support for people with chronic medical conditions and now Long Covid. Programmes are person-centred, addressing emotional and psychological as well as physical needs,



supporting personal development.

The SDF grant has supported a pilot project to assess and demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach, with around 12 participants taking part in a range of recreational activities and workshops in the National Park and beyond. Sessions included basic orienteering, walking and exploring, health and self-care, trying out electric bikes etc. The pilot was designed to take place over nine months, but Covid meant that it ran over two years with unexpected benefits. The format was adapted and redesigned with the full involvement of participants, ensuring that they continued to receive support safely in changing circumstances – all useful learning.

Initial evaluation shows that:

- by summer 2021, over half of the participants had reduced their medication by over 50% since starting Muddy Care, and had had fewer relapses
- all participants have shown consistent improvements in their overall wellbeing
- there were no drop-outs – all those originally recruited in November 2019 continued to attend sessions.
- local businesses have benefitted with e.g., bike hire from Drover Cycles, visits to cafes and restaurants
- participants have a much better understanding and knowledge of the BBNP – visiting and exploring less familiar areas

Feedback from participants is very positive:

When I first started with Muddy Care my life was just about existing. The only times I left the house were hospital appointments, which I had quite a lot of. I was still coming to terms with my diagnosis, I had very little support and no social life. Muddy Care has changed my life. I have done amazing things that I never thought possible.

When you have a chronic health condition your life gets smaller, darker, more anxious. Getting out and about into nature can be challenging and it's often to maintain motivation and courage. There are so many health benefits, mental, physical, and spiritual of being outside and engaged with nature and the outdoors - but even knowing that there are many barriers. Muddy Care cuts through these by providing the means, the motivation and the accountability needed.

Taking part in the Muddy Care activities has shown me that just because I have chronic conditions, it



doesn't mean I have to stop doing things, they can just be adapted to be done in a different way.

Working partnerships have been established with NHS services in Swansea and Cardiff, and Swansea University and research study pilots are underway with the Brain Injuries unit at Moriston hospital, Swansea and the National Welsh Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Centre, Cardiff. It is hoped that a similar partnership will be developed with Powys Health Board in due course.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Retail Start Up Units - Hay Castle Trust

Total SDF Grant £11,000

Grant payment in 2020-21: £11,000

Hay Castle Trust was formed in 2011 to purchase Hay Castle, a site which comprises the Grade I listed Hay Castle Manor, Scheduled Ancient Monument, various outbuildings, and registered gardens.

The £6.5m renovation project includes access to the top of the Norman keep, a new roof for the mansion, an exhibition gallery, education space, and flexible, multi-function rooms throughout. The ancient gateway will be re-opened and reconnect the town and the Castle grounds. Traditional building skills will be taught in the grounds and a cafe will inhabit the former coach house. Income made from private hires will support maintenance, upkeep and a host of community uses.

Construction work at Hay Castle continued throughout 2021. Although the project experienced significant delays, it's anticipated that the main works and the SDF funded work to upgrade five retail units on the site will be finalised early in 2022.

These small shop spaces will be offered to local start-up businesses giving local entrepreneurs the opportunity to rent a space at an affordable price in order to start their business. The unique spaces are ideal for businesses or artisans that require low rent and good footfall along a characterful cobbled lane. The shop units have been successfully used in the past when several businesses started up at Hay Castle and have now developed and moved to larger premises in town. Local business Eighteen Rabbit, for example, began their Fairtrade import business online, then grew their shop business during two years at Hay Castle paying minimal rent, and they now have a larger shop in the centre of town. Similarly, Beer Revolution started and grew its business selling



specialist and local beers in one of the small spaces and subsequently moved into town.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Allt yr Esgair Habitat Management – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Total SDF Grant £4,514 over two years
Grant payment in 2020-21: £2,684

Allt-yr-Esgair is an Iron Age hillfort and Scheduled Ancient Monument, seven miles south of Brecon in the river Usk valley. Although not one of the highest points in the BBNP, the views from the top are panoramic. The SDF grant supported a partnership project with local landowners and managers, involving a range of conservation work and access improvements on the well-used bridleway on common land that runs along the spine of the hill, through the fort.

Under the supervision of specialists and the BBNPA Warden team, Prince’s Trust trainees undertook habitat surveys, upland vegetation clearance, dry stone walling, rights of way improvements and archaeological monitoring. The wall repairs, dividing land owned by NRW and the common, managed by BBNPA, directly support the conservation grazing being undertaken by Newton Farm through stock proofing the area and the improved bridleway surface protects the monument from future management. Scrub removal, bracken control, and rough grazing benefits wildflowers, the principal food, and larval egg-laying plants for butterflies.

Volunteers and local landowners between them contributed an amazing £10,000+ in time and services provided.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Improving Resources & Monitoring for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat – Vincent Wildlife Trust

Total SDF Grant £10,000
Grant payment in 2020-21: £10,000

The grant enabled Vincent Wildlife Trust to undertake essential repair and maintenance work at four of its lesser horseshoe bat reserves in the upper Usk valley. These sites support a large proportion of the local bat population and include the largest lesser horseshoe bat maternity roost in Britain. The works have led to improved access and safety for staff and volunteers and have ensured that optimal roosting conditions persist through the repair and maintenance of the fabric of the buildings.

Local contractors were engaged to undertake this work, using local materials where possible. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted volunteer activities in the past 12 months, VWT is currently recruiting and training 15-30 local volunteers to assist in the upkeep and monitoring of its sites in the Brecon Beacons, ensuring that local communities are engaged in bat conservation work, and reserve management is sustainable into the future. Highlights of the SDF supported work include:

- Building condition surveys and maintenance: at Buckland Coach House and Ffrwdgrech Stables roofs and gutters have been cleared and repaired
- Areas around the sites: drystone walls have been rebuilt, vegetation and tree management has been carried out, meadow management plans agreed



- Work to improve site safety for staff and volunteers: rails and ladders have been installed to ensure safe access at key sites

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



44/45 High Street Brecon

Total Heritage in Places Grant £2,000
Grant payment in 2020-21: £2,000

Support for the built environment and local heritage is an SDF priority. This project in the conservation area of Brecon has helped to safeguard a listed building and uplift the town centre – making it a more attractive place for residents and visitors. The frontage of two shops (one occupied by a charity and the other a takeaway business) was restored and painted, under the skilled supervision of BBNPA’s Senior Heritage Officer (Buildings Conservation). Cracked render was made good, rainwater goods were repaired, and loose wiring removed.

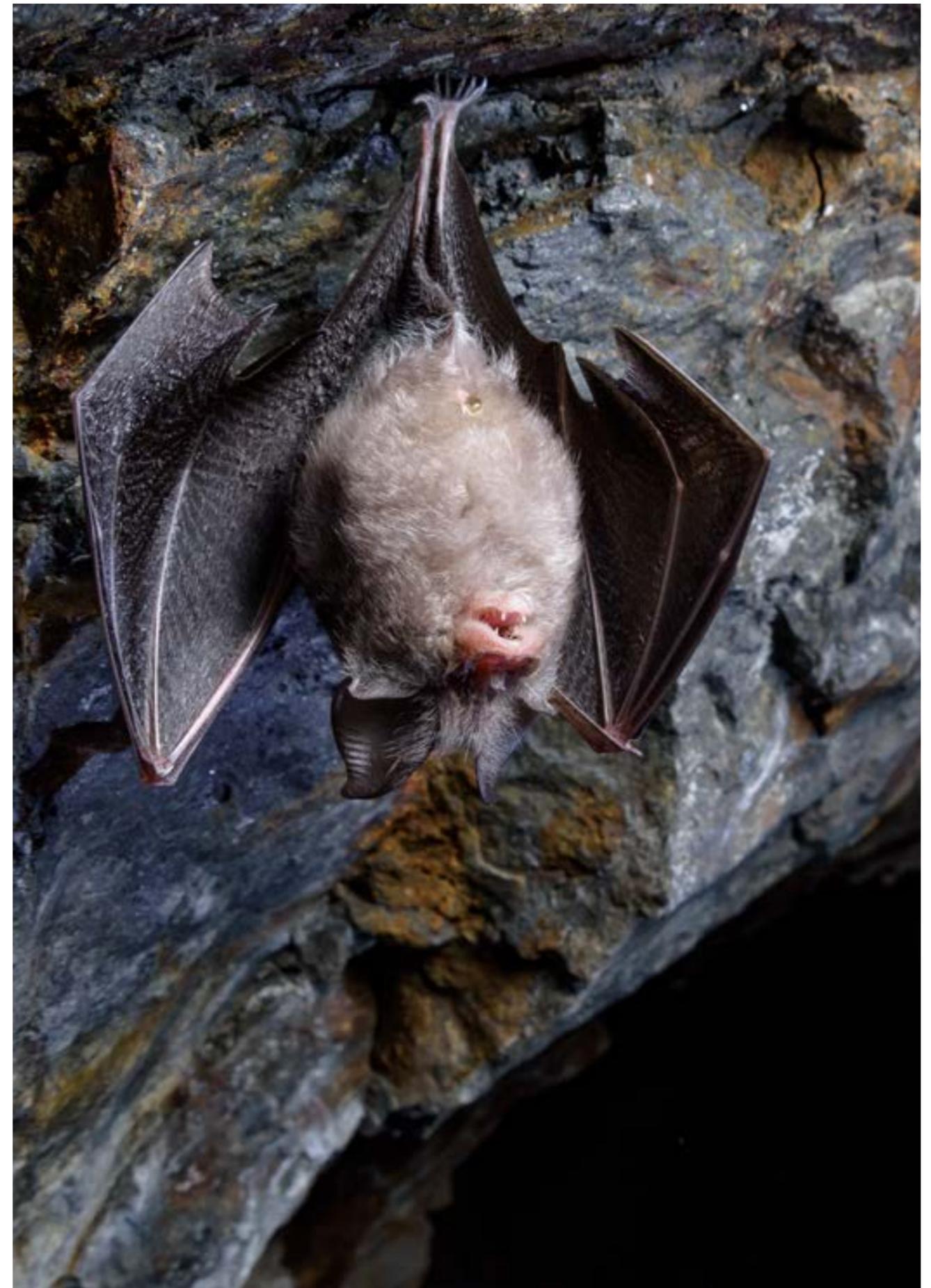
This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



BEFORE



AFTER



Getting to know your neighbours – Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru (INCC)

Total SDF Grant £8,252 over two years

Grant payment in 2020-21: £5,023

The INCC was set up in 2018 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its 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 engagement with the local community. A range of activities were 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 project was severely affected by Covid restrictions – walks and activity events were on hold for most of the past year. Despite that, work has continued in different ways. Expeditions have been 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/comments – local people provide their own stories and photos.

Moth traps and bat detectors (and training packs) were loaned to around 15 families – they return details/ID of species identified, which are 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 will continue.

"In 2016, I had been diagnosed with cancer but thankfully an operation had solved the problem. Just as I was getting back to health my husband also was told he had cancer and unfortunately, he died within three months of diagnosis. I was devastated and life had no meaning. Everything was too much effort and even my



beloved garden got neglected as I had no interest in it or, indeed, anything else. All this changed when I met Rob and got involved in volunteering for the INCC.

I've since been on bat walks and trekked the surrounding countryside checking on pied flycatchers, among other things. During one of these expeditions, I saw a real live cuckoo for the first time in my life. And I'll always remember standing on the hillside with the rest of the group, cheering on the meadow pipits as they mobbed the marauder. What a thrill! I've also been monitoring a couple of camera traps, both overlooking the river which flows past my garden, and have delighted in seeing the nocturnal doings of various creatures, including the unforgettable sight of a tawny owl having a bath in the shallows. Even the pesky squirrels which trigger the cameras repeatedly are a source of amusement.

Health problems, sudden widowhood and the isolation of lockdown could all have had a detrimental effect on me, but I never feel lonely or bored now. On the contrary, life is full of interest and I look forward every morning to discovering what else I share my world with."

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Brecon Heritage & Cultural Network – a Post-Covid Future

Total SDF Grant £2,500 over two years

Grant payment in 2020-21: £1,250

The Network brings together Brecon's heritage and cultural organisations, businesses, and volunteers, to raise awareness of the town's rich heritage and its cultural and artistic life. Its public facing name is 'Brecon Story' – a bi-lingual website portal telling the many fascinating stories of the people and places within and around the town – owned and created by them. It aims to both bring together local communities and to promote local businesses and attractions.

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. The SDF grant supports the post Covid plans of the Network – further developing the portal, 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 new Brecon Town Plan.

Recent stories created and uploaded by volunteers on the Brecon Story portal include:

- Bryn Terfel's concert at Brecon Cathedral hosted by the Metropolitan Opera of New York
- Yn y Lhyvyr Hwnn: tells the story of Brecon native Sir John Prys, author of the first book to be printed in the Welsh language
- Many paths to Brecon for Gurkhas: stories from Brecon's community of Nepalese people
- 1st Female Mayor of Wales: published on International Women's Day, a celebration of ground-breaking Brecon resident Gwennlian Morgan, the first female Mayor of Brecon (and the first woman in Wales to hold such a post) from 1910-11.
- Illumine: an 18-month digital arts training project for young 'Image Makers' (aged 16-25) – they worked with artists and industry professionals to 're-imagine' the Brecon Beacons and wider area, creating new digital content for display in Y Gaer.

The Network has also secured a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver online training for its volunteers. Delivered by specialists in social media, film, and storytelling the programme covers issues such as digital editing using smart phones, digital photography, presenting to camera, storytelling, and content.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Green Minds – Brecon Mind

Total SDF Grant £5,000
Grant payment in 2020-21: £5,000

Brecon and District Mind supports people in the rural communities of South Powys who are affected by mental illness and distress.

The Green Minds project launched in early 2020 with successful eco therapy sessions for 12 participants, who made bird boxes and undertook planting and growing activities. The SDF grant has contributed to staff costs to further develop the initiative – focussing on the creation of a bee and wildlife garden at Brecon Cathedral and a wildlife garden at Bronllys hospital.

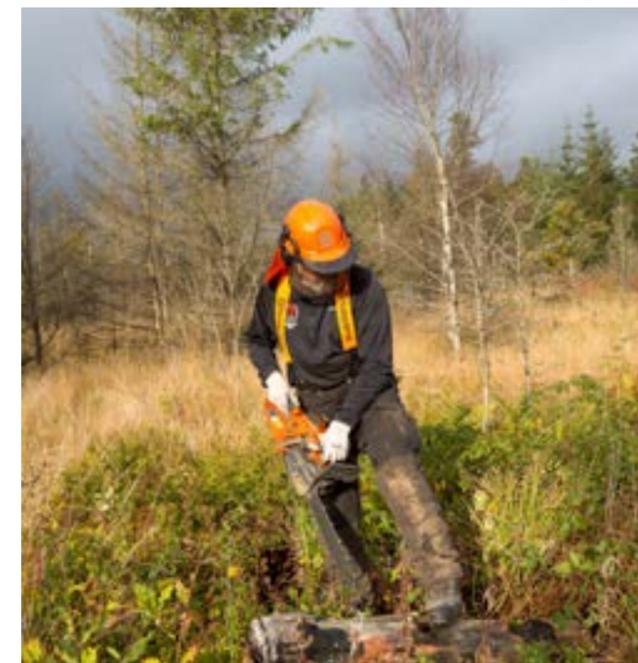
After the March 2020 lockdown staff constantly adapted delivery approaches to ensure the safety of participants. Online resources were developed for both existing participants and the wider community. When possible between lockdowns, therapeutic gardening and woodland walking sessions continued at a time when people needed them the most.

The wellbeing garden behind the Cathedral offices includes beds and borders for pollinator loving perennials mixed in with interesting edibles and healing herbs. It's hoped that the garden will inspire a sense of calm and recovery as well as providing a space for learning and growing. Group members have been directly involved in planting and building pathways around the garden from recycled stone.

People very much valued taking part:

“Before lockdown I was working as a volunteer for an Alzheimer's group, when that was cut, I lost a big part of my social life too, so being part of a group again is a big help.”

“I don't know that many people in the area and lockdown has made me feel really isolated so knowing this



group is happening is really good.”

“I really enjoy taking part in the Green Minds sessions, it really helps with my anxiety levels and it gets me out of the house too keeping busy” “It makes me feel better looking after and getting my hands in the soil”

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Land & Entrepreneurs – Conservation Farming Trust

Sustainable Development Fund Grant total of £15,264 over two years
Grant Payment in 2020 - 21: £5,905

The initiative builds on the success of the 2019-20 SDF supported ‘Our Food Brecon Beacons’ pilot project, which stimulated interest in increased production and consumption of local food. Outcomes included the establishment of two new horticulture business in Crickhowell, farmers offering land, the development of six new supply chain partnerships.

Working with stakeholders (local government, BBNPA, NFU Cymru, farmers), the overarching vision 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.

Project aims include:

- 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’s 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:

- Securing a 10-acre plot offered by a landowner in Abergavenny for 3-4 enterprises.
- Establishment of a peer network of farmers & growers to provide new entrants with support along with open days for these newly established regenerative enterprises.
- Exploring the establishment of a regional Land Trust to acquire and manage land to support both landowners and farming entrepreneurs. Now called the 1200 group they are planning to set up a

community benefit society in 2021 to raise funds to purchase land for small entrepreneurs to grow food.

- Hosting of regular on-line discussions about priorities for farming & growing for local markets in the region and how to address them. <https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2021/06/how-to-rebuild-a-local-food-economy/>
- Continued project promotion via social media – development of a communications strategy
- Development of the area (Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons as a Sustainable Food Place/Region)
- Discussions held with the Community Foundation and the Funding Centre on the feasibility of a new grant fund for regenerative farming enterprise start-up.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Battery Powered Tools – BBNPA

Total SDF Grant £8,736
Grant payment in 2020-21: £8,736

The new battery powered tools have been a huge help for the volunteer groups who work with wardens to keep the National Park’s network of footpaths and bridleways open for all users.

Due to last summer’s lockdown, paths were not cleared as they usual are – all work programmes ceased. When restrictions were lifted many BBNPA volunteers were keen to get back out into their local communities and help with managing Rights of Way. The new tools have been a massive boost for groups





that have been used to using manual hand tools. As a result, it's been possible to open up relatively quickly not only the blocked paths untouched since early 2020 - but many more as a result - enabling greater access for everyone.

Everyone - volunteers and wardens - have been very impressed by the new tools and the technology that runs them. They are quieter with no petrol fumes to contend with anymore. They are also lighter and vibrate less – resulting in much reduced physical impact on users. It has been a changing point for the warden and volunteer teams - the future is green, with many of the vehicles used already moving to electric, powered by the BBNPA's own photo voltaic panels.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Boat Servicing on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

Total SDF Grant £3,000
Grant payment in 2020-21: £3,000

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 is supporting Ian's training (which involves online and residential courses and rigorous practical assessment) and helping to keep all the Mon and Brecon boats on the move. As his workload increases, he hopes to employ a young person to work alongside him.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:



Garn Goch Management Plan – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Total SDF Grant £677

Grant payment in 2020-21: £677

This has been a highly successful partnership project, bringing together skilled partners to work on the complex management issues presented at Garn Goch Hillfort – a much visited Scheduled Monument and an important registered Common for graziers. It is owned by the National Park Authority, with 10 registered grazing rights holdings.

The problem: grazing ceased around 10 years ago, when the last sheep and ponies were removed from the common. As a result, scrub and bracken advanced up the slopes towards the hillfort, threatening its integrity and the heathland, creating a risk for sheep as they can become entangled in the brambles.

PONT (Pori, Nature & Threftadaeth/Grazing, Nature & Heritage) worked with BBNPA staff and graziers to identify the reasons for the cessation of grazing and assess appetite for the return of grazing to the common. The primary grazier identified the use of the common by irresponsible dog walkers as a major problem. Dog faeces was a constant worry due to the risk of contraction of Neosporosis by cattle (causes infertility) and Toxoplasmosis by sheep – diseases not well understood by the general public. Complaints from the public regarding cattle and ponies and perceived risk have resulted in the removal of cattle and ponies from the common.

The plan: following initial grazier interviews a public engagement campaign started. Surveys were carried out with local dog walkers; dog fouling problem areas were mapped, and signage erected. PONT installed a dog poo wormery, dog poo bag dispenser and signage as requested by the graziers – and leaflets were distributed to the local community. When monitoring showed that the wormery was not in the best place, it was moved.

Outcomes: follow up visits showed that the interventions had significantly reduced the amount of dog mess present on Garn Goch. As a result, a herd of 20 Dexter cattle were introduced to the common in Autumn 2018, with signage in place to alert walkers. The cattle have done a brilliant job of tackling the dense scrub encroachment. BBNPA volunteers will soon be helping with further scrub control on the hillfort.

This is a work in progress however, as unfortunately the Dexters have recently suffered a TB breakdown with devastating impacts on the farmers involved and nearby. It's clear that mixed grazing is the best and most sustainable way of managing upland areas with SSSI status, so the approach will be continued when and where possible in the hope that long-term solutions will be found.

This project supports the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals:





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