



Bannau  
Brycheiniog

# Sustainable Development Fund

Report for year ended 31 March 2023



HOUSE

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15

CLARKS TOYS

TOYMASTER TOYMASTER

AMAZING DEALS!  
AMAZING DEALS!  
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Special Offer  
£5

Clark's Toy Shop, Brecon

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# Chair's Foreword

It has been a pleasure to have been involved in the work of the Sustainable Development Fund Committee over the past year, working with Grants Advisory Panel colleagues and the Officer team. The appointment and induction of new Committee members in July 2022 gave us a useful opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the Fund over the past two decades. Grants awarded (often relatively small) have been the catalyst for many significant and now well-known projects and initiatives across the National Park including:

- the Green Man Festival – started back in 2003 with a £5k grant
- the Black Mountain Centre in Brynaman
- Myddfai Community Hall and Visitor Centre
- Talgarth Mill
- Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre (CRiC)
- Black Mountains College

The National Park Authority is proud to have been able to support and facilitate these projects through the SDF. The programme brings delivery partners together, supports community volunteers new to project development and fundraising, and crucially, works with them to make the National Park a better place to live in and visit.



Brecon Town

In the report you'll read about the particular success this year of our Built Heritage and Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings programmes – both contributing to core National Park purposes and duties to conserve and enhance cultural heritage and to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park. We plan to build on the learning from both programmes and develop further opportunities in the years ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- the hundreds of dedicated and inspiring volunteers and leaders in our National Park communities – the SDF is here to support them
- my fellow National Park SDF Committee Members and the Grants Advisory Panel whose skills, knowledge and experience we appreciate very much
- the Officer team responsible for day-to-day management of the programme – Helen Roderick (Sustainable Development Manager), Barbara Anglezarke (Sustainable Development Officer) and Ben Geeson-Brown (Sustainable Communities Officer).

I hope you enjoy reading about the extraordinary variety of work supported by the Fund in 2022-23.

Cllr. Peter Baldwin, SDF Deputy Chair



Llangasty Village Hall

# About the Sustainable Development Fund

Established over 23 years ago, the Fund is managed by the Park Authority's Sustainable Development Team with the valued contribution and guidance of expert colleagues. Over more than two decades, it has supported a wide range of activities that help us to live more sustainably in an area of great natural beauty and diversity. Officers work closely with applicants to offer support and make connections – we're here to make sure that proposals are as strong as possible. Applicants new to fundraising are welcomed!

Successful SDF projects:

- Demonstrate community support – bringing people and organisations together in partnership to make a positive difference
- Deliver benefits that link social/cultural, environmental, and economic issues
- Support delivery of National Park Management Plan priorities, the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act, and other local and national strategies.

# SDF Committee and Panel Members 2022-23

Applications are considered at joint meetings (usually 5 each year) of the:

- Grants Advisory Panel with 9 subject experts, and the
- SDF National Park Members Committee

The Grants Advisory Panel votes initially on applications and final decisions are made by the eight Members of the Authority.

We are grateful for the knowledge, insight, and commitment that all Committee and Panel members bring.

<b>National Park Authority Committee</b>	<b>Grants Advisory Panel</b>
Cllr. Iain McIntosh, SDF Chair (Powys CC)	Mike Wright The Charter Group
Cllr. Peter Baldwin, SDF Deputy Chair (Blaenau Gwent CBC)	Cllr Bernard Watkins Maescar Community Council
Cllr. Edwin Roderick (Powys CC)	Sarah Coakham Natural Resources Wales
Cllr. Jeremy Davies (Merthyr Tydfil CBC)	Abi McCullough – Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust
Cllr. William Powell (Powys CC)	Andrew King Brecknock Bird Recorder
Cllr. Ed Jones (Powys CC)	Cllr Chris Walsh, Brecon Town Council
Professor John Hunt (Welsh Government)	David Jones Farmers' Union of Wales
Dr. Yvonne Howard-Bunt (Welsh Government)	Cllr. Richard Dixon Llanelly Community Council
	Margaret Underwood Voluntary Sector



2022 - 23 Overview





Market Hall Crickhowell



31 new projects were awarded grants during the year, and a total of £87, 258 was paid out to 29 of these and to others awarded in previous years. £2,000 (2.3%) went to the production of the Dark Sky Planetarium Film led by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in partnership with the Brecon Beacons Dark Sky Board – see project summary below.

Although the world has moved on since the Covid pandemic lockdowns, communities are still recovering from the effects. Some of the projects underway this year were awarded their grants some time ago but are only now able to start work. Costs have increased and contexts have changed, so adaptations have been needed. Once again, communities are showing us that they are resilient and determined!

Alongside the main SDF programme, we have delivered two further themed programmes this year: Built Heritage and Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings.

## Built Heritage

In 2020, the National Park Authority was awarded £50,000 by the Welsh Government to support works which improved the built historic environment. With the support of the Authority's Senior Heritage Officer (Buildings Conservation) and Heritage Officer (Archaeology), the programme was managed through the Sustainable Development Fund, offering individuals and community groups grants of up to £5,000 (supporting up to 50% of total costs) to:

- undertake works to conserve and enhance heritage assets
- promote the appropriate and timely repair of buildings or structures of architectural or historic importance
- improve interpretation of historic assets.



Over the past two years, grants have been awarded to seventeen projects and the programme has been committed in full. The money invested levered in match funding worth £112,250, with a total programme value of £162,425. Whilst some work may have taken place without the grant support, most projects would not have proceeded.

Ten of the grant awards were in Brecon, and these have made a noticeable improvement to the fabric and appearance of listed buildings in conservation areas – particularly in The Struet. This work has supported delivery of targets in Brecon 20:20 Town Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, particularly those in *Section 1: Streetscene and Section 3: Retail and Market*.

## Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings

Community buildings are at the heart of community life, especially in rural areas. They enable people and groups to come together to socialise, play, make, plan, learn, celebrate, run events and much more. However, with energy costs increasing, volunteer management groups are struggling to keep buildings open. Alongside this the climate change emergency requires all of us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Practical steps to cut back on energy consumption can address both these pressing issues - safeguarding buildings for the future and reducing their environmental impact.

Over the past 18 months our Welsh Government funded £50k programme has supported community buildings (village halls and community centres, community group HQs, town and community council managed buildings) with energy audits and small grants (for up to 50% of total costs) to install priority energy efficiency measures. These have all been lower cost interventions such as LED lighting, roof insulation, thermostatic radiator valves, pipe lagging etc., rather than renewable energy installations, recognising that the building fabric must be as energy efficient as possible before generating options can be explored.

It's hoped that further resources will be secured to develop this work further in 2023-24.



# Performance Indicators & Output Measures



Felin Talgarth Mill

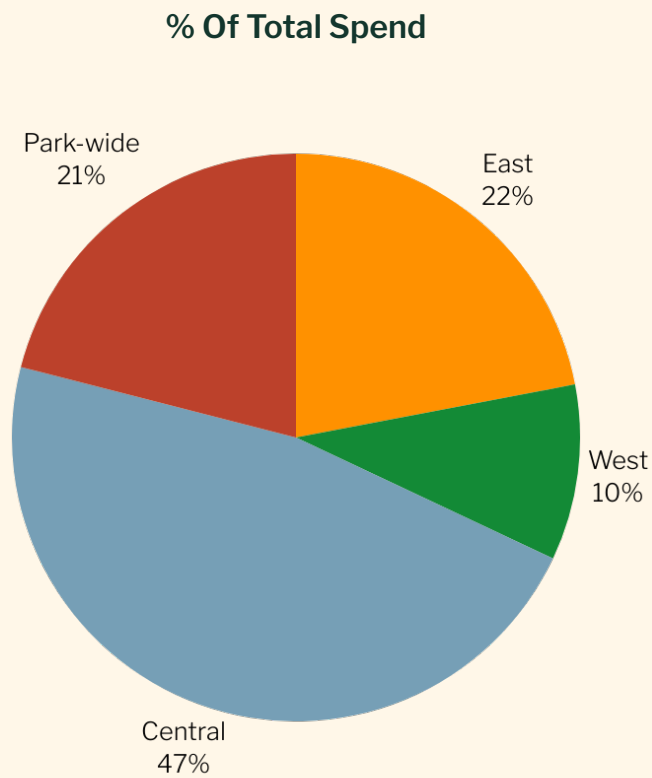
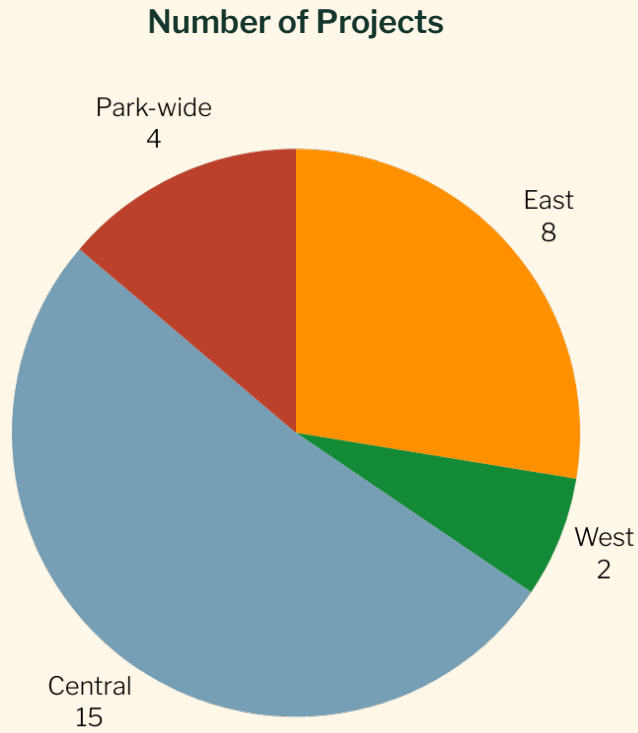
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<b>April 2022 – March 2023</b>
% of decisions on completed applications notified to applicant on time – target is 95% within 14 days of consideration by Panel for applications over £2,000	100% of all applications (under & over £2k) notified within 14 days of Panel.
Under £1,000 – 28 days from receipt of completed application.	100%
Number of jobs created & safeguarded (Full or part-time incl. temporary & permanent)	5
Number of volunteering opportunities	4,174 hours

<b>Output Measures</b>	<b>April 2022 – March 2023</b>
Funding levered in from other sources	Ratio 1: 1.7 (on grants paid)
Value of in kind & volunteer donations	£41,739
Public: Private ratio of match funding	1:6.44
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 2022-23 have provided volunteering opportunities of more than 4,174 hours, which represents a significant contribution to life across the National Park.

# Grant Payments 2022 - 2023

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



Llangattock Community Woodland Group	£1,306
Pen y Cae – Grwyne Fawr CIC	£2,124
Pontneddfechan Village Hall Feasibility Study	£4,475
The Big Skill – Beacons and Surrounds Crafts	£9,598
Brecon Story	£5,000
Maesgwyn Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	£500
Felin Talgarth Mill	£3,259
Ty'r Ash Woodland, Crickhowell	£1,440
Brecon Food Festival 2022	£900
Criw Craggy, Craig y Nos Country Park	£3,843
Talgarth Lunch Club	£1,363
Theatr Brycheiniog	£2,800
Dark Sky Planetarium Film	£2,000
Mametz - Reawakened	£5,000
Siop Llangors	£1,025

<b>Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings</b>	
Llangasty Village Hall	£1,745
St. Mary's Church, BreconStudy	£5,000
Gilwern Community Centre	£1,958
Crickhowell Parish Hall	£2,544
Brecon Guildhall	£5,000

<b>Built Heritage</b>	
Market Hall Crickhowell – Façade Restoration	£3,625
Viaduct House, The Struet, Brecon	£2,003
Llanthony History Walks – Leaflet Suite	£4,700
The Crooked Window, The Struet, Brecon	£5,000
Sacred Places Booklet, Brecknock History Forum	£1,360
Clark's Toy Shop, Brecon	£5,000
18, The Struet, Brecon	£1,690
9, Watergate, Brecon	£1,000
Llangynidr Church Bells	£2,000





Llangynidr Church Bells



# Project Summaries



THEATR

Dragonfly Cruises  
Bookings 07831 685 222

THEATRE BASIN

GASWORKS BRIDGE

WATTON BRIDGE

BRYNICH LOCK

Theatre Brycheiniog

## **1. Llangattock Community Woodlands**

Total SDF Grant £7,000 / Final Grant Payment made in 2022-23: £1,306

A registered charity, the woodland group is run by enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers with a shared interest in trees and timber products. Members work to promote the conservation, protection, and improvement of small woodlands in the South-East corner of the National Park, including a site leased from the Canal and River Trust. Delayed by the pandemic, the work to improve access to the woodland and install a compost toilet is now complete, enabling many different groups of all ages to visit and take part in activities.

## **2. Pen y Cae Project - Grwyne Fawr CIC**

Total SDF Grant £21,300 / Grant Payment in 2022-23: £2,124

The Grwyne Fawr Community Interest Company was founded in April 2015 to improve the living and visiting environment of the Grwyne Fawr valley. This major project, much delayed by the pandemic, is to bring back into use a small farmhouse in the Mynydd Du Forest, formerly used as an outdoor activity centre.

CIC volunteers have worked hard to raise funds and negotiate a long-term lease with land managers Natural Resources Wales, and work is underway to restore the building as both an educational and social resource. Solar powered and in a magical and remote location, it will sleep up to 12 people (with toilets, cooking and drying facilities) and offer wide-ranging opportunities for schools, student and other groups for day use.

Contractors are now on site, and it's hoped that the first visitors will be welcomed soon. The group is delighted - CIC Director Ian Mabberley says "At last something concrete is happening after all the delays caused by the pandemic and the long draw-out process of obtaining the lease. Our huge thanks to the SDF team for bearing with us over this period. We now have a properly engineered water supply, and the renewable energy kit should be in situ in September. The we can really get going!"

## **3. Feasibility Study - Pontneddfechan Village Hall**

Total SDF Grant £4,475

The Village Hall, an historic building once part of the local Gunpowder Works, has served its local community for many years. Leased from Powys County Council, it is the only community space in the village, following the closure of the school and church hall. It is also an important delivery resource for the outdoor activity providers working in the popular Waterfalls Area, visited by an estimated 300,000 people each year.

The grant supported an extensive consultation exercise with the local community and Hall users to identify the works and actions needed to maximise and realise the potential of this well-placed facility. The resulting report and recommendations are being considered by the management group to inform next steps.

#### **4. Beacons and Surrounds Crafts - The Big Skill**

Total SDF Grant £9,598

The Big Skill works with communities in Mid & South Wales & Herefordshire, to share and develop creative and practical skills through traditional and contemporary craft workshops and events. Workshops are provided at no or low cost to participants – accessibility is a fundamental principle for the group, as is a focus on involving people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, people who are lonely and isolated - boosting well-being and promoting positive interaction, as well as environmental understanding through recycling skills and traditional crafts – “everyone deserves a voice and has something to contribute”.

The SDF grant supported a 30-week programme of workshops in a range of community centres and galleries, culminating in a Craft Week Celebration and open studios event in June 2022. Venues appreciated the promotion and publicity – “It was great to have people specifically coming to the gallery already in the headspace of having a day out viewing art, conversations were much more art focused, and people were enjoying the trail and an arty day out. It definitely encouraged sales also, people were prepared to buy some artwork if they saw something they liked on the trail.” Ardent Gallery, Brecon

#### **5. Brecon Story Network**

Total SDF Grant £5,000

The Network was established in 2018 to foster collaboration between Brecon’s heritage & cultural organisations, businesses, and volunteers. It works with others to raise awareness of the town’s rich heritage and the vibrancy of its cultural & artistic life to strengthen Brecon’s identity and distinctiveness.

Over the last year, the group has focused on working with community volunteers to record video and podcast stories about Brecon’s heritage & culture – creating a bi-lingual oral history of the town. It has established a website ([www.breconstory.wales](http://www.breconstory.wales) / [www.storiaberhonddu.cymru](http://www.storiaberhonddu.cymru)) containing wide-ranging open-source content that can be shared to encourage both the local community & visitors to learn about and explore Brecon’s heritage, culture and arts.

The SDF grant helped the Network to recruit and support further volunteers, providing them with professional digital skills training, mentoring and ongoing peer-to-peer sessions to practice these skills, helping to build confidence to create and share stories.

Achievements in the past year include:

- The completion and posting of 5 new stories on the webpages: The Joys of Jazz, Celebration of the Regimental Memorial, Brecon Town Band promotion, Brecon with Bells on, What’s in a Name?
- Further requests from community groups to develop promotional videos (following the Town Band success) – e.g., Brecon Mountain Rescue, Brecon Mind, Royal Voluntary Service.
- Video stories of the monthly talks organised by Y Gaer and the Brecknock Society &

- Museum Friends featuring items from Y Gaer's collections.
- Introductory sessions on digital storytelling for the South Powys Ukrainian Oral History Project
- Development of the 'What's On' online listings and leaflets.

## **6. Maesgwyn Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)**

Total SDF Grant £500

Maesgwyn is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland near Talgarth in private ownership. It was assessed by specialist National Park Authority Officers as part of their ongoing review of SINC sites and essential work was identified to ensure good condition for nature recovery. The SDF grant supported a full survey of all trees over 5 meters essential safety work to one tree on the access path to the main site.

## **7. Felin Talgarth Mill**

Total SDF Grant £3,259

Opened 12 years ago and run entirely by volunteers, Talgarth Mill is the only working watermill in the National Park. It champions locally produced food with its stoneground flour, traditional bakery and family run café, and is a popular visitor attraction. Award winning wholemeal flour is milled by volunteers four days per week, using grain sourced as local as possible to the mill, including the Welsh heritage wheat, Hen Gymro.

During the pandemic, the Mill's riverside garden was opened free of charge to the community and visitors, and it became a popular meeting space - many local people discovering it for the first time. Mill volunteers have since opened up a previously inaccessible area of the garden, giving impressive new views of Talgarth Rocks waterfalls on the River Ennig. Visitors with visual impairments can enjoy the sounds of the river and the leat, and the rhythm of the waterwheel as it turns.

A priority for the group is making the Mill more welcoming to visitors, creating comfortable and safe outdoor spaces to enjoy food and drink from the Mill's café and bakery, or simply to relax and take in the beautiful surroundings. The grant enabled the purchase of outdoor seating and tables, providing additional capacity for both visitors and the local community to enjoy the riverside gardens and the Mill's welcoming entrance yard.

Chair of the Mill Trustees Mike Goode said "The SDF grant enabled us to buy new furniture for the Mill garden that has resulted in the area being enjoyed by visitors to a much larger degree than it had been previously. We're over the moon with the way it now looks, especially the small groups of metal tables and chairs with green parasols. These allow people to sit outside even when it is drizzling... which we've had a fair bit of this summer! Thanks again to the SDF team, you were a massive help to us. Your advice and proactivity were invaluable."

## **8. Ty'r Ash Woodland, Crickhowell - Llangattock Green Valleys CIC**

Total SDF Grant £3,570 / Grant payment in 2022-23: £1,440

Established in 2009 to address climate change at a local level, the group won the British Gas Green Streets Competition, becoming the Greenest Village in the UK. Since then, LGV has also taken on community woodland management as a core activity, and leases Ty'r Ash woodland from the Glanusk Estate, working in partnership with Llangattock Community Woodlands to manage the site which runs alongside the river Usk in Crickhowell. It is adjacent to the well-used and Town Council managed Bull Pit greenspace and the public footpath running through both sites is very popular with locals and visitors.

LGV has been working with National Park Authority Officers and volunteers to control invasive species and undertake other improvements on the site. This has included well-managed clearance of Himalayan Balsam, repair and opening up of pathways, and woodland management. The SDF grant is supporting continued clearance of areas of rough growth (brambles/nettles/Himalayan Balsam/reeds) to create a meadow alongside the Glanusk footpath for community use and to promote greater biodiversity.

## **9. Brecon Food Festival 2022**

Total SDF Grant £900

Now in its 26th year, this annual event takes place in the Market Hall, bringing together and promoting the best food and drink producers in and around the National Park and south Wales. This raises awareness of what's on offer and makes direct and long-lasting connections between local consumers and producers. The Festival is a popular part of Brecon's annual event programme, bringing many people into the town - all local businesses benefit from increased footfall, commonly reporting that it's the busiest retail day of the year.

The 2022 event was fully booked with more than 50 exhibitors taking part. There were also cookery demonstrations and masterclass tastings, and 6 local choirs performed throughout the day. The Festival promotes Brecon as a Market Town, contributes to delivery of actions in the Town Plan (Retail and Market) and the Wales Community Food Strategy - encouraging the production and supply of locally sourced food in Wales.

## **10. Criw Craggy, Craig y Nos Country Park**

SDF Grant £4,760 / Grant payment in 2022-23: £3,843

Established by Craig y Nos Country Park volunteers over 10 years ago, Criw Craggy is an independently constituted community group. They have established a successful Community Garden on the site and hold weekly work parties to develop and maintain it as a focus for local community engagement, and to enhance the environment and facilities provided at the Country Park.

The group has raised funds over the years to purchase gardening equipment, install raised

beds, seating areas, wheelchair friendly paths, and a storage shed. They have used these resources to engage with the local community to take part in horticultural activity and work with other community groups to provide wildlife advice, tool, bat and bird box making. They also regularly host refugee days and activity days for local families, work with people being supported by Mind and dementia groups and have delivered a storytelling and music festival at the Country Park.

This SDF grant enabled the group to purchase an accessible polytunnel and additional tools for those working on the site, providing protection from rain & wind to enable gardening and learning to take place whatever the weather - particularly important when engaging with vulnerable individuals. The polytunnel will also extend the growing season and increase the range and availability of produce.

## **11. Talgarth Lunch Club**

Total SDF Grant £1,362

A successful and popular luncheon club ran in Talgarth Town Hall for 38 years but did not re-open after Covid. This left a gap in provision and older, isolated people were missing the opportunity to meet others in a warm and welcoming space on a regular basis, with many losing confidence to leave their homes.

In February 2023, volunteers came together to re-launch a Tuesday Lunch Club at the fully accessible Town Hall – the SDF grant supported the purchase of key items of kitchen equipment. Since then, diners have been meeting monthly to share food, socialise, learn about local activities and services, listen to guest speakers - and feel part of their community again. Initiatives like this have a huge impact on well-being – giving everyone involved a sense of purpose and connection.

Club volunteer Anna Weston said “The grant from SDF has enabled us to restart the Lunch Club and go forward with regular monthly meet ups. We could pay for staff training and were able to update and renew the kitchen equipment. The word has spread about the lunch, and we get visitors from a wide area with lots of positive comments not only about the food but also how much people appreciate a friendly space to eat and talk.”

## **12. Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £10,005 / Grant payment in 2022-23: £2,800

Theatr Brycheiniog is Mid-Wales’ main performing arts venue, providing an artistic civic space for communities and visitors. It hosts wide ranging and inclusive arts programmes (theatre, dance, music, talks, comedy etc.), including events and activities specifically for young people, families and audiences who may have additional access requirements. The Theatr’s main house seats up to 478, and there is also a rehearsal studio/function room with a sprung floor, a Gallery, bar, and canal-side café. Its foyer and circulation spaces have recently been upgraded to provide a much more welcoming experience. The space is also a crucial resource for the many active arts groups in the area - including Brecon Little Theatre,



Brecon Festival Ballet, Brecon Jazz Festival, The Westenders, YFC, Baroque Festival, school and youth groups.

The Theatr recently consulted with this wider community (and local businesses, schools, the Town Council, Youth Farmers Groups etc.) to develop an Interpretation Report and Policy – looking at how displays in the building could be updated and made more relevant to community needs and interests. The SDF grant supports a new permanent display in the ground floor café area – a bi-lingual graphic timeline recording and celebrating Brecon's theatrical historic up to the current theatre culture. The timeline will direct visitors upstairs to Level 3 to find out more, explore and join any aspect of groups activity and creativity.

### **13. Dark Sky Planetarium Film – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

Total SDF Grant £2,000

The National Park has some of the highest quality dark skies in the UK. In 2013, the National Park Authority teamed up with the Brecon Beacons Park Society to apply to the International Dark Sky Association to make the entire National Park an International Dark Sky Reserve and became the fifth destination in the world (and the first in Wales) to be accredited. The Brecon Beacons Dark Sky Board supports the dark sky reserve and comprises the Park Authority, the Brecon Beacons Park Society, local Astronomical Societies, local businesses, and a Nature Conservation and Research organisation.

In 2022, funding was secured for a mobile inflatable planetarium and state of the art projector. It is completely accessible and can accommodate pushchairs and wheelchairs. In partnership with Usk Astronomical Society, 94 planetarium shows were given in the last year to schools, local communities and at events with a total of 6,258 people taking part.

The SDF grant supported the development of a new bi-lingual introductory film for the planetarium show - specific and relatable to the Brecon Beacons. It helps those attending understand, value, and protect our dark sky and its role in supporting both human health and that of nocturnal creatures who need dark nights to forage, hunt and migrate. It clearly shows the negative impact light pollution can cause and will include practical suggestions as to how people can reduce their light pollution.

### **14. Mamtez: Reawakened – DerynCoeh Cyf.**

Total SDF Grant £10,000 / Grant payment in 2022-23: £5,000

As part of the WW1 commemorations in 2014, National Theatre Wales staged an acclaimed, sell-out production of Owen Sheers' play Mamtez (now on the WJEC A level drama syllabus) at an ancient woodland site near Usk. Its theme is the attack on Mametz wood of the 38th (Welsh) regiment in France in 1914, where 4,000 were killed or wounded, and it gave audiences a vivid glimpse into life – and death – in the trenches and battlefields of the Somme.

Since 2014, there has been a huge demand for the piece to be restaged, and it's now proposed to do this within Brecon Beacons National Park in collaboration with Theatr

Brycheiniog and other local and national partners.

The SDF grant is supporting initial Research and Development, developing the creative concept for new audiences, understanding the practical considerations needed to stage the project, building delivery partnerships, and enabling applications to be submitted for funding of the final production. The team will undertake environmental impact assessments to manage any potentially negative impacts.

It's hoped that the production will ensure that many more people hear and know about Wales' role in WW1, offer participation and skills development opportunities to local people (especially young people), enable people to experience a fully bi-lingual immersive theatrical performance, and promote the BBNP as a visitor destination – bringing benefits for local businesses.

## **15. Siop Llangors**

Total SDF Grant £1,025

The last shop in Llangors closed in 2005. In 2018, a team of volunteers started work on consulting on and raising funds for a community owned and managed shop, and it welcomed its first customers in November 2021. Sited next to the Youth and Community Centre, the environmentally friendly store and café is a social hub for all members of the communities around Llangors Lake. The shop has a paid manager, but most of the work is carried out by an enthusiastic team of 60 local volunteers.

It has been crucial that income is maximised at peak visitor periods, and it soon became clear that the domestic dishwasher (with a 2+ hour washing cycle) originally purchased was not able to keep up with café custom. The SDF grant supported the purchase of a commercial, energy efficient dishwasher with a cycle of less than 15 minutes, helping to ensure that the shop has a financially sustainable future.



## Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings

These projects support the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals: Prosperous Wales, Resilient Wales, Healthier Wales, Cohesive Communities, Globally Responsible Wales.

### **16. Energy Efficient Solid Fuel Stove - Llangasty Village Hall**

Total SDF Grant £1,745

The Hall is a much-loved community facility for the villages of Llangasty, Pennorth, Talyllyn and Scethrog, used regularly by local community groups for a variety of events and activities. Due to its unique location overlooking Llangors Lake it is also regularly visited by walkers and tourists. Following a community consultation and an energy efficiency survey carried out by Severn Wye, a long-term plan has been produced which looks at making improvements to heating, insulation, kitchen facilities and storage. Phase 1 of the plan involved replacing the popular existing open fire (which loses 60% of heat through the chimney) with a solid fuel stove. Although log burners can contribute to urban pollution, the impact in rural areas is significantly less. Locally sourced well-seasoned wood will be used.

The group is delighted to have taken the first step on the plan to improve the sustainability of the hall for future generations. They also have:

- a cleaned fire surround with 90+ years of ingrained wood and coal smoke removed.
- a safe method of using locally sourced wood to provide primary heat at the hall
- an acceptable level of heating which enables our older customers to feel comfortable at the hall
- improved the air quality in the hall
- employed local businesses to carry out the work

Committee Member Ann Reese said “During the cold spells before and after Christmas, the WI and the art group cancelled their bookings at the hall and moved to other local halls. As soon as the stove was fitted, they returned to Llangasty Hall and have expressed their delight with the wood burner. There has been an increase in enquiries about hiring the hall. Increased use of the hall will ensure its long-term survival.”

### **17. LED Lighting & an Energy Efficient Boiler - St. Mary's Church, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £5,000

With its striking perpendicular Buckingham Tower, 900-year-old St. Mary's Church is a prominent building in the centre of Brecon and an integral part of town life. As well as providing opportunities for worship, the Tower Café in the nave (open 9-4 Monday-Saturday) is a popular venue and meeting place for many community groups.

Severn Wye Energy Agency carried out an energy efficiency audit of the building in March 2022 and a range of options was presented. A trigger point in terms of energy efficiency is a point within a building/organisation where a change is about to occur, offering opportunities to make energy saving improvements. Fortuitously, the audit coincided with an urgent need to replace a faulty gas boiler. Tower Café managers were also complaining about the high running costs and poor function of the current lighting system.

The SDF grant supported:

- a. The installation of LED lighting, estimated to reduce the building's lighting power consumption by at least 70%.
- b. The installation of a new energy efficient gas boiler with de-aerating technology. This removes air and dissolved oxygen from the heating system water allowing improved efficiency of the heat exchanger. It can also improve the lifespan of boilers, pumps, and radiators. It's estimated that adding the de-aerator to the new boiler will result in 10% energy savings.

The work will help to ensure that the building is maintained at an acceptable and appropriate heating and lighting level to enhance the experience of users and visitors. It will also help to maintain the fabric of the medieval building.

## **18. Gilwern Community Centre LEDs – Llanelly Community Council**

Total SDF Grant £1,958

Llanelly Community Council owns and manages the Community Centre and Playing Fields at Gilwern, hosting the local authority run library and community advice hub along with many events and activities run by local residents, clubs, and organisations.

In March 2022, an energy audit of the building was undertaken by The Green Valleys. The SDF grant supported the high priority replacement of the existing lighting throughout with LED lamps, potentially leading to a 40% energy saving. This will be monitored.

## **19. New Energy Efficient Windows - Crickhowell Parish Hall**

Total SDF Grant £2,544

Adjacent to St. Edmund's Parish Church in the centre of town, the 1904 Parish Hall (owned by The Parish House Charity) is well-used by community groups. An energy efficiency audit carried out by Severn Wye Energy Agency identified replacing the existing windows with sealed double-glazed units as a priority action. The Hall Committee has actively engaged with the audit and has used it to develop its own Strategic Energy Efficiency Plan to take forward recommendations on heating, lighting, and insulation in planned phases.

The window replacement was carried out by a Brynmawr based contractor and has had a significant positive impact on heating, maintenance costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

## 20. Brecon Guildhall – Brecon Town Council

Total SDF Grant £5,000

The Council's 15 elected Councillors serve Brecon's 4 Wards, managing a range of services and co-ordinating events throughout the year from their town centre Guildhall base. In June 2022, the Council approved and published a Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The Guildhall has occupied the same site for 700 years and has undergone many changes - the most recent significant renovation was completed in 1888 creating a Council Chamber on the ground floor and Theatre on the first floor.

Severn Wye Energy Agency undertook an energy audit in 2022 setting out priority actions. The SDF grant supported installation of loft insulation, thermostatic radiator valves, boiler upgrades, and pipework lagging. The Council have also replaced existing lights with LEDs. All work was undertaken by local contractors and will result in reduced operational costs / fossil fuel use and improved comfort for building users.

## Built Heritage

These projects support the following Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals: Prosperous Wales, Resilient Wales, Cohesive Communities, Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language

## 21. Market Hall Crickhowell – Façade Restoration

Total SDF Grant £3,625

The striking Crickhowell Market Hall, a much-loved, Grade II\* listed High Street feature, was built by the Duke of Beaufort in 1833-34, originally serving as a town hall as well as a market. Since 2007, it has been leased to and managed by the Market Hall Trust, a charitable trust.

The façade of the building needed maintenance work including cleaning the masonry to remove unwanted or harmful surface material and to reveal the condition of the stone. Repairs were carried out to remedy structural stone decay, using a lime mortar mix to match the existing stone patina, and the sash windows were overhauled and painted.

## **22. Viaduct House, The Struet, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £4,716 / Grant payment in 2022-23: £2,713

The early 19th century Grade II listed properties at 98 and 99 The Struet are privately owned. Collectively they are known as 'Viaduct House' - with lettering across the front of the buildings referring to the once closed but now demolished 1867 Neath and Brecon Railway viaduct over the river Honddu and The Struet. The railway was an integral part of Brecon's history and growth, and the viaduct was an important and imposing structure within the town. The only evidence that remains of the viaduct's existence apart from indistinct stone walls, is the Viaduct House lettering.

A shop unit occupies the ground floor of 98, with accommodation above. The ground floor of 99 is let to Brecon Little Theatre whilst the upper floors are privately rented. The Cadw listing describes them as having 'well-preserved character and good 19th century shopfronts - group Value with adjacent listed properties in The Struet.

The 'Viaduct House' lettering was in disrepair for many years and was in danger of disappearing altogether - a significant loss to Brecon's heritage. A specialist ceramicist has carefully recreated the missing letters and they have been refixed on a renovated backboard. Local contractors have been engaged to decorate both building frontages, enhancing the conservation area and townscape.

## **23. Llanthony History Walks, Leaflet Suite**

Total SDF Grant £4,700

Llanthony History Society was established in 2015 to promote interest in the history and culture of the Llanthony valley and surrounding area of the Black Mountains.

Building on an existing suite of four well-received and high quality local 'History Walks' leaflets, the grant supported the design and publication of a further four. Themes and routes were devised by Society members, drawing on local knowledge and research by both amateur historians and heritage professionals, with illustrated maps drawn by local artist Lisa Hellier:

1. Three Manors Walk
2. Pandy Circular History Walk
3. Grwyne Fawr Walk
4. Partrishow History Walk

The walks feature well-defined tracks and footpaths, but largely avoid heavily used paths such as the Beacons Way and Offa's Dyke Path, with start and finish points in designated car parking areas (there are no bus services within the area). As well as interpreting the history, buildings and landforms of the Black Mountains, the leaflets interpret the Welsh names of buildings, fields, and natural features. They are available from walkers' pubs, self-catering establishments, bunk barns, tourist offices, relevant local pubs and restaurants, farm holiday group members, walking clubs and their memberships, community centres, TICs, libraries,

## **24. The Crooked Window, The Struet, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £5,000

A privately owned property in an historic area of Brecon, this Grade 11 listed building has an unusual historic double-fronted shop window, Georgian to the right and Victorian to the left.

The owners have upgraded the façade of the property and repaired and repainted the Georgian and Victorian shop windows and casings, which were in a poor state. Cracked render and flashing have been repaired, and the windows restored along with the shop-front canopy. The repairs and upgrades have contributed to the enhancement of one of the most historically well preserved and architecturally significant Georgian streets in Brecon. The owners much appreciated their SDF grant: “obtaining the funding made all the difference to this project. Thank you.”

## **25. Sacred Places Booklet, Brecknock History Forum**

Total SDF Grant £1,360

Eleven member groups collaborated to produce a book dedicated to ‘Sacred Places - exploring the rich history of places of worship in the landscape of Breconshire’. It focusses on and promotes the lesser known ‘sacred places’, a wider definition than just churches, aiming to encourage visitors and residents to explore beyond the usual ‘honey pots’. Volunteers from each group researched and developed features showing trails (walking or driving) around the featured places. Each site was identified by points of interest which included sacred significance, architectural features internal or external, important memorials, location or biodiversity of the burial ground, roadside crosses, wells, and yew trees. The book was the focus of Brecknock History Month in September 2022, when well-attended open days and activities took place at many of the featured sites.

## **26. Clark’s Toy Shop, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £5,000

Based in imposing Warwick House on Brecon’s High St, Clarks is a long-established toy, gift, and nursery retail business in the historic centre of the town. Trading since 1905, it has been managed by the same family for four generations and employs six people. The property is Grade 2 listed mid-19th century, having group value with adjacent listed buildings.

The shop front of Warwick House and the adjacent gift shop property were in urgent need of repair and decoration. Colour choices were guided by BBNPA’s Heritage Officer.

Restoration of this prominent town centre building helps to deliver the aims of the Town Plan and enhances the appearance of the High Street and adjacent conservation area, contributing to the town’s distinctiveness. Local traders undertook the work. The Clark family are “pleased to see the buildings restored to their former glory and we have received many positive comments.”



## **27. 18, The Struet, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £1,690

A privately owned property, this Grade II listed building was built by the architect Andrew Maund in the period 1800-1810. The front of the house and woodwork (neglected for many years) was repaired and repainted. Leaking plastic rainwater goods were replaced in cast iron (not grant supported). The building owners said “We achieved everything planned and the house looks great. Many local residents stopped to talk while we were working, and they were universally positive about what we were doing and how it will contribute to the look and feel of the neighbourhood.”

## **28. 9, Watergate, Brecon**

Total SDF Grant £1,000

This privately owned Grade II listed building was constructed in the late 18th – early 19th century and has Group Value with adjacent listed buildings in Watergate. It contains 5 flats which are let at an affordable rent to local people. The grant contributed to essential decoration – colours were approved by the BBNPA’s Senior Heritage Officer.

## **29. Llangynidr Church Bells**

SDF Grant £2,000

The Church of St. Cynidr and St. Mary, dating from the 6th century, is the Parish Church of Llangynidr. In poor condition in the 19th century the building was comprehensively rebuilt in the early 1870s, when the two bells would have last been rehung, and the roof and interior was completely rebuilt in the late 1920s following a fire. The building is in regular use for Sunday services and is a place where local people come together to celebrate life events.

When roof repairs were being undertaken early in 2022, the contractor spotted that the hangings for the bells were in very poor/dangerous condition. Specialist advice was sought, and they were removed. Specialist company Blyth & Co. Ltd identified that whilst the smaller bell was cast in 1870, the other one dated from the early 17th century - much earlier than had been thought. The high quality of the casting makes its pre-reformation dating more likely since casting quality declined after that time.

There was significant community support for the project, and a group of young people based at St Edmund’s Church in Crickhowell undertook a sponsored bell ringing marathon to raise funds for the project. The bells are now re-instated, and the community will be able to enjoy hearing them for many generations to come.

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This document is also available in Welsh.

