

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Fund



www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Introduction by Jo Burgon, Chairman of the Cotswolds Conservation Board Grant Sub-Committee

In 2005, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were given grant funding from the then Countryside Agency (now Natural England) to run a specialised grants programme entitled the 'Sustainable Development Fund' (SDF). This fund was specifically designed to support local projects that contributed to the management aims and objectives of AONBs and thus enhance the value and enjoyment of such landscapes for both people and wildlife.



Jo Burgon, Chairman of the Cotswolds Conservation Board Grant Sub-Committee.

Since its inception, the scheme has supported in excess of 100 projects and contributed over £400,000 worth of investment to the Cotswolds landscape and communities.

The case studies in this brochure provide testimony as to the value successful applicants have gained from the Cotswolds Conservation Board's SDF scheme. The range of projects that have been supported over the years demonstrate very clearly the commitment to, and promotion of local community actions, whether it be upgrading a village hall, supporting a community shop, restoring a landscape or engaging people with their local landscape through the creative arts.

As current Chairman of the Board's Grants Sub-committee, I hope you find some inspiration in this brochure as well as gaining a further understanding of the Conservation Board's work in improving the quality of the environment and the quality of people's lives throughout the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

Background

In 2005 the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) introduced a Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) across England and Wales. Initially approved for a period of three years, the SDF was intended to support the responsibilities, aims and objectives of AONBs in terms of sustainable development.

The scheme provided a flexible and non-bureaucratic means for AONBs to administer funding to local projects which promoted the enhancement, conservation, and enjoyment of the landscape through the three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy, and community.

Now in its tenth year, the Cotswolds SDF is a regional grants scheme available to all individuals, groups or businesses with ideas or projects which aim to conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the the Cotswolds AONB. In particular, the scheme encourages and supports community-based projects which promote sustainable and innovative development, social well-being, and the economic viability of local communities.

What does Sustainable Development mean for the Cotswolds?

Sustainable development within the Cotswolds AONB will promote, enhance and conserve the environmental, economic and community well-being of the area to ensure an improved quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.

What is Sustainable Development?

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Brundtland Commission (1987).
Report of the World Commission
on Environment and Development,
United Nations.

Case Studies

The National Trust – “Ebworth Centre Green Energy Project”

In 2009 the Cotswolds Conservation Board awarded £4,668 to the National Trust as a contribution towards a green energy project at the Trust’s Ebworth Centre, near Stroud. The project involved the installation of a brand new biomass boiler and solar thermal heating system, designed to replace existing inefficient electric heaters and provide sustainable heating and hot water to four listed buildings on the historic Ebworth Estate.

The biomass boiler is powered using logs harvested directly from the Estate which, as part of the Sheepscombe Valley, contains prime woodland within the Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods National Nature Reserve and the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The boiler requires approximately 30 tons of wood each year in order to heat all four of the listed farm buildings, which include an old Granary, two tenant houses, and offices for National Trust staff. Through sustainable management

of the woodland, the National Trust is able to supply a continuous stock of fuel for the boiler and successfully combine nature conservation with reducing their carbon footprint.

“The green energy project has drastically reduced the amount of energy used by the National Trust’s Ebworth Centre. It has been fascinating to witness the transition of the old farm buildings from very energy inefficient to where we are now operating at 93% efficiency. It has also been great to put the wood harvested from our woodland to good use and promote alternative sustainable energy sources.”

Matt Stanway, National Trust Area Ranger



Matt Stanway, National Trust, with the new biomass boiler at Ebworth.



Alderton Pond in 2014 – An idyllic spot for people and wildlife.

North Wilts Medieval Pond Restoration Group “Restoration of Alderton Medieval Fishpond”

The North Wilts Medieval Pond Restoration Group was one of the first SDF grant applicants to be awarded funding by the Cotswolds Conservation Board in the early stages of the scheme. In 2006, the SDF award of £6,400 provided financial backing for the restoration of Alderton Pond, a former medieval fishpond which now provides an idyllic focal point for this quintessential Cotswolds village.

After the pond had been drained and dredged, repairs were made to the surviving dry stone walls and both the stone culvert and ditch into which it discharged were cleared. The traditional clay lining to the pond was restored and

the banks re-seeded. Finally, the Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens erected new fencing around the site and installed the statutory lifebelts.



Cotswold Voluntary Wardens repairing the dry stone wall.

“The SDF grant was essential towards initiating our plans to restore Alderton Pond back to its former glory. Once we had the support of the Cotswolds Conservation Board we were able secure further funding, which ensured that the project was able to reach its final stage of completion. The pond is now well-loved within our community and is often visited by locals and tourists”

Dr Claire Maxwell, a local resident and chairman of the North Wilts Medieval Pond Restoration Group

Case Studies (continued)

North Cotswolds Community Radio (NCCR) – “Founding of an Internet Community Radio Station”

In 2006 NCCR was awarded a SDF grant of £7,789 by the Cotswolds Conservation Board for the founding of a local community-led internet radio station. The grant provided essential funding for NCCR to purchase specialist broadcasting equipment and provide training for a team of volunteers and work experience placements. The Board also helped the NCCR find premises at the site of the Old Police Station in Chipping Campden where the radio has been based since its first official broadcast in autumn 2007.



The Churn Project – “Better Access, Better Chances” project

The Churn Project is a charity organisation established in Cirencester to help unemployed and low skilled workers learn and develop new skills in order to improve their employment prospects in the local area. In 2012 a SDF grant of £9,275 was awarded to the Churn Project to run a pilot training scheme for 15 local unemployed people. Entrants onto the scheme received six weeks training in bicycle repair and maintenance, by the end of which they would look to gain the Cytech Level 1 accreditation, the technical accreditation recognised by the Association of Cycle Traders. The project also involved guided cycle rides around the Cotswolds enabling trainees to develop a greater awareness of the potential cycling options in their local area.

Other Projects

Evesham Beekeepers

Establishment of a new beekeeping training site.

Date: 2010. SDF Award: £2,640



Westonbirt Aboretum

‘Forests for the Future’ – a project aimed at educating people on sustainable forests, trees and climate change.

Date: 2010. SDF Award: £7,373



The Application Process

How much is available?

SDF grants can range from a few hundred pounds up to £13,000 and are offered on a match funding basis, the maximum level of which is determined by the applicant's status as a private business (50%), not-for-profit company (75%) or voluntary organisation (100%). In-kind contributions, such as volunteer time, can also be included as part of a project's match funding.

Who can apply?

Public, private, voluntary sector, individuals, businesses or community groups can apply. Individuals or businesses can only be beneficiaries where the project shows a clear benefit to the wider community

What type of project is eligible?

Individual projects can place particular emphasis on any one of these three goals:

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Ensuring a diverse and prosperous rural economy (which supports the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities)

Ideally, a project should seek to make progress on all three points whilst demonstrating no negative impact.

Essential and desirable criteria for projects can be viewed on the Conservation Board's website.

Corporate Sponsorship

In order to build on the success of the last ten years, the Cotswolds Conservation Board is seeking corporate sponsorship for our next annual SDF scheme.

Sponsors will make a valuable contribution to the funds available for the Cotswolds SDF, essentially increasing the quantity and diversity of projects that can be awarded.

In return, the Cotswolds Conservation Board offers sponsorship opportunities for press and media coverage; corporate prestige through environmental responsibility, community engagement, and a chance to network with like-minded professionals.

Sponsors will be acknowledged in all news items and literature associated with the Cotswolds SDF, as well as appearing in regular local press releases and our biannual Cotswold Lion newspaper. Sponsor company logos will also feature prominently on the Cotswolds AONB homepage and SDF project pages with the option to include website links.



Cotswolds Conservation Board

Fosse Way, Northleach

Gloucestershire GL54 3JH

Tel: 01451 862000

Email: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

 www.facebook.com/cotswoldsaonb

 www.twitter.com/cotswoldsaonb