INTRODUCTION

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority’s Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) – now in its eleventh year of operation – aims to achieve a more sustainable way of living and working in the Dales, while enhancing and conserving local culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and communities.

So far, it has given out more than £1.75 million to 175 projects. The fund, which is managed by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) on behalf of the Authority, is open to everyone – community groups, businesses, local authorities and individuals.

In the last year alone, the SDF has given out £163,978 and helped all sorts of different projects to get started within the National Park. The Fund offers the money either to kick-start a project or to develop it for the good of the local community and of the National Park.

The following is a year end summary of the projects which benefitted from SDF during 2011-12. There will be a new SDF for 2012-13 which commences in April 2012 up to the end of March 2013. Expressions of interest should be made in the first instance to Gillian Muir, SDF Project Co-ordinator at the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, telephone 01524 251002, or email: gillian.muir@ydmt.org.uk
The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust is a key partner in the development and promotion of SWARD which is a specially commissioned play based on the history and complex web of life of an upland hay meadow. Using LEADER funding YDMT has organised seven performances of the play to rural communities throughout the Yorkshire Dales National Park. SDF has funded the production of a DVD of the play. This has been done by getting one of the performances professionally filmed and edited. Copies of the DVD will be available to Schools, Colleges & other interest groups/organisations. A booklet with text and images about hay meadows and the importance of the National Park as a key area for hay meadow conservation and restoration accompanies the DVD.

Project cost £13,085  
SDF grant £9,813
Domestic Firewood Market Support for the Yorkshire Dales

Applicant: Yorwoods

Image: Wood splitter, Yorwoods, Credit: Yorwoods

Yorwoods is a not for profit initiative that provides support services to the forestry industry in the Yorkshire region. They run a series of projects focused on developing the forestry sector through capital investment, business support and training.

The majority of areas in the Yorkshire Dales are off the gas grid as such many people have to buy in expensive fossil fuel to heat their homes. Yorwoods project proposal aims to combat this in two ways. They aim to provide impartial and independent information, advice and guidance to residents and communities on how woodfuel could be used as a realistic alternative and sustainable way of heating their homes or community buildings. Yorwoods also proposes to work with woodland owners or timber businesses with an interest in innovative, sustainable ways of working to become quality assured, certified suppliers of woodfuel. Yorwoods have targeted a number of local businesses including Gayle Mill, Arbortech & Zetland Estates. The SDF grant has been used to pay for Officer time to establish supply chain development and quality assurance accreditation and a marketing campaign to educate residents and communities in the Dales area of the benefits and importance of sourcing quality assured fuel products.

Project cost £18,172      SDF grant £13,240
Wharfedale Beekeepers Association is a registered charity with approximately 80 members; it promotes beekeeping through education and training. They now propose to re-introduce bee keeping at Parcevall Hall. The hall has a history of bee keeping dating back several hundred years although none has taken place in the past 40 years.

The project involves the construction of a wooden hexagonal summer house structure to contain a permanent educational display on the honey bee and related subjects. Within the house will be mounted an observation hive. To the rear of the hive will be a netted demonstration area containing two active bee hives for demonstrations. The educational display and observation hive will be open to all visitors to the gardens from April to October; the WBKA will give free talks and demonstrations on bee keeping one afternoon every weekend throughout the summer school holidays and at other times by arrangement for interested groups in particular from schools and educational establishments. SDF has funded the materials to construct the summer house, observation hive, demonstration area, signage & pathways.

Project cost £9,414

SDF grant £3,900
The Wonder of Wood Ltd is based in Stainforth and manufactures windows, doors and staircases. The majority of their wood is locally sourced oak. The company employs six people who combine traditional joinery skills with modern methods and techniques.

As the business has expanded, more production has led to an increase in the amount of wood shavings and sawdust produced.

SDF funded the development of a briquette maker which would allow use of the excess shavings and sawdust for the manufacture a local fuel source for wood burning stoves and open fires. The applicant also gained funding for an automated extraction system, building and electrical work.

Project cost £49,225  
SDF grant £23,980
The SDF grant will help to develop a Dales Interpretation Centre in a former agricultural barn so that visitors can become more knowledgeable about farming techniques and their impact on the environment. Inside the barn it is envisaged that monitors, displays and interpretation will be used for web links to show wildlife activities. A time lapse farming diary will be created and shown at Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes.

The new centre will also incorporate a 60 kW wood boiler (funded by CO2 Investment Fund). The boiler will heat the house, B&B, interpretation centre and holiday apartments. Firewood will be sourced from woods bordering the farm and will be processed at Gayle Mill. The centre will be open to farm visitors who use the B&B and conference facilities. It will also be available to passers-by and walkers using the Dales Way. SDF funded the refurbishment of the barn, a wildlife camera observation system, a tree hide/platform, walkways, observation hides, feeding stations, nest boxes and trail signage.

Project cost £44,250
SDF grant £22,125
Kirkby Malham School applied to SDF to fund the purchase of a weather station to be housed in its school grounds. The aim of this project is to use the station as an educational tool as part of their geography curriculum. Partner group Malhamdale Initiative (an action group whose aim is to improve the area), will also use the station as a forecasting tool and the resulting forecasts will be published on a website www.Malhamdale.com for the benefit of residents, visitors and local businesses.

The data and forecasts will also be used by My Local Weather; a Yorkshire based company that provides an accurate "real time" daily forecast from 5 local weather stations across the National Park; it also combines this with the national forecast to give the best weather picture.
Hawes School A-Little-Merits

Applicant: Hawes Parent, Teacher & Friends Association

Image:  Allotment preparation, Credit: Hawes Parent Teacher & Friends Association

Hawes Parent Teacher and Friends Association have created an allotment to educate children and the local community about healthy eating.

The children will learn how to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers from seed. Any produce will be used for cooking lessons and for preparing lunches in the school canteen; this will tie in with the school’s healthy eating policy. The children will also learn how to tend an allotment using sustainable methods like compost rotation and rainwater collection from the canteen roof. The students will be doing the work themselves. Parent, teacher and student volunteers will help weeding overgrown areas of the school grounds.

SDF has funded the purchase of fruit trees, a water butt, composter and mini poly-tunnel, seed trays, inserts, propagator lids and gardening equipment.

Project costs £500.00  SDF grant £375.00
A series of Energy Audits have been carried out on 7 community buildings throughout the Yorkshire Dales National Park as part of the Green Communities LEADER funded project. The audit reports have been used to identify and prioritise energy efficiency actions for each building.

An energy audit was undertaken for Clapham Village Hall & for The Devonshire Institute located in Grassington. This revealed a number of improvements that could be made including draught proofing, lighting improvements and installation of a new boiler. The most cost effective improvement is considered to be the installation of loft insulation to both community facilities. SDF funded loft insulation to both buildings. This will be made from recycled glass.

Project costs £20,000

SDF grant £2283
Dales Geodiversity Officer Phase 1

Applicant: Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Image: Dog’s Mercury in limestone pavement, Credit: Tanya St Pierre

This project has been developed by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust to raise the profile of the rich geo-diversity of the Yorkshire Dales. The object of this project is very much about community development and in particular with connecting a broad range of groups and organisations with geo-diversity. The project will encourage local communities to value and appreciate the geo-diversity in their area and this will also include working alongside relevant special interest groups, schools and other projects which are working with groups. These include Dales based communities and projects eg. Dales Volunteers, Nidderdale Volunteers, NYCC Volunteers, Dales based Parish Wildlife Project, Wharfedale Naturalists etc. It will also connect to ‘outreach’ projects which connect to the wider region such as People & the DALES, YDNPA initiatives, National Trust, NAONB Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership. These provide activities raising awareness and conservation work for disadvantaged groups including BME communities, people with physical/mental impairment, adults with learning difficulties, urban based socially/economically disadvantaged people. SDF has contributed funds towards the project officer and event costs.

Project costs £6,018

SDF grant £2,000
Dales Rail Trails

Applicant: Skyware Ltd

The applicant is a publisher and retailer of walk guides. They plan to produce a book of walks in the Yorkshire Dales that people can access using the Settle - Carlisle railway. It will be called “Dales Rail Trails” and promoted as “Ride and Stride”. The book will feature 17 circular and 10 linear walks from stations between Settle and Kirkby Stephen that take walkers into the Western Dales.

The aim is to encourage people to leave their cars at home and visit the Dales by public transport and to encourage people, who do not own cars, a significant number of whom are in the urban areas of West Yorkshire, into the Dales. It is also hoped that holidaymakers who are based in the Dales will be persuaded to explore the area by train, even if they have arrived by car. The walks will all be between 6 and 12 miles and graded according to difficulty. Each walk will have a timescale to give people confidence that they can catch the train home and shortcuts will be described in case of poor weather or other difficulties. SDF funded the design and production & artwork including promotion and publicity.

Project cost £8,000

SDF grant £3,340
Yorkshire Dales Forest School Project

Applicant: North Yorkshire Forest School Training Ltd

Image: Forest School Training Session, Credit: Rachael Atkin

The aim of the proposed project is to develop a network of Leaders providing Forest School education to children, young people and families within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There will be the Forest School Leader Course, establishment of a forest school cluster group, and the provision of a forest school leader kit. As part of the course each trainee Forest School Leader will identify a possible Forest School site, carry out an ecological survey to establish the flora and fauna present, assess the ecological impact of running sessions and develop a 3 year sustainable woodland management plan for the area. Each Trainee Forest School Leader will give children the opportunity to regularly spend time in and learn about natural environments in the National Park. It is hoped that this will be an opportunity to disseminate this knowledge to parents, carers and work colleagues. SDF funded the course promotion, planning, delivery, materials, travel expenses and the Forest School kits.

Project cost £25,038

SDF grant £12,519
Yorkshire Dales Food

Applicant: Friends of Dales Countryside Museum

Image: Sausage Making, Credit: Friends of Dales Countryside Museum

This pilot project will give people the chance to taste Yorkshire Dales food, understand how it was produced, gathered, stored, processed and cooked in the past and gain the confidence, knowledge and skills to use local food in their lives today through a series of events. People will explore food traditions and family favourites, find out about ingredients from the wider world and their influence on Dales food culture; be inspired by seasonal food opportunities and re-discover forgotten skills linked to growing, gathering, storing and cooking within the Dales environment.

A series of practical cookery demonstrations, tasting sessions and have a go workshops will give young and old the chance to share traditional skills and modern tips in a fun environment.

The SDF grant paid for a two day a week project officer between November 2011 & March 2012, together with equipment and materials needed to run the pilot project.

Project cost £8,080  SDF grant £ 6,060
This project proposes to run a programme of climate change focused primary education activities for 10 schools from across Bradford, Keighley and North Leeds during 2012.

Each school will have the opportunity to participate in activities including classroom based sessions on climate change, its impact on the National Park, important habitats and the Park’s role in mitigation. Existing resources are to be used including the online Yorkshire Dales National Park’s Climate Change Game. Participants will also visit the National Park to learn more and participate in activities on site. The group will also work in partnership with the National Trust at Malham where children will have the opportunity to visit the area to see first-hand the importance of the Park in the local and global context, and for the teachers to see how accessible it is for future educational visits. The visits will teach children in a fun and interactive way. They will take part in pond dipping and mini-beast hunts. They will collect surveying information and learn about the importance of habitats and species in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the impacts of climate change. The SDF grant is to be used to pay for staff time, travel expenses, education resources and project development.

Project cost £13,600

SDF grant £10,288
Richmondshire Eco Week 2012

Applicant: Richmond Swale Valley Community Initiative

The project was to run an Eco week at the end of March 2012 to coincide with National Climate Change Week. It consisted of a series of events to raise awareness of renewable energy initiatives and sustainable development in the Richmondshire area of the National Park such as an energy saving show, events looking at habitat improvement, community orchards, a car free day, running a Green Awards Scheme and a Rotary Young Chef Competition utilising local food.

The applicant will engage with parish councils, schools and community groups in the area and work in partnership with Yorkshire Energy Partnership's Green Communities Coordinator and National Park Officers. SDF will be used to fund publicity a newsletter, materials for events, venue hire, session workers and volunteer expenses.

Project cost £5,000

SDF grant £2,000
Ride the Dales

Applicant: Ride Yorkshire Foundation

Credit: Ride Yorkshire Foundation

This project will take place over one year and will enhance equestrian access to parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and widen participation in horse-riding. It will involve the design & mapping of riding routes of different lengths, from half a day to several days, covering existing rights-of-way (including the Pennine Bridleway) and involving farms which can provide horse & rider accommodation.

The SDF grant will be used to provide publicity for the new routes via a website and social media, attendance at agricultural fairs and other exhibitions. It will also assist in identifying ways of widening participation in horse-care and riding in the Dales through checking suitable riding centres and creating links with disadvantaged groups in nearby urban areas.

Project costs £16,840

SDF grant £10,215
Beecroft Cottages Community Centre

Applicant: Horton in Ribblesdale Parish Council

Image: Beecroft Cottages, Horton in Ribblesdale, Credit: YDNPA

This project aims to conserve a row of redundant historic former quarrymen’s cottages at Horton Quarry which is located within the Settle-Carlisle Railway’s Conservation Area to the west of Horton village by bringing them back into use as a community building. The cottages are currently owned by Hanson Aggregates. The Parish Council have been invited to come forward with ideas for the local community to make use of the cottages. Hanson’s have agreed to pay for the refurbishment works for the community uses identified.

The Parish Council now plan to commission a feasibility study which will identify a community use and provide the owners with a specification on which to assess refurbishment costs and commission detailed design. SDF have funded a feasibility study to explore refurbishment, future running & maintenance of the Cottages. The study should also identify a range of visitor and community uses that could be accommodated within the buildings and include an assessment of the refurbishment works to adapt the buildings for the purposes identified.

Project cost £1,517
SDF grant £1,125
This project aims at maximising the environmental and socio-economic benefits of geo-diversity in the Dales. This will involve developing a new geological trail between Winskill Stones-Victoria Cave & Attermire Scars near Langcliffe with key partners and community groups. It is also proposed to undertake some conservation/management work at Victoria Cave & Winskill Stones.

The project proposes to create an exhibition to mark the 175th Anniversary of the Victoria Cave re-discovery based at the Museum of North Craven Life in Settle from July to October 2012. A wide range of media with the public is also planned: interpretative panels, leaflets, an audio trail application for mobile phones & a new web site page. It is also planned to undertake a series of events which relate to the area.

The funding will be used for a project officer, geological trail including events, publicity, interpretation, exhibition & publications and for management & research costs for conservation works proposed at Victoria Cave and Winskill Stones.

Project cost £45,633

SDF grant £10,250
Grinton Church Bat Project

Applicant: St Andrew’s Church, Grinton

*Image: Grinton Church, Grinton, Credit: YDNPA*

St Andrews Church is a Grade II Listed Building and is also home to several species of bat. The church has worked closely with the North Yorkshire Bat group to identify the bat species present. SDF has funded an interpretation board, nominal leader fees for bat walks and a bat detector that will be used to illustrate the sound and location of bats within and around the Church. It is hoped that the interpretation board will encourage visitors to learn more about this protected species and how the National Park environment provides a good habitat for bats.

Project cost £659  

SDF grant £400
The Howgill Range

Applicant: Laura’s Looms

Image: Selection of throws manufactured by Laura’s Looms, Credit: Laura’s Looms

Laura’s Looms produces a range of woollen throws and scarves using wool derived from small hill farms in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The wool is sourced directly from the farm gate and is processed at Farfield Mill near Sedbergh using local transport suppliers for delivery.

The project aims to raise the profile of the products so taking the business to a more viable level. The plan is to double output by selling to trade buyers as well as retail outlets. To do this the applicant will take her products to a major trade fair in partnership with brand promoter ‘Made in Cumbria’. It is also proposed to add photography to the website to better illustrate how the products are produced and what they represent. The applicant also intends to extend the range of products produced to include wools for knitting as well as weaving using different breeds of sheep’s wool sourced from within the Park.

Project cost £3,150

SDF grant £1575
In Raistrick’s Footsteps is a new group that aims to involve young people in a year-long heritage project to promote awareness of the unique environment and heritage of the Dales through practical research activities. The group will establish a regular after school club for 9 to 17 year olds based at Upper Wharfedale School.

SDF monies are to be used to support a launch event to recruit new members, a 5 day excavation entitled the Big Dig, after school sessions, and an open day to showcase their achievements. A club website will be developed and newsletters produced. The group will recruit 25 new members to the club from Upper Wharfedale School itself and its feeder primary schools: Grassington, Kettlewell, Threshfield, Gargrave, Burnsall and Cracoe. Information will also be sent to other schools in the Skipton area and the Craven Museum.

SDF will contribute to the cost of an archaeologist who will run the after school sessions and the Big Dig, speakers, historic maps, aerial photos, archaeological records, geophysical surveying, CRB checks, travel costs and the costs of teaching staff to help with the Big Dig.

Project cost £16,956  
SDF grant £11,887
The project will investigate the Grinton-Fremington Dykes system, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Dykes are a series of banks and ditches, clearly visible to the naked eye, running on both sides of the Swale valley from the floodplain to open moorland.

The aim of the project is to date the system and assess the environment at the time it was constructed, in order to increase academic and popular understanding. The section being investigated has been severely eroded by a washout largely originating from moorland grips. This provides an opportunity to survey and excavate a section while causing minimum damage to unthreatened areas. Samples will be taken for environmental analysis and carbon dating by Durham University's archaeological services. Durham University staff will supervise and train SWAAG members during the excavation work and produce the final report for the Historic Environment Record. Subsequent publicity will include schools talks, lectures and organised walks, with brochures and trail guides distributed through local tourist service providers.

Project cost £7,270

SDF grant £2,500
Mealbank Quarry Phase 3

The aim of the project is to consolidate the Hoffmann Limekiln and its associated structures at Mealbank Quarry in Ingleton. As part of this project it is envisaged that the site will be sensitively developed as an educational, recreational & tourism resource. Mealbank Quarry is a former industrial site of 19th century origins which is located on the outskirts of Ingleton. The site is important for its industrial archaeology, geology and biodiversity.

In addition to the consolidation works it is also planned to improve accessibility to the site through a heritage trail and interpretation. This will involve production of educational, interpretive and publicity materials. The project will engage with local people and community groups including the local Scout Group who are based close by.

The SDF grant will be used as match funding alongside the funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £57,317. In addition YDMT have successfully secured £3500 from the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme.

Project cost £65,817  SDF grant £5000
The aim of the project is to enable residents and visitors to learn about the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the Dales hay meadows. This project will build and add value to the work linked to the recent success of the Authority’s ‘Hay Time Project’.

As part of this project it is envisaged that around 300 people (visitors & residents) will take part in a number of public events (walks, talks & workshops) with around 480 school children from 16 different local schools participating in educational activities delivered by an Education Officer. It is also planned to deliver 32 Discovery Days which will be undertaken in classrooms and in nearby meadows. Downloadable resources such as quizzes, self guided walks and family activity sheets will also be developed.

A new Education Officer post would be created to ensure delivery of the project. The post-holder will be based at YDMT and will manage the project from April 2012 to October 2013. YDMT have already secured £18,815 from LEADER and £2000 from Natural England.

Project cost £27,945       SDF grant £7130