SDF GRANT ASSESSMENT PANEL

**23rd November, 2011**

Present: Mr EA Sangster (Chairman)

Councillors RM Lewis and M Williams; Mmes W Marmara, V Moller, S Hughes and A Robinson and Mr R Smith.

(National Park Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00a.m. – 12.00p.m.)

1. **Appointment of Chairman**

It was **RESOLVED** that Mr E A Sangster be appointed Chairman for the Municipal Year.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor RM Lewis be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year.

**3. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Pembrokeshire Tourism and Mr R Ayre.

**4. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th January, 2011 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th January 2011 be confirmed and signed.

**5. Declaration of Interest**

Ms A Robinson declared an interest in projects SDF 0313 Newport Memorial Hall and SDF0315 Martletwy Sustainable Community Project.

Ms V Moller declared an interest in project SDF 0313 Newport Memorial Hall.

Ms W Marmara declared an interest in projects SDF 0315 - Martletwy Sustainable Community Project, SDF 0313 Newport Memorial Hall and SDF 0312 Low Carbon Cook Off.

Councillor RM Lewis declared an interest in project SDF 0315 – Martletwy Sustainable Community Project as he was the Project Manager for the proposal. As such, he would not take part in any discussions on any of the projects under consideration that day and he withdrew from the meeting altogether.

In view of Councillor Lewis’ withdrawal from the meeting, the Panel was left inquorate. It was **AGREED** to continue with the meeting as recommendations were made to the Chief Executive on the applications being considered.

**6. Sustainable Development Fund Update Report**

It was reported that during the year £235,247 of SDF funding was paid to ten out of thirteen approved projects, thereby helping to deliver a variety of sustainability objectives within and around Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Two out of a possible five new project applications were approved and seven projects, all with an intervention rate of less than 50% were completed. One project had been cancelled, releasing £83,000 of previously committed funding and three projects, including two large, high value projects were significantly delayed. One project had been re-submitted and was under consideration that day. The report went on to say that, even though only £200,600 of the Authority’s allocated £216,666 had been drawn down, and – even though two new projects had been supported in the last financial quarter of the year – the delays and cancellation had resulted in a balance surplus of £95,700 at the end of the financial year which was carried forward to honour funding commitments into 2011/12.

The Sustainable Fund Administrator went on to say that, were all projects before the Panel that day to be approved, there would still be £21,000 of uncommitted funds for the financial year. One Member enquired as to whether the underspend could be added to the Little Green Grant scheme instead. The SDF Administrator replied that there was the flexibility to do this and this was being publicised through funding fairs and the Western Telegraph.

It was reported that the SDF Annual Report, setting out the progress of the Sustainable Development Fund from April 2010 to March 2011 was submitted to Welsh Government in 2011.

With regard to the Little Green Grant scheme, seven applications had been received and considered for funding in 2011/12. Four had been approved, one deferred and two rejected.

It was then reported that the impact of Sustainable Development funding on the development of low carbon communities was chosen to pilot a scrutiny process established by the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities. The findings of the scrutiny study had been reported to the Authority in October 2011 and Members resolved to adopt the recommendations. The Chairman reported that the findings of this scrutiny project had been copied to the Minister who made positive comments about it.

It was reported that on 29th September 2011 the Welsh Government agreed a change in administration of the Sustainable Development Fund. In the draft budget, Ministers had committed £1.2 million to the three National Park Authorities and £700,000 to the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty for 2012/13 and 2013/14. In addition it was intended to provide National Park Authorities with SDF monies through their revenue grant budgets. It was felt that in the current economic climate to have the money guaranteed for the next two years was welcomed.

Panel Members were informed that the change in how SDF funding was received in future might affect the way in which the Panel operated. It was considered, however, that there would still be a need for a Panel but it might need to work in a slightly different way.

It was **AGREED** that the report of the SDF Administrator be adopted.

**7. Applications for funding under the Sustainable Development Fund**

The Assessment Panel considered five applications for funding under the Sustainable Development Fund. The applications were considered in detail against Welsh Government and Panel criteria, following a brief presentation by four of the project applicants.

| Ref No | **Project Name** | **Presentation by** | **Organisation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SDF 0308 | Training Skills for the Management and Maintenance of Woodland and Wetland Habitats | No presentation was given as this was a re-submitted application | Pembroke 21C Community Interest Company |
| SDF 0312 | Low Carbon Cook Off | Jake Holyfield (Director), Duncan Richmond, Matt Lees, Alice Williams | The Eco Centre Wales |
| SDF 0313 | Newport Community Energy Project : Hall Fit for Future: Reducing Energy Use | Siobhan Ashe, Newport Memorial Hall Manager | Newport Community Energy Projects (NCEP) |
| SDF 0314 | Tŷ Unnos Development of Building Components from Low Grade Timber | David Jenkins, Project Manager | Coed Cymru |
| SDF 0315 | Martletwy Sustainable Community Project | Peter Howe (PCC Community Regeneration Unit) and Mr & Mrs Oxley (Martletwy Community Council) |  |

It was **AGREED** that the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) be recommended to approve:

1. **SDF 0308 Training Skills for the Management of Woodland and Wetland Habitats** as it was felt that the model appeared to work and could possibly be replicated and applied elsewhere. Some advice and suggestions included making better links with other organisations. It should be drawn to their attention the benefit of establishing links with other organisations e.g. NFU and private landowners.
2. **SDF0313 – Newport Community Energy Project: Hall Fit for Future: Reducing Energy Use** as it was felt that this project was well thought out and very good for the community. It was also advised that if the Authority funded the photo voltaic (PV) aspect of the renovation then they could not claim the feed-in tariff. This had been verified with the Welsh Government and they would require a letter specifically excluding Authority funding for the PV aspect. It was also recommended that as the quotes received were high, three tenders for the work to be carried out would be required.
3. **SDF – Tŷ Unnos Development of Building Components from Low Grade Timber** as it was felt that this was an innovative project and very well thought through. It was also felt that this project should be publicised more for the work it was doing.

It was further **AGREED** that the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) be recommended to refuse:

a) **SDF 0312 Low Carbon Cook Off** as it was felt that the outcomes were too unquantifiable and the project was not sustainable in the long term. It was also felt that the administration cost was too high and that the money should pay for the project costs. It was suggested that they may be eligible for a Sustainable Food Communities Grant.

It was further **AGREED** that the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) be recommended to defer:

1. **SDF0315 – Martletwy Sustainable Community Project** as it was felt that the project needed the following:
2. Better demonstration of wider community support.
3. Better understanding of the rules on housing for local people.
4. Explanation of why they had not gone for RDP funding.
5. Clearer explanation of financial details e.g. tenders.