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SOUTH WEST PEAK LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Name of Project	Engaging Communities
Delivery Partner	Support Staffordshire
Name of Person Completing Report	Celia Muir and Esther Jones
Start Date of Project	1 st January 2017
End Date of Project	February 2022
Date of Report	June 2022

Aims and Objectives of the Project

Engaging Communities focused on engaging with people who love the South West Peak (SWP); those who live or work in the area or people who are just visiting. The project aimed to leave a long-lasting legacy in the South West Peak by building a sense of ownership and encouraging practical community involvement. To achieve this, project staff raised awareness of the aims of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership, and promoted a community grant scheme to community groups, parish councils, schools and churches. These groups were either based within the SWP area or outside but active within the landscape.

The Engaging Communities project offered small grants of between £500 to £10,000 for eligible community projects that addressed one or more of our project objectives. The scheme funded up to 50% of the total project costs and groups needed to provide match funding for their projects. This could be in the form of cash match (attracted through fundraising or from reserves) or a mix of cash and in-kind contributions, with the in-kind portion forming up to 25% of the total project costs. Project staff provided support to communities to design and implement community projects and to apply for funding, both from the Partnership and from other funding organisations.

A grants panel composed of volunteers knowledgeable about the area and interested in contributing to the aims of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme was recruited to assess grant applications and decide on awards.

Project Delivery

The staff team for the Engaging Communities project was originally made up of a Community Engagement Officer (30 hours per week) and a Grants Officer (14 hours per week). Their roles were respectively to reach out and engage communities within the Landscape Partnership Scheme area and

those without but with a heart for the area and for the aims of the Scheme; and to promote, support applicant groups and organisations (e.g. to seek funding), and administer the Scheme's grant scheme.

In all, their project activities included

- Contacting community groups, parish councils, schools and churches to raise awareness about the aims of the Partnership and supporting them to develop and implement community projects.
- Providing support and training for community groups about the grant application process and how to apply for funds from other providers so they can continue to apply for and manage grants long after the end of the project.
- Helping people gain skills and knowledge about the landscape through volunteering opportunities and the implementation of community projects.
- Supporting the development of new relationships between communities and encouraging people from outside the South West Peak who don't currently have a connection to learn more about the area and enjoy the benefits it offers.
- Helping people to understand and appreciate the landscape of the South West Peak and building a greater sense of ownership.
- Promoting the South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Engaging Communities project:
 - At events (self-organised events such as workshops and events organised by others such as shows and fetes)
 - Online via websites and social media, including through Support Staffordshire's channels and those of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme
 - Via local press and publicity (print and online media)
- The Coronavirus pandemic provided particular challenges: we made available to grant beneficiary groups Support Staffordshire's generic guidance packages and training for supporting communities during the pandemic; and supported them to make decisions about their funded projects, including in some cases either adapting their projects to deliver online, delaying their projects until they could meet relevant health and safety requirements or if necessary curtailing their projects. The work of liaison and supporting groups from the start of the pandemic was particularly arduous and time-consuming as some staff were furloughed, some organisations closed temporarily and were uncontactable, others restructured or their staff moved on to different jobs, and some entirely volunteer-led simply found navigating the pandemic itself was enough to deal with. It was therefore a huge credit to the project staff that their perseverance paid off and all but three of the funded projects were delivered.

The project staff were based at the Leek offices of Support Staffordshire. This proved relatively central for accessing all parts of the South West Peak, as well as providing easy access to office resources and admin support. It has also enabled close working with other Support Staffordshire staff and services, enabling staff to benefit from the collective knowledge, expertise and networks of the Locality and Volunteering teams on organisational development and all aspects of volunteer recruitment and retention.

The Community Engagement officer quickly made contact with Parish Clerks, Chairs of village hall committees and other organisations that Support Staffordshire and the neighbouring voluntary sector

support organisations in Derbyshire and Cheshire were in contact with. She offered presentations to groups and organisations, and more informal chats with individuals and representatives of groups to spread the word about the Landscape Partnership Scheme and in particular the grants scheme. This proved very successful and quickly brought her into contact with over 100 groups.

Attracting grant applications was a slower process: the Engagement and Grants officers worked collaboratively to help groups come up with ideas and then turn their ideas into fundable project proposals, while the Grants officer regularly wrote press releases to highlight the grant opportunities. Both officers also took stands out to events such as funding fairs, parish councillors' networking meetings, village fetes and country shows, sometimes representing the Engaging Communities project and grants scheme alone, and at other times in collaboration with partners' projects to promote the entire Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The projects funded took place in locations throughout the South West Peak Landscape Partnership area. They were a mix of capital and revenue projects, led by organisations based within and without this geographical area. Applicants were asked to confirm that any necessary permissions had been sought. All Community Grants applicants had to be non-profit making bodies, and any site-specific projects needed to demonstrate public benefit and could not lead to private gain.

We had anticipated awarding 40 grants with an average value of £7,500. In fact we found that many groups applied for far smaller grants, the average being a little under £4,400, so we sought to fund many more groups in order to distribute the grant pot. A total of 75 grants were awarded for 75 projects; 3 were withdrawn, either due to the difficulty of raising match funding or the challenges of delivering during the Coronavirus pandemic; 72 projects were delivered or partially delivered.

In July 2019 we added dedicated project management hours when the complexity of the financial aspect of the grant claims became apparent. The offer to groups to provide a mix of cash and in-kind contributions proved more complicated than expected, and the higher number of smaller grants also produced more work. The additional hours provided the time needed to adequately support the Grants Officer in their work assessing grant beneficiaries' funding claims, and to complete the quarterly project claim books including the details of the grant beneficiaries claims.

Both the original project officers left their posts in April and May 2020, during the first lockdown of the Coronavirus pandemic. At this point a good deal of community engagement had been carried out, and over 90% of the grant funds awarded; but many groups had not completed their projects and were struggling to deliver them. It was a good opportunity to reconsider how the remainder of the project should be staffed. By amalgamating the roles of Engagement and Grants officers we were able to both provide a service that was most appropriate to the situation, and extend the period of the Engaging Communities project, hopefully to a point where groups could complete their projects. In June 2020 we therefore appointed a single Community Engagement and Grants Officer (30 hours per week) to fulfil both roles. This officer subsequently reduced their hours to 21 hours per week by mutual consent in July 2021, ultimately enabling their delivery to continue until February 2022, and almost all groups to complete their projects.

It was proposed to establish two community grants panels – one in the Staffordshire Moorlands part of the South West Peak and one in the Cheshire East/ High Peak part. In practice it proved simpler and more effective to have one larger grants panel which met at the fire station at Longnor. An initial group of 8 volunteer panel members was recruited and trained quickly at the start of the project, with a further 6 volunteers joining over the next 18 months, bringing the total number of volunteers to 14.

The grants panel were inducted before joining the panel. Issues of confidentiality and conflicts of interest were highlighted, and the criteria under which they were to assess the applications were introduced.

These included

- a. Fit with the grant criteria
- b. Community benefit
- c. Community support
- d. Realistic, achievable and workable projects
- e. Clear robust project management
- f. Strength and viability of the applicant organisation

As we neared the end of the project, the panel was encouraged to put greater emphasis on some of these features to ensure that those funded were most likely to complete within the timeframe as well as fit well with the grant criteria.

Whilst obviously wanting to leave as legacy within the groups we supported the enthusiasm and passion to continue to provide activities and projects on the South West Peak Landscape Partnership themes, we also wanted to ensure that the groups themselves had the best chance of sustaining themselves. We therefore offered as many beneficiary groups as we could the opportunity for a 'health check'. This reviewed their governance, committee skills, resourcing in terms of both funding and volunteers, and their future plans. Resourcing was a common area of issue, and where possible groups were supported to address this or referred to their local voluntary sector infrastructure body for support.

For our learning we also surveyed grant beneficiaries to gain their feedback on their experience of receiving a grant through the Scheme.

Staff resource

1 x Community Engagement Officer (30 hrs per week March 2017 to April 2020)

1 x Community Grants Officer (14 hrs per week March 2017 – April 2020)

1 x Project Manager (4 hours per week, July 2019 – March 2022)

1 x Community Engagement & Grants Officer (30 hours per week July 2020 – June 2021, reduced by request to 21 hours per week – February 2021)

Budget resource

The initial planned project budget for Engaging Communities was £632,602 (including VAT) which was subdivided as follows, showing planned and actual costs incurred against each NLHF budget heading:

NLHF budget heading	Example items	Intended cost	Actual cost
New staff costs	Community Engagement Officer and Community Grants officer part-time posts	£130,326	£138,010
Training for staff		£1,099	£217
Travel for staff		£8,394	£1,800
Travel and expenses for volunteers		£3,120	£300
Equipment and materials (activity)	Office costs, phones etc	£3,722	£3,844
Other costs (activity)	Room hire, refreshments, events	£7,500	£2,327
Recruitment		£900	£0
Publicity and promotion		£0	£300
Other costs	Community grants	£450,000	£444,637
Full cost recovery		£27,541	£34,178
TOTAL		£632,602	£625,599

The project was funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and £150,000 worth of match funding towards community projects from a wide range of charitable trusts and community group reserves.

The project attracted additional cash match and £176,450 of reported volunteer and in-kind contributions.

Partnership working – team involvement, steering group etc

The Engaging Communities staff benefitted from the local knowledge and intelligence within the wider Support Staffordshire staff team to seek out and attract potential grant beneficiaries, and to provide the best possible advice and support on common issues for groups such as fundraising and recruiting and retaining volunteers.

As this project was about working with the local community, the main partners were those local people who got involved in the project as volunteers – either in developing and running community projects that come forward as community grants applications, or as members of the community grants panel.

The Engaging Communities team looked out for opportunities to work with other projects within the Landscape Partnership Scheme including those also looking for community engagement, and also collaborated to take displays to many shows and fetes in the area.

As the Landscape Partnership scheme area crossed county boundaries, the Engaging Communities team built useful relationships with relevant neighbouring voluntary sector support organisations, including the CVSs and Rural Community Councils. This enabled them to refer groups to the most appropriate organisation for support beyond the life of their grant-funded project.

The other key organisations involved will be High Peak CVS, Cheshire East CVS and Cheshire Action as the VCSE infrastructure bodies covering the Derbyshire and Cheshire parts of the project area. They will be involved to facilitate additional and on-going support for VCSE organisations based outside Staffordshire.

Volunteers

As described above, this project has been about working with local communities, where the groups and organisations benefitting from the grants scheme have been led by volunteers and often part or all of the project work has been carried out by volunteers. Alongside this our 14-strong grants panel has been made up entirely of volunteers.

Community involvement

- 89 community grant applications were reviewed.
- 75 community grants were awarded for 75 different community projects (3 projects were withdrawn).
- 72 projects delivered (3 of which were part delivered).
- According to grant beneficiaries’ end of project reports
 - More than 90,000 people benefitted as a result of the completed projects including more than 25,000 children and young people.
 - More than 1,600 volunteers were actively involved in projects

What Has (and has not) Been Achieved

Outputs

	Intended Output	Delivered Output
1	2 jobs created (total 44 hours is 1.19 fte at 37 hours)	3 jobs created
2	50 community groups engaged with (received advice/ information/ presentation face to face)	168 community groups engaged
3	100% parish councils in SWP engaged with (received face to face or at least 5x emailed advice/ information/ presentation) Planned number was 30 (NB There are 30 parish councils which touch the Scheme area, some very marginally. All parish clerks were contacted, but some said at the outset that their councils would not be interested, and not to waste time trying to engage them.)	24 Parish Councils engaged
4	5 new community groups helped to set up	2 new groups: Savio House Community Garden Group Rainow History Group

5	40 community groups receiving community grant	60 groups receiving community grant (13 groups received 2 awards for 2 different projects, 1 group received 3 awards for 3 projects)
6	£300K of Match Investment: Cash match funding £150K (at least) In Kind match up to a value of £150K	£326,450 of Match Investment: £150,000 Cash Match £176,450 In Kind Match
7	14 Volunteers recruited to Grants Panel	14 Volunteers recruited
8	£300K additional funding leveraged	£325,969 of additional funding

Key Outputs

- More than 90,000 people benefitted as a result of the completed projects
- More than 1,600 volunteers actively involved in projects
- More than 25,000 children and young people reached
- 89 grant applications reviewed
- 75 grants awarded for 75 projects (3 withdrawn)
- 72 projects delivered
- £294,559 of grant funding was distributed; this attracted in excess of £150,000 of cash match funding and in-kind contributions through donations of skills, equipment and volunteer time of £176,450
- Over 25% of projects funded targeted groups working with people experiencing disadvantage of some sort, many of whom would not have been able to access the South West Peak area of the Peak District otherwise.

South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme

Engaging Communities Project Highlights

5+ years 2017-2022

89 grant applications reviewed

5 new brideway gates installed

6 projects involving walking trails and new trail maps/leaflets

75 community grants awarded

£300,000 of grant funding

More than £150,000 worth of COMMUNITY CASH MATCH funding

17 Projects involving Village Halls and community buildings

9 Projects involving CHURCHES

60 community groups delivering projects

15 projects involving history/heritage

10 projects involving getting people outside

5 ARTS projects

3 projects to enhance or create new places to stay

7 projects involving gardens/nature/wildlife habitat improvements

168 community groups engaged

14 volunteer members of the Community Grants Panel

More than £150,000 worth of in-kind VOLUNTEER TIME CONTRIBUTED

7 webinars attended by **833** people

Heritage Fund

SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE

SOUTH WEST PEAK LANDSCAPE AT A CROSSROADS

The Old Sunday School

A Village Life

Was Time Spent In The Moorlands

Outcomes

N.B. Please refer to Appendix 1 (separate PDF file) regarding results from questionnaires mentioned in the section.

INTENDED OUTCOME 1:

Improved understanding and relationship between different communities – the engagement work will encourage people from different communities to get involved, not least through volunteering for some project activity

DELIVERED OUTCOME 1:

- ✓ Over 80% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said their understanding and relationships with other groups/communities has improved
- ✓ Extract from article written by Keith Quine, Chair of Trustees for Hartington Village Hall (re. Project ref SWP19022):
“The benefits have been considerable. Not only does the Village Hall now have a robust roof but the underlying insulation will significantly reduce heat loss. As important is the way the community has come together to support the Hall which by 2017 was running at a deficit and seeing declining use. The number of groups using the Hall has grown in the past three years, the Management Group of 14 can now call on the support of around 16 other volunteers to assist in cleaning, painting and decorating and some maintenance, and just over 100 subscribed to the annual lottery with fund raising events being exceptionally well attended. The project has served to bring the community together and show the initiative, creativity and resilience needed to make things happen. In recent months a significant amount of internal decoration has taken place and work has already started on fund raising to replace the ancient heating system.
There is now a belief within the community that we can bring about much needed improvements in our Village Hall which, as depicted in our logo devised by members of our primary school, is at the heart of our community.”
See the full article here: <https://mailchi.mp/50e8c763135a/south-west-peak-autumn-newsletter-5493695>
- ✓ Feedback: When asked; Please tell us what about your project makes you feel most proud one response was: “Brought the community together behind a common cause”

INTENDED OUTCOME 2

People have a stronger sense of place, they are engaging with landscape, have better experiences, and have gained respect and understanding – a key outcome for the community engagement project with the community grants enabling communities to get directly involved in local projects contributing to the SWPLP objectives

DELIVERED OUTCOME 2

- ✓ 57% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said their project has resulted in people have a stronger sense of place
- ✓ 52% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they are engaging more or better with the landscape

- ✓ 86% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they have a better understanding of the landscape
- ✓ 44% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they have gained more respect for the landscape

INTENDED OUTCOME 3:

People have gained skills and knowledge about the landscape – this project will facilitate the involvement of local people and community groups in SWP projects that deliver this.

DELIVERED OUTCOME 3:

- ✓ 65% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they have gained new knowledge and 48% have gained new skills

Feedback on skills/knowledge gained include:

- ✓ “.....as a group we added to our wildlife knowledge”
- ✓ “Young people participating have learnt more about conservation and the environment. One young person learnt how to climb and now he has joined a climbing club. Another young person fell in love with the outdoors and now has taken up full time employment with an outdoors education centre.”
- ✓ “Gain knowledge of the importance of the south west peak.”
- ✓ “...Knowledge of their local area, the geography and history”
- ✓ “Many volunteers have learned new skills and gained knowledge around conserving and enhancing habitats for wildlife and biodiversity as a direct result of the project and its outcomes”
- ✓ “better knowledge of ecology”
- ✓ “Plant identification, local farming practice, wild foods, health benefits of being outside in nature.”
- ✓ “Gained knowledge of the landscape and how it was used but Romany families in the past, such as using plants for medicines and food, and how this influenced the Travelling routes across the Staffordshire Moorlands and beyond.”

INTENDED OUTCOME 4

People value the environment and understand the benefits it provides - this project will support the engagement of local people and community groups in the South West Peak (SWP) in activity that will encourage this.

DELIVERED OUTCOME 4

- ✓ 57% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they value the environment and understand the benefits it provides

INTENDED OUTCOME 5

People living nearby who don't currently have a connection to the landscape are supported to build a relationship – by promoting and facilitating volunteering within the SWP, many people who live in

nearby towns and communities, and also those from further away, will get an opportunity to get involved in activity in the SWP landscape. Also, community groups from nearby towns will be able to seek community grant support for projects within the SWP such as a series of walks focusing on local heritage.

DELIVERED OUTCOME 5

- ✓ 65% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said their project attracted new volunteers
- ✓ 75% of the new volunteers were local residents and 19% were from other areas
- ✓ 77% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said these new volunteers have continued to be involved
- ✓ 6 of the funded projects involved walking trails and new trail maps/leaflets:
 - Project ref. SWP17003 Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Charity Trust and Project ref. SWP19030 Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Charity Trust:
 - Project ref. SWP18001 The Bridgend Centre:
<https://bridgendcentre.org.uk/heritage-trails/>
 - Project ref. SWP19011 Bollington Community Association:
<https://bridgendcentre.org.uk/bridgend-tree-trails/>
 - Project ref. SWP19036 Friends of the Peak District and CPRE S.Yorks:
<https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/news/south-west-peak-landscape-partnership-grant-awarded-for-boundary-walk> and
https://vimeo.com/539517945?fbclid=IwAR0hKRr_pAXMdLcuUNM5fvPfwTf3C1IS0JWg6BmWURdsd27iSnZ57L89ifE
 - Project ref. SWP19040 Longor Action Group:

INTENDED OUTCOME 6

Historic and built elements of the landscape are recorded, understood, valued and restored – local heritage is important to communities and the community grant scheme will support projects that will contribute to this aim.

DELIVERED OUTCOME 6

- ✓ 43.5% of of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said their project has resulted in ensuring that historic and/or built elements of the landscape are recorded, understood, valued, restored
- ✓ SWP17004 Tudor Farming Interpretation Group – Sheen Graveyard Survey
 - [Launch of 'Resting in Peace', a book and website about the graveyard survey at St Luke's Sheen: South West Peak](#)
 - [St Luke's Graveyard Survey | Peeling Back the Layers](#)
 - [Sheen Graveyard Survey Home Page \(champhs.co.uk\)](#)
 - [Book Launch: Resting in Peace: South West Peak](#)
 - [Projects for Community Groups and Parish Councils: South West Peak](#)
 - [Christmas Newsletter: South West Peak](#)

INTENDED OUTCOME 7

The existing mosaic of natural heritage is maintained and enhanced – the community grants scheme will encourage local groups to not only get involved in an immediate restoration, conservation or interpretation projects but such projects will enhance community interest and knowledge and lead to longer term safeguarding, maintenance and enhancements of both the built and natural heritage.

DELIVERED OUTCOME 7



South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives	
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area

- 54 out of 72 projects met objective 1
- 55 out of 72 projects met objective 2
- 58 out of 72 projects met objective 3
- 69 out of 72 projects met objective 4

✓ 7 projects involving gardens/nature/wildlife habitat improvements

✓ KRIV:

<https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/news/engaging-communities-volunteering-update>

✓ Sections of the Peak District Boundary Walk in the South West Peak area:

[South West Peak Landscape Partnership grant for Boundary Walk - CPRE Peak District and South Yorkshire \(cprepsy.org.uk\)](#)

INTENDED OUTCOME 8

Ecosystem services enhanced

- **Provisioning:** foraging food courses; garden maintenance social enterprise for young people with learning difficulties; beehives at a social enterprise care farm; craft skills courses – dry stone walling and hedge laying; rain water harvesting at a local cricket club house;
- **Regulating:** improving carbon sequestration and reducing climate change through tree planting and coppicing; purifying water and air through log jams, woody debris and stream rehabilitation; training volunteers to regularly test river water and send the data through to EA; controlling pest and disease through Himalayan Balsam clearance, rhododendron clearance, and monitoring water courses for Demon shrimp;
- **Cultural:** Non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences such as creative writing working with mental health patients; visual arts project working with elderly residents of a retirement

home; a League of Friends oral history film. Science and education including an eco-cabin for a local school; Forest Schools; plant and animal identification; habitat surveys



DELIVERED OUTCOME 8



- ✓ 40 projects delivered covering arts, crafts, creative writing, outdoor activities, habitat improvement/restoration/development, drystone walling, capture of oral history, storytelling, bush crafts, outdoor adventure, provision of camping pods, plant and animal identification etc.

For example:

- SWP19028 National Trust Lyme Park Project: 2 x 2 day drystone walling courses.

National Trust Wallers For The Future (SWP19028)





South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	🟢
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	🟢
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	🟢
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	🟢

The Project:


- 19 miles of historic drystone wall to take care of over the 1400 acre estate
- 2 x 2 day drystone walling courses (beginners & advanced)
- 10 Volunteers added to Lyme Park's drystone walling team
- Qualified DSWA instructor
- New skills & knowledge gained: Building a structurally sound wall, including foundations and through stones; Using pins/frames to obtain the required batter; safe dismantling; shaping stone and laying coping stones.





Nestling on the edge of the Peak District, Lyme was once home to the Legh family and, in its heyday a great sporting estate. The 1,400 acre estate with its medieval herd of red deer offers fantastic walks and stunning views. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lyme>

- SWP17008 Borderland Voices Project: 20 Creative writing & 20 arts sessions/workshops for people coping mental health issues

Borderland Voices Looking In/Looking Out SWP Perspectives (SWP17008)




South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	🔴
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	🟢
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	🟢
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	🟢

The Project:

- 12 months
- 98 Creative writing (49) & arts (49) workshops
- Professional writers and artists
- Visits to key locations in the South West Peak area
- Exhibitions
- Calendar featuring works created



Borderland Voices promote mental health through the arts and raise public awareness and understanding of mental health issues by delivering accessible arts projects and offering creative space for self-expression within a mutually supportive community [Home page Borderland Voices](#)

- SWP19016 East Cheshire Eye Society Project: Development of an art group for people with sight loss

East Cheshire Eye Society
Art Group Project (SWP19016)






South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	●
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	●
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	●
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	●

The Project:


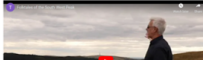
- Development of an art group with tactile focus for people with sight loss
- Producing multi-sensory art works including texture and sound
- Shaping the art works to reflect the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the South West Peak
- Visionary Awards 2019 Inspirational Service Delivery 



East Cheshire Eye Society, is an independent charity. Their purpose is to enable people affected by sight loss to lead fulfilling lives at work, at home and in the community.
The charity is run by a board of voluntary trustees, some of whom have a sight impairment themselves

 <https://eastcheshireeyesociety.org.uk/>

- SWP18005 Peak In The Past: Illuminating the History and Folktale Traditions of the South West Peak project

Peak In The Past
Illuminating the History and Folktale Traditions of the
South West Peak (SWP18005)





South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	●
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	●
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	●
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	●

The Project:

- The creation of a filmed series featuring the Peak District's rich tradition of folktales which have been passed down orally from one generation to the next through the centuries.
- Mark Henderson recites folktales relating to the South West Peak out on location in the landscape that shaped each story.
- Students at Buxton and Leek College were afforded the opportunity to contribute artistic representations of key dramatic scenes for each folktale to incorporate in the films to help bring the narratives to life.
- The films aim to highlight the richness and variety of the region's folktales in an accessible and strikingly visual way which will help to preserve and promote the folklore traditions of the locality as well as enhancing our appreciation for the dramatic landscape in which such stories were forged.

Peak in the Past is a community heritage group dedicated to exploring and sharing peak district history through the provision of documentary film footage, historical images and information resources and conducting reminiscence and educational activities. [Peak in the Past - Home](#)



INTENDED OUTCOME 9

People will have volunteered time – a key part of the project is to go into community settings and promote the range of SWP activity that local people can engage with through volunteering

DELIVERED OUTCOME 9

- ✓ 14 volunteers were successfully recruited to form the Engaging Communities Grants Panel <https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/blogs/south-west-peak-welcomes-new-grant-panel-volunteer> and Grants Panel meetings promoted/advertised: <https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/activities/community-grant-panel-meeting2>
- ✓ £156,711.00 worth of in-kind volunteer time

✓ The essence of this project was communicating with the general public, community groups and parish councils within the South West Peak to encourage involvement in all aspects of the Landscape Partnership activity.

Communication was primarily through the Community Engagement Officer using email mailing lists built up through the development phase, and working in conjunction with other CVS organisations e.g. High Peak CVS and Cheshire East CVS, for the parts of the area they cover.

✓ There were regular press releases highlighting the deadlines for community grants applications and using case studies as examples with photos of grant assisted projects e.g.

<https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/projects/community/engaging-communities/projects-for-community-groups-and-parish-councils>

And <https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/projects/community/engaging-communities/projects-for-community-groups-and-parish-councils>

Much of the follow up work undertaken was by telephone with face to face meetings, including scheduling presentations on the SWPLP to every parish council in the area.

✓ In addition, the Community Engagement Officer used all other methods of communication available through SWPLP including the website and Facebook, providing appropriate material/content for the Communications Officer e.g.

<https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/news/engaging-communities-october-spotlight>

✓ The Support Staffordshire website was used as a resource to share stories about Engaging Communities Projects via the 'news' section e.g. [Community Grants Project Update: South West Peak](#) and ebulletins and to promote volunteer opportunities such as 'balsam bashing' days in autumn/winter 2021 via the 'events section'.

✓ Also, the Community Engagement Officer participated in any SWPLP events or shared displays at existing community events e.g. the annual Manifold Agricultural Show, using these as opportunities to promote the community grants and identify relevant projects and community groups that would benefit from advice and support.

e.g. South West Peak Get Together 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEVsYXBQvAg>

INTENDED OUTCOME 10

More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage – again the work of the Community Engagement Officer in promoting the SWPLP will result in more people engaging with the built and natural heritage of the South West Peak

DELIVERED OUTCOME 10



South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives	
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area

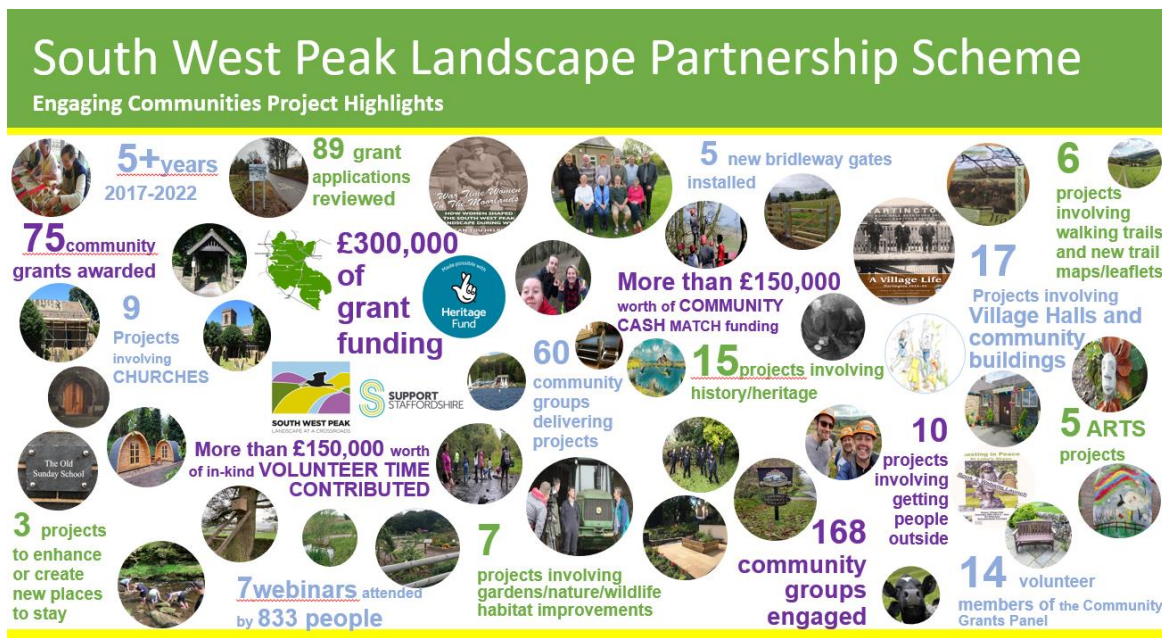
- 54 out of 72 projects met objective 1

- 55 out of 72 projects met objective 2
- 58 out of 72 projects met objective 3
- 69 out of 72 projects met objective 4

INTENDED OUTCOME 11

Our local area/ community will be a better place to live, work or visit – this project is about building stronger social capital as the community grant scheme and related support will enhance the robustness of existing community groups and facilitate the emergence of new community groups, leading to a greater range and depth of sustainable activity within communities, making it a better place to live, work and visit

DELIVERED OUTCOME 11



Key Outcomes

Other than the match to scheme outcomes described above, the outcome we are most proud of is the reach of our community engagement, and the range of groups and projects which we attracted to the scheme. Above this was the dedication and commitment that groups gave, and the very high quality of their projects. As is so often the case, it is clear here that often very small grants have made a huge difference to the communities they have benefitted.

So many of the projects stand out:

- for building community cohesion (e.g. Hartington Village Hall)
- attracting disadvantaged people to experience the landscape, heritage or culture of the South West Peak area e.g. Cheshire Eye Society, ASHA, Gradbach Scout Camp, North Staffs YMCA, Staffordshire Clubs for Young People, High Peak Community Arts

- for high quality learning e.g. through the White Peak Farmers' online sessions
- for gaining cultural insights of some of the most hidden minorities such as the Travelling communities (Kidology Arts)
- for creating legacies that will endure well beyond the Scheme including the walking trails guides (e.g. Bollington Centre), the online archives and the capital projects which shored up buildings for the future and provided new features such as bridleway gates, and so on.

What Made The Difference

The most key factor in the success of our project was the success of the engagement. A total of 168 groups and organisations were individually made aware of the Landscape Partnership Scheme. While the Scheme and grant offer proved inappropriate for some, others gave it serious consideration even if they did not eventually apply for a grant.

A second factor was that partly through networking amongst Support Staffordshire and other Landscape Partnership project staff, the engagement staff were able to attract a very wide range of groups and proposed project activities.

Challenges

Financial administration of the grants scheme: Staff found it difficult to explain to beneficiaries how reimbursements of invoices are apportioned according to the balance of cash and in-kind match funding; beneficiaries mostly had no idea what reimbursement to expect for an interim claim, or if the total cash costs of their project were less than forecast in their grant application; staff struggled to understand, it took a long time for them to work out how to calculate payments accurately and errors were sometimes made. The complexity of the system also made it difficult to work out how much funding had been allocated. We eventually came up with an Excel book in which to keep records of grant awards and payments, but none of us had the experience at the start of the project to create such a document. As a result, it never quite encompassed all the data we would have liked to have gathered together about the projects, for example on participant and volunteer numbers.

Smaller grant awards: We had anticipated grant awards of on average £7,500. In face the average award was £4,400. In order to distribute the grant fund we assessed 89 applications and awarded 75 grants rather than the anticipated 40. The administrative work was more than we had anticipated, and this factor significantly compounded this. We added 4 hours of staff time for project management in 2019 to assist with some aspects of this. Other than this we prioritised as best we could and had to accept that this contributed to reducing the level of legacy support work we were able to offer.

Rurality: While Support Staffordshire has extensive experience of working in rural areas, we had underestimated how suspicious very small communities can be of strangers, and even of their neighbouring communities. It took some time to gain the trust of some of our most remote rural upland communities.

Supporting groups to complete their projects during the pandemic: Our project officer attempted to contact beneficiary groups monthly to get a progress report but some groups became difficult to contact, some had staff changes; and some just struggled to complete projects because they could not be done other than by involving their participants in face-to-face activity and this was limited by Covid restrictions and related policies of the organisations concerned. Simply keeping in touch with grant beneficiaries and helping them to work out how and when they could deliver their project, or a modification of it, was extremely time-consuming; it used up time that we'd previously planned to dedicate to legacy work with these groups.

Creating legacies: With hindsight we would have left an even greater impact and legacy to our Engaging Communities project had we considered how to approach legacy-building at the start of the project. Groups who were grant beneficiaries early in the Scheme, and completed their projects quickly, moved on to other activities without being offered the support to reflect and assess their project and group's next steps and support needs. Despite encouraging them to join as members of Support Staffordshire or their local equivalent, some were therefore less aware of the general offer of advice and support that the voluntary sector infrastructure bodies provide.

Communication and engagement during the pandemic (March 2020 – February 2022). National and local periods of 'lockdown', restricted travel and other restrictions meant that, for this extended period, very limited face to face meetings and interactions could take place. In an attempt to overcome this and compensate in some way communication and engagement took place remotely e.g. via telephone and/or email and/or online video meetings. This felt quite alien at first, and disadvantaged those with a strong preference for face to face meetings.

Checking and monitoring website pages to ensure accurate and up to date information was maintained was essential when taking over a role e.g. key project dates/contact details/dates for meetings/links/downloadable files. This also provided important support for the Communications Officer.

The number and variety of reporting and recording documentation that needed to be updated and maintained was at times confusing, time consuming and sometimes felt like duplication of data and effort.

Case Studies

N.B. Please see: Appendix 2 for full Case Study 1 (separate PDF file) and Appendix 3 for full Case Study 2 (separate PDF file)

Case Study 1 – Overview

White Peak Farmers Networks For Nature Facilitating Collaborative Farming (SWP19018)



South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	●
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	●
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	●
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	●

The Project:

- Connecting farmer facilitation groups to share knowledge and experience, discuss issues and look to the future.
- Raise the profile of farmer facilitation groups
- A series of 7 online webinars
 - 23 experts from 14 organisations presenting
 - 833 people attended
- 2 films created (Long edit of 10 mins, short edit of 2 mins)
- Live event to premier the film



White Peak Farmers (WPF) brings farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. This group is centred around the southern fringes of the Peak District National Park and White Peak area. whitepeakfarmers.org.uk

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1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	●
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Case Study 2 – Overview

High Peak Community Arts Sheep To Craft (SWP17002)



South West Peak Landscape Partnership Objectives		
1	Conserving, protecting, and/ or enhancing natural, built or cultural heritage	●
2	Helping people learn about their natural, built or cultural heritage	●
3	Helping communities celebrate the natural, built or cultural heritage	●
4	Increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of the South West Peak for residents and/ or those working in or visiting the area	●



The Project:

- Jan 2018 – August 2021 (impacted by Pandemic)
- 52 Workshops, 64 women/girls actively involved,
- Understanding traditional processes - fleece to wool to crafted item
- Improved confidence and self esteem – relationship building, developing friendships & community cohesion
- New skills – quality, design, packaging, sales, meetings protocol and procedures
- Improved wellbeing



High Peak Community Arts provides opportunities for people to participate in high quality creative arts projects. We focus on those with the least access to the arts and culture and we believe that the arts can be a tool for change in people's lives.
[High Peak Community Arts – Youth and Community Arts for the High Peak \(highpeakarts.org\)](http://highpeakarts.org)

High Peak Community Arts Sheep To Craft (SWP17002)



Promotion/Resources

- <http://www.highpeakarts.org/creative-wellbeing-with-good-news-family-care/>
- <https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/projects/community/engaging-communities/projects-for-community-groups-and-parish-councils>
- <https://www.southwestpeak.co.uk/news/south-west-peak-supports-sheep-to-craft>



Legacy

Skills/knowledge/experience

- Community groups from outside SWP, including those who support harder to reach groups, have gained experience of delivering projects in the SWP, knowledge of the area and the opportunities and benefits it offers.
- Individuals and community groups have gained skills and knowledge to enable them to develop and become more sustainable e.g. funding opportunities, training and governance.
- Panel members have gained skills and knowledge about grants, community groups and the SWP
- Groups have gained knowledge about conserving old buildings and greater understanding of the planning process.
- People, including children and young adults in SWP have learnt more about their cultural, natural and built heritage as a result of several arts projects.
- Connecting High Peak District Scouts/Gradbach Scout Camp with SWP Cultural Heritage Officer re Small Heritage Adoption Scheme culminating in their Adoption of Gradbach Lime Kiln in 2021

Habitat/species improvements

- 6 projects involving gardens/nature/wildlife habitat improvements
 - Buxton Civic Association – water sensory garden
 - Derbyshire Wildlife Trust – pond
 - St Bartholomew’s School Longnor – nature areas
 - Beasley Back Dane – surrounding environment to Back Dane Cottage
 - Beasley Back Dane – additional development of environment
 - White Peak Farmers – networks for nature, facilitating collaborative farming

Capital Works

- 25 projects involving capital works
 - 9 projects involving churches
 - 16 projects involving village halls and other community buildings

Equipment

- 12 projects involving the purchase of equipment
 - Meerbrook Village Hall – sounds system
 - Meerbrook Village hall – staging
 - KRIV – waterproof clothing for volunteers
 - Buxton Sea Cadets – oars and spinnaker kit
 - Longnor Action Group – community sheds
 - Longnor Action Group – village benches
 - Grindon Village Hall – 2 gazebos

- Pott Shrigley Church School – laptops and tablets
- White Hall Outdoor Centre – purchase of specialist equipment
- Beasley Back Dane x 2 projects

Connections/collaboration

- Connections between groups have gained knowledge about conserving old buildings and greater understanding of the planning process.
- Connections in SWP to all village halls, churches, schools, Parish Councils and community groups.
- Connections between groups that have not worked together before e.g. refugee group and Gradbach Scout camp
- Connections between groups interested in maintaining rights of ways that have not worked together before. E.g. Parish Councils, Rights of Way Officers, Bridleways groups and mountain bikers.
- Connections between groups that have not worked together before. Groups have been introduced to the PDNPA outreach and education service e.g. Beasley Back Dane, North Staffs YMCA, Cre8 Macclesfield
- Connections between individuals and groups interested in cultural heritage that have not worked together before.
- Increased links between village halls in SWP as a result of training sessions and introductions

Educational Resources/Other Resources

- Several walking leaflets have been produced as part of community projects
 - e.g. [Bridgend Walking Trails – Bridgend Centre](#)
 - [Bridgend Heritage Trails – Bridgend Centre](#)
 - [Bridgend Tree Trails – Bridgend Centre](#)
- Several video and audio recordings of a series of folktales from the South West Peak area have been produced:
 - Peak In The Past Project: “Illuminating the History and Folktale Traditions of the South West Peak” (SWP18005) [Films - Peak in the Past](#)
- 7 webinars: [White Peak Farmers - YouTube](#)
- Information produced for groups to facilitate individual/group visits to the SWP. Includes information on places to visit and stay, activities, activity leaders, artists, speakers.

- Increased knowledge of individuals/groups regarding specialist services e.g. surveyors for churches, conservators for heritage fabrics, printers for history books
- 4 places to stay in the South West Peak area enhanced or newly created:
 - Projects at; Savio House, Beasley Back Dane, Gradbach Scout Camp, Fernilee Methodist Chapel
 - e.g. [Engaging Communities June Spotlight: South West Peak](#)
- 5 new bridleway gates installed
- 6 projects involving gardens/nature/wildlife habitat improvements
- Book: 'No Mustard At The Stores'-Village Life In Hartington 1933-1955
 - [Book Release: "A Village Life: Hartington 1933-55": South West Peak](#)
- War Time Women In The Moorlands archive/exhibition/leaflets/walk
 - [\(2\) East Peak Countryside Associates CIC | Facebook](#)



- New websites/digital archives:
 - [Engaging Communities July Spotlight: South West Peak](#)
 - [oseri-and-caroline | My Site 12217 \(kidologyarts.co.uk\)](#)
 - [South West Peak Spotlight: Connecting and Celebrating South West Peak Communities | Support Staffordshire](#)
 - [Elkstones Village – A tiny village in the Staffordshire Moorlands](#)

Lessons Learned

Administration: It is essential to properly consider, plan and create a digital filing system which is 'fit for purpose' i.e. comprehensive, clear, simple, easily understood and multi user friendly.

Roles and Responsibilities: Ensure clear understanding, mutual agreement and alignment between partners with regard to project officer role and responsibilities.

Marketing/PR: It is strongly suggested that more consideration be given to the marketing and PR aspect of a scheme and recommended that a Marketing/PR Officer Role be included as part of the Core Project Team together with appropriate budget allocation for marketing/PR activities.

Communications and Messaging: Key information and messages need to be continuously communicated and reinforced to ensure, as much as possible, that key points register and are remembered by target audiences.

Partner Recognition: For future schemes from a PR/branding point of view there needs to be a way for partners to be able to promote and publicise their own organisation and it's aims/objectives for being within the partnership not just pushing the overarching scheme aims/objectives e.g. Press Release template. In the case of the Engaging Communities project, groups already trust the Support Staffordshire brand so early engagement could have been speeded up through greater exploitation of this. Likewise a part of our legacy was to offer groups the generic ongoing advice and support and benefits that we offer our members, but it was difficult to promote this membership offer to the grant beneficiary groups.

Documentation: The number and variety of reporting, recording and monitoring documentation that needed to be updated/maintained/submitted should be streamlined and their use integrated/embedded into 'everyday' working practice.

Grant Award: Ensure clear and simple system for calculations, monitoring, reporting and claiming.

Building a legacy: We recognise that we didn't plan the legacy activities early enough. Working with groups, the opportunity to support them and to consolidate and create legacy with them is during and immediately after they have completed their project, not as we are completing our overall project. For example, ideally the time to ask for feedback on how they found the grant-making process is soon after completion, and likewise the initial conversation with them about what difference the grant made, their aspirations for what they want to do next, and whether they need help to gain additional skills within their group, or attract further funding or volunteers.

We have already discussed this learning and advised a similar project within the Transforming the Trent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme to think sooner about what legacy they want to achieve through their project.

Feedback from a community group member: "It has been a beneficial and timely scheme, in my opinion. One reason is that much of the area embraced by the Scheme has been 'off the radar', a quiet backwater not normally attracting the attention of 'external' agencies, in spite of large parts being within the boundary of the Peak District National Park. The Scheme has calmly promoted opportunities for the enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of the South West Peak's landscape qualities and heritage values. It has also provided mechanisms to support the people who live there, as well as those who visit it, and it has also brought closer ties between several of the agencies operating in South West Peak. **I am sorry the Scheme will end; I think a problem with time-constrained projects, especially in rural areas, is that they often lack continuity/sustainability. Hopefully, at least some of the mechanisms put in place can continue in one form or another.**"

Feedback from a community group member: "I think that it is important to have organisations like the SWP, which I hope is reflected around the country as it provides help and advice at a local level, which shouldn't be underestimated. It is important that communities can call on these organisations for help, advice and their knowledge. It also helps to promote the National Heritage Lottery Fund at a local level for the funding that has been provided."

The Big Headline

- More than 90,000 people benefitting as a result of the completed projects
- More than 1,600 volunteers actively involved in projects
- Nearly 25,000 children and young people benefitting
- 100% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said the grant award was important in enabling their 'project' to go ahead
- 92% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they felt the Community Grants Scheme was essential/important for landscape development and conservation in the South West Peak area
- Over 80% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said the application process has helped to build their confidence/capacity to apply for other sources of funding
- 74% of grant recipients who responded to a questionnaire said they found the help from the grants team was very valuable/valuable

Quotes from grant recipients:

- "Grants are vital when volunteers are giving so much of their time, not just for their own benefit but, for the future of communities beyond their own lifetime."
- "Our project into the South Peaks has given the young carers experiences they would never have normally been given at a time they needed it the most. We are proud of the fact we gave them a positive experience they will remember into adult life and hopefully find the inspiration to explore the countryside as adults. Our favorite quote from a young person was "I haven't felt this happy for ages"."
- "I believe the project was primarily of relevance/interest to a specific community within South West Peak. I have been told by many people who live within that community, or those who used to live in it, now scattered around the UK and elsewhere in the World, that the outcome provided much joy, pleasure, and happy memories of times past. It is a record for posterity, much of which would almost certainly have been lost without engaging in the project."

- “We have loved this scheme :)”
- “We are proud of the area we live in and believe in its importance for all. In particular for our beneficiaries. The various projects SWPLP supports fit with our ethos of protecting the landscape for future generations and encouraging a 'life-long' love of the outdoors in children and young people (CYP). By engaging with our community, with the support of SWPLP grant, we have been able to provide and promote outdoor activities for CYP who might otherwise not be able to access such activities due to their particular special needs and/or circumstances. We are aware the project funding is via the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The SWPLPs website provides comprehensive information about its plans and projects.”
- “The South West project has offered unique and valuable opportunities to young people and we have seen young people transformed by these opportunities.”
- “Extremely impressed with all aspects of the SWPLPS that we've encountered and engaged with. The various activities and projects are invaluable and innovative, but most impressive has been all of the staff and volunteers, each of them knowledgeable, dedicated and friendly!”
- “I have found the entire involvement with SWPLP enjoyable and beneficial. Advisers have been knowledgeable and enabling and a major refurbishment initiative of Hartington Village Hall could not have proceeded without the support of SWPLP.”