

# ANNUAL REVIEW

## 2015-16



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# INTRODUCTION

In these difficult economic times, we know how important funding can be. This year we've supported over 170 projects and it has been a privilege to see the fantastic impacts Biffa Award funding has had across the UK.

We have supported over 1,500 projects over the past 13 years under the Small Grants Scheme and it is with sadness that the scheme closed in early 2016. We have set about refocussing the funding streams raising the upper limit from £50,000 to £75,000.

The real highlight for me this year is hearing the fantastic stories submitted

by the projects through their end of grant videos, many of which resulted in both laughter and tears in the Biffa Award office. We asked projects to celebrate the incredible people who have worked to improve their communities or the environment, telling their stories in their own words, and they did not disappoint.

In this review you will find a brief glimpse of a few of our fantastic projects.



Gillian French  
Head of Grants



# FOREWARD

At Biffa Award, we are proud to be a significant part of the Landfill Communities Fund, supporting positive change across the UK.

Biffa Award projects make up an eclectic community across the country; with projects ranging in size and scale from £500 to £1.6 million. This variety is one of the greatest strengths of our Biffa Award community, and something to be celebrated. In the past five years alone we have installed double glazing in scout huts and provided a state of the art home for ThrustSSC, the fastest car ever made. We have fixed sprinkler systems in a bowls club, installed practice nets in numerous cricket clubs, and brought beavers back to Britain for the first time in 400 years. You may think that these projects have little in common, but they all represent the best aspects of community spirit and ambition. Though

their focus may be different, Biffa Award projects are all united in one mission: to build communities and transform lives.

A new boiler isn't just an upgrade to a building's plumbing; it means that a community centre is now usable in the winter months and can support a host of different user groups. All-weather cricket facilities mean longer practice hours, resulting in better cricketers, helping to encourage sport at a community level. Managing non-native species can mean rare butterflies returning to a site for the first time in years. Small changes can have BIG impacts, and we want our projects to shout it from the rooftops.



John Hughes  
Biffa Award Chairman

## A FOND FAREWELL

This autumn our Chairman, John Hughes will be stepping down after 12 years on the Biffa Award board.

John has made a massive contribution to the programme, donating his time, expertise and guidance to projects such

as the Scottish Beaver project and The Barn Theatre. During his tenure 2,564 projects have received over £100 million in grant funding. This incredible legacy will live on in countless wildlife reserves, cricket clubs and community centres across the UK.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## CASE STUDY – PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BUGLIFE – URBAN BUZZ

It's often easy to see the urban environment through world weary eyes, but there is a wealth of life around us every day in our cities and towns. This in essence is the ambition of Urban Buzz, which launched in November 2015.

Not just to tackle the massive task of reversing the decline of Britain's pollinators, but to inspire thousands of people to stop and to wonder about the abundance of life in urban environments. Conservation projects

work best when the public are engaged and communities can embrace nature in their daily lives. That's one of the most exciting aspects of this project, the desire to put people at the heart of this conservation action. Residents will be involved with cultivating and maintaining these sites to encourage pollinators. Habitats will be restored and created through clever planting techniques including living roofs and nesting walls, as well as the installation of bee hotels.

## CASE STUDY – PARTNERSHIP PROJECT FRESHWATER BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

This exciting project aims to save one of the most long-lived animals from extinction: the freshwater pearl mussel. Freshwater pearl mussels, which can live for more than 100 years, are internationally protected and critically endangered with a 90% drop in populations across the UK. They are indicators of good water quality: if they are at risk, it is a warning that the health of the river is in decline. This England-wide project, running from 2015 to 2018, is working on eight rivers across

four catchments in northern England and one in the south-west. Existing population sites are conserved and juvenile mussels and fish encysted with glochidia (mussel larvae) will be safely released with a view to establishing and enhancing existing populations. Local communities have been involved with mass tree planting days, to help combat bank erosion and volunteers are also being used to monitor the populations and survey the river for water quality.

# COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

## BODYMOOR HEATH VICTORY HALL CATEGORY WINNER – BIFFA AWARDS 2016

Bodymoor Heath Victory Hall is an essential meeting place for a small and tight-knit community in the West Midlands. Despite water being caught in buckets and wind whistling through the windows, the support for the hall from the villagers was unwavering.

The refurbishment surpassed the original objectives and the village hall now holds a series of regular events. With no shop or public transport in the village, older members of the community that live just half a mile from each other are meeting for the first time, and many



now have the confidence to join in with events despite living alone. The hall has been transformed into a thriving community building the whole village can be proud of.

# RECREATION

## EGERTON PARK IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE CATEGORY WINNER – BIFFA AWARDS 2016

Egerton Park's playground was coming to the end of its life and was in desperate need of replacement. The aim was to create a new modern play area for all the community and more than 200 letters of support from local children were reviewed to ensure that their views were heard. As a result of this transformation the council has invested further in the park, supplying outdoor gym equipment, so that adults can exercise while supervising their children.

The new playground has proved highly popular. Following an open day the committee received a letter from a woman who had decided to move to the area as she was so impressed by the community spirit!



**IN THE PAST YEAR £1.7 MILLION WAS GRANTED TO COMMUNITY LIFE PROJECTS. THIS FUNDING WAS USED TO...**

**SUPPORT 21  
VILLAGE AND 7  
CHURCH HALLS**

**RENNOVATE  
17 COMMUNITY  
CENTRES**

**CREATE 4  
COMMUNITY  
GARDENS**

**IN THE PAST YEAR £1.9 MILLION WAS GRANTED TO RECREATIONAL PROJECTS. THIS FUNDING WAS USED TO...**

**IMPROVE  
FACILITIES AT 16  
CRICKET CLUBS**

**BUILD 18  
PLAYGROUNDS**

**IMPROVE ACCESS  
TO 18 NATURE  
RESERVES**

# REBUILDING BIODIVERSITY

## HIRST WOOD REGENERATION GROUP CATEGORY WINNER – BIFFA AWARDS 2016



The aim of this project was to turn an overgrown boggy field into a place of beauty and tranquillity and a haven for wildlife. Funding was used to create paths, pond dipping platforms and bird hides.

and pride in the nature area.

“We are all misfits of society today, but we have been bound together forever by what we can achieve!”



Fruit trees have been donated and planted in memory of loved ones, and the wood is regularly used by school groups and an art class for the less able. Community volunteers from all walks of life have given thousands of hours of work to transform the site, giving them a real sense of ownership



**IN THE PAST YEAR £2.5 MILLION WAS GRANTED TO CONSERVATION PROJECTS. THIS FUNDING WAS USED TO...**

**PROTECT 412 SPECIES**

**CONSERVE 2,152 HECTARES**

**FUND 3 NATIONAL CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

# CULTURAL FACILITIES



## NORTHERN PRINT STUDIO LTD CATEGORY WINNER – BIFFA AWARDS 2016

Northern Print Studio works hard to encourage more people to see, make and enjoy printmaking. This work has assisted in the regeneration of Ouseburn Valley, seen as Newcastle's Cultural Quarter. With a grant from Biffa Award, Northern Print has expanded and improved its visitor experience, hosting more events and projects, such as the 'Scrum Down Print Forward' project, where the world's longest linocut was made to celebrate the Rugby World Cup.

workshops for community groups such as BAM Sistaood! (Black, Asian and minority ethnic refugee women) and Crisis Skylight (working with people experiencing homelessness) who also exhibited their woodcut prints in the gallery.

Since its improvement work, the gallery has been able to run more



**IN THE PAST YEAR £1.7 MILLION WAS GRANTED TO CULTURAL PROJECTS. THIS FUNDING WAS USED TO...**

**SUPPORT 4 THEATRES AND RENNOVATE 3 ART GALLERIES**

**CONSERVE 3 HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

**DEVELOP 14 EXHIBITIONS**

# FUNDING SUMMARY 2015-16

TOTAL AWARDED  
OTHER REPAYMENTS AND WITHDRAWALS  
GRANT TOTAL

£5,044,356  
-389,240  
£4,655,116

## FUNDING BY THEME



£1,1106,020

COMMUNITY  
BUILDINGS



£1,460,365

RECREATION



£1,475,298

REBUILDING  
BIODIVERSITY



£613,403

CULTURAL  
FACILITIES

