

Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter



Issue 67 – January 2016

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

Hydro Update:

The UK government published its response document last month on the new FIT rates and deadlines for renewable energy schemes in the UK. This was much anticipated by renewable energy organisations throughout the UK, as the government announced last September that any scheme which hadn't been pre-registered for FITs before the end of that month would be subject to the new FIT regime, and the expected new rate for un-registered micro-hydro schemes was given as 10.66p/kWh, a drop of over 20% from the previous rate.

As it turned out, hydro schemes were hit harder than other technologies and even this steep reduction in the rate was an underestimate, as the new rate for all hydro schemes under 100kW which weren't pre-registered by end of September 2015 has been set at 8.54p – a reduction of more than a third. Our Blaen Dyar and Abernant schemes were both submitted for pre-registration before the September deadline, although because of the significant volume of last-minute applications, these two schemes are still going through the pre-registration process. As mentioned last month, an application wasn't able to be made for Cwm Saerbren before the deadline, so this scheme will be subject to the new, degressed FIT rate of 8.54p/kWh. There is also no Community FIT rate under the new regime.

The boards of both LGV Co-ops are considering what effect this new regime will have, but in the short term it seems that the future of community micro-hydro schemes is likely to be very limited. However, we have some good news - our two operating hydro schemes at **Cwm Gu** and **Nant yr Hafod** continue to produce good amounts of electricity. The latest total generation readings for the two schemes are:

Cwm Gu (MH-1): 37,827 kWh

Nant yr Hafod (MH-2): 22,177 kWh

Discussions are ongoing to finalise arrangements at our second MH-1 scheme, **Blaen Dyar**, before construction can start.

We are making progress with the planned MH-2 scheme at **Abernant** – an agreement to lease has been signed and we are in discussions to finalise outstanding issues with the landowner and NRW.

The directors of the community group Welcome To Our Woods visited Llangattock last month, for continuing discussions with directors of the MH-2 board about this Co-op taking on their proposed **Cwm Saerbren** scheme. They also had a guided tour of the scheme at Nant yr Hafod. Both organisations are keen to work together to progress this scheme, which would appear to be viable even at the new FIT rate.

PV Update:

If anyone has some ideas on how to move this forward, please do make contact. We would be delighted to have some help! Many thanks, Andrew - andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk.



LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

As part of our ongoing Trees and Bees Project Bob will be providing a monthly update on the bees.



January Buzz Notes from Bobs Bees

The Bee Course will begin this month and Mead Making has attracted enthusiastic potential bee keepers. There will be a break in February but the group will start to focus on bee keeping in March meeting at Llangattock Community Hall on Wednesday evenings. If you are still interested but not signed up please contact llangattockbees@gmail.com for more information.

January is a quiet month for beekeepers and bees but a good time to make plans for changes and improvements to your beekeeping methods to help avoid the mistakes of the previous season. Bee magazines and equipment suppliers' catalogues can give you ideas about how to implement those changes. If you are a practical beekeeper make some of your own beekeeping equipment, knock up a Nucleus hive or two for your colonies or perhaps to house the Queen while you are carrying out a manipulation and want the Queen safe while you are doing it.

At this cool time of year the Queen would normally not be in lay for a few weeks. This year with this mild weather we are experiencing she may not be keeping to the norm. I hear from a beekeeper that lives near Cardiff that his Queen is still in lay this January. For those of us that use the broodless time during the winter to remove Varroa mites it is a setback. When a colony is broodless a quick dusting of icing sugar between the frames of brood on a dry windless day when the temperature is above 10C will remove a good proportion of the mites from the colony.



Check on the bag of fondant that was placed over the feed hole in the crown board, it may need another bag by now. Both colonies on the allotments at LACAS have two bags and they



are both being consumed. My experience of this sort of winter feeding is that when the weather is mild enough for the bees not to be in the winter cluster but too cold or wet to fly,

they will expend energy moving around the inside of the hive. It is better that they find and eat this refined fondant that is not part of the brood nest stores that surround the cluster. The other benefit of fondant is it has next to no solids that can block the bowels of the bees confined within the hive.

Finally, have your hives had any flood or wind damage? Check regularly.



Now for some Woodland News for 2016

The weather has been awful over the last few months as we all know. LCW has rarely had to contend with such bad conditions even in winter. We have still notched up many volunteer hours and it is inspiring to go along every Tuesday to see the regular bunch turning out. To say thank you before Christmas we had curry in the woods. Yes, we managed to enjoy a great curry in the pouring rain with specialist beers and cake to finish off.

Our aim this year is to increase the wood fuel sales if we can but this means an extra effort to support our volunteers and also ensure they still enjoy meeting up and working out. Yes, processing wood for fuel is a great way of keeping fit and the volunteers benefit by being very active in our woodlands. So if you want to get rid of some extra weight that might have crept up on you over the festive season think about joining us.

During 2016 we will be looking at more weekend activities as many of you are unable to volunteer during the week. We started LCW with a view to providing family friendly volunteering and it worked when we organised events at weekends. If LCW are successful in purchasing the small woodland along the canal in Llangattock then this will be much easier to achieve and regular weekend activities will be organised later in the year.



Funding all these activities is an ongoing process especially as our success over the years has been reliant on employing a Volunteer/Woodland Manager. Without his commitment and support we would not have been able to make environmental improvements including tree planting, supporting pollinators for bees, coppicing and invasive species eradication. LCW also carries out regular litter picks too. LCW will be working hard to support the excellent funding we have had from the Welsh Government and the Brecon Beacons

National Park Sustainable Development Fund during 2015. This will be achieved by selling wood fuel and developing some simple ideas for contracting in the future as well as looking at new funding opportunities.



Recruitment of Volunteers and Trustees

We are actively looking for an additional Trustee for LCW. Would you be interested? We have been extremely successful over the last five years in gaining support and funds to take a small group of enthusiastic volunteers to the point we are at today which is an organisation with a turnover exceeding all expectations but needing a strategic approach for the future. If you think you can fill that role we would be really delighted to hear from you. Please contact jackiecharlton@msn.com for further details.

LCW Trustees are justly proud of the commitment and enthusiasm of all our volunteers. If you are interested in environmental management, green wood crafts or bee keeping then please do get in touch. Visit our website lcwg.btck.co.uk or email eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT – LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS:

Please follow these links for our most recent news:

- [Newsletter December 2015](#)
- [Annual Report 2015](#)
- [Supporters Club Booklet](#)
- [Questionnaire](#)

Llangattock Litter Pickers will be holding its Annual General Meeting at The Old Rectory Hotel in Llangattock on Thursday 28th January. The meeting starts at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

PLEASE ASK US!

If anybody would like to look at our finances or discuss our schemes, please contact us and we will be very happy to help. We are proud to be operating a transparent and successful Community Interest Company.

MEMBERSHIP:

To find out more about joining please visit [Llangattock Green Valleys](#).



LGV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE! CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for a number of people who would like to get involved at Director and non-Director level. Please get in touch with Andrew Fryer if you would like to explore the ways in which you can help:

andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk

**For more information on all our activities and to become a member,
please visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org
You can also follow us on Twitter [@LGVcic](#)**