



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 100
January 2019

<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

A belated Happy New Year to all our readers!

Merger update

The directors of our two micro hydro Co-operatives are pleased to announce that last month the FCA approved the merger of the two organisations by transfer of engagements and so this became effective at the end of 2018, which coincided with the financial year end for both Co-ops. Therefore the assets and engagements of LGV-MH1 have been transferred to LGV-MH2 and we will be working to finalise the



merger over the next couple of months. We will use the trading name 'Llangattock Green Valleys Micro-hydro Co-op Ltd.' for the merged organisation.

Hydro scheme update

A prolonged period of rain in December meant that all five hydro schemes have generated some good amounts of electricity. The month of December and the October-December quarter were our highest combined generation periods to date, although this is the first rainy season when all five schemes have been operating. Generation was as follows:

	Generation December (kWhs)	Generation to date (kWhs):
Cwm Gu:	18,300	199,070
Nant yr Hafod:	8,230	118,250
Blaen Dyar:	9,640	65,120
Abernant:	10,520	73,240
Cwm Saerbren:	13,590	78,330

Unfortunately the first half of January was quite dry but at least we haven't had a Beast from the East, as last year.



LCW's BEES

By Jackie Charlton

Bob always gives you some great information about the cycle of bee care we undertake with our bees. He provides us with training, supports the group and encourages new ideas on what we should consider in the care of our bees. He leaves us during the winter months to work away during January, February and some of March, so we have to look after the hives ourselves. The cold snap is approaching so we don't disturb them much but we do like to keep a careful eye on food stocks and whether they are snuggled up together in the hive.

I can report they are looking healthy, eating the stores and definitely "cwtching up" (a bit of Welsh there). Every hive is looking the same with the colonies being as you would expect in January and very little verova either, which is great news. I can report that our bees conform to Bob's Bees report this month, so we're feeling proud that we have become real beekeepers.

ALDER CARR COPPICING

The coppicing and woodland management is now underway. Coppicing is a very sustainable management process which we are extremely keen to use throughout the woodland site. Some trees have had to be felled to give us access but now we are just coppicing.

Coppicing for those who are interested in climate change and sustainable woodland management is the most effective form of managing and encouraging carbon capture and healthy woodlands. New growth needs more carbon from the atmosphere whereas older trees need less. The trees, once coppiced, shoot out multiple stems and this can provide more wood product quickly and has many more uses than just for firewood. Coppiced hazel provides good stems for making gates and hurdles, willow can be used in different ways as it is supple and easy to use. In our Alder Carr, the alder will take longer to grow but will provide fence posts and other products as alder continues to absorb moisture long after it is cut. And importantly for our financial sustainability, by coppicing all our native trees we ensure greater re-growth for no cost.



ALDER CARR LOTTERY

You won't see any further promotion of our Alder Carr Lottery now as we have decided to bring this to an end. After two years we have raised in the region of £600 and given out prizes too. As there are so many calls out there for small lottery schemes and finding more contributors has been very slow it was decided there are better ways to raise funds and get people involved. All lottery fund contributors will be contacted individually to cease standing orders next month. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Last year's contributions went to purchasing our small community orchard and this year's funds will be used to purchase safety equipment for our volunteers.



BOB'S BEE NOTES ~ JANUARY



This month is quiet for both bees and beekeeper as the temperatures are usually low so the bees stay in their tight cluster or perhaps a few will move about inside the hive eating the fondant that is near the warm area above the bees. On mild days forager bees can leave the hive looking for water that is used to dilute the honey stores that can then be eaten by the bees to replenish heat loss as the cluster moves over the frames inside the hive. Some bees will perhaps find a pollen source for protein that will then be used to produce "Brood food" to feed the first larvae of the year, when the Queen comes into lay usually sometime this month. It is surprising how much pollen is available at this time of year if given warm temperatures, by looking in hedgerows and

gardens we will see Hazel catkins, Hellebores, Snowdrops, Viburnum, winter flowering Honeysuckle, Winter Heliotrope and soon Winter Box. As the daylight hours increase, more of the overwintering bees will fly out of the colony to collect supplies that will help with feeding the newly emerged young bees. I have recently read an account that is confirming what we have seen our bees in Llangattock doing because of the mild weather; lots of fondant is being eaten by the bees as they are moving about inside the hive. The problem with this is that the bees are more active than they should be and that activity will shorten their lives and so possibly threaten the ability of the colony to keep the nest temperature in the high 30s °C. The colony could be threatened by having fewer bees to keep the cluster warm as the Queen's laying begins and the volume of the brood nest increases just as the older bees are dying from old age. However, with the cold weather now returning, our Llangattock bees will have to keep all their legs crossed and hope they have enough stores and bees to survive this winter.

Bee Bob



LCW Trustees are justly proud of the commitment and enthusiasm of all our volunteers. We meet regularly every Tuesday and you can find information on where and when we meet on our website www.lcwg.btck.co.uk. If you are interested in environmental management, green wood crafts or bee keeping then do get in touch. Please email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge

As you might guess, there is very little happening on the allotments at the moment apart from the odd leeks, cabbages and brussels being harvested. Some well-prepared veggie growers may have planted odds and ends of salad under fleece, but just now warm soups are more the order of the day rather than cool salads. But it's all happening in the background and the imagination, not to mention the seed catalogues.

Soon it will be time to prune the apple trees in the orchard, as well as hold a working party to have a general tidy up around the allotment field in preparation for the new growing season. The weeds are never far away.

Plans for the coming year are being made – we aim to host another Big Lunch this year (Eden Project Communities). LACAS will be attending an informal get-together in Monmouth arranged by the Eden Project aimed at anyone involved in making positive things happen in their community.

We will be arranging our usual Allotment Show, not forgetting our canine friends, weather permitting (sadly 2018 had to be cancelled due to dreadful weather), our traditional No Fireworks Bonfire Night and hopefully another Apple Day. Meanwhile, we are all eagerly looking forward to the coming of spring and a new growing season.

Sadly, there are no free plots available at the moment but this does change, especially in the spring, so for any LACAS queries, do contact Phil Gibson on 01873-811537 or gibsons@uwclub.net.



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: andrewfryer70@gmail.com. You can meet our Board of Directors [here](#).

Now that we have 5 hydro schemes up and running, we'd also like to get a few more volunteers involved in monitoring the schemes and taking readings. This would only take around an hour or so once every 6–9 weeks. If you are interested in helping, please contact Simon Walter admin@llangattockgreenvalleys.org.

www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

[@LGVcic](#)

[Facebook](#)