



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 102
March 2019

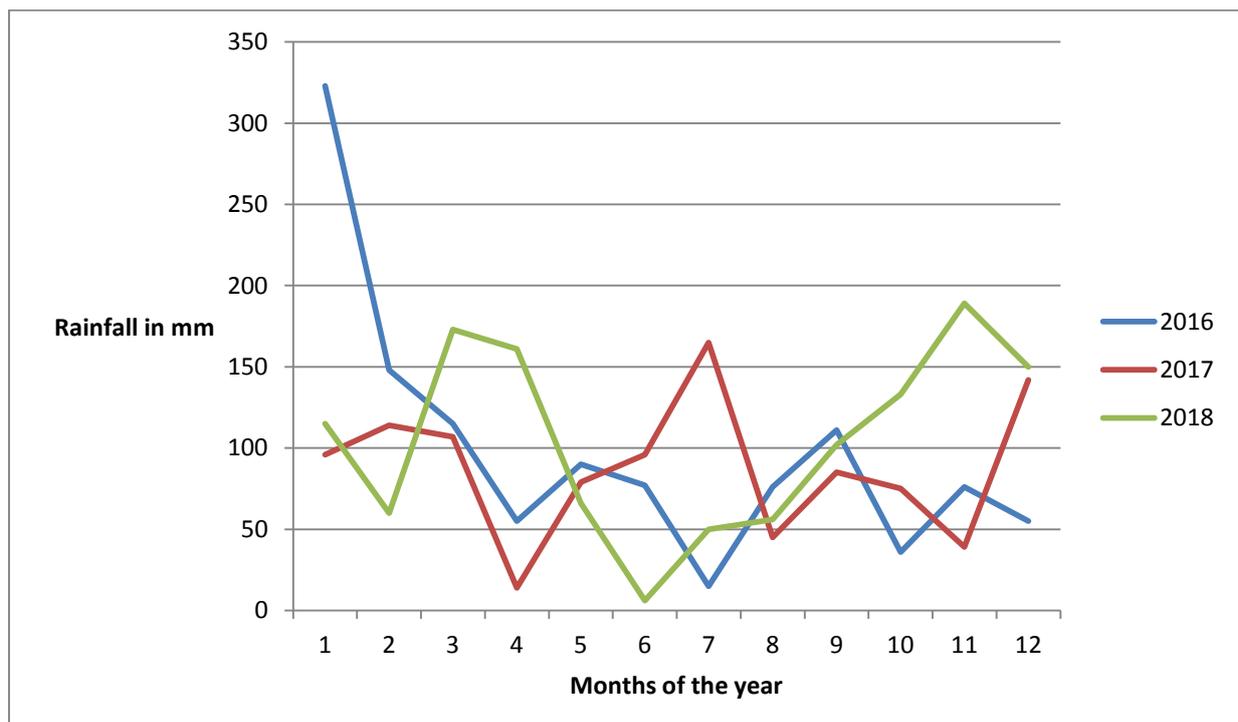
<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

Two of LGV's directors now have rainfall stations in their gardens and so we can more accurately monitor rainfall locally. This year, February (95mm) was almost twice as wet as January (54mm) and March was wetter still. However, below is a graph of rainfall during the past three years and you can see that this January had significantly less rain than in the three previous years and there is significant variation throughout each year, with July having been the wettest month in 2017.



At the request of a shareholder, I will include some graphic representations of the performance of our hydro schemes in future newsletters, as I realise that some people prefer images to numbers. In February, generation at our five hydro schemes was as follows:

	Monthly generation (kWhs)	Total generation to date (kWhs)
Cwm Gu:	8,990	216,640
Nant yr Hafod:	4,010	125,550
Blaen Dyar:	4,930	72,660
Abernant:	6,360	83,110
Cwm Saerbren:	12,060	99,080

There was a power cut at Cwm Gu in March which affected generation but we managed to get the scheme operating again within 12 hours.

In today's open electricity market, it is possible to have import, export and FITs with three different electricity companies and the rates paid and charged vary quite a bit. We have now switched all five hydro schemes to Co-op Energy for FITs and we have operational 12-month export Power Purchase Agreements in place for three schemes with the same company.



MARCH LION ENDING LIKE A LAMB

By Jackie Charlton



The “in like a lion and out like a lamb” was true of March and the last days of the month remained calm. These photos demonstrate the power of the wind at the beginning of the month – our shelter was lifted out of the ground completely and was repositioned over the fence and the stream. However, our band of volunteers got to work on it straight away and the roof is back in shape. The corner posts have been replaced and all that's left to do is to put the roof back and reset the tarpaulin across the roof and down



the sides. Our shelter designer has got some new ideas on how to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Once the weather calmed down, we were out planting trees, catching up with spring flowers and clearing the canal ready for the canal boats to start moving again in April. This tree has been



under water for most of the winter but it's out now. The felling season will be over at the end of March so we will start to process the wood that has been cut over the winter months. It's quite a struggle to fell and process all the wood we need now for our growing customer base but with fantastic commitment from our volunteers, the wood sales will provide us with the financial cushion we need to keep our volunteers safe and equipment in the right order too.

The funding applications for the compost toilet and green grass matting have now been submitted. LCW has had massive support from people who want to use the site and these two

developments will enable us to ensure visitors and volunteers can access the woodland and have facilities to enable people to be on site all day. It's a big project and we're hoping to get it completed by the autumn.



BOB'S BEE NOTES ~ MARCH



The mild, damp but windy weather we experienced during the first half of March would have helped our bees in their quest to forage for food and water. I have mentioned before about the importance of foraging bees being able to replenish stores around the expanding brood nest as numbers of the overwintering bees die off from old age and the young, growing bees needing to eat sufficient pollen to help activate their brood food producing glands. This brood food is essential when fed to the larvae if they are to develop into healthy, strong bees.

Brood expansion will depend on the weather and what flowers are available in any particular area; if hives are situated near sheltered, built-up areas where gardens have exotic early pollen and nectar-producing plants, the brood will get a good start to life. Willow pollen is now



available to the bees in our woods and flower buds are about to break open on some shrubs, so over the next month there should be lots of food available. These little anemones and the marsh marigold were both showing in our woodland on 19th March, providing some good nectar for the bees.



In a normal year we would inspect the colonies during April, once we can see the Queen is in lay, and monitor board debris. When monitoring debris patterns at this time of year, the beekeeper can estimate the size and activity of the brood nest and if no activity is seen it is a good indication that the colony has died out for some reason. If there is a possibility that the colony may have had a brood disease, the hive should be fumigated in order for it not be passed on to any other colonies. Old and diseased comb should be removed and destroyed by burning or the beeswax could be melted down to trade in for new beeswax foundation sheets. If it is not possible to deal with the hive immediately, the entrance should be blocked to prevent bees robbing any remaining stores and getting contaminated from disease. Our monitoring boards indicate good activity and we check them weekly.

Soon, the hives will be getting an empty super for honey storage over a sheet of newspaper that is placed above the brood box and the newspaper will keep brood nest heat contained until the bees are looking for more space for honey storage. As with most things involving natural creatures, the weather and disease actually have the last word by natural selection; the strongest and most adaptable survive and the weakest die out. Beekeepers want their bees to survive to pollinate and eventually produce a surplus of honey for the beekeeper but every year is different.

All looking good so far this year.

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, do get in touch. Please email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge

Many Hands



A winter work party has been held to nurture all the fruit trees in the communal orchard, spreading compost around the bases of the trees. We look forward to a healthy yield of apples, plums and pears later in the year and we are hoping to host another Apple Day on the allotment site, date to be arranged.

It's traditionally said that we should plant potatoes on Good Friday. Maybe the workers were all working so hard that Good Friday was the

only day between New Year and Easter they had free to get into the garden and start planting!

These days we are fortunate to have much more choice. However, Easter is quite late this year, so potato planting should be happening fairly soon, well in advance of Good Friday.



Meanwhile, seeds of all varieties are being raised on windowsills, in sheds and greenhouses, prior to planting out as soon as the weather improves and the soil is warm enough. The Spring Equinox was on 20th March and the allotments have been a hive of activity since then.

The Big Lunch

The Eden Project has been hosting a series of meetings in South Wales to promote community activity and one of these was held in Crickhowell. LACAS sent two representatives to join with various folks from Llandrindod Wells, Monmouth and more. The history and development of the Big Lunch was discussed, then after a lovely lunch from Latte Da we had a tour of the Corn Exchange – a community-led project if ever there was one. We then visited the Clarence Hall to look at the exciting developments planned to preserve its future.

Although there were many community-led activities happening, one of the drawbacks identified by participants was the lack of communication between them. So, for this summer's Big Lunch event, LACAS aims to involve as many community groups in our area as possible.

If you think you would like to be involved, please contact Sue Cartlidge on 01873 812008 or chiro.sue@btinternet.com. LACAS' Big Lunch will be held on Sunday 2nd June – save the date in your diary!

Are you seeking an allotment but don't think you could manage a full-size one? We may have just what you need. For further details, please contact Phil Gibson on 07977 731309.



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

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