



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 117
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<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

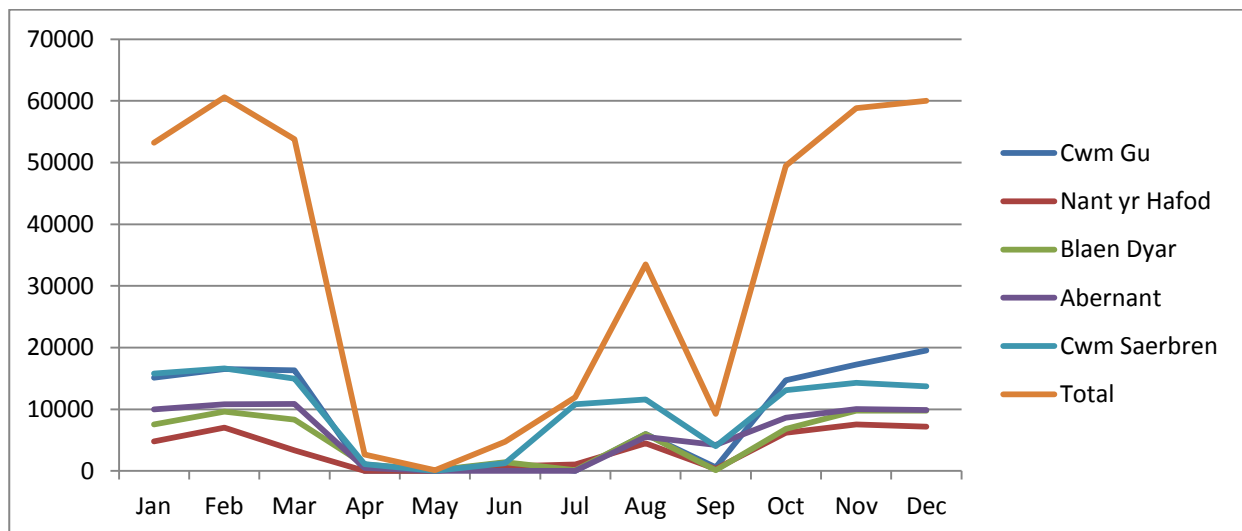
By Steve Sharp

Hydro schemes update

We've again had a wet last few months. This is good news for LGV's hydro schemes but we're aware that it's not so for those living near the River Usk and other rivers that have started to flood more often. We also experienced the Beast from the East part 2 in February and this froze water at the intake of our Nant yr Hafod scheme, as can be seen in the picture below.



To follow is an update of last newsletter's graph showing electricity generation during 2020.



Monthly generation (kWhs) from January to December 2020



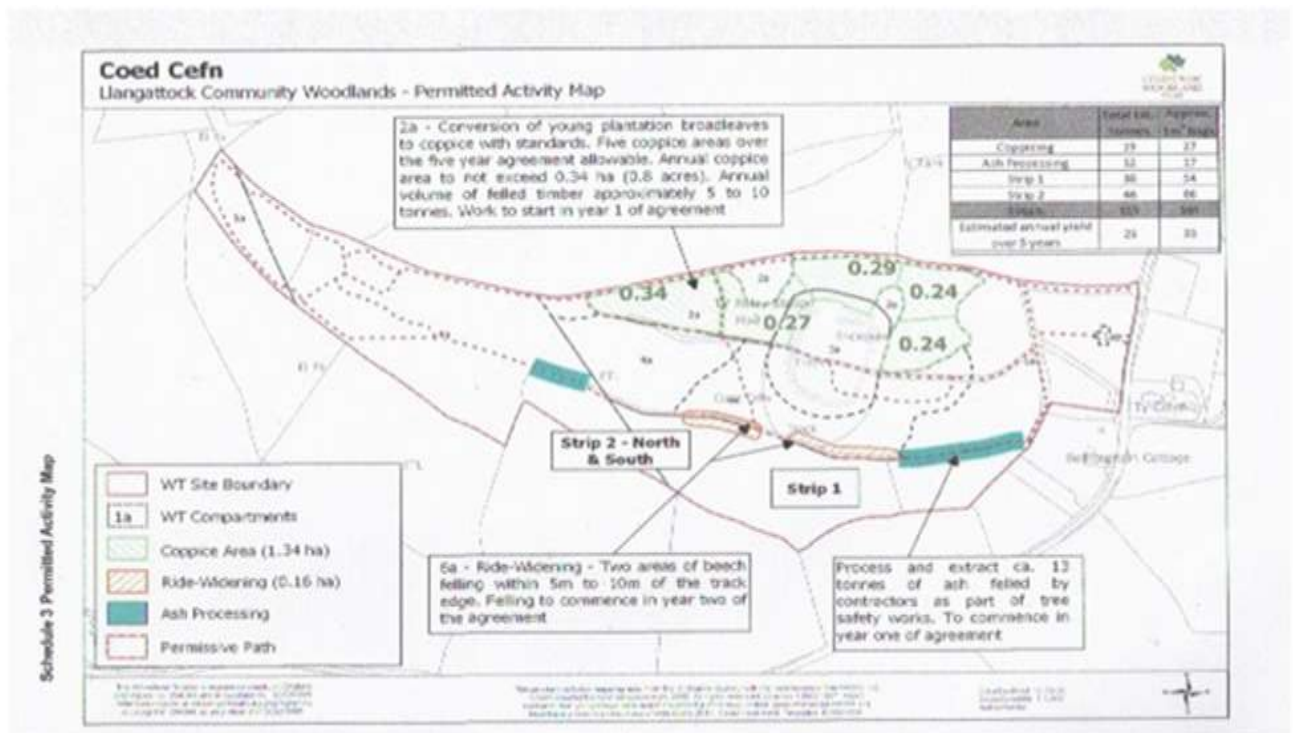
LOCKDOWN AGAIN

By Jackie Charlton

Once again we have had to cease all our activities due to lockdown but there could be a change in a few weeks time. We will be ready to get moving again.

The Bluebell Wood

Over the last two months we have completed negotiating the woodland management agreement with the Woodland Trust on the Bluebell Wood in Crickhowell. This is exactly what it says on the tin, a magnificent and well loved bluebell wood.



The Alder Carr



Down at the Alder Carr, two volunteers got together just after Christmas and made some running repairs to the entrance into the site. As mentioned previously, we will be building some French drains at the entrances to all three gates on site to ensure safe and secure land drainage to allow vehicles to move easily across the site.

Ty'r Ash

Llangattock Green Valleys has a lease on another woodland in Crickhowell called T'y'r Ash. This is leased from the Glanusk Estate and we funded the build of a new wooden bridge some years ago. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has been doing an amazing job in getting funding to improve the access alongside this woodland and to eradicate the Himalayan Balsam from the area, including in the woodland itself. Some new trees, including fruit trees, will

hopefully be planted soon in an effort to increase the variety of species in the woodland and help ensure the woodland remains robust and healthy in to the future.

2021 is still looking very exciting for Llangattock Community Woodlands!



BOB'S BEE NOTES

During a cold snap after Christmas, Jackie decided to check that the bees had enough food to keep them going. The lids from the hives just had to be removed and then a quick look inside to see if there was enough food for them. Sometimes they don't need the extra we give them if the previous summer has been good and stores on the frames adequate. Unfortunately she made the fateful error of dropping the lid as she was placing it back on top. This woke the bees up and they decided to attack! Jackie thought she had escaped them but they managed to sting her on her eye and this was photo shows the result! A very painful lesson on making sure you always wear your bee suit, even when you think the bees are asleep. The swelling did go down after a couple of days but it was a bit worrying.



I have recently been in touch with local beekeepers who are finding dead colonies in their apiaries even though their hives have adequate stores. I suspect they have yet to find an underlying virus or infection such as Nosema (a disease of the bee's gut). We are also still at an early stage of the season and with the weather we are experiencing at present, we may yet find more dead colonies.



My colonies were flying during a mild spell of weather in mid February. Young bees were doing their orientation flights facing towards the hive, moving away from and then back towards the entrance in slow rhythmic movements. These are the bees that will be foraging as soon as the weather warms up enough for any flowers to produce pollen and nectar.

So far I have seen snowdrops, witch hazel, winter flowering honeysuckle and crocus flowering in Llangattock, plus a few early daffodils in some sheltered places.

Beekeepers will have been monitoring for Varroa mite numbers in their colonies by examining the removable boards under the open mesh floors. We are looking for numbers of dead mites that have died from natural and un-natural causes. The mites that have died from un-natural causes may have dents or splits in their shell-like carapace caused by the bees attacking them.

Beekeepers like this trait in their Drones because they can be reared to spread the trait to the wider bee population when they mate with a virgin Queen. A further simple check, called hefting, is done now to estimate how much honey is in a hive without stressing the bees. The rear of the hive is lifted slightly to get an idea of how much weight there is in the hive. When this is done as a comparison between hives, the beekeeper can estimate if any spring feeding will be necessary. Very mild temperatures are forecast for the next few days so the bees should be out in numbers.

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

LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge

What a strange old time this has been for one and all! It has seemed like a very long winter, but spring is well and truly just around the corner and there's plenty to do to prepare the allotments for the coming growing season. Beds are being prepared, aerated and covered, as well as compost being spread to reduce the weeds and warm the soil a little.



Autumn raspberries should have been pruned back by now along with apple trees and fruit bushes. All of our orchard trees have been given a pruning apart from the very tallest of them that I couldn't reach!

Seeds are being planted in trays on windowsills and potatoes are chitting in egg boxes, ready for the warmer weather to come. With the garden centres closed due to lockdown it has been difficult to source seeds etc., however the Abergavenny Garden Centre will take your order over the phone and supplies can then be collected by arrangement.

All of the allotments are now taken and we do have a waiting list but if

you would like to have your name added, just get in touch with Sue Cartlidge on llangattockallotments@gmail.com

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](#).

We'd also like to get a few more volunteers involved in monitoring the hydro 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 using the email below: admin@llangatockgreenvalleys.org

