



LLANGATTOCK GREEN VALLEYS NEWSLETTER

Issue 61 - June 2015

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

Hydro Update:

Our Cwm Gu scheme has virtually been completed, the electrics and meter have been installed and the environmental improvements have been made. However, we are still waiting for the final plumbing work to be completed on the turbine and for the final G59/3 engineering test to be done.

The planning application decision for the Blaen Dyar scheme is due at the end of July which gives BBNPA's ecologist more time to complete her report and the scheme's updated status as a new planning application reflects the degree to which the scheme has been amended and reduced in size.

The construction of our Nant yr Hafod scheme is now well underway. The main excavation and rock cut back has been completed, all the pipework is on site and has been partly joined and concreting work has started. The turbine house slab was cast last week and the structure itself will be erected next month. Our supplier has told us that the build and delivery date of the turbine itself is now likely to be delayed until September, which we are trying to expedite.

The landowner has decided not to allow LGV to construct a new pole on their land, in order for us to be able to export electricity from the proposed Gargwy Fach scheme. This is very disappointing, and although we are pursuing a couple of final potential solutions, it seems likely that we won't be able to build this scheme or Nant y Gadair. However, we are continuing to search for other options for the MH-2 Co-op.

PV Update:

We have been working with a number of potential partners and landowners over many months trying to launch a Co-operative-backed, roof-mounted PV scheme. This has been enormously frustrating because, as time has elapsed, the decline in the FITs rate and the lack of availability in Grid capacity has made the schemes less and less economic, and whilst worthwhile in terms of carbon reduction, we would not have been able to finance them.

A few weeks ago we were able to almost agree on a set of agri-barn roofs which would have cost over £500K to cover in PV, paying back subscribers in 25 years, returning 4% to the landowner (in

return for the roof) and 3.6% return to subscribers as well as generating a small community fund to add to our existing funds derived from hydro. In the event, we have not been able to agree a final deal on this with the landowner and so we have no PV schemes in the pipeline. This is a significant disappointment, particularly to those of us who have spent large amounts of time and energy trying to make it work.

Even more frustrating has been looking around us at Bristol, Plymouth and Wrexham, where large community-run roof-mounted PV schemes (in collaboration with the Local Authority) have become the norm, making a significant contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the area and the financial success of the community and subscribers. Even in rural Herefordshire, ground-mounted community PV has become quite commonplace.

Why are we not succeeding?

- It is almost impossible in the National Park to get permission for ground-mounted PV (the easiest and cheapest form), given all such schemes would be overlooked from mountains in a protected landscape - as an organisation, we have not been trying to do this.
- Local authorities in our area have been much more reluctant than elsewhere to get involved and cover their roofs in PV through partnership with the community – thus failing to get the cheap energy benefits for schools and community halls and slowing the take-up and scale of the technology. As a result, for example, few schools in Powys have significant solar schemes, despite having the biggest roofs in most towns (Crickhowell High School has a large south-facing roof). With increased austerity, it now looks highly unlikely that any of these buildings will get the benefit of solar energy within the next five years.
- The Grid network in South Wales has not had investment for many decades and is now at capacity, which means it is very expensive or impossible to get grid connections for any renewable energy schemes in Mid and West Wales.
- The rapid decline in Feed in Tariffs has meant that, to be economic (and for funding to be possible), the minimum size of such schemes within a Co-operative has risen over the last two years from about 40 kWp to almost 400 kWp – this is very hard to achieve in a rural area without a number of large agri-barns in the mix. However, the returns available from such schemes are so small that many farmers in LGV's local area, unlike some other areas, do not consider it worthwhile to rent out their roofs.

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

LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS (LCW):

Llangattock Community Woodlands has benefited from free National Garden Gift vouchers thanks to the 'Have a Wild Weekend' campaign run by Keep Wales Tidy and funded by Welsh Government's Nature Fund.

Volunteers from Llangattock Community Woodlands rolled up their sleeves and gave pollinators a helping hand in May when they found out they had been successful in applying for £500, which they used to buy wildflower seeds.

The aim of the 'Have a Wild Weekend' campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, as well as to help communities create new habitats and food sources for pollinators by planting wild flower havens in unused spaces.

Community environmental groups, schools, businesses, charitable organisations and local authorities across Wales were asked to apply for a 'Wild Weekend' grant of up to £500 to help them in their pollinator improvement projects.

As part of their environmental project, Llangattock Community Woodlands did a lot to improve the habitat in Canalside wood to provide nectar and pollen for pollinators. We sowed wildflower seed on over 500m² of woodland floor and planted over 100 trees.



Jon Stedman from Llangattock Community Woodlands said 'We were thrilled when we found out that we'd been successful in applying for Garden Centre vouchers. 'Wild Weekend' has enabled us to make a huge improvement to the pollen and nectar that's on offer in Llangattock and hopefully this will benefit our local environment and wildlife, as well as the local community.'

Lesley Jones, Chief Executive of Keep Wales Tidy, said: 'I am delighted that so many groups across Wales got involved to help our pollinators and their natural environment. They have planted new flowering plants to attract our bees and butterflies as well as giving existing habitats a helping hand. Keep Wales Tidy would like to thank the Welsh Government for all their support, ensuring that the 'Have a Wild Weekend' has been a great success for people across Wales!'

NB/ 'Have a Wild Weekend' is part of the 'Natural Buzz' initiative run by Keep Wales Tidy, in partnership with the Horticultural Trade Association and Green Space Wales and funded by the Welsh Government's Nature Fund. For more information on the 'Natural Buzz' initiative, please e-mail wild@keepwalestidy.org or visit the website www.keepwalestidy.org



Keeping up to date with Llangattock Community Woodlands on the website (lcwg.btck.co.uk) is a great way to find out what we are doing. The calendar gives you a flavour of the activities on a weekly basis and if you want to come along and join us, you are very welcome to contact Huw Lloyd, our part-time Volunteer Support and Training Manager. You can contact him via the website lcwg.btck.co.uk. We have had over 7,500 hits on our website, so if you want to help us make it even better, visit and give us your views. There are so many photos, too.

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. Thanks!

TY'R ASH MEADOW:

Well, we now have our planning permission granted. The meeting held in the first week of June agreed the permission and, after a lot of administration to get the application right, we are finally there. It has been an interesting journey for me. The first planning application I have submitted and I thought it would be easy! Just a little wooden bridge that will make access so much better for people in wheelchairs or with baby buggies, etc. Quite rightly, there are lots of things to overcome, not least Access Statements, Ecological Assessment, Application for Land Drainage Consent and a licence from Natural Resources Wales. I even learnt a new word 'soffit' - apparently it is to do with the height of the bridge to avoid flooding.

We're hoping to get this erected sometime in July and will be looking for volunteers. Thanks to all those who have already signed up to help: High School Eco Club, BBNPA Warden, Land Manager from Glanusk and volunteers from LGV. Jackie.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT - LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS:

The monthly community litter pick on Saturday 6th June saw nine volunteers collect 4 bags of litter, focusing on the B4560 on Llangattock Llangynidr Mountain, the Beechwood and Recreation Ground, with 7.5 miles of verge litter picked.



We are holding additional litter picks later this month, meeting at Park Drive (Llangattock) on each of the dates/times below:

Tuesday 16th June - Meet at Park Drive at 9.15am

Tuesday 23rd June - Meet at Park Drive at 9.15am

If you can come along and help, please send us an email in advance (michaelbutterfield@hotmail.com) to confirm, so that we can plan the routes to litter pick and put out enough road safety signs before the work begins. Please note that it is **essential** that you bring a fully charged mobile phone with you, in case of emergencies – unfortunately if you don't, we won't be able to use your help that day. All welcome and all other equipment provided.

The month of May saw us collect 14¾ bags of litter (111kg with 76% recycled) and 1 tyre, with the entire 70 miles of roadside verge, country lanes, canal tow paths and community areas in and around Llangattock that we cover being litter picked. This took 30.5 volunteer hours to achieve these great results.

There was only one fly tip on our patch to report from May, which saw the fly tipping of what looked like the waste from a takeaway/restaurant, with oil drums, bags and packaging, etc. We reported this to Powys County Council and we are glad to say that this was collected 3 days later.



Behind the scenes, Llangattock Litter Pickers has been encouraging Powys County Council (PCC) to prosecute fly tippers and litterers, following our Freedom of Information request to the council which revealed that, due to the lack of an effective enforcement policy, prosecutions have been absent for at least the past six years. Thankfully, PCC has just secured a prosecution against a

person who fly tipped in Powys, which sent out a strong, clear message that fly tipping is unacceptable and that there are consequences for those who are caught.

We are pleased to say that all the additional flower troughs are now in situ in the community, bringing the grand total up to 23, and with the wild flower seeds sown on the three verges on Beaufort Road (opposite the allotments), we hope you will enjoy the displays in the coming months.

Thanks, too, go to Jenny, Lorraine, Lee and Michael for the work carried out on the verge on The Legar which has seen this transformed from being just weeds/grass to having wild flower seeds sown. It will be lovely to see the transformation continue as these pretty plants come in to bloom.

We have renewed our litter picking agreement with The Beaufort Estate for a further 3 years, which will provide the group with a vital source of income and allows us not only to purchase equipment but also enhance the community further, through projects such as the flower troughs and wild flower verges.

Drink-related litter such as cans, bottles and cartons contributes 75% of the litter volume we collect. We have been following developments in relation to a deposit return scheme in Scotland with great interest. As you will remember from your youth, deposit schemes used to be common - Corona (based in Rhondda) and Lowes (Cardiff) are examples of companies running deposit schemes that foundered when it became convenient to pass on responsibility for dealing with their waste to the taxpayer. These schemes are common place across the world including Germany, Sweden and Norway and also in parts of Canada, Australia and the United States. We are collaborating with Friends of the Earth Cymru and have been and continue to lobby politicians, government and organisations, as we believe the time has come in Wales to introduce such a scheme to reduce the amount of drink-related litter but we need policy intervention by the Welsh Government to make this happen. As we have seen with the single-use carrier bag charge, attaching a value to something can be very effective in helping us bring about much needed change.

ALLOTMENTS (LACAS):

Llangattock Allotment Society held their AGM at The Old Rectory recently. Following the formal part of the evening, an auction of donated tools took place which, after a tentative start, livened up with some fierce bidding, including a husband and wife bidding against each other ('I want it for the garden', 'I want it for my allotment') and concluded with another member buying a hedge-trimmer, then saying 'Hang on, I haven't got a hedge!'. The auction was followed by a plant and seed swap, with cabbages and courgettes finding new homes and some funds raised for the Society.

The Sunday of June 21st at 1pm will see a members' BBQ in the allotment field.

We still have a few spare plots, if anyone would like to join or maybe you know someone who might be interested. Spread the word. Contact gibsons@uwclub.net or phone Phil on 01873 811537.

See our page on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/llangattockallotments?fref=ts>

MEMBERSHIP:

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

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.

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
visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org**

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