



LLANGATTOCK GREEN VALLEYS NEWSLETTER

Issue 64 - September/October 2015

Sorry for the lateness of this month's newsletter, which should have been last month's, that's how late it is.

Simon Walter

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

Hydro Update:

Cwm Gu has generated some electricity but flow in the scheme hasn't built up to any great extent, because of the fairly dry September weather. Three LGV directors visited the scheme recently for handover training and we are looking for volunteers who would be willing to help out doing occasional weekly checks of the meter reading and intake point, to ensure there's no significant build-up of leaves, twigs or rocks. Ideally we'll have a group of local people who will need to make a visit to the scheme every month or so, on a rota basis. If you can lend a hand with this, please contact Steve Sharp (stevesharp.lgv@btinternet.com).

Planning permission and full licences have now been received for Blaen Dyar, our second MH-1 scheme, so we have placed an order with our construction partners TGV Hydro to build this scheme. This will be carried out over the winter months and the scheme should be commissioned early next year.

One significant change on the renewable energy horizon is that the UK government has said it will stop the pre-accreditation process for FITs at the end of September, so anyone planning to build a micro hydro scheme, for example, had to pre-register the scheme to avoid a significant degeneration (over 30%) in the FIT rate. The exception to this is if a scheme is built and commissioned before the end of March next year, but we pre-registered the Blaen Dyar scheme in September. Construction is just about complete on our first MH-2 scheme, Nant yr Hafod. Unfortunately Ecotricity again delivered the wrong meter (a 100% failure rate so far - well done Ecotricity!), which has caused a delay, but a new one is being fitted this week and the electrics can then be finalised in the turbine house. Delivery of the turbine itself is due and commissioning is still on target.

Talks are continuing to progress well regarding the potential micro-hydro scheme near Builth Wells and we have managed to pre-register this scheme in the name of our MH-2 Co-op before the end-

of-September FITs deadline. The scheme is still in planning (the intake already has planning permission) and we have submitted a full application to NRW for Abstraction and Impoundment licences. Flood Defence Consent has already been granted and so we are hopeful that we will be able to take on and build this scheme early next year.

We thought we had some further good news for MH-2 subscribers but the last week has typified some of the hydro highs and lows we've experienced over the last 3 years. Three LGV directors visited the landowner of a potential hydro scheme near Talybont-on-Usk and initial discussions were very positive. We agreed outline terms and checked that it was a viable scheme with our business model, however, we then received an email 4 days later stating that 'something had come up' and it was no longer available to LGV.

It is with some sadness and great frustration that we finally decided to call a halt to our plans to develop the Gargwy Fach and Nant y Gadair schemes this month. About 3 years of planning, fund-raising and negotiations and hundreds of volunteer hours proved to be fruitless and our last plea to the landowner fell on deaf ears. We also decided that the two schemes north of Abergavenny, which were mentioned in the last newsletter, weren't viable enough for us to take on.

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.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT - LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS:



August results: August saw Llangattock Litter Pickers' efforts rewarded with 15.3 bags of litter/2 tyres/137.5kg/60.8% recycled from 76.5 miles of road side verge, country lanes, canal tow path and community areas. Just 27 hours of volunteer time were needed to achieve these results and the entire litter picking patch was covered in the month of August. The early years of hard work by the group are really now paying dividends in that we are able to cover the entire area of our litter picking patch in a very efficient manner. This is allowing the group to look at other ways in which we can enhance the community and surrounding area such as the placement of flower troughs/wild flowers and the maintenance of the verges that they are located on.

October litter picks: We will be out litter picking on the following weekdays during October with the meeting time in brackets:

Monday 12th (9.15am), Tuesday 20th (9.15am)

All our litter picks meet at Park Drive (Llangattock) and all welcome with equipment provided.

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 litter pick 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.



Level of litter at Garnlydan: As advocates of "lying litter will attract further littering" we have since 2014 been reporting into Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council the unacceptable levels of litter in Garnlydan. We know that the situation is having an impact on the patch that we litter pick and have asked both the Council and Sally Morgan (Project Officer, Keep Wales Tidy) for a proactive approach to be adopted in tackling the issue. Currently, the Council adopts a reactive approach when we report in unacceptable levels of litter at Garnlydan. This tends to happen on a monthly basis by us and is proving not to be effective in tackling the issue hence our call for a proactive approach.

Post Greenman Festival litter pick: Since the last newsletter we have been instructed by the organisers of the Greenman Festival to carry out a fine litter pick of the Glanusk Estate where the Festival was held. In years where the festival has experienced inclement weather such a fine litter pick is needed. We carried out the first fine litter picking session at the Estate on Saturday 12th September which saw 25 volunteers from the group, Llangattock School and Crickhowell Scouts give their time. This will result in a donation of £250 to each of the two organisations named above. As a volunteer litter picking group the revenue we receive from this service we provide enables us to enhance the community through the likes of the flower troughs, wild flowers verges and replacement/enhancing of our equipment. It also means that we are not entirely grant dependent which allows us the greatest possible chance of having a sustainable future as a group from a financial aspect.



Deposit return scheme in Wales: We are pleased to say that Keep Wales Tidy are currently considering a paper on the merits of the introduction of a deposit return scheme in Wales. We fed into the paper and look forward to hearing whether Keep Wales Tidy will be adopting the proposed position in the paper by the end of September. We met with the Special Adviser to the Minister (Carl Sargeant) this month and left the meeting heartened with the Welsh Government/Minister position on such a scheme being introduced in Wales. We are having follow up meetings with the political parties in the Assembly with a view of securing manifesto commitments for the Assembly 2016 election manifestos for the introduction of a deposit return scheme in Wales as a way to combat drink related litter.

Image below: "A month's worth of drink related from our patch in Llangattock and the surrounding area"

Fly tip prevention follow up project on the Hafod Road:

As reported in the last newsletter we are currently working on a follow up project to our fly tip prevention project on the Hafod Road which is the old tram road from the escarpment on Hillside, Llangattock around to Brynmawr. Given the success of the initial project we are now looking to install preventative measures to curtail the fly tipping over the steep embankment on the Hafod Road over some 800m of roadside verge. We have submitted a grant application to the Welsh Government for a sum of over £14,000 and will hear back whether we have been successful or not at the start of October.



Flower troughs and wild flower verges: With the summer growing season drawing to a close we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those in the community that have contributed to looking after the flower troughs and maintaining the verges where they are located in Llangattock. The summer annuals have been replaced in the flower troughs with the winter annuals (pansies) to provide some colour through the winter/spring.

We are delighted in both the display that the wildflowers have produced on the three verges on Beaufort Road and also from the feedback we have received from residents, visitors to the community and also members of surrounding communities. The actual seed mix we used was not cheap to purchase but we did this following our research that they would not only give a good display but also be long lasting. Once the wild flowers have stopped flowering and the seed set we

will look to thrash the plants down to allow the seeds to disperse and also look to over sow the verges in readiness for next season where we hope again to have a wonderful display.

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



LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS IN CRICKHOWELL:

August has been a busy month processing wood for customers who want locally, sustainably sourced wood fuel. It is hard work but sales of wood fuel ensure we remain financially viable and supports our environmental objectives as a woodland group. Without this source of income we would not be able to support volunteers, provide safety equipment and match fund valuable grants.

Llangattock Community Woodlands has submitted an expression of interest to Arwain which is the new LEADER 11 programme. We have a good project idea to expand our Green Craft activity and will be seeking to provide high quality training for at least two of our volunteers. Here are some of

the outputs we expect to achieve:-

- Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources
- Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains

At the LACAS Show on 5 September we demonstrated some very simple green woodcraft using fresh hazel to make stunning little flowers. They were extremely popular. Green woodcraft is becoming increasingly popular and during 2016 we hope to offer much more activity to volunteers who would like to support our work through this project.



The biggest star at the show must have been Squeaky! Huw rescued this little hedgehog a couple of months ago which can be seen here with two fans from Llangattock. Update on Squeaky, she is doing fine, putting on weight before hibernation. Huw has the perfect home set up for her to spend the winter months in a cosy box, built to make sure she doesn't get too warm and wake up too early.

We are also calling out to Welsh speakers who

would like to participate in a walk and talk through one of our woodland areas. If you are a Welsh speaker or a learner longing to use this beautiful language in an easy atmosphere then do please get in touch.

Sam Ridge, National Park Warden, organised an afternoon in Llangattock Beechwood on the 9th of October and he provided some ideas to promote community engagement in this little jewel of a woodland. Llangattock Community Woodlands has previously been offered a long term lease on this site but had to decline due to lack of resources at the time. Sam says the purposes of this open day are to:

- give local people an opportunity to impart suggestions for how they would like to see the Beechwood managed.
- make them aware of the formation of a working group and offer an opportunity to be part of that.
- float the idea of a volunteer group and assess interest.

We hope to play an active part in supporting this management plan, helping in the formation of the working group and supporting the National Park Authority in developing regular volunteer input.

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 lwg.btck.co.uk or email.eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

TY'R ASH MEADOW - Llangattock Green Valleys Project

We have almost secured the lease for Ty'r Ash Meadow and are looking forward to planning the bridge build in the spring of 2016. This has been a long journey and we now feel at Llangattock Green Valleys that the project is almost complete. When starting out on this journey with Crickhowell High School and Glanusk Estate it was never envisaged it would take this long. But such is the joy of dealing with land negotiation, legal documents, planning applications, the weather and funding.

Our partners at Ty'r Ash Meadow:-



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.

**For more information on all our activities
visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org**

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who might be interested.**

If you'd like to see your photographs in the next newsletter send them
to: admin@llangattockgreenvalleys.org