



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 74
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<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

LLANGATTOCK GREEN VALLEYS CIC - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

The aim of Llangattock Green Valleys (LGV) is to develop projects that will reduce our community's reliance on fossil fuel and make our village more sustainable - environmentally, socially and economically.

Our vision is to:

- **make Llangattock a Carbon Negative Community**
- **build a community asset base that supports sustainable development**
- **involve the whole community and develop a sense of pride and wellbeing**
- **inspire stakeholders to promote a culture of 'walking together'.**

In order to achieve our vision the primary aim is to ensure a good financial framework and accountability for activities. Additionally LGV aims to establish a structure to support different activities for renewable energy and sustainable development in the next year. This will be achieved through mentor schemes, providing financial support where appropriate and increasing the number of projects that enable our community to be more sustainable in the future. LGV Community Interest Company (CIC) will be in receipt of monies to enable this to happen from two Micro Hydro Co-operatives (Industrial and Provident Societies) now operating with completed schemes. Our members are kept fully informed through our monthly newsletters, website and networking.

The two co-operatives (LG Micro Hydro (1) Co-operative Ltd. and LGV Micro Hydro (2) Co-operative Ltd.) are now supporting active micro hydro schemes at Cwm Gu and Nant yr Hafod and will develop a further three schemes during 2016/2017 using the £894,550 they raised. The financial surplus which will be generated from these co-operatives is designed to repay subscribers and provide a community fund for LGV to share in the way described above.

LGV provides volunteering opportunities and offers community-based investment opportunities such as the micro hydro co-operatives through our trading arm LGV Ventures CIC. LGV membership at the end of 2015 was 524 and during the year we increased our volunteer base to support LGV's micro hydro activity. All volunteers are supported by LGV CIC across the LGV family. During 2015, LGV recorded 825 volunteer hours but it was probably closer to 1000. Our volunteers undertake many different activities during the course of the year, helping to ensure that the CIC fulfils all of its aims.

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro – MH-1 and MH-2 updates:

There was again no generation at Cwm Gu this month, due to the lack of any heavy or persistent rain, so the generation total at the end of August was still 68,252 kWh. However, we did receive our first FITs payment, which will help with short-term cash flow.

We finalised and signed the Agreement and Storage and Access Licence for the construction of Blaen Dyar and are hoping to schedule construction soon with our partners TGV Hydro, who have said that the scheme construction should be able to commence over the winter.

There was some generation at Nant yr Hafod this month, so the total generation figure at the month end was 43,579 kWh. We've had confirmation that the FITs process is complete and Microtricity has agreed that we can submit our first readings this month. We will get paid in November for electricity generated from 18th April this year until the end of September, so will unfortunately miss out on payment for much of the power generated to date. However, the 20-year FIT payment period will not start until April 2016, so we will not lose out in the long term.

Following the granting of preliminary FIT accreditation for Abernant, we have started the full accreditation application process and are hopeful we can start construction of this scheme before next summer.

We have managed to secure written confirmation from landowner NRW that they are satisfied with the access arrangements and planning permission for our other MH-2 scheme, Cwm Saerbren. Having agreed Heads of Terms with NRW, we are now in discussions to finalise the lease and we hope that this scheme will also be built early next year.

Finance Director role:

Finance Director Mike Procter has decided to resign from LGV for personal reasons with effect from the MH-1 and MH-2 hydro AGMs, taking place at The Old Rectory in Llangattock on the evening of Monday 27th June. As a retired Chartered Accountant, Mike has provided invaluable advice and many volunteer hours during a crucial period when LGV created several Co-operatives and raised almost £1m to design and build our micro-hydro schemes and we would like to express our gratitude to him. If you have finance experience and might be interested in taking on the role from Mike, please contact Steve Sharp on stevesharp.lgv@btinternet.com for more information.



LGV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE! CAN YOU HELP?

In addition to the new Finance Director role, 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

By Jackie Charlton and Bob Needs

This month Llangattock Community Woodlands (LCW) has signed a Licence with the Canal & River Trust (CRT) to manage and improve an important alder carr woodland and meadow. CRT had planned to sell the site by auction earlier this year but due to legal issues found this to be problematic. LCW have shown considerable interest in this woodland for many years, understanding its unique management scheme. Alder carr woodlands are becoming very rare in the landscape. Having done some research on the importance of alder carr we are delighted to have been invited to manage this site. Dense, often impenetrable alder carr develop alongside streams and adjacent ground is waterlogged for much of the year. The alder is the dominant tree able to tolerate wet conditions and benefit from these conditions too.

Alder trunks are usually tall, straight and slender and the bark is dark brown and rough, whilst the leaves are dark green and round. Alder is the only broad leaf tree that has cones so if you are in doubt look for the little cones on the branches. The alder is also the only native tree that grows well in waterlogged conditions, a feat made possible by the presence of bacteria in the alder's root nodules. The bacteria extract nitrogen from the air, and 'fix it' for use by the tree, making up for chronic shortages in waterlogged soil of this colourless gas so essential for life.

The alders in our woodland have multiple trunks growing from ground level, or just above, which indicates that they have been coppiced, that is, repeatedly cut to promote the growth of shoots that could be harvested again and again after every cut.

The water-resistant nature of the wood meant it was used in water pipes, wooden pumps, and for piles under bridges and buildings. Alder also burns slowly and provides one of the best charcoals for use in gunpowder manufacture, whilst latterly charcoal from these alders was used extensively in gas mask filter manufacture. We hope to be able to do some further research of local archives to see if we can find out what this woodland was used for in the past. It could have been linked to many different activities in the area during the 18th and 19th centuries.

(Information used here was extracted from

<http://www.newforestexplorersguide.co.uk/wildlife/habitats/alder-carrs.html>)

If you would like to come along as a volunteer and find out more about charcoal making, bee keeping, moth surveys, wood processing or woodcrafts, please email huw.lloyd@hotmail.co.uk. We meet regularly every Tuesday and you can find information on where and when we meet on our website www.lcwg.btck.co.uk.



Tree Stories

We are still collecting Tree Stories for the Woodland Trust Tree Charter project and would be very interested in having more stories. If you have a short story about trees then please do send it to me at jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com. At the moment I have just over 50 and am looking for another 50 at least. At the LACAS show on 3rd September we collected stories on a wet, downcast day and they brightened everyone up.



Bee notes for September

What a surprise, more honey!! Most beekeepers that harvest honey from their hives will have finished the honey extraction at the end of July or sometime early in August after the bramble honey flow has finished. Poor weather this year has meant the honey at the Llangattock allotments and Jarrett's Wood was extracted later (mid August). I was going away on holiday the week following the extraction so was keen to get this part of the season behind me so we could concentrate on final inspections of the colonies and get them ready for the winter.

After extraction the empty frames were returned to the hives for the bees to mop up the small amounts of honey that are often left in some cells and on the woodwork of the frames. All of this theory was discussed during the winter honeybee classes that were held in Llangattock community hall and, apart from the season being later than normal, it went to plan.



This year the Llangattock allotments' show was held on 3rd September; the Jarrett's Wood bee group had woodlands honey for sale in jars and natural honeycomb produced by the bees was sold by group members at the show. The woodlands site where the bees are kept has been cleared to encourage wild flowers. Insects then feed on the nectar produced by those flowers which means the honey is very local to the site.

The allotment bee group also had a tent at the show where visitors could see what can be produced from the hive products including the honey. As part of the allotment bee experience, I took a frame I had returned (empty) two weeks earlier from the strongest colony. The idea was that visitors could have a taste of local honey and see what natural honey looks like when taken directly from the hive. As it was being tasted I noticed some of

the honey was exceptionally thick and had a strong aroma. I then realized it was ling heather honey the bees had been working on during the two weeks that had passed since I returned the frame to the hive. Look back at last month's bee notes for an explanation about ling heather honey. This was the surprise I had not been expecting so late in the season!

Once I realized that this year there was ling heather about I arranged for the woodland group to inspect the Jarrett's Wood colonies to see if it was also there, especially as the site is very close to the Sugarloaf Mountain. We found about 14 super frames of heather honey, four of which are for cut comb that will be sold in attractive presentation boxes. As it is such an exceptional honey and for most beekeepers a rare crop, the price will be double that of most other honeys – enjoy it.

Bee Bob



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 eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS

By Pete Bates, Rollo Lewis and Michael Butterfield

Please follow these links for our most recent news:

- [Newsletter September 2016](#)
- [Llangattock Litter Pickers Supporters Club](#)

PLEASE ASK US!

If anybody would like to look at LGV's 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.

To find out more about us and to become a member,

please visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

Follow us on Twitter! @LGVcic