



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 99
December 2018

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Our five hydro schemes have benefitted from some fairly typical Welsh Autumn weather with several periods of persistent rain. The schemes have been relatively fault-free and have all generated decent amounts of electricity. Total generation to date in kWhs at the end of November was:

Cwm Gu: 180,770

Nant yr Hafod: 110,020

Blaen Dyar: 55,770

Abernant: 62,720

Cwm Saerbren: 64,740

We are still awaiting a final response from the Financial Conduct Authority on the proposed merger of our two hydro Co-operatives but they have indicated they will sanction the merger. Therefore we have been working hard to ensure the merger is able to take place at the end of this month, which is also the financial year end for both Co-ops. The Boards wish to thank Members for their support and backing of the merger proposal and the directors look forward to a slightly reduced workload next year, with just one Society to manage and now that all five hydro schemes are operational.

On behalf of all our volunteer directors, advisers and helpers, I'd also like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and wet 2019.



Image: Abernant intake last month – before cleaning!



Image: Nant yr Hafod intake in spate



SPECIAL GUESTS

By Jackie Charlton



We felt properly honoured this month to invite some special guests from Newport Sanctuary, a charity which supports refugees from across the world. Refugees are victims of national crisis and look to other nations to give sanctuary and support. We had 12 people from different nations – Iran, Iraq, The Congo, Malaysia and Syria and all age ranges. Some had only been in the UK for as little as a month and others much longer. The Newport Sanctuary provides support liaising with the Home Office and local

authorities for housing, education and general needs. Whilst seeking asylum, these people cannot work and so are unable to provide for themselves and need a lot of support. Sanctuary has a wealth of expertise and additionally offers days out and other activities to ensure that people are able to engage, learn the language and new skills and finally become UK citizens, if that is the future they want. We hope to foster this partnership with both Newport Sanctuary and the Hay and Talgarth branch too.

CHRISTMAS FAIR - CRICKHOWELL

What an evening! Crickhowell having just won the UK High Street of the Year proved they were worthy winners organising and delivering the Christmas Fair, which involved the whole of the town. We did really, well selling all our honey and other bee products and most of our Christmas decorations made from wood and holly from our woodland. It has helped us to raise some funds which will be put towards new projects in 2019, including the Llangattock Community Woodlanders group activities, more help for Sanctuary and other groups and extending our bee development too.



THE BENCH!!

It's finally in place, the bench which was bought with funds from the Woodland Trust Competition for the Tree of the Year awards in 2018. The Giant Redwood, recognised by locals and visitors alike and seen in the photo, will be viewed and cherished for years to come. Volunteers dug the holes and fitted the bench over two weeks and it is now ready to sit on!



BBC WILDLIFE MAGAZINE

During the summer, Llangattock Community Woodlands was invited to provide BBC Wildlife Magazine with some information for an article. It was good fun and a specialist photographer

came out to visit us all for the morning, taking lots of pictures, and we submitted some words about our group. Sue Wingrove did us proud with [this article in the magazine](#), which is due to go out in the January edition. Hope you enjoy reading it.

LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDERS

The Woodlanders will be properly launched in the New Year and the group is growing. This month they focused on – yes you've guessed it – Christmas! After spending a very wet morning, they all came together to make decorations with wood from our woodland and eat hot dogs, chocolates and biscuits. James Godding, one of the parents, is keen to lead this group and make the second Saturday of the month a fun morning for local children and their parents. We want this to be a family session, giving children and parents space to have fun and explore.



ALDER CARR LOTTERY

The Alder Carr Lottery is something we want to promote to support small projects in **Llangattock Community Woodlands**. We raised nearly £300 last year and three people won prizes at the end of the year – 1st prize £50 and two prizes of £25 each. We are looking to raise more money this year, so if you would like to support us and perhaps be a happy winner, please get in touch.

For more information, please contact jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com or andrewgpeach@gmail.com. The **Alder Carr Lottery** is registered under the Gambling Act 2005 and has a Small Society Lotteries Registration Certificate. Registration No: LN/201600367



BOB'S BEE NOTES ~ DECEMBER

December is the time of year we carry out checks on Varroa numbers and the levels of fondant feed above the crown boards on our hives. We continue to check Varroa at this time of year because the mites are attached to the adult worker bees. The workers are not in the sealed brood cells where they would be protected from treatments. I have mentioned before about why we use bio-technical methods of removing the Varroa, which works well at the present time, so no need to change the treatment method. I prefer to use the dusting method, with icing sugar sprinkled over the bees clustering together on the combs. It is quick,



safe and cheap and most effective when there is no brood where the mites could be hiding. I have started monitoring the natural mite fall through the mesh floors and so far the mites dying from old age are below average, so that is telling me the numbers are low in the hives. Even so, I will give all the colonies a quick dusting between the top bars of the frames at the



next opportunity. I inspect the mites for damage because some bees actually attack them, denting the body and biting off the legs. We want this trait to exist in our bees as it could lead to a natural way of keeping the mite levels low without interfering with the colonies so much.

Bees are often seen through the feed holes in the crown board right at the top of the hives. This is where fondant sugar bags are positioned immediately above the bee cluster. In mild weather at this time of year the bee cluster can break up as the bees eat stores and move around inside the hive, releasing heat from around the Queen. The heat then has to be built up again when the temperature drops at night, using up precious stores.

The fondant is a supplementary feed that means the honey stores around the bees will go further in the early spring, when the Queen's laying increases and all those young, hungry mouths will need food. So far this year, most hives have consumed at least one bag of fondant per colony. All the colonies will be visited over the next few weeks, adding more fondant as required.

Apart from the activities I have mentioned, this is a time of year to get on with planning and reading about how we can try out new ideas and setting aside time for making up equipment ready for the next season.

Enjoy Christmas

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 do get in touch. Please email Eric

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



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.

