

Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter



Issue 66 – December 2015

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

Hydro Update:

And the rains came down and the floods came up, and the hydro schemes filled up...

We're very pleased that our hydro schemes at **Cwm Gu** and **Nant yr Hafod** have been operating at or near full capacity for the past few weeks. There was a temporary problem at Cwm Gu, where noise during one of our inspection visits was much louder than usual and we found this was due to a stone being trapped in the spear valve. However, we managed to clear this and flush through the system without much loss of generation.

We're in discussions with organisations such as Sustrans and RPL to try to agree storage and access arrangements etc., for our second MH-1 scheme, **Blaen Dyar**; our plan is to build this scheme in the first half of 2016.

In its first three weeks of operation, our first MH-2 scheme **Nant yr Hafod** generated 8,000 kWh of electricity and it attracted a visit from Welsh Government Minister Carl Sargeant and Alex Thomas, the Welsh Labour candidate for Brecon and Radnorshire. Carl Sargeant commented that "It was great to visit this micro-generator scheme. The community has worked incredibly hard to develop this future-proofed local scheme" and Alex Thomas said "This is a fantastic project, run by dedicated volunteers, that makes brilliant use of our natural resources. In the week of the Paris Climate Change Conference, this shows the real difference that local, community-led endeavours can make."



From left to right: Carl Sargeant, Jackie Charlton, Alex Thomas and Simon Walter

Talks continue to progress well with the landowner regarding **Abernant** and we're hoping the lease will be signed shortly. Three LGV directors also visited a third potential MH-2 site this month, at **Cwm Saerbren**, near Treherbert. We were welcomed by three members of the community group there and we've since had a positive response to our initial discussions about taking on the planned scheme in MH-2. Another meeting is being arranged for later this month in Llangattock, to progress our discussions and so that our visitors can see one of our completed hydro schemes.

On the political front, we're still waiting for the expected UK government's announcement on the new FIT rates and deadlines for hydro schemes. Applications for pre-registration for FITs have already been made for Blaen Dyar and Abernant, so the current FIT rate for these schemes should be guaranteed, assuming the applications go through satisfactorily (this process is currently taking many months, due to the sudden September deadline which was imposed and the consequent influx of last-minute applications). However, an application wasn't able to be made for Cwm Saerbren, so the UK government's announcement on the new rate is awaited with interest.

Many thanks to those people who have volunteered to help out with the cleaning and monitoring of our hydro schemes. Once the necessary insurance is in place, we'll be organising a training session for these volunteers. If you're able and willing to help but haven't responded yet, please contact Steve Sharp: stevesharp.lgv@btinternet.com or 01873-810013. No prior knowledge or great level of fitness is necessary, as we'll give you full training and support.

As we go to print, DECC has released a 115-page response document to the renewable energy consultation, which the MH-1 and MH-2 boards will consider over the coming days. A shareholder information update will be sent out soon direct to all MH-1 and MH-2 shareholders.

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:

[Please follow the link to our November 2015 newsletter.](#)



LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

As part of our ongoing Trees and Bees Project, Bob will be providing a monthly update on the bees. Here is his first update which includes November.



BUZZ NOTES FROM BOBS' BEES

LCW and **LACAS** are working together to set up a course for bee keepers in the New Year. Bees are such an important part of what both organisations do, we thought it would be interesting to have monthly Buzz Notes. Bob Needs is supporting both groups and here are some of the things we are doing with our bees.

November is when apiary sites should be secured ready for any winter storms and there have been some big ones this November. Mouse guards will be in place, all Varroa treatments have been completed, syrup feeders have been removed and a bag of fondant placed over the crown board hole for emergency feeding. On 16 November this year, bees were seen collecting ivy pollen when in a normal year the Queen would have finished her egg laying and the bees would have formed a winter cluster. Any pollen collected now is eaten by the winter bees or stored for the spring. It is a time when beekeepers should be putting their feet up, reading a good bee book and sipping some of the mead made from honey of a previous year's wax cappings.

December is a good time to monitor the varroa mite population of each colony as the Queen will have stopped laying her eggs. The last of her offspring will have vacated their cells with varroa attached to them – a phoretic interaction between two species in which one transports the other. A proportion of the mites will naturally fall off the bees as well as dying from old age,



whilst some are preened off and all of these can be found on the monitoring board under the mesh floor. When the monitoring board is examined and the mites collected, they are individually examined using low magnification to see if the bees have attacked the mites. If the opportunity arises this could also be a good time to dust between the top bars with icing sugar to reduce the mite population still further. Colonies are checked for winter damage. Green woodpeckers are known to be a problem in some places for damaging beehives, if so, net with chicken wire or cover the hives with shiny material such as plastic.

New Community Woodland



LCW has been offered a unique opportunity to purchase an alder carr woodland site and meadow in Llangattock. This type of woodland and meadow is very rare in Wales. There is a wonderful report written by Patsy Dallas MA looking at the history of medieval woodlands in Norfolk and the importance of alder carr to basket making where woodlands and meadows are important links to medieval life. Now we don't think our woodland goes back that far, but who knows? What we do know though, is alder carr is a fantastic host for biodiversity for both flora and fauna. We know there are lots of interesting elements that we can monitor, study and share with the community of Llangattock if we are able to secure this site for LCW. Wet woodlands are incredibly important habitats and have been lost to the nation in recent years. LCW has

important charitable objectives which will ensure this woodland remains protected for the future. In the UK Biodiversity Action Plan wet woodlands are recognised as a priority habitat.



Recruitment of Volunteers and Trustees

We are actively looking for an additional Trustee for LCW. Would you be interested? Tony Jones has been a fantastic Treasurer and Trustee at LCW for over six years and he has decided to stand down at the next AGM in May. We have been extremely successful over the last five years in gaining support and

funds to take a small group of enthusiastic volunteers to the point we are at today which is an organisation with a turnover exceeding all expectations but needing a strategic approach for the future. If you think you can fill that role we would be really delighted to hear from you. Please contact jackiecharlton@msn.com for further details.

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.

Volunteers seen here clearing Laurel from our Canal Side woodland a couple of weeks ago to make a path through the wood to the great Red Wood.



Ty'r Ash

LGV is just about to sign the lease with Glanusk Estate for managing and supporting Ty'r Ash for the next ten years. During 2015 LGV secured planning permission for a new access bridge into Ty'r Ash from Bull Pit Meadow and the bridge has been stored ready to be put in place in late spring 2016. The delay is mainly due to getting people together to build the bridge which is a wooden structure. The bridge will be placed on concrete plinths and the Brecon Beacons National Park warden Sam Ridge will be supervising this work. We can't work during the autumn or winter months due to the risk of higher water levels. Once the bridge is in place Crickhowell High School will be developing an open classroom site for environmental studies.

MEMBERSHIP:

We are delighted to have received some positive feedback from a couple of our stakeholders. Please see below for their comments:

Hi,

I have to say I am totally impressed with the amount of work you are undertaking. My only regret is that I live in Grimsby and not in your area plus I'm now 72 years old and not in the best of health but reading your updates is like a breath of fresh air.

I'm really pleased I invested in this excellent scheme,

Best wishes

Peter Lockwood.

Dear LGV team,

Thanks for a marvellously upbeat and informative newsletter... Here too we are dancing in the windy rain with our 21kWh micro hydro scheme (installed by TGV in spring /summer 2014) merrily maxing out again at last.

Celia Jefferies.

To find out more about joining please visit Llangattock Green Valleys.



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

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 and to become a member,
please visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org
You can also follow us on Twitter [@LGVcic](https://twitter.com/LGVcic)**