



## **LLANGATTOCK GREEN VALLEYS NEWSLETTER**

### **Issue 58 - March 2015**

#### **COMMUNITY BROADBAND:**

Monday 23rd March sees the launch of the Llangattock and Ffawyddog Community Broadband by Kirsty Williams AM and Roger Williams MP. The scheme will bring superfast internet to all residents and businesses in the area.

Installed and operated by Rural Technologies Wales, the Community Broadband scheme will complement the Superfast Cymru roll-out, delivering business quality, superfast broadband speeds to members who would not otherwise benefit.

Grants of up to 90% of the installation cost are available to businesses and residents under the Access Broadband Cymru scheme. Rural Technologies Wales will be available to assist potential members with their application.

Telephone lines are also at a premium in many parts of rural Wales including Llangattock and Ffawyddog. The Community Broadband will enable members to make the most of Voice over IP telephony, greatly reducing the costs of telephone services whilst also improving the sound quality of telephone calls.

The Community Broadband will be hosted at Graig Barn Farm near Crickhowell and using Super High Frequency wireless connections, an initial service of 30 mbps will be broadcast to members on the opposite side of the Usk valley. Members will connect into the wireless network using an inexpensive wireless receiver mounted on their property. When the Superfast Cymru fast fibre connection becomes available, the wireless network will provide the full download speed of 70 mbps.

Rural Technologies Wales is a Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) based in the Brecon Beacons and provides superfast broadband services to businesses, communities and individuals in Wales. Advice and technology is also available to allow users to make the most of their superfast broadband. These include internet based security camera systems, monitoring and Voice over IP telephony.

Prior to this official launch there will be an open evening for residents of Llangattock and Ffawyddog on Wednesday 18th March at 7:30 pm in the Rectory Hotel.

The evening will cover an introduction to the Llangattock and Ffawyddog Community Broadband scheme, the technology, administration, support and costs, plus a look at the Dyffryn Crawnon broadband scheme from a user's perspective. Please come along to find out more!

More information is available from [www.ruraltechnologies.co.uk](http://www.ruraltechnologies.co.uk)

### **ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:**

Progress on our first micro hydro scheme, Cwm Gu, has been slower than we'd hoped this last month, due mainly to some poor weather. The turbine house structure is now complete but ground conditions are still not good enough to start trenching in the upper half of the scheme, where there is a cross slope. Construction of the intake should commence soon. A lot of the trenching and laying of cables for the electricity export has been completed. Commissioning is now expected to be in April.

We have been taking advice and exploring some alternative options to try to surmount the problem mentioned in the last newsletter concerning two of our MH-2 hydro schemes, Nant y Gadair and Gargwy Fach. For the time being, we have no news on these schemes.

We also commissioned a hydrologist's report for another MH-2 scheme, Blaen Dyar, as we'd noticed that the flow of Nant Dyar following our own flow gauging over the winter months was lower than we'd expected. The report concluded that this scheme is less viable than indicated previously, so again we are looking at an alternative option which involves a lower intake point.

Construction of the Nant yr Hafod scheme is still scheduled to start later this month.

### **SOLAR PV**

We are also exploring a number of big PV roof mounted schemes with the potential of another co-op being launched. We hope to include local schools and agricultural barns in the scheme, as well as large commercial buildings, village halls, chapels and churches. Anybody with a building with a large roof which meets the following criteria:

- **Size**
  - 30kWp+ (120 panels @ 250w panels)
  - 220m<sup>2</sup> of area needed for 30kWp
  - So 30-50kWp is your starting point and then you jump to 135-150kWp bracket then as your next sizing point for workable return figures
  - Ideally single roof not multiple roofs as costs increase i.e. scaffolding, safety netting (if agri barns), cable runs etc
- **Electricity**
  - Split phase at the very least available at site but three phase needed above 35kWp sized scheme
  - Good on site demand for electricity

- **Orientation**
- Ideally south west through to south east orientation
- East/West orientation workable but need to have strong on site electricity demand to support workable return.

and who would like to explore either doing it at the same time for themselves, and so reducing their costs through the benefits of bulk buying, or leasing the roof to the co-operative, with a deal on cheap electricity, please get in contact with me: [andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk). Many thanks, Andrew.

### **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](mailto:andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk)

### **LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS (LCW):**

It has been extra busy this month along Canal Side clearing the big Redwood for a beautiful sight up through the branches to a magnificent height. In the recent edition of the [Canals & Rivers Trust "VOLUNTEER" newsletter](#) the Redwood was seen in all its glory with a great article from LCW.

If you want to see the tree, walk along the towpath from Llangattock towards Gilwern and it is just before bridge 113.



In the future we will be doing more work along the canal to provide an environmental experience as well as seeing some great views.

In January Llangattock Community Woodlands was successful in their application for 400 'Wet Woodland Trees' from the Woodland Trust. They have delivered over 5000 trees this month for community groups to plant across the UK. Dr Mark Robinson, National Ecologist for Canals and Rivers Trust, is very supportive of the planting and will no doubt want to see how we progress this. We hope to get lots of volunteers involved from the village when we organise a date sometime in April to do the planting. Wet Woodland is a special habitat which is rapidly being lost in the UK so we hope this will give back a little that has been lost. Look out for the invitation to join us planting trees.

Another great event coming up on 27th & 28th March is the [Llais y Goedwig GATHERING](#) being hosted by community woodland groups in Abergavenny and Llangattock. Venues include The Priory, in the heart of Abergavenny, and award winning Wern Watkin bunkhouse in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

This is a gathering of all those who are interested in Community Woodlands across Wales. You can come along and enjoy a lively mix of practical demonstrations, thought provoking workshops, good food, good company and inspiring site visits. To find out more please visit <http://llaisygoedwig.org.uk>

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](http://lcwg.btck.co.uk) or email [eric.gower@gmail.com](mailto:eric.gower@gmail.com) for a membership form.

#### **TY'R ASH MEADOW:**

There has been some good feedback as a result of the planning application and we hope to hear more news soon. If the result is to permit, we hope to build the bridge early in the summer and will be looking for volunteers. If you want to find out more please do contact Jackie Charlton and she will be able to give you more information: [jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com](mailto:jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com)

#### **COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT - LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS:**

**Litter picking:** February's Monthly litter pick saw 8 volunteers picking 4 bags of rubbish; the February monthly total of litter picked was 14.75 bags amounting to 130 kg of rubbish, 67.75% of which was sent for recycling. In total, volunteers gave 27.5 volunteers hours.

**STOP PRESS:** The Monthly community litter pick on Saturday 7th March saw 5 volunteers picking up 5.5 bags of litter from 7.6 miles of verge side on a bright and breezy morning. In addition, three tyres and a car seat were also rescued.

**Forthcoming litter picks on weekdays in March on the following dates: Monday 16th (9.00am) & Monday 23rd (3.00pm), followed by the usual first Saturday of the month on 4th April 2015 at 9.30am, meeting each time outside the Recreation Ground on Park Drive.**

**Fly tipping:** We have had a spate of fly tips recently in the surrounding area both on Llangattock Mountain and hillside and we ask members of the community to keep an eye out for vehicles that

may be fly tipping and report it to both PCC and Dyfed Powys Police. We are working with Powys County Council, Dyfed Powys Police and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority on the issue.

Llangattock Litter Pickers recently had an article published in the B&R regarding Powys' zero fly tipping and littering prosecutions/fines record in last five years.

**Flower troughs:** Fourteen additional flower troughs are now planted up with perennial plants and will be placed on the verges and areas agreed with Powys County Council shortly, with summer annuals planted up end of April/beginning of May. We need volunteers to come forward and volunteer to water, deadhead flowers and mow around flower troughs.

We have some volunteers but are in need of more. Thanks to Luke Draper for providing batons to adapt the additional flower troughs that are being placed in the community this spring. We would like to hear from you if you would like to see flower troughs in your part of the community as we are committed to further enhancing the local area.

**Wild flower verges:** We are now in receipt of the wild flower seed thanks to our successful grant application to Keep Wales Tidy Natural Buzz funding programme. The verges where the wild flower seeds are to be sown have had further preparation work done to them very recently, including mowing, spraying of glyphosate by Powys County Council to suppress grass in order to give wild flower seeds a head start and hopefully a good display later in the season and provide opportunities for pollinators to thrive.

Please bear with the verges after the spraying of glyphosate as they will look somewhat different to what we have been used to whilst the grass dies back and the wild flower seed takes time to establish itself. Legal agreements (Licence to plant in the highway under the provision of the Highways Act 1980) with Powys County Council's legal department have been drawn up and are about to be signed.

**General updates:** Keep Wales Tidy "Tidy Wales Awards" have been pushed back to April 27th from the 26th February. We have been surprised at the level of interest shown in our roadside verge signs, with a number of communities from across the UK, looking to replicate our signs in their own localities. Our Twitter account (@LlangattockPick) has been inundated with interest over a 24 hour period after we tweeted a picture, which saw over 500 re-tweets, favourites and follows as a result of posting the photo.

### **ALLOTMENTS (LACAS):**

On Sunday, March 22nd Police Community Support Officers will be visiting the allotment field with special equipment to mark members' property (spades, forks, etc.), society assets (mowers, strimmers etc.) so that it may be possible to identify them in the event of loss or theft. They will also mark any other equipment such as iPads, mobile phones etc. for everyone who would like to attend from the wider community of Llangattock and district. To quote, "The kind of marking we do is simply a UV type pen which when dry becomes invisible. If an item is then lost or stolen, the owner can inform us of where the mark was made, we can then check any found property by running a UV light over it and hopefully match the two together. When I am marking property I normally put the postcode plus surname or house number." **EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO**

**ATTEND.** It will run from **10.30a.m through to 2.30** in the afternoon. For further information, please contact **Phil** ([gibsons@uwclub.net](mailto:gibsons@uwclub.net)).

Also, contact Phil if you would like an allotment as there are vacancies at the moment.

### **Q&A – A NEW ADDITION TO THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:**

We thought it would be a good idea to start an ongoing column dealing with some common questions people seem to ask about Llangattock Green Valleys. If you have any specific questions or queries, please do send them to us!

### **What is Llangattock Green Valleys (LGV)?**

LGV is a Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by membership. As such, it seeks to abide by the rules of Companies House (to see our information at Companies House [click here](#) and then click Start Now, fill in Company name **Llangattock Green Valleys**) and the CIC regulator (for more info about CIC's [click here](#)). These are very different from those of The Charity Commission, which has no role in the governance of LGV. Membership is free and available to anyone who registers and is approved by the LGV board; no membership request has been rejected. Members get monthly communication on plans, an annual report, receive some privileged access to various projects and the ability to participate and vote at formal meetings. It has over 500 members. It is possible to sign up to the Newsletter without being a member.

### **So, what's the LGV Family?**

There are other linked entities which are colloquially referred to as the Llangattock Green Valleys Family. These include a trading arm, LGV Ventures, which is a Community Interest Company limited by shares and wholly owned by the membership-based Community Interest Company, **Llangattock Green Valleys**, and two Industrial Provident Societies, otherwise known as Co-operatives, which are independent entities which have been financed by public subscription to build six micro-hydro schemes between them. In time, these Co-operatives are projected to generate a financial surplus over that needed to repay the subscribers and this will be remitted back to the membership CIC to help further its aims to support carbon reduction and the local community. Over the next twenty years this is expected to be a substantial amount of money.

### **When will LGV funds be available to the local community?**

Llangattock Green Valleys is currently working on a plan for distribution of surplus income and will be consulting with its membership and the broader community on this over the next couple of years.

### **LLANGATTOCK MADE IT IN TO 'BRITAIN'S 10 GREENEST COMMUNITIES':**

[The Sunday Times, 22 February 2015](#). Online version, [Sunday Times](#) jpg version

### **AND THE TOP 50 BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

[Sunday Times](#)

**Also in the the** [Abergavenny Chronicle](#)

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

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

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**For more information on all our activities  
visit [www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org](http://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](mailto:admin@llangattockgreenvalleys.org)