



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 73
August 2016

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro – MH-1 and MH-2 updates

There was no generation at Cwm Gu this month, due to the relatively dry summer weather, so the generation total at the end of July was still 68,252 kWh.

We had notification from Ecotricity that the first FITs payment of around £17,000 would be made into the MH-1 bank account at the end of August, which is very welcome news and some reward for the persistence and determination of LGV's directors and volunteers. The payment was for the period from the official FITs sign-off date of 25/8/15 to 27/6/16 and some of the board directors toasted this milestone with a glass of Prosecco in front of an old water source in Llangattock, the water fountain opposite the church.



There was also some progress with Blaen Dyar, as the solicitors have produced a draft rental Agreement and a draft storage and access Licence and we expect these to be signed this month.

Nant yr Hafod did manage to generate a small amount of electricity this month, the generation total at the end of July being 42,009 kWh.

Abernant, another of our prospective MH-2 schemes, was granted preliminary FIT accreditation and so we will now apply for full accreditation. This will hopefully be a quicker process but the scheme is unlikely to be commissioned for another 12 months.

Our other prospective MH-2 scheme at Cwm Saerbren is still stalling, as our partners WTOW have been unable to satisfy landowner NRW about access. Therefore LGV has offered to take on this task and this has been agreed with WTOW.



TY'R ASH BRIDGE



At last, the bridge has been built. For those of you who have been following this long saga you will know how much angst we have gone through with design, positioning, partnerships and planning. All now water under that bridge (sorry, unforgivable but necessary!).

It was built by volunteers from the Brecon Beacons National Park ably assisted by Paul Chapman, the local Park Warden. This little bridge will provide great access for local people and can be used by students from Crickhowell High School to access what will become an outdoor environmental classroom. But most importantly it makes the meadow accessible to people who rely on wheelchairs for mobility.



It is the first project outside of our renewable energy agenda that has been fully supported and funded by Llangattock Green Valleys. The woodland site has been leased from Glanusk Estate and funded by LGV. Crickhowell High School will now begin planning for the environmental classroom and with some support from LGV look at developing a Community Woodland Group to manage the woodland area.

This is a long term project and LGV will continue to provide the sustainability needed to protect and enhance an important landscape with the help of High School students and the local community.



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



Bee notes for August

The month of August is the transition between the summer bees and winter bees, the summer bees that live for six weeks and the winter bees that need to live for six months. It is the time to harvest the surplus honey and the best time to remove as many of the varroa mites that are the main cause of vectored virus in honey bee colonies. The eggs laid from now on will produce the bees that keep the Queen warm during the long cold winter days and nights and feed the first brood during that time. These bees have extra fat in their bodies that will give them the stamina to survive low temperatures with little or no food coming into the hive and still be able to produce brood food to feed larvae.

This is also the time to get a honey harvest from the Ling Heather if there are any heather stands near the colonies. Ling is in a class of its own when it comes to aroma and taste. This is a honey that can be described as bitter sweet and has the distinction of being thixotropic, that is "jelly like". It is so thick it is difficult to extract the honey from the comb using a honey extractor as we do with normal honey, it can be loosened by stirring the honey in the cells with needles then extracted by spinning the frames in the usual way. Other ways of harvesting the honey are melting the wax cells down or mashing then squeezing the comb in a sack so only the honey comes out. The simplest way of all to deal with a heather crop is to cut the comb into slices and sell it as virgin comb in plastic containers.

Weak colonies rarely survive the winter and colonies that are too strong may consume too much honey then starve in the spring. There is a saying with beekeepers “consolidate colonies in autumn and expand in spring”. If the beekeepers were able to raise new Queens in the current year it would be possible to have those Queens heading the colonies kept as over wintering colonies as their Queens will do best the next season. Colonies that are strong in numbers but have little in the way of stores will need to be fed. This is best done during September as the cooler weather of autumn will delay the conversion of syrup into winter stores.

The honey harvest this year has been good when compared to recent times. At the allotments we have had a super quantity of honey and the bees are now on new larger frames. At Jarrett’s’ Wood we have a bumper crop that will be extracted this afternoon. I am estimating a crop of between 60 and 80 pounds of honey. This will be on sale at the Woodlands tent on 3rd September (see p.5). Hope to see you there,



Bee Bob



Locally Produced Charcoal for Sale

Llangattock Community Woodland (LCW) is a charity set up to manage several local woodlands with the objectives of sustainability and biodiversity. One of the by-products of thinning woodlands is small diameter timber which is of no value for logs. However, they are ideal for converting into charcoal. We use a small batch method of “cooking” the offcuts in old 45 gallon drums for about 8 hours. Once cooked the barrels are sealed and allowed to cool for about 12 hours. Each barrel will produce about 8kg of charcoal. The charcoal is then sieved to remove the dust and small particles then bagged.



If you would like to come along as a volunteer and find out more about charcoal making or any of our other activities such as 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

So, next time you want some charcoal for your barbeque, rather than buy imported charcoal from a supermarket, buy locally produced charcoal made from sustainably managed woodlands. A 3kg bag costs £5. The money from the sale of our charcoal provides essential funds for volunteers and equipment for the organisation.

If you would like to buy some charcoal please email robdunning@gmail.com to arrange delivery or collection.



At the end of July, LCW held their annual Open Day. Volunteers were able to invite family and friends along to Jarrett's Wood to show how they are contributing to sustainable woodland management. There were over 25 visitors who walked around the woodland, saw charcoal being produced, looked at the moth traps and learnt about the Tree Charter.



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 ALLOTMENTS (LACAS)

By Susan Cartlidge

LACAS Show and Party

Saturday 3rd September brings the annual opportunity for the now 54 allotment members to show off their plots and their produce, as well as get together and have a bit of a do. There will be a tea and very lovely cakes tent and a BBQ, tables selling books, allotment produce, jams, honey and chutneys and the inevitable raffle. Local groups such as the Woodland Group will be welcomed too. Members of the Bee Group will be in attendance to answer any bee questions, and we aim to have a new (small) flock of chickens on the allotments by the time of the show – come along and help us choose their names!

Silver cups from the old Llangattock Horticultural Society, which was disbanded many years ago, were passed on to



Marquee construction before the show

LACAS and these are awarded in the produce show for various categories such as Plot of the Year, Best in Show, a Selection Basket of Five Vegetables, the winner of the Peoples' Produce and the Best in Cakes section. The children's competition includes a Recycled Scarecrow and a Miniature Garden.

Our esteemed judges will be Jed Needs, a previous chair of LACAS, Kerry Needs and Richard Jones from the Llangattock Community Council.

We welcome the return of the Dog Show this year, ably organised and judged by Wendy Parry. Some of the classes will be The Best Rescue Dog, The Dog the Judge Would Like To Take Home, and The Best Six Legs (all six to be shown). Entries cost £1 per class and registration is from 1.00pm with judging to take place from 2.30pm.

Look forward to seeing you on Saturday 3rd September: the gates are open at 2.00pm and admittance is free but just a reminder – there will be no parking available on the allotment site itself.



Tasting The Peoples' Produce

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

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