

Celebrating Success:

Collaborative action for nature in Wales

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd
ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also
available in Welsh.



PARTNERIAETH BIOAMRYWIAETH CYMRU
WALES BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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Credits

Clockwise from top left Mawdach Estuary iStock image; Volunteer work party © Tom Marshall; Marsh fritillary iStock image; Common dolphins iStock image; Red squirrel iStock image; Lapwing iStock image; Girl in bluebell wood © Tom Marshall; Water vole iStock image.

Introduction

Biodiversity is the variety of life and provides multiple benefits to society. Our health, economy and quality of life depend upon a healthy environment and the sustainable use of our natural resources, including our biodiversity. Here in Wales, we are privileged to enjoy a fantastic diversity of species and habitats coupled with a strong network of local partnerships delivering for nature and people in communities across Wales.

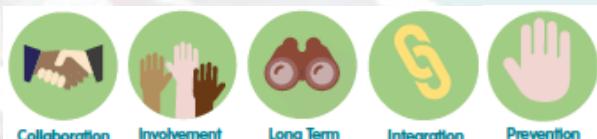
Local partnerships for nature operate in all areas of Wales and provide a focus for delivering the Nature Recovery Plan objectives and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources at the local level as well as contributing to many of the Well-being of Future Generations goals. These case studies provide a snapshot of the diversity of projects and the range of partners involved with local action for nature in Wales. You can find more examples to inspire you by visiting the 'Local to You' section on our website.

The projects featured in this booklet address several key areas:

The Well-being of Future Generations Act

They contribute to achieving the Well-being goals including a *Resilient Wales* - a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change) and other Well-being goals – these are illustrated with each project.

They also demonstrate the five ways of working encouraged by the WFG Act:



Environment (Wales) Act

They demonstrate sustainable management of natural resources, contributing to meeting the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty for public authorities.

The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

They address the objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan, helping to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales. These are:

- Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- Safeguarding species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management
- Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Most projects address more than one Nature Recovery Action Plan objective, illustrating how cross-cutting and collaborative working delivers action for biodiversity and multiple benefits for people and the environment.

Mawndir Môn (Anglesey Peatlands)

Restoring wetlands, improving water quality and raising awareness in Anglesey

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Background

Anglesey has some fine areas of wetland, though there have been losses over the years, and there was also an apparent lack of awareness as to how significant our wetlands are. The project sought to raise awareness and undertake some practical management for wetlands on Anglesey.

Partnership

Initiated through initial discussions in the Anglesey Wildlife Forum, partners included Isle of Anglesey County Council, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), North Wales Wildlife Trust, Bangor University and RSPB. The project was funded by Welsh Government (through NRW), spending just short of £49,000.

Learning

The project helped to educate visitors to the Wetland Festival and through the production of a wetlands information booklet.



Image © Polina Cowley

Highlights

- Elected Members Wetland Awareness visit in June (20 people present) and Wetland Festival in July (500 visitors) both included guided interpretive walks as well as giving out other relevant information. Good feedback on effectiveness of both events
- Wetland Festival hired a number of local providers of wildlife-related event activities, and these were then accessible to be experienced by the 500 attendees
- Local contractors undertook contract work to construct new wetland areas and habitat improvement including scrub clearance and rhododendron removal
- The short term monitoring in place at the time of the project showed some improved water quality at the new wetland sites
- Anglesey Wetlands information book produced and distributed

The Future

The project gave valuable experience in managing a variety of areas of work. This will help plan and shape future wetland work on Anglesey. It is hoped that further Wetland Festivals can be held, and that further, and more extensive effective 'on the ground' enhancements can be put in place.

Schools biodiversity improvement

Working with schools in Blaenau Gwent to enhance biodiversity within grounds, create learning opportunities and cultivate an appreciation of nature conservation

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Background

The Blaenau Gwent Biodiversity Partnership (BGBP) started the Schools Biodiversity Improvement Project in 2010. The project initially started as a pilot and has since expanded. A dedicated biodiversity project officer works with each school providing a biodiversity management plan to help schools increase biodiversity within grounds and raise awareness of biodiversity amongst school children.

Partnership

The Schools Biodiversity Officer works with a range of other organisations for support, resources and funding including Keep Wales Tidy, BG Biodiversity Partnership, Gwent Wildlife Trust and more.

Learning

The main aim of the project is to create spaces for nature and provide learning opportunities for school children aimed at cultivating an appreciation for the natural environment. This is achieved by providing advice and guidance on how to make the best use of the school grounds and using practical activities and events to demonstrate how schools, with varying conditions, can maintain and enhance biodiversity.



Image © Nadine Morgan / Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Highlights

- Increasing school engagement from 4 pilot schools in 2010 to 21 in 2016
- Increased biodiversity in school grounds
- Raising awareness of biodiversity conservation amongst school children
- Runner up in the Tidy Towns Award 2012
- Landscape and environmental benefits
- Supporting schools to enhance their school grounds for wildlife and to encourage teachers to utilise their outdoor spaces as a unique learning resource
- Enhancement of biodiversity - example activities including making nest, bat, hedgehog and bug boxes, native tree planting, native hedge planting, creating log piles, creating bog gardens, pond creation, orchard planting, creation of wildlife friendly gardens
- Events include bat walks, moth trapping, eco school days, RSPB Big Schools Bird Watch, biodiversity enrichment days

The Future

The project continues to run in Blaenau Gwent, and would like extend to Torfaen area subject to availability of resources.

The Long Forest Project

To support schools, community groups, landowners and businesses to take an interest in their local hedgerows and help maintain them in the Brecon Beacons National Park

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Background

The Long Forest Project is a community engagement project, aimed at encouraging local groups and individuals to become more actively involved in the management of hedgerows, which form an important feature of the landscape of the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP). The initial phase of the project (2012-14) was jointly funded by the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund and The Brecon Beacons Trust. It had positive environmental and social outcomes. The project has subsequently grown and developed, supported by various funders and partners.

Partnership

The project was led by Keep Wales Tidy. Partners included landowners, farmers, volunteers, community groups, specialists, Biodiversity Information Service for Powys and BBNP and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

In 2014/15, Welsh Government Nature Fund funding was secured by Keep Wales Tidy in partnership with The Woodland Trust and the University of South Wales.

Learning

The project aimed to encourage schools, community groups, landowners and businesses to take an interest in their hedgerows and help maintain them. The project also provided groups with the equipment, material and knowledge they needed to plant hedgerows at their own sites.

Highlights

- Increased public knowledge and awareness of the importance of hedgerows
- Training courses to provide local groups and individuals with the skills and knowledge to survey, manage and plant new hedgerows
- Traditional skill development and well-being benefits through physical activity in the outdoors
- Landscape and environmental benefits
- Supporting landowners to improve hedgerows on their land, providing wildlife and farm management benefits
- Enhancement of biodiversity
- Bilingual Hedgerow Information Pack

The Future

In 2015, Keep Wales Tidy and The Woodland Trust came together to develop The Long Forest Project across Wales. They have been successful in winning grant funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Heritage Lottery Fund.



Image © Keep Wales Tidy

The Spirit of Llynfi Woodlands

Tackling poverty, enhancing resilience and diversity, green growth and resource efficiency at Llynfi woodland, Bridgend

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Background

The Spirit of Llynfi woodland site is owned by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Once home to the Coegnant Colliery and Maesteg Washery the 75 hectare site underwent partial remediation in the early 2000's resulting in a landscape of re-profiled tips, failed plantings and a network of paths. The site was identified as a prime location for new planting in 2005 following studies into remediating derelict colliery sites across Wales, and later by studies undertaken by the NHS in 2014 with the area being identified as one of the most deprived communities for health in Wales.

Partnership

NRW manage the site through a lease agreement with BCBC and work with community groups and local residents.

Learning

Strong links to 8 local primary schools, Maesteg Comprehensive School and a local skills centre. Through being involved in the development of the site, the children and young people have been able to develop a greater understanding of wildlife, regeneration, health and well-being, and sustainable natural resource management.



Image © Natural Resources Wales

Highlights

- Masterplan for the community woodland developed in partnership with the local community
- 30 hectares of new woodland planting, including 60,000 trees, 7000 of which were planted by schools and community volunteers, including 3 community fruit orchards
- 350 local school children and young people engaged in developing ideas and undertaking practical work on site
- Stock proof fencing installed around all new woodland planting areas
- Planning permission granted for development of a green gym trail, running trail and walking routes.
- Community woodland group becoming established to form an integral part of the sustainable management of the wider site

The Future

Building on the success, NRW will continue to strengthen links with the local community through offering further volunteering and training opportunities on site and involving local community groups and organisations in developing and maintaining project areas and habitats. NRW will continue to work with local organisations to apply for funding to support community projects on site that will benefit the health and wellbeing of the local community for generations to come.

Managing Marsh Fritillaries

Managing marsh fritillaries at Aberbargoed Grasslands - securing long term survival of marsh fritillaries in Caerphilly

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Background

Aberbargoed Grasslands was designated by the Countryside Council for Wales (which now forms part of Natural Resources Wales) as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in January 2001 for its assemblage of species rich grassland communities and for its population of marsh fritillary butterflies. The site was designated in 2004 as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in recognition of its European importance for its population of marsh fritillary butterflies and for its purple moor-grass and rush pasture.

Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) own part of the site and using their own herd of Welsh Black and Belted Galloways manage the whole site, with the agreement of the adjacent landowners, for the best possible benefit of the rare butterflies. Marsh fritillaries are reliant on the presence of the plant devil's-bit scabious, which occurs in abundance throughout these marshy areas.

Partnership

A partnership of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Water and local landowners have enabled the site to be managed as a single unit, while volunteer groups and local schools are actively engaged in management tasks on site.

Learning

The location of an Education Centre on the site provides a base from which to explore the variety of habitats and species present on site for visiting schools and scientists.

Highlights

- Declaration of the site as a National Nature Reserve in 2012, with a community parade and evening celebration
- Clearing of bracken and scrub to open up parts of the site previously inaccessible to grazing
- Interactive Butterfly App for mobile phones to capture virtual butterflies while walking around the site
- Interpretation panels and car parks to improve visitor experience

The Future

Funding has been secured to facilitate the positive management of sites suitable for marsh fritillary within the wider landscape around the National Nature Reserve through a concerted engagement and awareness raising programme with local landowners, local community groups and schools, and through the setting up of volunteer groups who will undertake a locally based training programme focussed on rural skills specifically tailored to safeguarding the marsh fritillary habitat.



Image © CCBC

Cardiff Pollinator Project

Initiating a variety of activities benefitting pollinators in Cardiff through community engagement, volunteering and awareness raising in an urban environment

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Background

Cardiff Pollinators Project has been initiated to oversee a variety of activities benefitting pollinators in Cardiff including implementing changes in management regimes, pollinator friendly planting, improving awareness and linking habitats. The project meets the needs of the Wales Pollinator Action Plan.

Partnership

Initially funded through Tidy Towns and in partnership with local schools and volunteers. Since the initial pilot project partnerships have been developed further with Buglife and the Urban Buzz Project. Other partners include our network of friends groups, local schools, Cardiff Museum, RSPB, Innovate Trust Green Days, Plantlife and Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Learning

The project aimed to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and enable people to experience, connect with nature on their doorstep in an urban environment. Opportunities for this have taken a number of forms from working with schools, public events through to training days with volunteers to assist with plant and bumblebee identification.



Image © Cardiff Council Ranger Service

Highlights

- Native rich wild flower meadows created at New Road Playing Fields, Greenway Road, Hill Snook Park and Ely Wells
- Training opportunities for volunteers to improve skills for species identification and to help with site management
- Increased public knowledge and awareness of the importance of pollinators
- Increased public awareness in the importance of grassland habitats
- Increased opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to experience nature in the urban environment which has benefits to health and wellbeing
- Increased areas of pollinator-friendly habitat in Cardiff which brings wider benefits for biodiversity

The Future

The pilot project has acted as a catalyst which has been growing year on year. It overarches a variety of projects which includes pollinator friendly planting, restoration and management of wildflower meadows, volunteer training, community engagement and education. The foundations built in the pilot project will continue to develop in future years bringing more areas and partners in and looking more strategically to enable pollinators to move between sites across the city for both foraging as well as overwintering.

Carmarthenshire Bogs Project

Exploring their past, celebrating the present and conserving the future

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Background

The sites consist, in the main, of lowland bogs, heathland and marshy grassland habitats on Section 45 common land, i.e. common land for which there is no known owner. The sites have a considerable biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage value and lie within an area that has been identified by Natural Resources Wales as a wetland priority area for lowland bogs in Wales. They have suffered (to varying degrees) from activities that are harmful to their biodiversity that also prevent the wetlands delivering their ecosystem services fully.

Partnership

For the current Heritage Lottery Fund project the partners are Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC), Swansea University, National Botanical Gardens of Wales and Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

Learning

Research: Swansea University are undertaking peat core analyses of a 9 m core from one of the bogs.

Volunteering: volunteers have had the opportunity to find out more about these habitats and the historic landscape in which they would have formed.

Education: local schools have visited one site to explore a group of Bronze Age round barrows and find out more about the prehistoric landscape, the people who lived there and the ecology of bog habitats.

Local tourism providers have visited the sites to highlight how they could be promoted to people visiting the area.

Highlights

- Previous preliminary survey has shown the CO₂ equivalent for the carbon stored in six bogs is 108 million kg
- Radiocarbon dating from one of the bogs has also shown that the start of the peat formation was dated back to 9700 years ago. Further research will help discover environmental change in Carmarthenshire over the last 10,000 years
- Firebreaks have been cut, a ditch blocked, fly tipping removed and Japanese Knotweed treated – helping make the sites more suitable for grazing and protecting them from arson

The Future

Through conservation management, research, education and public involvement in the sites, it is hoped that the resilience of these habitats will be improved, that the management undertaken will encourage appropriate grazing to be reinstated and that local people will have a better understanding of the ecological and cultural importance of these sites.



Image © Isabel Macho /CCC

Nature and External Wall Insulation

Creating a toolkit to conserve and enhance nature conservation as part of EWI in a pragmatic way in Ceredigion

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Background

External Wall Insulation (EWI) involves covering the external walls of properties with insulation which must be sealed to the soffits/eaves to avoid thermal bridging. If not carried out properly, this work could lead, and has likely led to over previous years, wide scale detrimental impacts on birds and bats.

The project outline was to put together a Toolkit which could be used by clients, ecologists and contractors alike to provide a pragmatic approach to nature conservation and EWI. This Toolkit would then be shared across Wales.

Partnership

The 'Nature Conservation and EWI' project is being led by Ceredigion County Council (CCC). Welsh Government provided support and funding and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have provided input regarding bat licencing. The Toolkit was produced with help from the contractors Willmott Dixon Ltd, and was tested on their scheme. Consultants Greenman Ecology Ltd and Tom McOwat were funded to produce the first draft of the Toolkit. CCC will also be carrying out a walk in the two communities involved to educate them on bats.

Learning

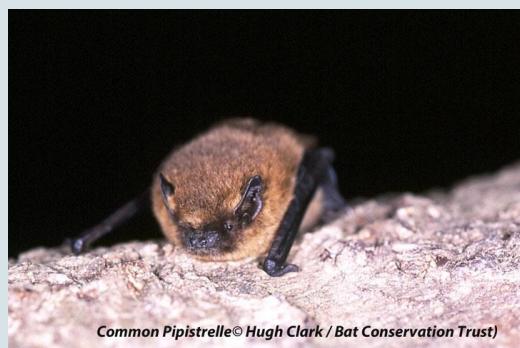
The project will educate contractors and Local Authorities on how to approach EWI considering nature conservation. It will also raise awareness of the importance of bats to the local communities.

Highlights

- Safeguarding protected and priority species
- Providing new opportunities for bat and bird species
- Improving contractor knowledge of protected species and how to incorporate in a pragmatic way
- Partnership working with those in a position to make a difference
- Increasing public knowledge and awareness of bats and their importance

The Future

Completion of a bilingual Toolkit provided to Welsh Government for circulation in addition to bat walks for the two communities from this year and potentially future community sites.



Common Pipistrelle © Hugh Clark / Bat Conservation Trust)

Image © Hugh Clark/ Bat Conservation Trust

Conwy Wildlife Events Programme

Inspiring members of the public about their local wildlife and natural sites, increasing well-being and health

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Background

Each year Conwy County Borough Council holds a successful Wildlife Events programme.

Partnership

The events are run by the Council's Biodiversity Officer and the Countryside Wardens in partnership with external wildlife experts such as bat ecologists, wildlife trackers, marine experts and so on.

Learning

Feedback tells us that the events are achieving their objectives of engaging new audiences and encouraging people to use their local nature reserves. In 2015 25% of respondents hadn't been to an event about nature or wildlife before and 65% of respondents hadn't been to that particular site before so the events are encouraging residents to use their local nature reserves.

We ask for feedback from attendees so that we can continually improve our events.



Image © Conwy County Borough Council

Highlights

- Bookings are consistently high, in 2015, one third of potential places were booked within three weeks of the programme being published. 150 people attended the events altogether
- Feedback is always excellent. This year, 95% of respondents rated the event as excellent (the other 5% rated it as good). 100% of respondents felt the event matched their expectations
- Highlights from last year include bird-watching for Welsh learners, tracking wildlife in a woodland, bat-detecting and finding out about the marine world by searching the strandline. Previous years have seen us foraging for wild food, whale-watching and woodland orienteering

The Future

Our Wildlife Events programme will continue to be an important tool to engage members of the public in wildlife, nature and the outdoors. Increasingly, promotional methods will use web sites and social media, rather than paper-based methods and bookings will be made on-line.

Alyn Valley Himalayan Balsam

Removal of invasive non-native species (INNS) in the Alyn Valley, Denbighshire/Flintshire

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Background

The River Alyn is a tributary of the River Dee. The area supports a range of important habitats including riverine and ancient woodland habitats and priority species such as dormice, otter, lesser horseshoe bat and a wide range of plant species. The dominant INNS along the lower stretch of the River Alyn are Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.

Partnership

The project is a partnership between Flintshire and Denbighshire County Councils, North Wales Wildlife Trust, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), community groups and individual volunteers. The project is now running alongside the Alyn and Chwiler Living Landscapes project and is a key element of tackling Invasives at a Dee catchment level linking into 'Big Dee – the invasion events'.

Learning

The project has worked from the top of the catchment down and is within reach of INNS control along the river from its source to the area above the town of Mold. The project has fostered links with farmers and landowners to deliver the aims of the project and has received positive backing from the community.

Highlights

- INNS removed from over 20km of river corridor
- Enhancement of biodiversity and the local environment
- Improvement of flood resilience
- Facilitation of outdoor recreation and healthy living by promoting the use of the local environment
- Practical action for pollinators and the Water Framework Directive
- An average of over 50 volunteer workdays completed each year

The Future

The upper catchment is now largely under control, the procurement of health and safety equipment through grants will enable further volunteer and corporate group control events.

There is a strong desire to continue with the project and progress the control downstream. The partnership is seeking funding to do this, building on the biodiversity and outreach elements of the project to complement the wider Alyn and Chwiler Living Landscape initiative and Dee catchment INNS control.



Image © Flintshire County Council

Water Vole on the Llŷn Peninsula

Water vole population monitoring on the Llŷn Peninsula, Gwynedd

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Background

A long-term water vole population monitoring project on the Llŷn Peninsula, Gwynedd. Monitoring of the population began in 2003. Experts and volunteers working alongside each other have surveyed the rivers of the Llŷn Peninsula for water vole signs. Mink control was initiated by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) in 2011 to safeguard the water vole population. It is now important to monitor the water vole population to gauge the success of the mink control and ensure the population is continuing to sustain itself.

Partnership

This project has been undertaken in partnership with Natural Resources Wales, Gwynedd Biodiversity Unit and BASC.

Learning

Volunteers, staff and students had the opportunity to learn field skills and surveying techniques. Data collected informs us about the status of the water vole population locally and regionally.

Highlights

- Surveying rivers for signs of water voles such as feeding piles and latrines to monitor the water vole population. A recent 2015 survey led by BASC with volunteers found signs that the population remained and mink control work is having an effect
- Discovering nature – finding water shrew, reptiles, otters, field voles and orchids
- Benefits to local volunteers of working outside with nature, sharing skills and knowledge
- Delivering positive actions for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for water vole

The Future

The Llŷn Peninsula is a key water vole area in North Wales, and the population is monitored every few years.



Image © Emily Meilleur/Gwynedd Council

Cyfarthfa Park / Greenhouses

Health and social benefits through the natural and man-made environment

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Background

Cyfarthfa Park Greenhouses were formerly used by the Local Authority Parks Department for bedding plant production. The space is now a burgeoning 'Honey Pot' facility offering new opportunities for engagement in a series of horticultural experiences through contact with the wide diversity of flora found locally as well as within the context of a former walled garden and Cyfarthfa Park.

Partnership

The project is a partnership between Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's (MTCBC) Countryside Team, Social Services, National Museum of Wales and the British Institute for Geological Conservation.

Learning

As an environment for horticultural therapy for adults with learning difficulties and the wider public it also offers opportunities for Heritage Lottery Fund volunteers making the space an introduction to the natural world through horticulture.



Image © Rolf Brown/MTCBC

Highlights

- Development of an exemplar 'Potager' kitchen garden for the growing of fruit, flowers and vegetables; planted, maintained and used by the staff, volunteers and Social Service users to encourage small-scale local food growing
- Carboniferous Collection: Time travel 300 million years to see the types of plants in Wales that made coal
- Horticultural tasters, advice and skills for children and adults of all ages and abilities

The Future

Develop an exciting permanent Prehistoric Garden exhibit at Cyfarthfa Castle Greenhouse. The project will recreate, using modern living plants, a replica of the primitive 300 million year old tropical swamp forests that gave rise to the rich coal and iron bearing rocks on which the ex-industrial town and communities of MTCBC was founded. Funding is being sought to start the partnership project by developing a full show garden at Cardiff Royal Horticultural Society Flower Show 2017 to be kept at Cyfarthfa Park. The garden will depict the relationship between geological formations, fossils, natural resources, industry, culture and Nature: the coloniser and re-claimer of mankind's exploitation of the environment. The display will be created by and with local communities and volunteers of all ages and abilities.

Monmouthshire's Natural Assets

Making a substantial contribution to the sensitive management and future safeguarding of Monmouthshire's local high value natural sites

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Background

The project builds upon the successful partnership approach to Local Wildlife Sites in Monmouthshire, which has identified a network of over 300 grassland Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) since 2004.

Partnership

The Rural Development Programme (RDP Axis 3) funded project was steered by the Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Board with Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) as the lead body and delivery by Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT). The involvement of the Monmouthshire Meadows group, Natural Resources Wales and the Wye Valley AONB was also essential to the project's success. The Countryside Council for Wales and subsequently Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided vital match funding for the project. Landowners were keen to provide match funding to enable vital management works to be carried out on their sites.

Learning

Specialist support was required to engage landowners, however the LWS project has demonstrated how hugely interested local landowners are in nature conservation management of their land.



Image © Andy Karran / GWT

Highlights

Project officer and two 6-month seasonal surveyors helped achieve

- Over 100 new LWS identified
- Expert wildlife and management advice to landowners
- Access to financial resources (through the Natural Assets Environment Grant) to enable works

Key project activities included:

- Site Surveying and management advice
- Landowner engagement
- Production of Interpretative Materials
- Project Publicity and Events
- Natural Assets Grant Scheme

The Future

The LWS work is being taken forward by GWT with resurveys of 150 existing grassland LWS originally surveyed prior to 2008. This work, which is part of the "Joint Working Partnership" with NRW is being undertaken between 2015 -2017 and will update site survey information, assess the sites condition and advise landowners on management through the provision of bespoke "Habitat Management Toolkits". This will help safeguard these sites for the long term. To further aid the management of the LWS network in Monmouthshire all the relevant information relating to the 400+ LWS are being recorded on a bespoke Database which will enable easy retrieval and analysis of information. Monmouthshire County Council hopes to work with partners such as GWT to develop planning guidance which will seek to protect and enhance the sites via the Planning Process.

Cwm du Glen and Glanrhdy Plantation

Education, conservation and health through woodland activities at the Cwm du Glen and Glanrhdy Plantation Local Nature Reserve in Neath Port Talbot

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Background

An underused but accessible and central greenspace in the town of Pontardawe was improved through a programme of works involving local residents, schools and community groups. The site was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2015.

Partnership

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) Countryside and Wildlife Team coordinated the project with help from NPT Biodiversity Forum, Biodiversity Action and Actif Woods Wales. Funding was received from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Mynydd y Bettws Windfarm Community Fund and Tidy Towns.

Learning

The Health element of this project was largely run by Actif Woods Wales, in particular taking people with mental and physical illnesses to the woods on activity days. The response from these groups has been overwhelming and the benefit to health obvious.

Antisocial behaviour is still a problem even though the use of the site has significantly increased.



Image © Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Highlights

- Conservation task days x 12
- Bushcraft and Foraging x 2
- Bird ID and data recording
- Bumblebee and insect identification skills
- Historical Walk
- Gruffalo in the woods storytelling and walk x 2
- Room on the Broom storytelling and walk
- Green woodworking x 1
- Wood carving x 1
- Woodland Arts and Crafts x 2
- Big Celebration event
- 12 Woodland Gym Sessions
- 18 'Woodworking and Conservation' sessions
- 3 Christmas sessions
- Entrance Feature
- Interpretation Panels particularly looking at the history and biodiversity of the site
- Path Marking Signage
- New Tree Trail
- Bench and Seating

The Future

An increase in visitor numbers has already been noticed, and many compliments received on the improvements to the site and a regular group of volunteers are now engaged on the site with support from the Countryside and Wildlife Team of NPTCBC.

Conserving the Small Ranunculus

Increasing populations of the small ranunculus moth

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Background

The small ranunculus moth (*Hecatera dysodea*) was once widespread in southern Britain, but declined dramatically in the late 19th century and was declared extinct in the 1930's. However, in recent years it has returned. Its first Welsh record was in 1999 in Newport (an adult to light in a garden). Larvae were found in the city in 2003 on a brownfield site near the docks, and have subsequently been found on many brownfield sites in the area. The coastal area between Gloucester and Cardiff, but centred on Newport, is now one of the most important areas in Britain for small ranunculus.

Partnership

The Newport Biodiversity Partnership, in particular the members who represent Moth and Butterfly Conservation and the Gwent Moth and Butterfly Group, were instrumental in identifying and recording this species. They also advise Newport City Council (NCC) on best management of the host plant – prickly lettuce, and carry out surveys of sites across the city.

Learning

When a project has been running for so long, communication and record keeping are particularly important. Since the re-discovery in 1999, more than 8 Biodiversity Officers have come and gone through the doors at NCC, sometimes leading to knowledge loss.

Highlights

- Since 2012, many urban verges in Newport have been sown with flower seed designed for such situations. The annual ground disturbance and reseeding appears to be benefitting prickly lettuce, the small ranunculus' main host plant
- Regular larval surveys in recent years have revealed a good population of the species in the urban verges – summer 2015 revealed 160 larvae found just on 9 roadside verges across the City
- NCC's grounds maintenance team are fully aware of the moth, being able to identify the host plant and agreeing to continue sensitive management of the verges to ensure this colonising plant has regular bare soil

The Future

Through continued surveying and appropriate management, it is hoped that the population will increase across the City, on verges, brownfield sites and other disturbed ground. Through PR exercises and promotion, we hope to raise awareness amongst the people of Newport about their rare resident.



Image © George Tordoff / Butterfly Conservation

Invasive Species in the Gwaun Valley

Eradication of key invasive species from an ecologically sensitive catchment, Gwaun Valley in Pembrokeshire

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Background

The Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership has identified and prioritised key invasive non-native species (INNS) according to national and local risk. The list includes Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and rhododendron.

The Stitch in Time project is funded by the Sustainable Development Fund (administered by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) with additional assistance from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The project aims to eradicate Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and rhododendron from the Gwaun Valley catchment in Pembrokeshire.

Partnership

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA), with support from NRW, is helping implement the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership's grouped Species Action Plan for INNS, for key target species in the Gwaun Valley. Land managers' interest and assistance is vital to the project.

Learning

Raising awareness among individual organisations and communities about INNS. Building capacity in local communities to monitor and manage some INNS and any re-infestation.



Highlights

- Survey has benefited enormously from dedicated volunteers and from sightings and grid references submitted by members of the public
- INNS found at 120 sites, with an overall extent of ~60ha
- Volunteers are also helping with management and control. Volunteer work parties have been uprooting Himalayan balsam plants before the seed pods mature, and have cleared vegetation near to Japanese knotweed plants to make them accessible for spray treatment
- 50+ volunteer days were donated by the Stitch in Time project in the 2015 treatment season
- Biosecurity measures are taken to ensure that plant fragments are not inadvertently transferred off-site
- Tactical approach within the catchment, based on stream order

The Future

Eradication is a long-term goal, but subject to funding, and as the workload decreases in the Gwaun Valley in successive years, it will be possible to take on further catchments, including coastal streams. Even when a catchment is deemed to be clear, monitoring for regrowth or reinfection will be needed. Volunteers will be key to this and to removal of some species; developing this capacity locally will be a valuable legacy of the project.

Image ©Matt Tebbutt / PCNPA

Milford Haven Native Oyster Regeneration

Native oyster regeneration project in Milford Haven (Stage One)

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Background

Native oysters were abundant at one time within the Milford Haven waterway. Due to many variables including pollution, disease, non-native species and poor fisheries management, stocks of oysters have declined across the UK and Europe. A healthier oyster stock provides a cleaner and healthier waterway. Oyster beds provide a wide range of ecosystem services, particularly those categorised as *provisioning* as a food source, *supporting* broader processes such as nutrient cycling and biodiversity, and *cultural*, as part of our natural heritage.

Partnership

The West Wales Shell fisherman's Association (WWSFA) Ltd received funding from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for a native oyster regeneration project, with support in kind from fisherman. WWSFA worked with the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC officer to manage the project. A collaborative project with a management group which includes local stakeholders and organisations such as NRW and Welsh Government. Oyster beds are able to provide wide benefits to a wide range of users, so it is unsurprising that many people regard their restoration and enhancement as directly applicable to them. When differing sectors all see benefit in a single goal, working together to make it happen is the logical thing to do but it requires good information, good trust and careful management.

Learning

The project aims to fill in the gaps of information to support an active oyster regeneration project.

Highlights

- Building the bridge between fisheries and conservation
- Fieldwork is being made possible through use of fisherman's boats, in kind time and local expertise
- Data collected will assess the current status of oysters, cultch availability and threats to oyster within the focus sites
- A parallel project working with volunteer divers through Seasearch (funded separately by Biodiversity Solutions Ltd) is supplementing the project with the use of diver-collected data
- Helping to inform management of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC and a native oyster local biodiversity plan

The Future

A report setting out practical considerations for native oyster regeneration specific to the waterway will be produced. The next phase will seek to actively improve conditions for the native oyster and to ensure it is able to sustain itself.



Image © Sue Burton / Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation

Llandrindod Wells Lake Park

Increasing biodiversity and amenity value at Llandrindod Lake in Llandrindod Wells

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Background

Llandrindod Wells Lake was created by the Victorians in the 1870's, the spa town's heyday. Today it remains a popular tourist attraction, as well as remaining popular with local coarse fishing enthusiasts. Unfortunately over the years the flora, fauna and general water quality declined, particularly following toxic algal blooms in 2006. The owners, Powys County Council established a major restoration project to improve biodiversity and enhance its amenity value for residents and visitors.

Partnership

Led by Powys County Council in partnership with Radnorshire Wildlife Trust, Llandrindod Wells Town Council, Llandrindod Wells Angling Club, Natural Resources Wales, local volunteers and others from the local community.

Learning

Sense of ownership by the local community; activities include toad patrols and creation of a sculpture in the lake. A multi-use dipping platform provides opportunities for local school children and the wider community to pond dip, bird watch and fish.

The site provides an example of the impacts of management and subsequent need for restoration. Through lake restoration and continued positive management the lake and surrounding park provide a pleasant environment, with cleaner water, enhanced amenity value and a haven for wildlife. In 2015, the bittern, one of Britain's rarest birds was spotted at the lake.

Highlights

- Restoration of lake including dredging, creation of new banks and reed beds, plantation of native flora common to the area including marsh marigold, ragged robin and reeds
- Creation of a lagoon to safeguard the large toad population and encourage successful breeding of other amphibian species
- Creation of a new pond to provide additional breeding habitat
- Designation as a Local Nature Reserve
- Improved footpath access including a footpath network within the adjacent SSSI broadleaved woodland

The Future

Building on the success of the restoration and management of the site for the benefit of the local community and as an important ecological site, the partnership aims to update the management plan when the current plan ends.



Image © Julian Jones / Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

Biodiversity and Planning

Ensuring that biodiversity is taken into account in the planning system in Rhondda Cynon Taf

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Background

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) identified county planning as one of the key levers for action by the Local Authority. The LBAP was adopted as supplementary planning guidance at an early stage. When the Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in 2011 the substantive nature conservation policy was backed by Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Guidance. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation were included on the proposals map. The policy featured in the examination of the LDP and was endorsed by the Planning Inspector.

Partnership

The LBAP partnership identified planning as one of the original site protection actions in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. More recently, partners have become involved in management as well as site protection and specialist advice.

Learning

Planning Officers have developed biodiversity negotiating skills and some developers are promoting biodiversity benefits. Local residents at one site have received training in wildlife recording and are contributing to the Local Record Centre.



Image © Alan Barnes

Highlights

- The nature conservation policy has been used to ensure that developments avoid damaging habitats of nature conservation value. Planning conditions and Planning Agreements (such as S106) are used to protect important features and bring sites into biodiversity management. Biodiversity conservation is integrated with public open space, landscape, active travel, children's play, tree and water management considerations
- The Wildlife Trust received £1/4m from a housing S106 agreement to manage Brynna Woods and Llanharan Marsh for dormice and marsh fritillary
- Planning agreements for the major windfarm and other energy developments will see more than 1000ha of peatbog and heathland restored and brought into management, with the potential to reduce both wildfire and flood risk

The Future

For the review of the LDP a map of the land brought into biodiversity management through the planning system is being prepared.

The multiple benefits for water and carbon storage, recreation, urban shade and shelter, children's play, landscape and active travel provided by this Green Infrastructure are being identified.

Snowdonia Peatland Restoration

Helping to facilitate the restoration of peatland sites within Snowdonia and its environs

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Background

Funding was sourced to help restore some of the peatland areas of north-west Wales. Funding sources include Ecosystem Resilience and Diversity Fund, Resilient Ecosystem Fund and the Welsh Government Nature Fund.

Partnership

Five primary partners as follows:

- Snowdonia National Park Authority
- The National Trust
- Natural Resources Wales
- RSPB Cymru
- Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water

Learning

Engagement with local schools and colleges through the Moorlands as an Indicator of Climate Change Initiative (MICCI).

Production of project video with local primary schools - available to view on website (link below).

Open evenings aimed at explaining the reason for needing to do the work to the general public.

Highlights

- Blocking approximately 130km of artificial drainage grips on various sites
- Removal and treatment of invasive non-native species (INNS) including Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)
- A host of community engagement work
- Restoration of field boundaries and stock handling facilities in order to facilitate grazing

The Future

Continued efforts to draw in external funding in order to run future projects, based on the soon to be published *Peatland Strategy for Snowdonia*.



Image © John Burton / Contractor working for Snowdonia National Park Authority

Countryside Connections Project

Connecting people with the countryside and biodiversity in Swansea

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Background

Countryside Connections was a three year project delivered by the City and County of Swansea's Nature Conservation Team from 2011-2014. The overall aim was: "to connect people and communities to the countryside and biodiversity intellectually, practically, economically and emotionally". The main approaches used were education and awareness raising, interpretation and information, events, volunteering and grant-funding to partner projects. The project worked with people living in and visiting the eligible rural wards of Swansea.

Partnership

The project was funded through the Rural Development Programme (80%) and Natural Resources Wales partnership funding (20%). Community groups, schools and voluntary sector organisations were all supported by the project.

Learning

Engaging solely with rural residents proved initially difficult. The target audience was therefore broadened to include visitors and tourists to the areas too, which resulted in greater take-up of the innovative opportunities offered.



Highlights

- Education and awareness raising: John Muir Award project - 11 rural schools engaged with a local wild place over a year and Urban Schools Project - 12 urban schools visited four Gower habitats
- Events and volunteering: over 400 public events in total over 4 years and 'Love Your Countryside' festival 2014 over two weeks with 60+ events and two open days
- Interpretation and information: Panels were produced for Port Eynon dunes and rocky shore, Penclawdd estuary, Coedbach Park and Crwys Community Woodlands. Leaflets were produced for Bishops Wood Local Nature Reserve and Crwys Community Woodland
- Grant-funded innovative partner Projects included Sculpture 'By The Sea', Forest Schools Swansea Neath Port Talbot, Emergence (arts/sustainability collective), Crwys Community Woodland (CDSA), Sustainable Swansea, Down To Earth, Mindful Photography and the Friends of Coedbach Park

The Future

Although funding for this specific project has ended, City and County of Swansea continue to develop innovative projects to engage people with nature using experiences and knowledge gained from Countryside Connections.

Image © City and County of Swansea

Torfaen Local Nature Reserves

Establishing and positively managing a network of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in Torfaen

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Background

In 2007 Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) designated 6 LNRs (now 7). The catalyst for this project was the Torfaen LBAP and the Community Strategy. A public consultation exercise highlighted both public and political support for LNRs but at the same time signposted a problem with fly-tipping and illegal vehicle use. It was envisaged that LNRs would help meet biodiversity obligations, engender a sense of pride and local ownership and serve to alleviate some of the anti-social concerns. Furthermore LNRs could help access funding for land management hitherto unavailable.

Partnership

A partnership between various council land management teams, community groups, education providers and Torfaen Biodiversity Partnership. Volunteer groups e.g. Blaenavon World Heritage Environment Group (BWHEG), Friends of Henllys LNR have been actively engaged in management tasks. Other groups e.g. Gwent Wildlife Trust and Natural Resources Wales also use the network of facilities.

Learning

To date the project has worked well in helping to raise awareness of the socio-economic and environmental benefits of LNRs.



Highlights

- Designation of a landscape scale network of over 150 hectares of council land as local nature reserve
- Provide a resource for focused environmental education activities
- Help stimulate community involvement in practical action
- Deliver positive actions for Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species
- Two LNRs are awarded Green Flag status
- Worked to communicate the value of accessible natural green space for health and well-being
- Established links with local community groups and schools
- Generated new volunteer groups to engage in management activities
- Supports the delivery of Environment (Wales) Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act obligations

The Future

The range of LNRs now forms the basis of a network of nature conservation sites whereby people can interact with the natural environment. There is an on-going desire to access additional funding wherever possible to continue to improve facilities. We are also keen to develop the 'Friends of' model in line with that in place at Henllys LNR.

Image © TCBC

Porthkerry Pollination Project

Increasing species diversity in areas of low value amenity grassland, focusing on pollinators in Porthkerry, Vale of Glamorgan

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Background

Porthkerry Country Park has a large meadow (6.6 hectares) which, until a few years ago, was maintained as amenity grassland, for picnics and games, with low biodiversity value. Over the last 3 years a section of this meadow has been left to grow long (1.6 hectares) and has been cut and baled by a local farmer at the end of summer. Last autumn Porthkerry Wildlife Group, working in partnership with the ranges and other volunteer groups, collected and strew wildflower meadow seed from other areas and planted 150 wild flower plugs. The project planned to build on all the previous good work.

Partnership

Porthkerry Wildlife Group (PWG), in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council ranger service, applied to Welsh Government for funding for small scale projects. Porthkerry also received funding from Natural Resources Wales. PWG and the ranger service have been working with Bumblebee Conservation Trust and the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre to record and monitor pollinator species. A variety of volunteer groups have helped carry out the practical conservation work.

Learning

Over 10 local schools/community groups education activity sessions were held promoting wildflower meadows and their importance for pollination through the parks 'Go Wild' project. An interpretation panel was installed reflecting the importance of meadow/grassland habitats for pollination; this has helped get the message out to the local community and visitors.

Highlights

- Creating a further 800m² of new wildflower meadow, through replacement of amenity turf with wildflower earth, and deep scarification of remaining area and seeding with wild flower seed mix
- Hosting 10 school/community education activity sessions promoting wildflower meadows and their importance for pollination through the parks 'Go Wild' project
- Working with volunteers from the local community during 'Community in Action Days', helping implement and manage the project
- Introducing a new bee hive at a safe location within 50m of the new wildflower site

The Future

Carry out further improvements to the large meadow area and other grassland areas of the park and continue to use the new wildflower areas as sites for education activities and as a great promotional tool to showcase the importance of wild flowers for pollination.



Image © Mel Stewart / Vale of Glamorgan Council

For more information visit:

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/enjoying/parks_and_gardens/porthkerry_country_park/port_hkerry_country_park.aspx

Industrial Estate Living Landscape

Establishing a landscape-scale conservation scheme on the Wrexham Industrial Estate

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Background

The Wrexham Industrial Estate (WEI) is one of the largest in Europe. It contains an important network of wildlife habitats, including County Wildlife Sites, which support a diverse range of wildlife. Important species found include water vole, otter, bats, grizzled skipper and dingy skipper butterflies, great crested newt, barn owl, and black poplar. The WEI offers a great opportunity to properly integrate business, industry and people with wildlife in a working landscape and has the potential to become an exemplar site for the successful integration of social, economic and environment outcomes. The North Wales Wildlife Trust has been working with partners to establish a 'Living Landscape' Scheme for the Wrexham Industrial Estate.

Partnership

The North Wales Wildlife Trust has been working in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC), Buglife, Butterfly Conservation (BC) Wales and Natural Resources Wales. Liaison with businesses and other landholders on the estate has enabled us to map wildlife enhancement opportunities and provide land management advice in a mutually beneficial way.

Learning

This project aims to demonstrate how economic development and sustainable land management can go hand-in-hand, benefitting wildlife, people and businesses. By enhancing habitats and protecting key wildlife corridors, species can be conserved and barriers preventing dispersal can be removed with landholders involved in a positive and sustainable way.

Highlights

- 28 landowners involved
- 7 roadside verges managed, 2 acres of rough grassland. 0.5km of mixed native hedgerow planted
- 2 acres of topsoil stripping
- 5 barn owl boxes installed on trees. Bird and bat boxes installed
- 2 camera traps installed – providing data on woodcock, fox and badger

The Future

Our first priority is to secure funding to fully establish the project beyond the current development phase. We then aim to deliver the identified actions on the ground and, through best practice examples, enable landholders to undertake sustainable wildlife-friendly land management into the long term. We also aim to continue and expand our engagement with local communities, seeking to empower them to get more involved in the management of their local green spaces. We also aim to work closely with WCBC to develop an overarching strategy for the industrial estate that can be incorporated into the Wrexham Local Development Plan.



Image © Clare Williams / BC

The Eastern Valley Uplands

Delivery of ecosystem services and sustainable upland management

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Background

The uplands of South East Wales are dominated by large areas of upland common. A key habitat is upland heath which has traditionally been managed by local commoners for grazing. However, hill farming is not currently viable and this has resulted in reduced levels of management, habitat loss and bracken encroachment. This project has investigated methods to address this situation.

Partnership

The project was managed by a partnership comprising: Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen County Borough Councils and commoners associations with support from Gwent Police, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Blaenavon World Heritage Environment Volunteer Group, Natural Resources Wales, Treadlightly Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Learning

Strong links have been developed with commoners and communities who are now more aware of the opportunities the uplands present in terms of economic regeneration, tourism, wildlife and ecosystem services provision.

Organisations such as Gwent Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have also learned from this collaborative approach. They are now making plans to reduce landscape crime because of its negative impacts on the commons and their sustainable future.

Highlights

- Commoners Associations engaged
- Heather cut in fire risk areas 4ha
- Fire breaks created 4.5km
- Bracken control 8ha
- Dry stone walls repaired 343m
- Stock proof fence repaired 9km
- Cattle grids replaced 5
- Reed beds created 0.6ha
- Peat bog restored 10ha
- Production of a Natural Resource Management Plan and a Landscape Crime Toolkit
- Wildlife Sites advisory sheets 6
- Volunteers and land managers trained 43
- Outcomes of Police led operations: Sec 165 issued 2, Sec 59 warnings 8, Traffic Offence Reports 5, Off-roaders stopped from entering commons - Quads 10, Motorbikes 147, 4x4s 14

The Future

The Partnership recognises that it must build on the Project's success. This will require the strengthening of the Partnership and identifying the resources to deliver the Natural Resource Management Plan and the Landscape Crime Toolkit. An application for Rural Development Programme funding is currently in development.



Image © Torfaen County Borough Council

Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project

Expanding and protecting the unique population of red squirrels in Mid Wales

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Background

Red squirrels have rapidly declined since the 1950's. In Wales, there are only three remaining red squirrel populations: in Anglesey, around the Tywi Forest; in mid Wales; and in the Clocaenog Forest in north eastern Wales. The main threat to the red squirrel is the grey squirrel introduced to the UK in the late 1800s.

The Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership (MWRSP) was established in 2002. In 2009, a conservation plan for red squirrels in Wales was approved by Welsh Government. The partnership initially focused on research, and now shifted to conservation action. In 2014, the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW) successfully applied for funding to deliver a 5 year Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project, on behalf of MWRSP.

Partnership

Partners include the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW), Brecknock Wildlife Trust, Powys, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils, Natural Resources Wales, private forestry companies, Biodiversity Information Service for Powys and Brecon Beacons National Park, West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre and the National Trust.

Learning

The project operates through a network of volunteer coordinators.

Image © Becky Hulme / WTSWW

Highlights

- A Trap Loan Scheme (TLS) set up with a network of 8 volunteer coordinators and over 70 members. Free training is provided in live trapping technique and dispatch
- 4 camera traps erected, some with regular red squirrel visits
- Project website, leaflet and quarterly e-newsletter
- Public drop-in events, stands at local agricultural shows and talks to community groups
- Over 1060 grey squirrels dispatched in year one
- 2000 volunteer hours in the first 18 months

The Future

Continue to develop the TLS, enlisting further volunteers to the scheme. A Heritage Lottery Funding application submitted as part of the UK wide 'Red Squirrels United' project. In the long term, after the period of project funding, it is hoped that the TLS will be sustained as it works through a network of volunteers.



Alyn and Chwiler Living Landscape

Improving habitat connectivity and local links to wildlife in the Alyn and Chwiler Living Landscape, Denbighshire/Flintshire

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Background

The river Alyn is a tributary of the Dee and the Chwiler is a tributary of the Clwyd, both of these rivers are known for their biodiversity and their tributaries are no exception. For several years there have been various small projects focussed on the river valleys separately and for one specific reason such as water voles. The living landscape project enables us to work at a landscape scale and with local landowners to improve habitats and the connections between them. The area supports a range of important habitats including riverine and ancient woodland habitats and priority species such as dormice, otter, lesser horseshoe bat and a wide range of plant species.

Partnership

The project is a partnership between North Wales Wildlife Trust, Flintshire and Denbighshire County Councils, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, Natural Resources Wales, and North East Wales Wildlife. The project is running alongside the Alyn Valley Himalayan balsam project and carries forward work by the Wheeler water vole project and North Wales dormouse project in the past.

Learning

The project was developed over a number of years and included the production of a scoping report that engaged with landowners, identified opportunities and informed a successful WREN grant application. This has enabled work to be focussed on areas where work will join up and provide the most benefit to wildlife.

Highlights

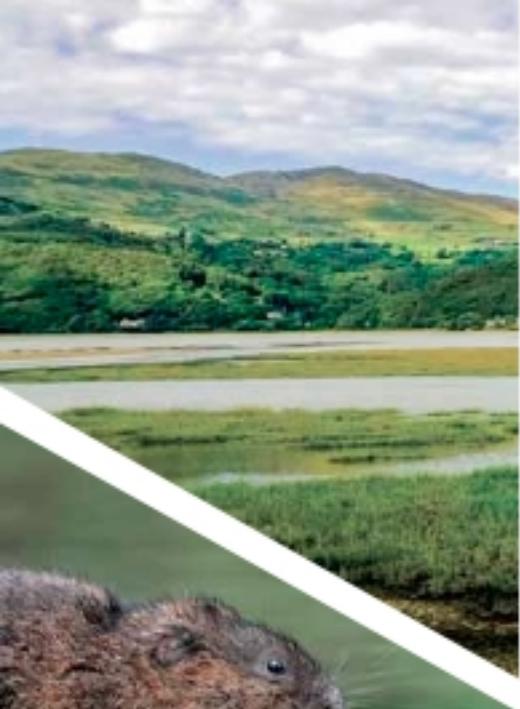
- Planted 125m of native hedgerow
- Put in place fencing to prevent livestock from entering a SSSI
- Protected 245m of ditches to improve the habitat for water voles
- Fenced 5 acres of young trees to prevent grazing by livestock
- Trained 19 volunteers to survey for water voles
- Advised 24 landowners on land management

The Future

The project has funding until November 2017 when we will hopefully have secured more funding to continue this positive work. There is a strong group of people moving this project forwards to create a network of linked up habitats whilst also connecting local people to the landscape in which they live. Many of the actions in the project also have a positive impact on river quality, such as fencing off riverbanks and ditches and removal of invasive non-native species.



Image © Flintshire County Council



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