

Projects Update LAG 12th May 2022

Theme 1

Our View Extension Project

To mark the end of the Our View/ Social Media Tourism Ambassadors project we would like to hold three training sessions to create an end of project exhibition and legacy zine (a small piece of print that explains the project and can be digital). One of the sessions will be in conjunction with the Llanover digital inclusion project using Llanover Hall and the surrounding area as one of the venues for the training session. The ambassadors will have a chance to explore the history and natural environment and help local residents learn how to use and take photos.

Gwent Wildlife Trust - eDNA Grassland Fungi & Dung Beetle

The proposal is wildlife based and focuses on grassland, concentrating on two different aspects (Grassland Fungi and the Dung Beetle) with a common thread running through it of e(nvironmental) DNA. The overarching purpose of the eDNA is to seek cost effective, innovative solutions to make rapid assessments of biodiversity, for use by GWT and more widely in the NRW. This will enable quicker assessment of protected site conditions so they can survey more sites with their limited resources and for the Sustainable Farming Scheme to gather baseline data and post intervention information.

We have been busy contacting the landowners of potential sites. This has involved sifting through our records and then emailing/phoning the owners of both known and potential Grassland Fungi Sites. We now have permission from all 30 Fungi Sites and have collected and sent samples to Aberystwyth University for 10 of these. We intend to collect from a further 15 sites on the 6-8th May. The final 5 will be later in May.

Additionally, we undertook our first piece of publicity in our GWT eNews which goes out to a few thousand members.

We don't intend to undertake any Dung Beetle work until a bit later in the year.

Abergavenny Lido Feasibility Study

The ultimate goal is to bring a heated outdoor pool back to Bailey Park, Abergavenny. The RDP is funding a feasibility study with the aim of ensuring that the pool is both viable and sustainable. There are two strands, a technical study and a business plan. Summerbell Architecture have been selected as the technical consultant as their proposal was well tailored to the requirements of the Abergavenny scheme. Since their appointment, the architects have met the steering group on three occasions to plan the way forward. They have visited the site, researched site opportunities/constraints and explored different accommodation options and area zoning. They have presented a number of 3D sketches and visuals for discussion by the steering group. AB Planning of Crickhowell have been appointed to work with them on the pre-planning application.

Tim Mills of FMG Consulting Ltd has been appointed to undertake the business plan and work is well underway. Tim has links with Fusion lifestyle, a company we hope will help us further along the project journey.

Contact has been made with a number of organisations and individuals who are keen to support us with other aspects of the project:

Fusion Lifestyle – a highly experienced sports and leisure management charity are keen to support us in many ways including possibly putting up some of the funds for the build. They work in partnership with public sector organisations to provide health and fitness activities to local communities.

Ogi – a broadband marketing/community liaison team have offered to help with PR, community engagement and fundraising.

Chris Jones of People make Places has offered to help us put together a market research survey. The results of this will feed into the business plan.

Theme 2

Schools Education Project

Gilwern Schools educational programme has now closed since the last report where we were looking at final spend and evaluation. Despite the hold up by Covid, the schools returned in September and we re-started the face to face opportunities (where possible). However, Covid is still prevalent and still offers some hindrance to the project.

Previously reported on and no change: On a positive note, this project continues to make its mark with the highlight of this being its impact on the developing curriculum. The project has added to the development of the new curriculum (which was one of the objectives of the project) and the new curriculum now offers the opportunity to look at where food comes from and its impact on carbon, etc.

Since the last report Lesley Griffiths Minister has attended the school and seen at first hand the programme of development.

Developing resource for farm enterprise – Brecon Beacons & Monmouthshire

Since the last update the project has closed, and extension refused by the LAG. It wasn't felt appropriate to take it forward under the RDP. However, as an offshoot, the project spawned a new group – now registered as a social enterprise [Home - Our Food 1200](#)

Nutritional Project Abergavenny Community Trust

LAG approved the request for changes to the original bid and we have now moved £10K from the original bid into support for access to food in Monmouthshire. A wider report will be offered for this part of the project for the next meeting.

I have no further updates for this project at the moment - I am meeting next week for a progress meeting.

However, the project is still making good progress and gains momentum.

Last update: Contact has been made with all named partners in the development area and there is a build-up of shared foods from surplus supermarket food stock – ACT acts as a catalyst and administrator (liaison point) for supermarket and partners.

In preparation for half term, frozen foods (as well as fresh surplus foods) are being utilised from Morrison and the continued liaison with the supermarket is good.

As reported in our last LAG overview and with permission from the LAG, we have moved £10k out of this project for direct intervention on and development of support for volunteers. The briefs

(attached) have been sent to Sell to Wales (as per MON CC procurement policies) and we are now awaiting applications. This will be a short-term intervention and be supplemented by successful (non-RDP) funding.

- Work in partnership with local volunteers to develop the above and effectively free-up their time to do what they do best – that is, to engage with their local communities”.

No other information available as yet – the project coordinator is on leave and an update will be forthcoming when the evaluation takes place.

Theme 3

Be. Community Programme

We have a volunteering networking and workshop event taking place on the 18th May in partnership with GAVO, Cwtch Angels and the Melville Centre. On the day we will be running Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and Customer Service courses and will be holding a community circles skills sharing workshop followed by focused networking. The event is ticketed for 40 people as the Melville Centre is still operating under a maximum capacity number measure.

We are planning on getting some more courses booked soon (food hygiene being highly requested again) and have also been in touch with a couple of groups who are looking at doing some face to face training (including health & safety).

Farming Community Network Exhibition Unit Project

The Monmouthshire Rural Support Centre (MRSC) has now been at the Livestock Market for nine months and has embedded into market life. The Centre is open every Market Day plus other events held on site. Recently, we have opened for the Gwent Young Farmers’ Field Day, and the NFU Sponsored Tractor Run in aid of Motor Neuron Disease.

We are now recording how many farmers we engage with, and since starting records, two months ago, we have engaged with just over 310 people, of which, 13% have been referred on to other agencies for help and advice.

Along with MRSC volunteers, Bob Stephenson and Shirley Hughes, we have 2 x Big Lottery Rural Workers from Mind Monmouthshire, who attend every Monday and Wednesday. We also have Volunteers from RABI, FCN and DPJ every Wednesday. Along with a retired Solicitor and Vicar who attend ad-hoc and give advice & guidance FOC.

Most Wednesday’s we have a ‘Visitor/Activity’ attending the Centre, and this can range from a men’s Hairdresser, children’s colouring in (during school holidays), to outside Agencies such as The Care Collective, Citizens Advice, Mouth & Throat Cancer Awareness Team. We welcome all Agencies that can offer practical help to the rural residents of Monmouthshire.

Following two very sad and untimely deaths of farmers with heart attacks whilst transporting livestock into the Market, we recently held a Training Session given by ‘Calon Hearts’ on CPR and Defibrillation, twenty-four Market and MRSC personnel attended.

On 18th May, we start ‘Do you know your numbers?’ campaign, which will involve qualified volunteers doing Blood Pressure checks, and intend to repeat the session every month.

Theme 4

Halls Together

The steering group are in the process of becoming a constituted group, in order to work towards becoming a CIO. This will allow them to apply for funding to continue to work started through the RDP project. The Charitable objectives are being worked on with a view that an application will be submitted by the end of June.

A number of workshops have been run to support the halls, these include Social Media, greening up your hall and managing your hall. The next workshop will be funding for the future and a follow-on social media workshop.

The steering group are also keen to secure continued support for the project either from MCC or an organisation such as GAVO after the RDP has finished.

Carbon Literacy for Communities

Monmouthshire County Council, on behalf of the Vale of Usk Local Action Group (LAG), commissioned a Carbon Literacy Project from an accredited training provider to deliver Carbon Literacy training in Monmouthshire and the rural wards of Newport. Cynnal Cymru-Sustain Wales won the contract. The project began on 8th November 2021 and the training programme completed by 31st March 2022. The summary report is provided here:

<http://monmouthshire.biz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Carbon-Literacy-Final-Report.pdf>

Two courses were written for two learner groups. Group one was for members of the community with no specific responsibility. Group two was for community and town councillors, local authority officers, council clerks and members of committee responsible for community assets i.e. buildings, green space, and public infrastructure. 24 community activists undertook the training with 34 councillors and managers. 100% of respondents said they would recommend the course to others in Monmouthshire and Newport.

The total number was less than we had hoped. From their extensive training experience, Cynnal Cymru reported that when a course is offered for free, more people book or express an interest than attend. The drop off between bookings and attendance is typical and does not indicate anything wrong with this particular project. Consideration must also be given to the time of year and the prevalence of Covid when assessing the attendance. In correspondence, potential participants cited unforeseen workload, family, and care commitments as reason for nonattendance.

However, the number of people (13) that were trained in order to be able to deliver the training to others exceeded the original target. This will help to ensure that the training continues to be delivered post funding. What's most pleasing is that plans are already underway to include Carbon Literacy in the Adult Community Learning programmes in Monmouthshire and Newport. In terms of Newport, this June they will be delivering an initial pilot course for tutors to 'test' the new course. This will be spread across 3 x 2 hour sessions and will be face-to-face in the evenings at St Julian's Community Education Centre. From September onwards, Carbon Literacy classes will be introduced to the ACL programme offer. Initial planning is to commit to 6 classes over the course of the year. We are allowing up to 12 hours total teaching hours per class dependent upon how the June pilot goes. Target attendance is 8 per class with a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10. These will run from St Julian's CEC and community venues. There would be scope for expansion if courses are popular.

In respect of Monmouthshire, plans are being made to introduce the training from the September 22 ACL programme and initially council staff will be offered the training using trainers qualified through the LEADER project.

Furthermore, fifteen citizens were motivated to create an informal network of Carbon Literacy alumni. This legacy group aims to stay in touch outside of any formal Council-led activity. Their aim is to maintain knowledge of practical relevance such as funding and training opportunities, voluntary initiatives and Council policy that will enable them to individually and collectively achieve the goals they committed to during their Carbon Literacy training. They have established an on-line presence. Many of them are already active in "Transition" and other environmental groups in the county.

Theme 5

Llanover Cluster

Following the approval of the extension to the project, there have been a number of training sessions held in each of the new halls. These include gardening events, craft events and web training. Over the next two months we have further gardening and craft events as well as astronomy, wildlife and photography with the Our View project and the Monmouthshire ambassadors.

IoT and Independent Living

The project has been able to secure the OT seconded to the project three days a week, which has been integral in the project being able to continue. We have been able to set up one smart home with an Alexa show and dot along with smart lights, sockets, TV and are planning on blinds and a hive type system. A second smart home is planned to be running by the end of the project in June. The new Kraydle Konnect 2 devices have now been installed with some great reports from service users.

Projects approved since January 2022 meeting:

IOT & Independent Living extension - approved 20th January 2022. RDP amount £16,000

Our View extension – approved 21st February 2022. RDP amount £3,920

Gwent Wildlife Trust eDNA project – approved 17th March 2022. RDP amount £16,341

Be Community Programme extension – approved 11th April 2022. RDP amount £18,000

Pipeline project:

GWT Restoring White-tailed Eagles to Wales (T1024) – currently open for voting

A study to assess the feasibility of re-establishing a breeding population of White-tailed Eagles (WTE) within Monmouthshire, Newport, and the South Wales coast, restoring what was once part of Wales' biodiversity, culture, and heritage prior to their extinction in the early 19th Century.

