



Funding Sustainable Community Woodlands



REPORT

Llais y Goedwig's Conference and AGM

Brookhouse Mill, Denbigh. 11th and 12th March 2011

Introduction

Llais y Goedwig ran their second well attended and successful conference and AGM at Brookhouse Mill in Denbigh on the 11th and 12th March 2011. It was attended by 59 delegates, including groups from all parts of Wales and brought together community woodland groups with funders and third sector organisations to look at how woodland-based projects can help create a sustainable future for Wales.

The conference was on the theme of “Funding Sustainable Community Woodlands” and explored various options for this, aiming to share information on how this could be achieved through a mix of traditional funding applications, with tendering and income generation; in other words, “How to Make the Woodland Pay”. An expert on this subject was Rod Waterfield, and a visit to his woods, The Woodland Skills Centre at Bodfari, was a highlight of the programme on Saturday.

Here are just a few quotes from the great feedback we got;

“A good networking opportunity- and a great day out!”

“Having students at the event was a great idea, as they seemed to benefit greatly from it”

“A chance to make ones views known on discussed topics, and a great source of woodland information –plus a chance to speak to people with real experience.”

The following report contains an overview of the weekend, with notes from some of the sessions taken by volunteer scribes and Llais y Goedwig directors and staff members.

All PowerPoint Presentations from the event are available on the website, where there are also photos and a couple of video clips from the site visit. See www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk



Llais y Goedwig gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders: Forestry Commission Wales

Summary of the weekend

The conference was opened on the Friday by an opening address by Eleanor Burnham (AM), followed by an informative panel discussion with representatives from funding bodies such as the Big Lottery and WCVA. The panel was a chance for the funders to talk about the sort of funds they had available, and who could apply. After this we had lunch with plenty of opportunity for networking and for delegates to talk in person to the funders.

The afternoon began with a presentation of the “Size of Wales” project, and then a talk on “Funding Sustainability” by our Chair, Roger Davies. Following this we had a series of workshops, ranging from “Demystifying tendering”, through “Social Enterprise” to “Joint Marketing Initiatives”. After reconvening at the end of the day we had a premier showing of the Forest Film Festival Shorts from the celebration of the UN International Year of Forests.

The second day of the conference began with a welcome from Rod Waterfield, introducing his site. Next we had “Reflections on Sustainable Funding” by David Williams from Blaen Bran, also a Llais Y Goedwig board member. This was followed by the AGM, at which two new board members were elected. A very warm welcome to Adam Thorogood and Ruth Stafford!

We picked up our packed lunches and headed out to visit to the inspirational Woodland Skills centre in nearby Bodfari, to get a different perspective on how to “Make Your Woodland Pay”. Site manager Rod Waterfield and his daughter Helen both gave fascinating tours of the site, which encompassed the saw mill, the Greenwood Skills courses, Forest School site and woodland walk. Expert advice was given on how to make money from running a woodland, and many delegates came away filled with fresh enthusiasm for their own projects.

The day drew to an end back at the venue, where members were encouraged to comment on what they would like to see Llais y Goedwig doing in the future, and a mandate was established for our future work – ideas from members are always welcome on what you’d like to see from your network!

We would like to give our thanks to Rod Waterfield and all at Bodfari for making our visit there so enjoyable.



PROGRAMME

Friday 11th March: Funding Sustainable Community Woodlands

10:30 Registration

11:00 Welcome: Rodney Waterfield (Bodfari Woodland Skills Centre) Key Note Address: Eleanor Burnham AM for North Wales

Roger Davies (Llais y Goedwig Chair)

11:30 Introductions from groups

12:00 Means of support (Wales Co-op Centre, Sustainable Funding Cymru, Focus on Forestry First, Cadwyn Clwyd, Menter a Busnes, Forestry Commission Wales) Chair: Roger Davies.

12:30 Lunch – Networking

14:00 Size of Wales – Hannah Scrase

14:05 Funding Sustainability – Intro from Llais y Goedwig - Roger Davies

14:30 Workshops

	Charitable and grant funding	Contract-based funding	Developing enterprise
14:30	Nia Lloyd, BIG Lottery Fund <i>People & Places Programme</i>	Gareth Coles, Sustainable Funding Cymru <i>Demystifying Tendering</i>	Ebony Redhead, Wales Co-op Centre <i>Social enterprise</i>
15:30	Jane Gronow, Llais y Goedwig <i>Networking & sharing experience</i>	Dr. John Taylor NEF/WAG Lajla Cash FCW <i>Ecosystem services</i>	Adam Thorogood, Llais y Goedwig <i>Sharing experience</i>
16:30	Sian Roberts, DVSC <i>Getting fit for grant funding</i>	Roger Davies, Llais y Goedwig <i>Exploring service provision</i>	Jenny Wong, Llais y Goedwig <i>Joint marketing initiatives</i>

17:15 Reconvene panel and plenary session, goodbye and thanks.

18:00 International Forest Film Festival Shorts - in celebration of the International Year of Forests

19:30 Dinner

Saturday 12 March: Llais y Goedwig Annual General Meeting and woodland visit

09.30 Welcome back – Rodney Waterfield (Bodfari Woodland Skills Centre)

09.45 Reflections on sustainable funding (Chair: David Williams – Llais y Goedwig)

10.30 AGM Chair: Roger Davies AGM Agenda attached

11.15 Tea break (and pick up packed lunch)

11.30 Leave Brookhouse for visit to Bodfari Woods Introduction to Bodfari - Rodney Waterfield

12:00 Lunch in the woods (shelter with some seating)

13:00 Tours at Bodfari. 1: Saw mill, craft workshops and products, tree nursery, polytunnel (1 hr)
2: Forest school sites and woodland walk that each group visits in turn. (1 hr)

15:00 Leave Bodfari return to Brookhouse Mill

15:30 Making it happen!

16:00 CLOSE

Session notes:

The following are some of questions raised during the initial panel discussion on *Means of Support*.

Q. Is the Engagement Gateway programme worth it? I'm from Elwy working woods- we're not on computer and find meeting the criteria on paper very difficult.

A. WCVA support is available for this, to help with streamlining etc.

For innovative projects bear in mind there are innovation streams (Nia, Big Lottery)

Q. Why is it such a rigid framework? It can't be flexible enough to deal with needs.

A. WCVA strives to meet needs, encourages sources from other routes e.g. fundraising, community shares. Membership is a big asset. Developing that membership and getting them involved in what you do is key.

With innovations funding there can be difficulty in defining social problems. Small groups don't stand a chance. Things can be done about this but many are just not big enough. Representatives are not necessarily able to go on training courses due to money or family/work commitments.

A. WCVA is developing training online so that there is access to it in the evenings.

Q. I've had so many applications turned down because I've written something a little bit wrong in the box.

A. Funders are human beings after all so ask them and talk to them before you submit the application. In Gwynedd there are development officers to help with this.

Q. The difficulty is the supporting evidence e.g. social difficulties. Where do you find that evidence? Where does that come from? Where is it?

A. It is in the public domain. You can obtain it from the County council, local authority or Health board. Gather your evidence. Participation Cymru can help with this giving advice on how to do it and running events etc.

Q. The problem is knowing about these support structures. Could a big picture be put together in a database?

A. There is a funding portal at WCVA, and information for start up groups too.

Q. We have had quite a lot of funding but after a successful project we can't find the funding again. Why when something works can't it be funded again? *Pippa (Forest School)*.

Q. How do we register for Engagement Gateway? Is there ever going to be the chance to be able to apply for something from WAG?

A. Registration is through a Pre-qualifying questionnaire. If accepted on to the list then tendering is then the way ahead- to deliver contracts and services.

Are you registered on “Sell to Wales”? That has all the tendering opportunities. You can register anything below £10 000 and they only have to go to one supplier, so if they don’t know you they won’t come to you. Between £10 000 and £50 000 they need 3 quotes, so you need to have a good profile. Over £50 000 there has to be a proper tendering process and European legislation kicks in regarding this. It can be good to tender for opportunities that will be too big, and then find out who got it. There might be then opportunities for collaboration and subcontracting. Partnership working can be key- to fill in forms and offer support.

There is an issue with scale- how to upscale is a problem for groups all over. Maybe through a merger or consortia opportunities? On “Sell to Wales” you can do a search and find out about the contracts and who they have been awarded to. There may be a problem with inconsistent information though.

Q. It takes ages to fill out the proforma, and the time to monitor what is coming up- it’s almost not going to happen.

A. That is one of the requests that has been made to the public sector. There is currently a pilot project unique to Wales, looking entirely at beurocracy (training) how to fill out forms, and find training providers- it’s important to remember that simplicity is very valuable in this.

A. Invite funding panel to the project to see what you are doing- they usually love coming to visit projects. Also remember the benefits Environment Wales can offer through Development Wales.

Q. It seems a bit mad that there are funders from WAG wanting to give money to CWG’s, and groups wanting funding. Why can’t they just give the WAG money directly to LlyG to give it out on a form that works for CWG’s.

A. LlyG needs a mandate from the members to do that.

- **Size of Wales – Hannah Scrase**

Wales is 2 million ha, and the idea is to protect an area of forest that size so that the measure of Wales’ size is being used for something positive, rather than negative, as is often heard in relation to deforestation. Currently have 20 forest projects in Africa, totalling 700 000ha. The idea is to find good projects, and then partner them in Wales with supporting members (e.g. the Botanic Gardens etc). Some organisations adopt a project, and try and raise money for them. The idea is to try and create direct links. 2 models – any CWA can get involved with a group in Africa (which could be time consuming) or LlyG could be a network- groups could fundraise, help with mapping etc. Community woodland management is advanced in Africa. Processes are in shape in Tanzania and the DRC to take on ownership of woodlands. It can be a matter of survival to protect the land from logging.

In Tanzania 18 000ha are registered as community forest reserve. In DRC there is a network of NGO's, who work with the community- mapping using GPS 350 000ha of forest. The group can register their land.

Funding- Wales Africa community links- provides money for exchanges, info sharing etc. See <http://www.sizeofwales.org.uk> for more details.

- **Nia Lloyd, BIG Lottery Fund - *People & Places Programme***

Nia Lloyd gave a very useful overview of the process of applying for People & Places projects with Big Lottery. The discussion then moved to an evaluation of this process from the perspective of a CWG. It was noted that the availability of someone to provide one-on-one advice on the development of the proposal is really useful. That it is sometimes difficult to interpret what is wanted for monitoring soft outcomes and to provide evidence for demand. The breakdown of the proposal into answers to specific questions with tight word limits is also difficult – it would be easier to simply write a prose account of what a group wants to do and why. Nia said she would take these points for consideration and said if anyone was interested the Big Lottery has a client evaluation group and they always welcome new members. Despite these problems the Big Lottery application forms and processes for small grants is still a lot easier than some other grant funding bodies.

- **Ebony Redhead, Wales Co-op Centre - *Social enterprise***

Ebony Redhead from Wales Cooperative Centre spoke on social enterprises and consortia cooperatives, packing lots into a 45 minute slot. Aim of Wales Coop centre is to build a strong and dynamic social enterprise and cooperative sector in Wales. The can help groups at all stages from aspiration, emerging groups through to well established social enterprises.

Definition of social enterprises: a trading business with social/environmental goals at its core. Create other types of profit, social, community, well-being. Not just focused on financial profit. All financial profits are ploughed back into organisation.

Social enterprise is possibly a good model for CWGs as this gives them flexibility to work in a community context but also to operate as a business. Wales Coop centre can support groups with advice on legal structures and company registration as well as with financial planning.

Ebony went on to discuss Consortia cooperatives, cooperative organisations working together to pool resources and skills and spread risk. ; a really good way of coping with issues of scale. Operating on a competitive scale can be a problem for third sector organisations. A cooperative consortium enables small businesses or sole traders to work together for mutual benefit.

- **Dr. John Taylor NEF/WAG and Lajla Cash FCW - *Ecosystem services***

Dr John Taylor gave an overview of the 'Living Wales' natural environment framework for Wales. He showed how this initiative has grown out of growing awareness of the

interconnectedness of ecosystems and human well-being as expressed in global deliberations starting in 1972 with the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, continuing through the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and most recently with the TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity). WAG have responded to this with a consultation which closed at the end of last year and are now preparing a natural environment framework to be called 'A Living Wales' to apply these principles to Wales. This is an unprecedented opportunity to integrate the management of landscapes of Wales to deliver ecosystem services which are:

1. Supporting services (e.g. soil formation, water cycling)
2. Regulating services (e.g. flood and erosion control)
3. Provisioning services (e.g. food production, fibre/timber)
4. Cultural services (e.g. socially valued landscapes, physical and mental health etc.)

Delivering this will require radical thinking, new legislation and greater local control of decisions that affect ecosystems and the services derived from them. This is all highly relevant to CWGs and is something we need to fully engage with.

- **Adam Thorogood, Llais y Goedwig - *Sharing experience***

The sharing experience slot was facilitated by Adam Thorogood. We started with some advice from Carys Griffiths from Menter a Busnes on tendering for contracts through Sell2Wales. Carys went through how to use the sell2Wales site, how to register and talked about the different scales of contract. Lower value contracts are decided regionally, for example in Denbighshire, only 1 supplier is needed for contracts below £10,000. 3 quotes are needed for between £10k-£50k contracts and for any contracts above this, competitive tendering must be used. Discussion focused on how small community groups might work on the scale that some of these contracts demand, very difficult. Cooperative consortia could be a way to scale up the work of a cluster of community woodland groups and social enterprises working together. Carys agreed to promote the "How to Tender" workshops through Llais y Goedwig.

Robert Price from Cadwyn Clwyd spoke about regional enterprise development with particular focus on his area: Flintshire and Denbighshire. Although Cadwyn Clwyd have had a previous focus on community projects they are now concentrating solely on enterprise development, this does not mean that community groups can't apply though. The Agri-Food and Forestry scheme could be of particular help to community woodland groups, providing them with the capital funds they might need to really kick-start their activities.

- **Jenny Wong, Llais y Goedwig - *Joint marketing initiatives***

Jenny Wong opened by briefly describing the 'Heritage woodland product' label launched by the Leader Coetir Clwyd project some years ago. The idea was that local woodland products would be labelled and jointly marketed by woodland enterprises in NE Wales. Unfortunately this initiative failed as there was insufficient buy-in from the enterprises concerned and only one ever used the labels. So although group marketing is an attractive idea there are also pitfalls and we need to learn from previous initiatives. Selling things from woodlands is an obvious way for CWGs to generate income but many groups struggle with marketing or may only have small quantities or intermittent

supplies of products to sell. Is there a role for Llais y Goedwig to develop as an umbrella 'brand' and to develop a marketing scheme for members? There was general support for the idea that a Llais y Goedwig brand would have value to provide quality assurance which links woodlands, people and local produce. This endorsement of this idea will be passed to the Board for further consideration and development into a project proposal.

Conference participants

(Those in italics did not attend)

FUNDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WOODLANDS 11th and 12th March 2011		
Name	Surname	Organisation
Sophie	Ackerman	Bangor University
Barbara	Anglezarke	Woodlands for Wales (FCW)
Viv	Archer	Kehoe Countryside
Prabi	Basnet	Bangor University
Mike	Bithell	Moelyci Environmental Centre
Denise	Bott	Barmouth Communities First
Eleanor	Burnham	AM
Amanda	Calvert	Community Woodland Association (Scotland)
Sara	Carroll	WCVA
Lajla	Cash	FCW
<i>Mel</i>	<i>Chandler</i>	<i>Mongomeryshire Wildlife Trust</i>
Jo	Cooper	Llais y Goedwig
Adam	Crowe	Bangor Forestry Students' Association
Julie	Daley	Communities First Flintshire
Nigel	Davies	Communities First Flintshire
Roger	Davies	Golygfa Gwydyr / Llais y Goedwig
Joseph	Durant	Bangor University
Janet	Evans	
Adrian	Farey	Elwy Working woods
Pippa	Gallagher	Plas Derw Trust
Colleen	Geoghegan	Bangor University
Carys	Griffiths	Menter a Busnes
Chloe	Griffiths	Llais y Goedwig
Jane	Gronow	Llais y Goedwig
Barbara	Hadrill	Forest School Wales / Carnog working horses
Danny	Harris	Centre for Alternative Technology
John	Hubbard	
Chris	Hughes	Focus on Forestry First

Gareth	Jones	Keep Wales Tidy
Mike	Klymko	NE Wales Wildlife Trust
Mara	Kozulina	Bangor University
Kerstin	Leslie	Bangor University
Nia	Lloyd	Big Lottery
Kirsten	Manley	Dyfi Woodlands
Mike	Meadows	Erlas Victorian Walled Garden
Ralph	Miller	Blaen Bran Community woodland
Ann	Morton	Erlas Victorian Walled Garden
Adewole	Olagoke	Bangor University
Evelyn	Over	
Roz	Owen	Woodlands for Wales (FCW)
Siwan	Owens	Partneriaeth plant a pobl ifanc
Dave	Petty	Coed Marros
Janet	Price	Friends of Pen y Maes Woods
Robert	Price	Cadwyn Clwyd
David	Pugh	Blaen Garw timebank
Ebony	Redhead	Wales Co-op
Sian	Roberts	Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council
Hannah	Scrase	Size of Wales
Henry	Shallcross	Friends of Pen y Maes Woods
Fay	Sharpley	Llais y Goedwig / Pobl y Fforest
Dave	Smith	Bangor University
Ruth	Stafford	Newtown Community orchard
John	Taylor	CCW
Adam	Thorogood	Llais y Goedwig
Rod	Waterfield	Woodland Skills Centre
Maria	Wilding	Ceredigion County Council
Dai	Williams	Transistion Town Holywell
David	Williams	Blaen Bran / Llais y Goedwig
Eifion	Williams	Environment Wales
Leah	Williams	Menter Mon
Zena	Wilmot	Coed Lleol
Sarah	Wilson	Forest School Wales
Jenny	Wong	Coetir Mynydd / Llais y Goedwig