



PROJECT PLAN

NEED

In 2012 the Community Council asked local people to suggest new community projects. Neighbours adjoining Coed Hafod y Bryn commented that this 6.5 hectare mixed deciduous woodland had not been properly managed for in excess of 15 years; it was overgrown, dark and difficult to access. A steering group was formed and the woodland owners, Snowdonia National Park, were approached to negotiate a way forward. New Park Forestry officer Rhydian Roberts was appointed during 2014 and following further negotiations it was agreed to establish a community working group to begin a clearance programme. The aim, at this point, was to remove invasive species, allow light to enter and start a natural programme of biodiversity regeneration.

Being close to the village, access it is favourable for residents to use the woods as a recreation facility. New footpaths were created to provide local people and visitors with a circular way-marked access route for both walking and jogging. The benefits to individual health through exercise and outdoor activity are a bonus freely supplied by the woodlands.

At the end of Winter 2014 the success of the work was assessed with Snowdonia National Park. Surveys of flowers, bats, birds and butterflies all indicated a narrow field of species evident in the woods. Lichens and mosses, key factors in these rare climatic tropical environments forming Merioneth Oak woodlands, were severely lacking to the extent that these woods were not included in the main survey carried out. It was agreed to bring in advisor Gareth Ellis to suggest suitable ways forward for the group and land owner to get a better understanding of each others needs, responsibilities, abilities and limitations (document one enclosed).

It was also felt that the group needed to increase the range of woodlands. The Woodland Trust and Wildlife Wales were approached and following a meeting of all interested parties including SNPA it was unanimously agreed that their organisations had limited budgets for woodland maintenance and reduced staffing. The voluntary work of the group was eagerly welcomed and now Coed Aber Artro, Lletywalter, and Crafnant Wildlife reserve are part of the group's management remit.

AIMS

- To improve and manage the ecological biodiversity and environmental status of woodlands around the village of Llanbedr including Coed Hafod y Bryn, Lletywalter, Coed Aber Artro and Crafnant.
- To develop a strong working partnership with landowners and their agents including Snowdonia National Park Authority, Woodland Trust and North Wales Wildlife Trust.
- To ensure good long-term management of the woodlands to create a beneficial environmental resource for the local community to value and enjoy now and in the future.

OUTCOME

1. To establish a voluntary working group that is insured for safety at all times. Bethan Gritten (Renew Wales) advised upon group structure to help the community form a soundly organised group (document three enclosed) This has been established specifically relating to the needs of the community and woodlands. *Snowdonia Cycles* have agreed to their address forming the basis for the group's centre in the village.
2. To learn new skills which may have a benefit for future employment through involvement in specifically related professional courses. Insurance will be applied for once courses are completed and appropriate tools and safety clothing can be purchased.
3. To improve the quality and access of all footpaths in the woods and where possible to provide disability access. Having local people on the ground to monitor and ensure safety of footpaths was welcomed by all landowners. Sign posting and further construction work could take place. The development of a public path linking all four sites was welcomed and the SNPA footpaths officer has agreed to work with the group to establish this facility and to link it into the Ardudwy Way and Coastal path
4. To create a healthy environment for all potential indigenous woodland species to thrive. Removal of invasive species creates light at ground level enabling plants especially mosses and lichens to naturally develop.
5. To ensure the woods are safe for people to use and are a beneficial amenity for local residents and visitors to Llanbedr.
6. To broaden community involvement Ysgol Llanbedr are to develop a Forest school under the guidance of Lee Oliver of Keep Wales Tidy. Following a link with Keith Griffiths (manager Gwynedd Council adults with learning difficulties) a small group of adults who have learning and/or emotional problems, some of which reside in property in the village are to participate in a confidence building programme through practical woodland work.
7. To encourage goodwill, working in partnership and involvement of the local community to appreciate the environmental value of these woodlands. With support from the Community Council and Councillor Annwyn Hughes the group have held one social event which immediately led to new members and local press publicity.
8. It is planned to hold more social events to develop awareness and an understanding of the importance of woodlands in our environment today, starting with Arts and Crafts in the woods in September 2015.

OUTPUTS

- The formation of clearance groups working during the Winter months assisting with the management of trees and ground species. For the group to have more involvement and responsibility a number of courses were identified as essential for health and safety, handling tools and equipment, woodland management and use of power equipment. Associated protective clothing was required as was more costly quality equipment. Until these courses are complete it is not possible to gain full insurance or to develop a key role in the future of the woodlands. (document two attached) Once courses have been completed greater management roles can develop with chain saw work and regeneration programmes
- In 2014-15 the group worked with SNPA providing labour in Coed Hafod y Bryn for two days per month from October to March (under SNPA insurance). Volunteer numbers varied from 4-14 and this was supported by SNPA staff and estates team. It was agreed that the size of area cleared was achieved only because of the number of volunteers and the Park provided the additional staff only on the basis of community enthusiasm. Keep Wales Tidy provided a small grant for the purchase of basic tools.
- To carry out annual ecological surveys and monitor the status of the woodlands, its development and evidence of improved biodiversity. This to follow guidelines from appropriate environmental organisations - RSPB, Plantlife - and will include, bats, butterflies and moths, flowers and grasses, birds, mosses and lichens. Annual collation and recording will provide an analysis of progress over the years.
- To photographically record the condition of the woodlands and hold exhibitions to show to the public the value of the work carried out.

INPUTS

To move forward the group requires;-

- To attend specified courses
- Tools and protective clothing
- Insurance
- Daily administration includes stationary, photocopying, internet resources, travel costs, training costs, volunteer expenses, publicity including logo and templates for posters etc.
- To increase participants numbers through active publicity.
- To draw up activity plans with each land owner for work in 2015-16

Budget details enclosed in document four

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

At the end of year one it was agreed, by SNPA and the group, that good progress had been made in Coed Hafod y Bryn. The group had proved to the land owner that they had the enthusiasm, staying power and willingness to learn and observe woodland procedure. Each member completed a form to show when they had joined the working group indicating that they provided between 200 and 300 hours of labour that season. Surveys showed a lack of wildlife diversity but also indicated how this could be improved. Professional help comes from the Merioneth Oak woodlands survey that will point to areas where the group can help land owners diversify in future years for both long and short term benefits. David Lamarka (lichens and mosses expert from Merioneth Oak woodlands survey) to visit the woods not surveyed (Coed Hafod y Bryn and Aber

Artro)in September 2015.(Crafnant has high status, Lletywalter medium status)
New members are required as more woodlands are included under the remit. The Arts and Crafts day will form the basis of regular events to create awareness for the local community of the benefits to human health, the health of the natural environment, together bringing about a balance between the village and nature. And in a small way helping to sustain the viability of our planet for human beings and nature to exist in harmony. Questionnaires will enable people to contribute ideas for future schemes.