

A survey of the Woodland Trust site transfer programme in Wales: can communities become more engaged?

Summary of a Llais y Goedwig study, 2014



The Woodland Trust (WT) in Wales (Coed Cadw) asked Llais y Goedwig (LlyG) to assess how its Site Transfer Programme was functioning and to advise the WT on enhancing opportunities for transfer of site responsibilities to Community Woodland Groups (CWGs).

The Site Transfer Programme is part of a WT policy to encourage communities, organisations and individuals to take on the management of discrete WT woods through a lease agreement. The WT/Coed Cadw is keen to support community involvement in some of its woods and wishes to adopt a flexible approach in negotiating a lease or management agreement



Findings on the site transfer programme

The WT/Coed Cadw Site Transfer Programme in Wales is at an early stage. To date only one CWG has an agreement with WT/Coed Cadw and a second CWG is in the process of signing a lease agreement. However the survey found that there are a number of opportunities which indicate that this initiative can be successful but the WT needs to ensure that the CWGs are well supported so that they can manage a WT woodland sustainability in the long term.

Potential woodland opportunities

Twenty three WT woods in Wales with good access and close to communities have been identified by WT/Coed Cadw and these could be targeted for future local community engagement. The WT could actively target communities close to these sites and encourage local involvement. ACTIF Woods and Outdoor Learning Wales already use these woods as a local resource for education and health.

Potential involvement of LlyG members

LlyG members suggested a number of incentives to encourage new CWGs including a Development officer working with LlyG to support the creation of CWGs, peer mentoring by existing CWGs and paying an individual, local group or organisation to run open days and special events in new Community Woodlands.

1. Thirteen CWGs are interested in taking on the management of WT/Coed Cadw sites and a further 5 CWGs are potentially interested. Most groups would prefer to travel 10 miles or less to manage a WT site.
2. CWGs named support with volunteer insurance, training in woodland management skills, opportunity to collect firewood, support with funding raising and publicity and support with travel costs as incentives to support a CWG to manage a WT site.
3. The majority of CWGs wanted to sign a management agreement with the WT rather than a lease agreement.
4. The majority of CWGs contacted are keen to be part of a peer mentoring service to support new CWGs.

For more details on this study, or to enquire about a WT/Coed Cadw Woodland, please contact – Coed Cadw

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Llais y Goedwig

07966 071073.

info@llaisygoedwig.org.uk

www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk

Thank you to the Woodland Trust for initiating and supporting this study and the community groups who took part.. The report was prepared by Dr Evelyn Over, with additional help from Rosie Strang and Jane Vaughan Gronow.