

Case study 8 'Meditation and Chainsaws - Communities coming together' Knighton Tree Allotment Trust

Case study Summary

KTAT is a community woodland management project operating with the goodwill of private landowners in Powys and Shropshire.

This case study will tell you about how and why KTAT originated, what we have achieved, as well as what problems we are encountering and how we are dealing with them. It will give some details of the English woodland that KTAT manages but will concentrate on our Welsh site.

History

The Teme Valley Environment Group (TVEG) is based in and around Knighton, Powys and was started in 2008. It is part of a grass-roots movement exploring how communities can adapt to a society without access to cheap energy derived from fossil fuels. Rather than a cause for depression, the group felt this was an opportunity to make life better while enjoying themselves at the same time. It welcomed all local people concerned about sustainability and the environment and explored local food production, renewable energy supply, transport, health and well-being, housing and livelihoods.

In June 2010 several members started a Woodland Working Group and soon decided that there was enough interest in and around Knighton to encourage members to grow wood for fuel and also for fruit, nuts, and timber to be used locally.

They began to meet more regularly. In September they began the process of setting up a separate entity, still linked to TVEG, but called the Knighton Tree Allotments Trust (KTAT) that would take overall responsibility for the woodland project.



*Volunteers Kate, Colin, Jamie, Angie, Camilla
Jan 2014*

They registered KTAT as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 22nd October 2010 with 6 subscribers. These 6 were soon joined by 2 more supporters and the 8 together acted as Trustees until the first AGM was held in March 2012. We set up a KTAT account with the Co-op Bank and started keeping formal accounts on an excel sheet. We also started keeping a tally of volunteer hours and minutes of our meetings.

We knew we had to get more people involved. At our November meeting we decided we would recruit paid up Members so that our first AGM would have Members to vote for Trustees and to agree the policies that were being formulated. We also needed to raise funds. We therefore sent out an outline description of KTAT, asking for Members (annual membership fee of £10) along with an appeal for Friends of KTAT. We raised almost £2,000 and also received an amazingly generous donation of £10,000 for a 'land fund' to buy woodland. What a great start!

We were lucky that TVEG had quite an extensive email list of local people concerned about environmental sustainability issues that we could tap into. Most of our first year's batch of Members were connected to the wide social network around TVEG and 3 years later almost 50% still are.

The objects of KTAT as stated in their Memorandum & Articles:

The objects for which the Trust is established are for the benefit of the public in and around Knighton and the Teme Valley, including the members of the Trust, so that they can plant and maintain woodlands to provide themselves with affordable access to firewood, fruit, nuts and other woodland products in a sustainable manner by:-

1. Setting up a Model Tree Allotment where skills can be learnt and shared and where trees are planted wherever appropriate to produce a sustainable supply of woodland products, including firewood, fruit, nuts, and timber whilst encouraging biodiversity. The distribution of the woodland products from this Model Tree Allotment will go to all those directly involved in working and managing the Model Tree Allotment including those who are also Trustees or members of the Trust;
2. Acquiring and providing affordable use of land for local people to grow their own firewood and woodland products by the setting up of Tree Allotments;
3. Promoting education, skill-sharing and knowledge of woodland management, sustainable eco-systems, biodiversity, and related scientific and artistic endeavour;
4. Managing all lands held by the Trust in a sustainable fashion, so as to enhance the diversity, productivity and beauty of the environment, in accordance with organic principles, for the benefit and happiness of present and future generations;
5. Encouraging participation in all of the above activities of the Trust by the general public and specific interest groups of all ages, abilities and backgrounds;
6. Acquiring lands whether freehold or leasehold, with or without buildings and fixtures, and of a character, size and location to be decided by the Trustees.



Camilla & Kate planting broadleaf trees, Nov 2014

"I am a new volunteer for KTAT and have been warmly welcomed into the community of people involved. Being a volunteer is a great way to contribute to sustaining our marvellous local woodland. I have already learnt to wield an axe, how best to stack wood and what to do to plant trees. Pleasurable and on occasion hard work! I have helped with some administrative work too so there is something for everyone. A great way to connect with the countryside and work for future generations" Nicola

KTAT subscribed to various land agencies email lists and followed up with several visits to woodlands for sale, going to auctions and generally becoming familiar with the local context. The visits helped us get to know each other and gel as a group and provided us with an opportunity to explore what kind of woodland we actually wanted and why. We decided we wanted to purchase woodland but would also look at land that was suitable for planting woodland, and that it should be within a 6 mile radius of Knighton. Being environmentally conscious we did not want to travel too far. Being on the border we were searching in Shropshire as well as Powys. Although we had £10,000 that would provide an initial deposit we were worried about how we might raise more and did not want to get into problems of loans that would need to be paid back. But the price of land was going up all the time and we could find nothing suitable.



Trustees meeting June 2012

"I enjoy working with the other volunteers. Everyone is so friendly and it's easy to get to know new people. Although we have different levels of skill and physical strength there is never any pressure to work beyond one's capability. Everyone is able to feel they have made a positive contribution" Kate

In November 2010 we were told that the owners of a wood, a few miles away, might be interested in selling it to us. After contacting the owners we spent 8 months of quite intensive work organising visits, meetings, and planning surveys but it all fell through.

It became clear that the owners did not want to sell it and when we explored the possibility of a 10 year lease to manage it we found the communications with the landowners very difficult as we never got clear feedback from our discussions and the relationship never developed.

We suspect that they did not find it easy working out how to deal with a community group with lots of unknown volunteers with very little actual experience, and who can blame them! Eventually they got a local contractor to work for them for a set amount – much easier to deal with. Unfortunately, this took us a long time to work out.

We began to wonder if we would ever find anywhere to start our project. We put adverts in local papers to try to find landowners willing to lease us land and also wrote to local farmers. We received very little interest and were running out of hope. In fact the first half of 2011 was a very low point for us, wondering how to proceed, doubting our abilities and plans. But luckily, Colin, one of our Trustees, very supportive and calm, kept encouraging the rest of us, saying 'Stick with it, there are always low patches, give it time'.

And then we had two offers around May 2011. Both were just over the border in England. One was on the side of a busy road near Knighton train station but was extremely steep with service wires running through it. We felt this was too difficult to take on with our lack of skills.

But the other site, Weir Cottage, was only a mile away, was next door to one of our Trustees, was a mixed woodland of about 1.2 acres and the slope was not too steep. The owner seemed willing for us to manage the woodland as she had no time herself. Weir Cottage wood is in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and we were able to get a survey done by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Their woodland officer was extremely helpful, gave us much advice and helped us prepare a management plan.

It took over a year to negotiate a 10 year lease agreement and agree the management plan but this was done in January 2013. KTAT is now working well in this little wood. Steps and paths have been built to make access easier, some damaged trees have been felled, others have been thinned, some replanting has taken place and there are several stacks of covered firewood drying for the owner and for KTAT.



Two handed saw, 2013

"A wet Saturday on a hillside in Wales, tea that was cooled by rain drops and soggy biscuits. Laughter punctuated safety briefings as friendships grew. Forgetting my age and weight I pulled myself up precipitous inclines, spreading a blanket of twigs around this seasons seedlings. Returned home flushed pink and sticky with pine sap...bliss" CindyLou

Weir Cottage is being managed by a specific sub-group of KTAT volunteers that have bonded with the wood and like the fact that they can easily walk the short distance to work it. It is thus the first of the 'tree allotments'. The owner is happy for any work to take place at any time, thus work days are easy to plan. It is next door to Anne Mary, who has now stopped being a Trustee but has generously volunteered to manage the Weir Cottage Tree Allotment. She is responsible for liaising with the owner, organising work days and fund-raising from the English side of the border.

In September 2011 a local contact, having heard of our aims, introduced us to the Samatha Trust (ST), a Buddhist Meditation Retreat Centre, only 6 miles away in the village of Llangunllo. After writing to the ST we arranged a walk around their lovely 88 acre property in December. It seemed so well cared for that we wondered if there was anything that we could offer them!

However, they had one area that they thought might suit both their and our needs. It was a 1.95 hectare (4.82 acre) West facing plantation at 250-350m above sea level and consisted of 80% Japanese larch and 20% sweet chestnut that they were interested in changing into a broad-leaf wood.

This was really hopeful. We decided to apply for an Environment Wales pre-project grant to enable us to pay for an expert forester to survey the plantation and write a feasibility study for us. We received the grant and employed Dr Evelyn Over who did a great job. We discovered that the *Phytophthora ramorum* fungus was already only 40 miles away and the risk of it attacking the larch plantation was probably around 50% in the next 10 years. So felling it and replanting with mixed broad-leaves seemed like a good idea.

Evelyn did advise us that a 60 year old larch plantation on a very steep slope was certainly not ideal for a community woodland project and suggested that the old mixed broad-leaf wood called Greenstreete Wood would be more suitable. However, the ST was only interested in us managing The Larches at this time.

The Larches at Greenstreete is not an ideal community wood because vehicular access is very restricted, the wood is very steep and the crop is larch, which is a poor fuel wood.

However, if the ST decided to fell The Larches, it could be an exciting prospect for KTAT to help with clearing the brash and restocking part of the wood for their future fuel wood needs. The Larches could be used for some training e.g. ecological surveys but it is not very suitable for more practical courses such as a chainsaw course which needs small diameter timber on less steep ground with good access for an instructor to bring in his equipment.

The Larches is not a good site for families unless the children are very careful on the steep slope which can be very slippery after heavy rain and also may not be suitable for the less mobile members of KTAT - Dr Evelyn Over's advice.



Richie planting, 2014



Paul showing Nicky various tools for splitting wood, June 2014

"A group of people working together for a day on a patch of the woods makes a visible difference to its character. It is satisfactory to see the improvement"
Jamie

We loved the kind, considerate and thoughtful process of the Buddhists. We met with their Trustees and began to get to know Francis and Paul. Francis had looked after the management of the ST lands for many years and was very concerned about how and what we would be doing in The Larches, we would need to communicate with him about the details of our practical work. Paul arranges all the ST bookings for meditation and we would need to communicate with him on a regular basis to make sure our work-days would not interrupt their retreats.

The main challenge would be how to reconcile our needs with their requirements.

The ST had established their centre at Greenstreete to provide meditation courses in tranquil surroundings in rural mid Wales and this included walking and quiet meditation in all their woodlands. There were already a number of paths through the larch plantation which they planned to extend and there was a meditation hut in the south western corner.

They also wanted to put up a new hut in the west of the plantation. They were keen to improve biodiversity and, over the twenty five year period since they bought the land, they had already created a pond and planted up numerous trees in other areas of Greenstreete. Their long term objective for The Larches is to gradually convert the plantation to a site native broad-leaf wood.

KTAT, on the other hand, had been set up to promote the sustainable management of woods close to Knighton and to allow a community group to plant and maintain woods to provide an affordable source of firewood and other woodland products. We were keen to promote woodland education by encouraging training and skill sharing and to promote woodland biodiversity.

It seemed that both Trusts had a similar ethos and would therefore be compatible partners as we are both keen to look after woods for biodiversity and sustainability. We therefore decided to go ahead and work towards a joint agreement. The ST prepared a 10 year lease agreement that KTAT signed in January 2013. It had taken 15 months from first seeing The Larches to signing the agreement. But we were there at last.

The agreement paved the way for us to get registered with Environment Wales and in February 2013 our project was officially registered and we were able to apply for project grants. The whole process of registering was very good for us, encouraging us to make sure we had 10 year agreements in place, ensuring our policies were in place and making us look more attentively at our plans. More importantly we had the help and guidance of a development officer, which was to prove really helpful.

Environment Wales have been very generous and we received 3 more grants to help with acquiring necessary tools and safety equipment, for flora and fauna surveys, and for training in basic woodland management and chain saw qualifications as well as the safe use of hand-tools. We also got funding for some workshops that enabled us to build a wood-store and bio-loo. Without this funding we would not have been able to proceed so well with the project.

In the 2 years of working The Larches we have recruited around 50 volunteers many of whom have been introduced to the art of coppicing, high pruning, brash clearing, processing and stacking fire wood, and conducting flora and fauna surveys. Our volunteers have been given basic instruction in how to safely use hand tools like bill hooks, bow-saws, loppers, axes and some have also taken part in basic woodland management courses and have had workshops on how to build structures from the wood felled and milled on site.

We have had to learn how to apply for felling licenses and contract out the felling work as we did not have the skills ourselves to fell such tall trees on such a steep slope. The first coupe of 60 larch trees were marked and felled, the brash cleared and we have replanted with 158 broadleaved trees and are beginning to see the coppiced under-storey regenerate. 10 of our volunteers completed a 1 day 1st Aid in Woodlands course and 7 did various courses in chainsaw skills depending on their level of skill. Slowly we are increasing our skill levels together.

Trees planted were sessile oak, rowan, small leaved lime, wild cherry, downy birch, sweet chestnut, silver birch, grey willow and field maple. The under-storey re-growing is mainly ash and hazel and there are a few mature holly and yew that were left in place.

The ST paid for a mobile sawmill to be brought to the site and our volunteers helped the sawyer as he planked up the timber for a meditation hut and also for the wood-store and bio-loo. It was very satisfying to be able to build with the recently felled trees. The off-cuts were stacked and covered with tarps and then throughout the summer and autumn we used our newly acquired skills with chain-saws and splitting mauls to process it all into fire-wood and stack into the wood-store. We had some amusing feedback on our early attempts at stacking when we returned to find various log falls had jammed up the entrance door – we were lucky to be able to get it open.

We have regular communications with Francis of the Samathata Trust about what we want to do and often have to adapt our plans to fit in with his. Our management plan is updated each year to take these changes into account. We often do not know how to juggle it all or what to do as the costs for felling and milling are quite substantial. These costs have been covered so far by Environment Wales and by the ST but we are hoping that as our own skills develop we can do more of this work ourselves and become more self-reliant.

One problem has been that local contractors are not really interested in quoting for such a small job (only 60 trees) on such a steep slope with very difficult access (that requires winching). The contractor we eventually found we will never use again as he did not do what we specified in our written agreement. He cut the trees too high off the ground and took half of them downhill (when his winch broke) and then dumped them in a car park that the ST needed to use so that we had to sell them at rock bottom prices to get them cleared out of the way quickly. He left the ones that were winched up to the processing area in a chaotic mess rather than sorted into lengths that would have made the milling easier.



Tea break, Feb 2015

"The reason I put my name forward to volunteer is because I am new to the area and thought it would be a fun way to keep active and meet new people. I have only helped volunteer once, but I am looking forward to learning a few new skills over the coming months"

Louise

"I like feeling that I am part of a project that will provide a sustainable source of fuel for ourselves as well as looking after the woodland" **Kate**

However, maybe the fact that we cleared the car park very quickly meant that the ST found out they could trust us when things went wrong to take fast action. Certainly the ST have told us that they are pleased with the work we have done. We are now in dialogue with them about how to proceed with the next coupe and where it should be. We are asking them whether we could fell 2 or more coupes at the same time to cut costs or even fell it all.

Grants Received for The Larches

Environment Wales – 4 grants - totalling £14,249.60

1. Pre-project grant of £3,467.80 on 13/8/12
2. PGF Grant 12/13 of £800 on 22/2/13
3. PGF Grant 13/14 of £8,816 on 22/4/13
4. PGF Small Grant 14/15 of £1,165.80 on 22/10/14

This works out at £4,750 per year.

Our experience of working with a private landowner

In the process of searching for a wood to manage we met several landowners and were involved in sometimes lengthy meetings with them. It became very clear that ease of communication was of prime importance. We learnt that we needed to be clear about our aims and objectives and honest about our capabilities and to admit that KTAT was in the early days and was evolving.

We needed to know that we could talk through any issues that arose. We could have saved ourselves a great deal of time if we had realised this early on in the process of negotiating about the first wood. If you find that you have no idea what the landowner really thinks and cannot get a straight answer to a question then it probably means that you are not on the same wave length and you may save yourself a great deal of bother if you just call it a day and try to find somewhere else.

The ST was very different to deal with. All the people connected to the Trust have been friendly and communicative and deal with problems arising straightforwardly and in a gentle and friendly manner. Probably this has a great deal to do with their Buddhist beliefs.

Francis had a clear idea of what he wanted done with The Larches, was very 'protective' of 'his' wood and when we pushed for 'our' plans made it clear that this would not work for him. But the whole process has been conducted in a friendly manner. For instance, when we viewed the chestnut area together to ensure we were clear which trees should be felled, we had assumed that we would only leave the very tallest and best of the chestnut and ash (probably around 6 to 8 trees altogether) and only coppice the rest.

This would, we thought, leave a high canopy but with enough light for the coppice and under-story to regenerate. But when we were in the wood he had very different ideas and eventually we only agreed on a very few trees to be felled. These we marked and will be felling very soon as our felling licence runs out in a few months. It was important for us to do this together as the decisions although unexpected were agreed by both sides. This has led to a greater feeling of trust and more understanding about where we are coming from.

It is only by testing out our assumptions together that we can grow in understanding and it is important for KTAT to realise that we are not the 'owners' of the wood and that the main decisions must be made and be seen to be made by the ST. As our understanding and trust grows we will probably need to do less checking in. But these first few years are really important.



Production line Andy and Mick Sept 2014

Tips for voluntary / not for profit groups working with landowners on woodland

- Many landowners will not have worked with voluntary / not for profit groups before and will only be used to paying people to work on their land which is a very different relationship.
- Be very clear about what your organisation / members will get out of working on the woodland e.g. firewood, training etc. as land owners may otherwise be suspicious of your motives – they know there is no free lunch. If you might sell wood from the woodland be up front from the start about this and what the money would be used for.
- If there is a bottom-line for you in working with the land-owner or expectations you have of him or her be clear about these and if necessary write them down. E.g. if you are arranging a work day it may be very inconvenient to cancel it at short notice etc.
- Land owners will naturally be possessive of their land many will see it as an extension of their home so try and treat it with the same care and respect as you would their house.
- Find out what the land owner's priorities are for the woodland as they may be very different from yours. Every land owner will be different. It is particularly important at first to fulfil the land owner's agenda so that trust builds up in your working relationship. Once this trust is established other possibilities are likely to open up.
- Think ahead and specifically discuss with the land owner anything that might be controversial and ask their views or warn them e.g. arrangements for access, mess left after work has been done, noisy work etc. Time spent managing others expectations is time well spent.
- Do not be pushy. If you pick up any resistance to something you are proposing move to something less controversial. It is important that the land owner feels in control or they may back out.
- If you require written agreements to get grants etc. use standard pre-prepared ones if at all possible as most land-owners will not have the resources to pay for legal advice. Make sure the agreement makes it easy for the land owner to withdraw as this will give them confidence in your motives.
- There is potentially enormous benefit to all parties possible from these schemes. The most important factor in enabling them to happen is good communication. Good luck!

Francis Beresford, On behalf of the Samatha Trust. www.samatha.org

Another example is that we had thought we would be able to transform The Larches into a sustainable coppice with standards grown on a 15 year rotation and this is what was put in the re-worked 10 year management plan that we wrote up for the Trust in 2014. We had thought this would supply both Trusts with a good supply of firewood and be good for bio-diversity. But in fact our assumptions were not correct. Francis clarified that he wanted a high canopy woodland that would be better for meditation. We are now thrashing out what this means in practice.

We recently got permission from the ST to show other local woodland groups around the wood and explain our work to them. Francis sent us a very helpful guide on working with landowners that we could share with the participants. I have reproduced it above as I think it is really useful. It certainly echoed some of what we had learnt. And it is good to have a reminder for ourselves to look at from time to time.

Lessons & Challenges

- **Taking time and not giving up**

The process of coming up with the intention to form a community woodland group and actually working in a woodland took much longer than some of us had anticipated. It took two and a half years. In actual fact it was not that long considering that we had to find a suitable wood and get a 10 year agreement signed. But there were times when we felt we would never manage it. During the time it took to find the woods however, we were able to get on with deciding what we would call ourselves, organising the set-up of our company and a bank account, start drafting our policies, and finding Members and Volunteers and more importantly learning how to work together.

- **Finding Trustees**

We were lucky to find people enthusiastic enough to help set up the group and we were really grateful for this vital initial support. But it soon became clear that one of the Trustees just did not have time to come to meetings and he resigned before the 1st AGM. We managed to attract a few new Trustees at this 1st AGM but when we started to sign documents and agreements and the work load increased another of the initial Trustee admitted she did not want the responsibility and she also resigned. These two people still support the project but we do not see them very often now. Another Trustee left because of a new job. Then another took over leading the Weir Cottage Tree Allotment on the English side and as she does not like meetings decided to step down as a Trustee. However, she is still obviously closely involved in the practical side of the project.

We have also found the job of Treasurer very hard to fill and at present the Secretary of KTAT does this task too. We still have 3 of the original Trustees and have attracted 3 new ones. We thus have 6 Trustees at present but would feel safer if this increased to 8 or 9. We try to make our meetings attractive and friendly with tea and cakes or shared meals but filling the gaps remains an ongoing challenge.

- **Asking for Advice**

We often found that we did not have the information or skills required. As issues emerged we therefore sought help. When we needed the lease agreement checked by a lawyer we found a local retired solicitor who helped us for free. He is now a Trustee! When trying to work out how to deal with volunteers and what our policies should be we asked PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) and also the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). And we used our common sense adapting what we found to what made sense for our project. And once we were registered with Environment Wales we asked for their advice too.

It is amazing what skills there are in any local community, we just needed to find them. Our local TVEG network was really useful for this.

- **Quality of tools**

We did do some research on this and asked for advice and generally are well satisfied but we did make one mistake with bill hooks. The initial ones we bought did not have handles that could be screwed in and out. The handles fell off and could not be easily fixed.



Ann putting the tool shed up, June 2013



Helping the sawyer mill the larch for buildings, March 2014

"With a chainsaw I can cut quickly – keeping it safe requires so much concentration" Jamie

- **Keeping good records**

We soon found it was essential to keep good records and to share them with the other Trustees. We found that they emerged naturally as we developed over the months and years. They were useful and made it much easier to fill out grant applications, write reports, prepare newsletters and articles, and answer questions from volunteers and others. They are also good for passing over to new Trustees to continue the work.

It was not long before we had the following records that we now try to remember to copy over to all Trustees at least every 3 months or so:-

- Register of Members, Volunteers and Friends with their addresses, emails, telephone numbers, date of joining and leaving.
- File of Volunteer application forms with emergency numbers, interests and skills – this gets taken to all our workdays in case we need the details of volunteers involved in any accidents.
- Accident Book – luckily no accidents have taken place yet but the book goes with us to each workday in the woods along with the 1st Aid Kit.
- Financial Accounts, including details of grants – copies of applications and reports to funders.

- Volunteer Hours Accounts – volunteers sign in to each workday and their hours go into a data base, the workday records also show the date, venue, kind of work as well as the hours of each volunteer. Volunteers that do administrative work for the Trust send in their hours every few months or so.
- Inventory of Tools and Equipment – a list is kept updated and a full inventory done each year.

- **Amount of administration**

We are getting to the point when the work-load is too large for us volunteers and Trustees to deal with. The organising of workdays, keeping in contact with volunteers, checking and maintaining tools, doing grant applications, keeping the accounts, organising the AGMs, etc etc is a lot of work. We are managing for now but this is a growing problem.

- **Regular work days**

We have not been able to schedule in regular workdays on specific days of each month which would make it much easier for our volunteers. We need to negotiate each day with the ST to work in The Larches in order to ensure that we do not disturb their meditation courses and retreats. This adds to our administration load but also means that volunteers find it difficult to schedule their time.

The gains far outweigh the disadvantages at The Larches but we are aware that any future woodlands that we take on should preferably be more flexible.



Kate and Hilary stacking our newly built wood-store, Sept 2014



Anne, Olive and Bernard surveying birds May 2013

"I like being outside in the woods. I like learning about all the trees, plants, fungi and wildlife. Even though it's not 'our' wood, it begins to feel like it as we get to know it, and how our work opening up the canopy and replanting allows all kinds of new things to grow" **Kate**

- **Walking distance to woodland**

We set our local distance at 6 miles and the 2 woods that we work are within this range. But the 6 mile one means we have to go by car. Thus we organise a car sharing scheme, as per our Environmental Policy, to cut down on carbon use. Apart from transport costs there are other disadvantages to not being within walking distance. If someone just wants to work a half day they cannot arrange this so easily if they are car sharing.

We have found that the Weir Cottage site is perfect for accessibility as volunteers can walk there and back and can decide on the day if they only want to do a few hours, which is a great advantage. We also feel as a matter of principle that local woods should be managed as locally as possible. We are beginning to find people in the village of Llangunllo, which is really encouraging.

The Future

KTAT face a number of challenges if it wants to continue.

We have relied upon grants to get us started but recognise that we need to become much more self-reliant. There is too much work to expect unpaid Trustees to continue doing and we need to find sustainable ways of paying for an administrator and volunteer co-ordinator.

We are finding it difficult to locate skilled and reliable contractors to fell small quantities of timber on the steep slopes in The Larches. We need to either find some or get ourselves skilled up to do it ourselves.

We would like to attract more volunteers and to be able to offer better training opportunities so that our volunteers have the skills to do the work we are having to try and find contractors for.

The training needs we have identified include:-

- Felling and extraction on steep slopes
- Dealing with snagged and hung up trees
- Mobile saw mill operation
- Manufacture on site of wood products like stakes and fencing
- Skilled flora and fauna surveying

There are many unmanaged woods in our area and we would love to see them managed sensitively and sustainably to provide for local needs at accessible prices as well as for biodiversity. We would like more local people to be involved in caring for their own environment and benefiting from the very many different rewards this brings. Our aim is to help this process along by providing opportunities to get involved with woodland management at our own simple level and to slowly develop people's skills, confidence, and knowledge.

This Case study has been prepared for Llais y Goedwig by Angie Zelter, a member of the Knighton Tree Allotment Trust (KTAT).

Contact KTAT:

<http://tveg.org.uk/wordpress/what-we-do/woodland-project>

Llais y Goedwig is a voluntary association of community woodland groups that formed in November 2009 to provide a voice for community woodlands. We want to share experiences, support each other and enhance local woodlands to benefit the people of Wales. This resource is part of a growing series for association members, and others interested in community woodlands in Wales.

Contact Llais y Goedwig:

www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk

