

## **Llais y Goedwig - Core Funding Proposal to Welsh Government Environment & Sustainable Development Directorate**

Llais y Goedwig (LlyG) is a vibrant grassroots organisation working in the woodland/forestry sector. We are an 'umbrella body' for community woodlands in Wales – over 50 and growing – as well as having many organisational and individual members (over 250). Our name means the 'voice of the woods' in Welsh – and that is what we aim to be. In our short existence we have already worked with both statutory and voluntary organisation and established a reputation as a trusted partner – delivering on what we say we will do. Core funding is an opportunity to extend our work and the multiple benefits it can deliver

In the overall scheme of Natural Resource Management (NRM) the growth of community woodlands has encouraged LlyG to develop more networking opportunities for groups across Wales. LlyG has had a vital role to play in connecting communities and places – to develop a wider understanding of environment and the natural world, to put into practice the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – making policies practical.

### 1. Our organisation

1.1 Constituted as a company limited by guarantee in 2006, Llais y Goedwig is a voluntary, grassroots membership organisation that promotes and represents community woodland groups in Wales and supports local community woodland initiatives. It does this in four thematic areas:

- \* Profile raising of community woodlands - within the third sector, with statutory agencies (local and national government) and within the forestry sector as whole.
- \* Resources for community woodland groups - guidance notes and case studies developed through practical experience and sharing in honest fashion 'ways to do' (and ways not to do!)
- \* Policy engagement - taking the voice of community woodlands into the policy arena to ensure a community and social perspective is heard as well as the economic and environmental voices (but working with these in collaborative fashion)
- \* Networking - linking up community woodland groups, encouraging sharing of problems and solutions, arranging events (including an annual national Gathering ), and using an on-line network forum to encourage peer support and sharing of practice.

1.2 The organisation has both full members - community woodland groups - and associate members, which include both individuals, larger organisations and groups that do not manage woodland but who have an interest in this. The total membership across these two categories is now in excess of 300 across Wales.

1.3 Llais y Goedwig recognises the importance of connectivity and collaboration in the woodland sector and has worked in formal partnerships with NRW,

Coed Cadw and the European Forest Institute and also works closely with the Community Land Advisory Service/Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Tir Coed, Coed Lleol, Environment Wales, Wales Environment Link, Renew Wales and others. As examples we have worked with Coed Cadw to support an application for an Environment Wales project officer and with European Forest Institute to be a partner in the EU Startree project covering 9 EU countries, researching the use and potential use of non wood forest products (such as moss, mushroom, berries, etc). Our network of 300 full and associate members helps ensure we retain close ties with our existing and potential future partners.

- 1.4 Llais y Goedwig has a management board of volunteer directors, elected from full and associate members, with the opportunity for additional members to be co-opted onto the board for specific purposes. The directors put in an average of 400 voluntary hours per quarter. There are two part time paid members of staff - a network co-ordinator, funded through a current NRW grant of £20,000/year (running to March 2016) and a Startree project co-ordinator, funded through LlyG participation in the EU FP7 research programme into non timber forest products. This Startree post is also part time and works solely to that project, highlighting ideas and opportunities as part of the networking referred to above.

The core funding bid and start dates for post holders reflects these known funding terms. LlyG has delivered a great breadth of work to date on a relatively modest NRW budget – illustrating the potential to deliver more on an enhanced core fund.

## 2. Proposal Summary (why make a request for core funding and what will be delivered?)

### 2.1 Responding to membership

2.1.1 Llais y Goedwig held a series of workshops across Wales in 2014 focusing on the future of community woodlands in Wales, and the vision for the future.

2.1.2 150 people from across Wales – both from communities and statutory organisations unequivocally stated the value and importance of community woodlands in Wales and the huge potential for growth –if a number of gaps and constraints can be addressed – key is mentoring and support on the ground to aid the start up and development of community woodland groups.

2.1.3 Our core funding proposal is to develop that capability and capacity for community woodland groups in Wales so meeting aims and objectives from the national level down to the individual level. We see that a strong grassroots structure at community level will be fundamental to the success of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in terms of practical application and delivering successful outcomes.

### **The vision:**

1. A vibrant and active community woodlands sector in Wales

2. More community woodland groups in Wales
3. Community woodlands to be seen as a community right that meets the communities current and future needs
4. A strong community woodland support network in Wales
5. For community woodland groups to be self sustaining through income generation
6. To sustainably manage woodland to benefit people and wildlife

2.1.3 Whilst there are many very active and sustainable community woodland groups across Wales, there appears to be a feeling that things are static but challenging in the current economic climate. The availability of woodland sites does not appear to be a limiting factor, but there are issues around linking woodlands and potential groups and in negotiating agreements, for which there is little or no support. There is great potential to develop and grow.

2.1.4 In order to move towards the vision, the people at the workshops shared and discussed many different ideas that could help move the situation forwards, including:

- grassroots networking at a regional level, sharing resources
- need for 'brokering' between woodland owners and community
- creating a bigger voice for community woodlands in Wales
- strengthening the community woodland network



2.1.5 Llais y Goedwig has also undertaken other specific areas of research either directly or in collaboration with others (such as Forest research) and the reports are available as a resource for community woodland groups and the sector as a whole. Examples of what we do can be found at:

(<http://llaisgoedwig.org.uk/about-community-woodlands/reports-and-research-on-community-woodlands/> )

## 2.2 Core activity

2.1.1 Our aim is to safeguard existing network support capacity (0.6 FTE post) and to develop a small team to cover those elements identified for development,

building on the workshop findings set out above and from specific requests for help from aspiring local groups, local authorities and other woodland owners.

2.1.2 This would mean recruitment and employment of two 'brokerage' or 'capacity building' officers, one for North Wales and one for South Wales. They would have the role of working closely with both established community woodland groups to help them develop and also to inspire, mentor and support the start up of new groups - providing practical advice and links to peer organisations, statutory sector, voluntary organisations and local authorities. Brokering agreements over land would be a key task; numerous consultations have identified this as a critical constraint. These roles need to work closely with support staff of other organisations in the sector, with potential co-location (for example with regional project staff of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, or Renew Wales) and be a channel for grass roots information sharing as well as a conduit to collect and distribute what is happening at local delivery level. An alternative would be for those posts to be hosted by community woodland groups in their region, using these as hubs to support new groups

The expected outcomes would include:

- Establishment of more community woodland groups - leading to more local management of woodland, whether urban or rural, privately owned, local authority owned or part of the national forest estate. (Work with Coed Cadw indicates 100+ small woods across Wales that could benefit from community involvement.)
- \* Gathering more of the 'what works' experience and adapting for effective knowledge transfer. Organising, running and reporting on 4 events per year, open to the whole woodland sector as opportunities for CWG's to share best practice.
- \* Connecting local authority and other agencies woodland resource with potential volunteer resource to increase peer support and idea sharing at local levels yielding at least 10 community woodland case studies or 'living stories' over the 2.5 years of funding.
- Supporting development of social enterprise within woodland environments - identifying barriers and partners to work with.. At least 10 community woodland groups would be supported.
- \* Enabling the establishment of CWGs in response to grassroots requests for help and support, building capacity at the local level. Target of 4 new groups per year.

2.1.3 In addition we would see the need for a communications and development officer role to work alongside the network co-ordinator. One role would be primarily internal facing, contacting and supporting the LlyG network, and one would be primarily external facing, linking with statutory and voluntary sector organisations ensuring appropriate collaboration with others in the woodland

sector - avoiding duplication and building synergy. Both roles would be important 'connectors', ensuring that communication works effectively - and that what is committed to is delivered. As such we would see these posts being co-located, using the existing Forestry hub in Machynlleth so there is continuation of the connection established with other woodland organisations. We feel that it is important to retain the strengths developed in the life of Llais y Goedwig - to keep promises and deliver above expectations.

- 2.1.4 LlyG is increasingly being asked to engage with consultation and development exercises from different bodies in Wales, from Woodland Trust/Coed Cadw, Focus on Forestry First, Chartered Institute of Forestry to NRW and Wales Government. This presently falls to volunteer directors who are increasingly stretched, but does signal that other organisations value the contribution that LlyG can make - as a rational, articulate voice in the wider forestry and environmental sectors.
- 2.1.5 We would expect the two network co-ordinator and communications and development officer roles to 'cross cover and to co-ordinate with brokerage officers, supporting events and activities in the field, linking with new and existing community woodland groups, and with local authorities and with statutory bodies such as NRW. This will be increasingly important as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act comes into force, to ensure that duties on statutory organisations are applied effectively at the community level.
- 2.1.6 Finally we would propose a business support officer role, ensuring that work plans are progressed, grant returns made, events set up and paid for, and the myriad of support requirements that we know, from our experience with the Startree EU project, are vitally important. Good front line delivery needs to be supported by good planning and co-ordination. Ideally this post might be shared with another partner organisation to ensure good co-ordination and dovetailing of reporting, and coordinate collaborative funding applications for different projects
- 2.1.7 Our proposal would be that all these posts are part time, working closely with the 'hands on' approach of the volunteer LlyG board, reflecting the grassroots nature of the organisation. The aim would be for each p/t officer post to 'pair' with a volunteer director in areas of primary focus and activity.

Full funding proposals are set out on the final page of this application.

## 2.2 Links to Government priorities

### 2.2.1 Existing engagement

Llais y Goedwig supports a number of Welsh Government and NRW targets through the existing work plan agreement with NRW running to March 2016. This includes:

- \* Programme for Government Action Plan - *'Ensure woodlands are for people - serving local needs for health, education and jobs.'*
- \* Welsh Government Woodlands for Wales strategy (2009) aims to ensure that:
  - *More communities benefit from woodlands and trees*
  - *More people enjoy the lifelong learning benefits of woodlands and their products*
- \* The NRW Business Plan 2015 -2016 - linking to NRW objectives to *'promote and maximise opportunities for enterprise, skills development and the promotion of wellbeing through the land we manage and influence the way we manage our business'* as well as *'develop our Cyfoeth scheme - a national umbrella scheme for the co-ordination and management of work placements, volunteering, graduate and sandwich placements, apprenticeships'*
- \* The latest Woodlands for Wales Action Plan, where we contributed significantly to the draft consultation and are a named partner in several of the planned 15 priority action areas, namely:
  - *Priority action 7 - 'Explore the issues associated with enabling and building the capacity of community groups and enterprises to be involved in woodland management responsibilities in order to realise community woodland objectives'*
  - *Priority action 9 - 'Develop models for woodland related enterprises and provide opportunities for employment and training across the forestry sector by developing sector relevant skills and providing work experience as pathways to employment'*
  - *Priority action 13 - 'Gather evidence to measure and evaluate the non-timber value of forestry, woodlands and trees'.*
- \* We also see scope to support priority action 2 (*phytophthora recovery programme*), priority action 3 (*Glastir implementation*), priority action 6 (*increasing tree cover in towns/cities*); priority action 10 (*measures for protection of valued trees*) and priority action 14 (*promotion of access and recreation activities*) - if we are able to get greater core funding as set out in our proposals.



### 2.2.2. Ministerial Priorities

#### i. *Driving Green growth*

Our objectives to support and develop existing and new community woodland groups and to contribute to the Woodland for Wales action plan priority 9. Community woodland groups can directly support volunteers to develop new skills and also develop local level wood fuel supply services, so supporting low level but sustainable small scale economic opportunities. This applies to both rural woodlands and to urban areas. One SE Wales CWG member has over 150 'facebook friends' and uses this social media to support and educate people in sensitive use of the countryside, as an example.

#### ii. *Resilience and safety*

The roles of broker and capacity building officers would be very much geared to developing the resilience of local community groups and ensuring that they operate and work safely, taking full cognisance of insurance, safe working practice, site risk assessment and training needs for effective woodland habitat management.

There is also the landscape impact of well managed woodland - which improves and broadens habitat for wildlife, increasing natural resilience, as well as the role of managed woodland to reduce flood risk. An accessible, well managed woodland is also positive for health – as exemplified by feedback from the Coed Lleol Actif woods programme run in some member CWGs.

#### iii. *Working together to deliver better services and ensuring frontline delivery*

As an umbrella body for grass roots groups we recognise that effective outcomes can only be achieved through good partnership working, that identifies issues and sets out to resolve them. This has been evidenced in the working arrangements we have put in place with both NRW (including a review of their 'Woodlands and You' policy and process) and Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust, and the events that we have put on to develop local capacity - such as skill share events and involving many community woodland

groups in having a presence at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS) as well as involving other organisations in our annual gathering event.

iv. *A Fairer Wales*

We see that access and involvement in woodlands should be for everyone - irrespective of age, ability or level of need. Our member groups demonstrate that up and down Wales, having links with young people, older people and those with disability - from planting trees to creating tracks and access for wheelchair users, from sensory planting to photography. Managed community woodlands draw in and involve their local communities - and those woodlands close to urban areas (as in the South Wales valleys) have shown this, as people benefit in different ways - from exercise to relaxation, from learning new skills to refreshing old ones, and enabling people to alleviate the effects of poverty and exclusion. As we have CWG members in both rural and urban settings, we can draw on practical experience in engaging with people of all ages and backgrounds – recognising the need to understand what is important and unique to each community. Community woodlands deliver multiple long term benefits in some of the most deprived urban areas of Wales.

2.2.3. Link to Key areas

i. *Increasing materials resource efficiency*

As a community woodland organisation we may not always have much direct involvement with waste prevention, reuse and recycling, but public access to community woodlands does encourage greater awareness of the provenance of materials used every day, and the value of a renewable resource in timber. In addition a number of member groups regularly undertake litter picking and waste collection activities, ensuring that recyclable material is collected - and all groups play a part in raising public awareness of the impact of negative waste management (littering and tipping) and its effect on our environment.

Coppicing and tree planting are well understood activities for carbon capture and many of our network groups provide figures for savings in carbon in wood fuel too. LlyG are in a good position to research and share the benefits that community woodlands contribute to environmental standards and climate change activities.

We see scope to engage with local housing associations to promote the use of locally sourced timber, in helping them meet their community obligations as a 'win-win' opportunity.

ii. *Improving local environments*

This is a key objective for all community woodland groups - and in fact many came into being in response to either threats to or neglect of cherished local environments. Every community woodland group will have its own story, and as a network we seek to support those stories to be told and shared with others, as case studies on the LlyG website and more widely with such as

Forest Research. Each of these helps to show how issues of concern to local people can be and are being addressed.

Additionally many woodland groups have objectives which seek to improve biodiversity in their woodlands capturing local wildlife measurements and working with specific environmental standards. This could be lost with future funding arrangements moving away from grant giving organisations with environmental objectives such as Environment Wales. Many of our member groups have benefitted from EW grants which are clear about measuring environmental activities.

iii. *Better management of our natural resources*

Again this is a fundamental objective for community woodland group members and for LlyG as a whole. We have looked to promote and promulgate good practice through guidance notes and materials drawing on practice and experience, and this would be a key objective for the staff posts for which we are seeking core funding.

As an example of this, we were delighted that it was a community woodland group that won the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) gold medal at the 2014 RWAS as best entry in all woodland categories.

Our website is designed to enable new and existing groups access to supporting management plans with case studies and blogs. We would like to extend this further by providing more active support for managing natural resources in our communities.

iv. *Resilience and efficiency*

As a community woodland organisation we do not directly impact delivery of the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion risk management or promote decarbonisation in the public sector. However, member groups can and do support flood risk management at a micro scale through good woodland management practice, and some have sought to explore renewable energy generation, from solar panels to generate lighting through to micro hydro to utilise water courses in woods. It is very small scale, but community woodland groups can and do play a part in raising awareness around renewable energy generation.

Most specifically, community woodland groups have explored wood fuel use and promoted wood as a renewable energy with crop rotation planning and small scale charcoal making.

v. In core funding LlyG as a body that supports, develops, collates and communicates the experience of community woodland groups across Wales we can demonstrate to Welsh Government the capability and capacity to show multiple benefits - with some examples set out above.

## 2.2.4 Ethos and Approach - Partnership working and commitment

- i. LlyG is a partnership focused organisation and has demonstrated a strong commitment to working with others in the woodland sector in Wales. As such we are actively linking with bodies such as Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust, Coed Lleol and Tir Coed so as to avoid duplication of core funding and to get best value from the public purse. We see events across Wales as a good opportunity to showcase work done in the sector and allow for practical exchange of views – as well as testing out joint projects – for example on use of wood fuel or using woods for different healthy living activities.
- ii. We recognise that others will have greater experience in training provision, or in fundraising support, or in promoting physical activity in woodland. We have also seen the positive value of co-location - currently working out of the 'forestry hub' in Machynlleth, alongside Coed Lleol, the Wales Forest Business Partnership, Wood Fuel Wales, Forest School Wales and others.

The hub was a positive development by Forestry Commission Wales prior to creation of NRW, to build a modern building largely from native timber, to allow forestry related bodies to share office and meeting space so practically recognising and encouraging opportunity for greater synergy coming from ready information exchange and small day to day acts of collaboration.



- iii. We have thus made a deliberate choice to seek core funding for part time posts only - recognising employment patterns in rural Wales, where people often have two or three jobs for flexibility and fit to family and other commitments.
- iv. We see that some of the posts we seek core funding for may be filled by individuals who may work for another woodland or community related organisation, again helping the synergy of collaboration. Seeking part time funded posts also encourages some resilience and recognition that work activity has to be shared. Core funding will enable us to actively and significantly expand our partnership working on the ground in North and South Wales, for instance with Local Authorities, Federation of City Farms and Gardens, Green Valleys, NRW and Cynefin. LlyG has a close working

relationship with NRW, in 2014 we worked with NRW to identify the constraints to communities making greater use of WG land for multiple benefits – core funding would enable us to assist NRW to open up this huge woodland resource to community groups. LlyG has also undertaken similar work with all Local Authorities across Wales; core funding would enable us to respond to the growing requests we receive from Local Authorities to support community woodland growth.

- iv. We also see that having part time core funded posts will help leverage other funding - as we have been able to do as a partner in the EU FP7 research programme on Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP's), and as a Wales partner in a successful Big lottery application 'Making Local Woods Work', that is set to be launched in June. Core funding would enable us to contribute to or lead on partnership based bids for project funding in future – for instance around Green Growth, skills training for community based natural resource management.
- v. The core funded posts will be supported by volunteer director time that has averaged around 400 hours per quarter. Our history to date shows that we have 'punched above our weight' doing a lot with limited funding but great commitment and good relationship building. Core funding will expand our capacity to deliver and mean we can contribute even more to a fairer and more sustainable Wales

### 2.3 Core funding - sustainability and community development

In summary the core funding that LlyG is seeking is for:

	Year 1 (15/16)	Year 2 (16/17)	Year 3 (17/18)
Salaries and associated On Costs			
Network Co-ordinator (.6FTE)	£8,250	£16,750	£16,900
Comms & Development Officer (.5FTE)	£6,700	£13,650	£13,750
Capacity Building Officer (North) (.5FTE)	£5,600	£11,400	£11,550
Capacity Building Officer (South) (.5FTE)	£5,600	£11,400	£11,550
Business Support Officer (.5FTE)	£5,600	£10,800	£10,900
Recruitment	£1,600	£400	£400
Staff training (including induction programme in year 1)	£3,000	£1,500	£1,500
Travel and other expenses (staff, volunteer directors, travel bursaries)	£5,000	£8,000	£8,000
Office costs			
Central Forestry Hub, Machynlleth (3 x staff)	£1,500	£2,600	£2,800
Satellite Offices (1x North; 1 x South)	£1,500	£2,600	£2,800
Marketing & Communications	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000

(website, marketing, PR, communications) including membership & conference fees				
Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning & (to include research external evaluation)	£1,000	£2,000	£5,000	
Professional & legal, (including provision for translation accountancy, insurance)	£3,500	£4,000	£4,000	
Other (printing, postage, stationery, sundries)	£1,000	£1,500	£1,500	
Computer equipment (incl. mobile phone, software, printer)	£4,000	£1,000	£1,000	
Networking Events				
Annual National Gathering	£3,500	£3,750	£4,000	
Local/Regional skillshare (min. 4 a year)	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	
	TOTAL	Yr 1	£64,350	Yr 2 £98,350 Yr3 £102,650