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# **Community Woodland baseline Report *Wales***

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*Report commissioned by Forest Research*

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## **Purpose and scope of the report**

This report was commissioned by Forest Research to describe the current situation of community woodlands in Wales. Parallel reports are being undertaken in Scotland and England, and it is hoped that this will allow for comparison of the situation in the three countries. The purpose of the report is to document recent developments which have supported or contributed to the development of community woodlands, both directly and indirectly, and investigates problems and barriers experienced. It reviews the current and past status of community woodlands in Wales, and gives case study examples of Community Woodland Groups (CWGs). The present study is not exhaustive and the case studies cannot claim to be representative of all Welsh community woodlands. They have been chosen, however, to represent as wide as possible a variety of the existing community woodlands as could be compiled in the limited timescale for research. This report therefore aims to give a broad introduction to the subject, identify gaps and act as a catalyst for further research.

## **1. Introduction**

### *What is a community woodland?*

There are many ways in which people can get involved in woodlands, from simply walking in them, contributing to management, organising activities in a woodland through to community ownership of a woodland. In this report we use the term 'community woodland' to refer to woodlands where the local community have some degree of control over how the woodland is run or managed. Such woodlands are usually supported by a community woodland group (CWG). The woodland can be owned or leased by the group, or managed in partnership with another organisation. Community woodlands can be any type of woodland, large or small, in either urban or rural areas, and vary considerably in the level of community involvement.

There are a large number of community woodlands in Wales; estimates vary from 30 to over 200<sup>1</sup>, depending on the definition of 'community woodland'. It can in fact be very difficult to define what is and what is not a community woodland; as they are grassroots structures, and therefore develop in various forms with varying aims, each one is different. There is an argument<sup>2</sup> that definitions should be wide enough to encompass this originality of development.

### *Why are community woodlands important?*

There is currently a growing interest from government in empowerment of communities to manage their own resources and futures. There is also increasing interest from grassroots groups in the woodlands on their doorsteps. The result is the emergence of an active community woodland movement in Wales over the last decade, which this report aims to document.

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<sup>1</sup> Cydcoed funded 163 community groups to undertake woodland projects (Owen, 2008). Personal communication with representatives of CWGs (as listed in Appendix 1) suggests that according to some people's definitions of CWGs, many of these may not actually be community woodland groups or Cydcoed funded groups such as Community Councils which are in fact part of the local government structure rather than grassroots initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> Personal correspondence with Jon Hollingdale, Director of the Scottish Community Woodland Association, 2008.

Community woodlands in Wales deliver a huge range of public and community benefits, including recreation facilities, biodiversity conservation, rural development and jobs, renewable energy, woodfuel, locally produced woodland products, social cohesion and development, and outdoors education.

## **2. Methodology**

This report is a desk study which relies heavily on the contacts and prior knowledge of the authors, who are employed by Coed Lleol and have been involved in supporting the establishment of the Llais y Goedwig community woodland association. Personal experience was supplemented by a questionnaire circulated to known community woodlands and to key people involved in supporting community woodlands in Wales. A list of people who responded to the questionnaire by email or telephone is in Appendix 1.

## **3. History and current development of community woodlands in Wales**

Historically, Welsh forests were used primarily for hunting, fuelwood and collection of other woodland products, under a common tenure system of either joint land (*cytir*) or hereditary land (*tir gwelyog*) (Linnard, 2000). Areas of woodland were designated as 'commons' and were of vital importance to the community. The woods were a source of wood for timber, fuel and to make implements, fodder for livestock, honey and wax from wild bees, and bedding for animals. However the commons often came under pressure from overuse and degradation (Linnard, 2000).

In times of crisis and invasion the Welsh tribes found refuge within the native forests and used the cover of the trees as sites of ambush. Linnard (2000) describes the response by the Kings of England of imposing "...the first 'forest policy' for Wales: systematic felling and permanent clearance of passes and of large tracts of woodland to form safe areas". Since 1536, Wales has been considered for legislative purposes to be part of England.

Following the devastation of Welsh woodlands during World War 1, the Forestry Commission (FC) was formed in 1919, and began acquiring land to plant conifer plantations. Many local communities resented the changes, as many upland farms became plantations, altering the old way of life and creating a tension between sheep farming and forestry (Linnard, 2000).

In the 1970s, public awareness of the environment and civil society interest in forestry increased. Conservation organisations such as the Woodland Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW, 2009), and the Ceredigion-based Friends of Hafod Forest (Ceredigion County Council, 2009) began to influence forest policy. At this time FC began to put greater emphasis on social issues and expanded recreation facilities in forests.

Increased interest in the environmental value of woodlands, and the importance of broadleaf native woodlands, resulted in the formation of two organisations supporting woodland owners and groups: Coed Cymru, and the Small Woods Association, who have been offering support on issues such as woodland management and insurance issues since the late 1980s (see Appendix 2). This support is available to woodland managers, private woodland owners and CWGs. These organisations have had an important long-term role to play in supporting good management of small woodlands over the last 25 years.

A growing interest in community involvement and ownership of woodlands has developed over the last few decades in Wales. This has not happened in isolation but is part of a global trend towards decentralisation of forest management and increased public participation in management of local resources (Colfer and Capistrano, 2005). The 1992 UN conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, resulted in the global Agenda 21 Declaration and marks a starting point for international interest in this topic. The conference made specific reference to the institution of land tenure systems to encourage sustainable development, meet local aspirations, utilise local knowledge, promote local livelihoods and enhance local enterprise through forestry (UN, 1992).

Shortly thereafter, in 1993-4, both Coed Cadw (The Woodland Trust in Wales) and Forest Enterprise commissioned staff to assist in the development of community woodlands. In Ceredigion, for example, staff of the Llanafon Forest District were asked to assist developments at Coed allt Goch, Talybont, and Coed Dolgoed, Pontrydfendigaid<sup>3</sup>. Little remains of these early initiatives, but they mark the beginning of a new policy direction. Also in Ceredigion in the 1990s, an ongoing local and heated debate between communities in the Hafod area and the FC, owners of the Hafod Estate forest, over rights to access the woodland, was recorded by the local press. (Ceredigion County Council, 2009). This served to demonstrate the strength and nature of grassroots interest in the FC estate and woodland management.

In 1998, the Government of Wales Act (Government of Wales, 1998) devolved some powers to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), thereby making the new WAG the landowner of the Welsh National Forest Estate or 38% of Welsh woodlands (FCW, 2009a). Since this time Wales has been developing a devolved policy and management structure for woodlands in Wales through the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW). In 2001, the first Wales Woodland Strategy was published, which included 'Woodlands for People' as one of the three main objectives. Community woodland groups, such as Coed y Bobl Trust, lobbied to ensure that more emphasis was given to ensuring people can get involved in woodlands<sup>4</sup>.

In 2005-6, co-ordinated by FCW, a Community Involvement Forest Policy Advice Group (CIPAG) produced a report for the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel (FCW, 2006), which recommended that there should be more and higher levels of community involvement in woodland. It was not until 2007 that a dedicated 'Woodlands for People' team was employed as part of the new and enlarged Welsh woodland policy department, to implement these recommendations. Many of the recommendation are still to be implemented and form the basis of the revised and updated WAG 'Woodlands for Wales' strategy published in February 2009 (FCW, 2009b). Plans for the implementation of this strategy are still to be finalised and announced by FCW. The pace of change and integration of aims relating to 'woodlands for people' into wider Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) practice has started to pick up since the 'Woodlands for People' team has been in place and the new strategy has been launched. Welsh policy on social forestry issues is currently undergoing a period of rapid development, and significant changes to the way in which people can engage in WAG forest management are expected in the near future.

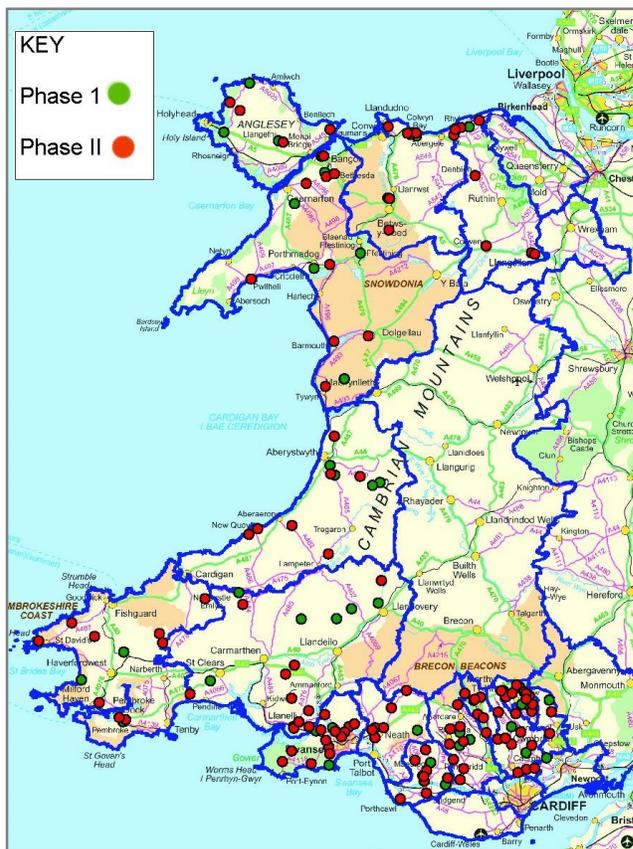
One of the first initiatives to support community woodlands in Wales was the Woodland Trust's Millennium Commission 'Woods on Your Doorstep' initiative, which in 2000 purchased land and planted 25 new community woodlands in Wales. This gained significant political support and sparked new interest in community woodlands in Wales. Local communities were involved in fundraising and tree planting. One community group, the Coed y Bobl Trust at Devil's Bridge, Ceredigion, still plays an active role in managing the woodland on behalf of the Woodland Trust, and they have gone on to win awards for 'Best Community Woodland' at the Royal Welsh Show in 2006 and 2008 (Woodland Trust, 2006). The current status of the community groups who initially supported the Woodland Trust at the other 24 woodland sites is not known and these woodlands are now managed mainly by the Woodland Trust. The project officer for the Woods on Your Doorsteps programme later went on to work for FCW as manager of the Cydcoed project (see below).

In 2001, the Cydcoed programme, a major initiative to support community woodlands in Wales, was launched by the FCW and Tir Coed. Cydcoed was a £16 million project funded by the European Union programme for deprived Objective 1 areas, with match funding from WAG (Owen, 2008). It ran in two phases, 2001-2004 and 2003-2008, and provided funding to 163 community groups in North, West and South Wales (East Wales is Objective 2 and was not included). The Cydcoed programme was possible because it satisfied the objectives of the newly released 2001 'Woodlands for Wales' strategy, and was able to take advantage of Objective 1 European funding.

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<sup>3</sup> Personal correspondence, Steve Wigfall, former employee of Llanafon forest district FEW.

<sup>4</sup> Personal correspondence, Steve Wigfall, Coed y Bobl Woodland Trust, March 2009.



**Figure 1:** Projects receiving funding from the Cydcoed project between 2001 and 2008 (Owen, 2008). *Reproduced in this report with kind permission of Roz Owen*

Cydcoed was initially run as a partnership between FCW and Tir Coed, an organisation established in 1999 by the Forestry Commission as an alliance of countryside organisations with the purpose of establishing more native woodland in Wales. Initially staff were employed by FCW and seconded to Tir Coed to manage Cydcoed. A year into the programme, FCW decided to run Cydcoed in-house, and Tir Coed became an independent organisation which no longer had any links to Cydcoed.

This initial arrangement explains the unusual position of Cydcoed within the FCW. It was initially branded as a separate entity, distinct from FCW, with a different and new approach. Even after it was brought in-house, the Cydcoed team operated as a separate entity and was not integrated into other FCW structures (Owen, 2008). While this allowed Cydcoed to respond to the demands of the programme more easily and to work effectively as a team, it also had disadvantages in that both the public and FCW staff were at times confused as to what and who Cydcoed was (Owen, 2008; Wylde, 2006). Cydcoed staff were employed for their knowledge of community development rather than of forestry. Cydcoed became the

mainstay of FCW’s policy to engage with communities, yet there were few opportunities for knowledge transfer to the rest of the organisation. This meant that after the programme finished, the capacity gained to work with communities was lost to FCW, with the exception of individual members of staff transferred from Cydcoed to other posts within the FCW, and the outcomes of the evaluation report.

Cydcoed, however, successfully supported the development of a large number of community groups to deliver woodland projects in Wales, resulting in a ‘boom’ in community woodland activity. Many groups appreciated the 100% funding, and the hands-on support of the Cydcoed officers (Owen, 2008). The transition from 100% funding at the end of the programme has, however, proved difficult for some groups and resulted in sudden loss of capacity. One criticism of the programme is that due to funding and time restrictions, there was little done to build the capacity of the groups to survive and grow after the end of the programme. Other groups, however, have gone from strength to strength following the end of Cydcoed, having grown considerably in capacity and outlook during the project.

In 2003, the Woodland Trust established a GB-wide Community Woodland Network which held an inaugural conference. This network focuses on England but also includes groups from Wales. A website [www.yourwoods.org.uk](http://www.yourwoods.org.uk) was launched to support community woodland groups. A number of groups in Wales were previously listed on this website as members, but this has now declined to a list of only two groups in Wales.

Coed Lleol (Coed Lleol, 2009), a partnership project hosted by the Small Woods Association, and directed by a steering group which includes FCW, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, Tir Coed, the NHS, and several community woodland representatives, has supported community woodland groups in Wales in a number of ways since its inception in 2003.

Initially, Coed Lleol was set up by the organisations involved in the steering group as a vehicle for delivery of a European funded Objective 1 project to support CWGs across Wales to run public events. In 2004 Coed Lleol supported Cydcoed to run a conference on community woodlands at Aberystwyth University, and hosted the Small Woods Association AGM at Ty Llwyd near Aberystwyth with speakers focusing on community woodlands. In 2007, following a scoping study of the future role of Coed Lleol, the project began to support community woodland networking activities.

Three community woodland networking events were held in 2007-8, with the support of the Woodland Trust Community Woodland Network. These were a huge success with over 50 attendees at each event. At the March 2008 event, held at the Centre for Alternative Technology in mid Wales, the 18 community woodland groups present voted for the creation of a national community woodland association for Wales, and for Coed Lleol to support development of the new association. This idea had been gathering momentum for several years, and had previously been discussed by a growing number of woodland groups at events such as gatherings of Cydcoed groups organised by FCW, such as the conference held in Llandudno in 2007 as part of the EU Robinwood project (Robinwood, 2007). Coed Lleol played a small but key role in taking the idea forwards by providing facilitation, and thereafter successfully obtained two years' funding from FCW and CCW (October 2008 – September 2010) to support the development of a new, independent community woodland association, and to continue running networking events.

A working group of community representatives was formed, and in November 2008 'Llais y Goedwig' (Voice of the Woodlands) (Llais y Goedwig, 2009), was inaugurated in the form of an unincorporated membership association to support and represent community-led woodland groups in Wales. It has a board of 5 people and by February 2009 had 21 members, of which 11 were full voting members, i.e. community-led woodland groups. The association was launched at the WAG Senedd with the support of Elin Jones AM, Minister for Rural Affairs, and at Glasdir in North Wales, in February 2009. The first Llais y Goedwig AGM and all-Wales conference is planned for autumn 2009. Coed Lleol currently acts as secretariat to Llais y Goedwig. FCW response to Llais y Goedwig has been very positive. The new group has been consulted on all woodlands and people policy and strategic developments since its inception, and a representative has been invited onto the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel (WSAP).

In June 2008, a conference 'Realising Rural Assets' was organised by the Wales Council for Voluntary Associations (WCVA) and the Carnegie Trust on behalf of WAG. This conference focused on transfer of assets such as land and buildings from public ownership to communities (Carnegie, 2008). Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) ministers present indicated that based on the findings of the 2007 Quirk Review (Quirk, 2007), asset transfer was to feature strongly in the future of rural development in Wales. An assets transfer fund to enable this to happen has been proposed by WAG (WAG, 2008), and is likely to be managed by the Big Lottery Fund. While most of the discussion at the conference featured transfer of buildings, the prospects for inclusion of woodlands into the asset transfer agenda is high, and is supported by Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs.

This conference gave political support to transfer of assets to communities in Wales, and strengthened the need for FCW to listen to communities asking to be more involved in management of FCW woodlands. The FCW policy team have in 2008-9 begun to investigate options for greater involvement of communities in management of FCW woodlands. Only around 10% of Cydcoed projects were carried out on FCW estate. Several people interviewed for this report have highlighted the lack of interest and capacity in some forest districts to deal with community groups, and the lack of framework to support them to do so, as one of the factors leading to this situation. It is sometimes difficult for groups who wish to engage in woodland management activities or timber harvesting to work on FCW land due to complicated regulations, which may put groups off working on FCW land. Several groups in Wales have expressed dissatisfaction at the limited range of activities they have been allowed to carry out on FCW land (see case studies), and the options open to CWGs to work with FCW have varied across Wales (Owen, 2008). The Cydcoed review (Owen, 2008) identified the need for FCW to review and strengthen the management agreements they have with CWGs working on FCW estate. The issues related to this are discussed further in section 6 of this report (tenure and ownership).

In 2009, FCW are planning to establish 'Pathfinder Projects'<sup>5</sup>. These are individually negotiated projects which will run from 2009 for 3 years, focusing on developing the relationship between a community woodland group working on FCW land, and the FCW, and investigating options to increase the level of community management of the woodland in ways which previously have not been possible, thereby finding solutions to current barriers. The Pathfinder Projects will be monitored and evaluated; thereafter a programme which builds on the successful elements of the projects may be rolled out across Wales and offered to other groups. The FCW is in the process of identifying groups with the capacity to take on this challenge. Discussion and activities will be undertaken with each group to help them to understand what is needed and to develop models for different styles of community involvement in FCW woodlands. The establishment and co-ordination of the Pathfinder Projects aims to investigate legal options, necessary framework and guidelines, and the support which must be provided by FCW for this to be successful. So far discussions have focused on three potential Pathfinder Projects (and a further three may be considered at a later date):

1. *Long Wood Community Woodland*, near Lampeter, have expressed an interest in a long-term lease on the woodland that they currently are involved in. This would allow them to manage the timber, which they currently do not have permission to do without involvement of FCW. FCW are investigating the legal options, as previously it has not been possible to lease woodland to community groups, and establishing criteria and an eligibility framework that would be required, before deciding whether a lease is possible.
2. *Coetir Mynydd*, near Bangor, are exploring the option of co-management with FCW. The discussion focuses on exploring how to engage a local community in the Design Plan consultation in order to develop a forest which better meets community needs, and what is required to support Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) management plan preparation and review for community-managed woodlands.
3. *Golygfa Gwydyr*, in Llanrwst, are also interested in investigating whether they can take on a lease of a part of the Gwydyr Forest for which they already have a management agreement to carry out certain activities in the woodland. If a lease is possible it may allow them to take on the role of managing the woodland, which is currently the responsibility of FCW. The process of investigating options for a lease will build on the experience currently being developed in negotiations with Long Wood, as mentioned above.

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<sup>5</sup> Personal Correspondence, Richard Davies FCW Policy Team, March 2009

#### 4. Timeline

- 1985 Coed Cymru formed to promote better management of broadleaf woodland in Wales.
- 1988 Small Woods Association (UK) formed to support owners of small woodlands.
- 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 Declaration
- 1993 Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust Wales) employs community forest officers on short term contracts.
- 1994 Forest Enterprise give remit to staff in some areas of Wales to assist development of community woodlands.
- 1998 Government of Wales Act devolves ownership of the state forest land to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 1999 Tir Coed formed by FCW and other countryside organisations.
- 2000 Woodland Trust establishes Millennium Commission 'Woods on Your Doorsteps' programme.
- 2001 Woodlands for Wales Strategy instituted by WAG with wide public and stakeholder consultation
- 2001 Cydcoed project established (2001-2008) by FCW and Tir Coed.
- 2003 Woodland Trust forms Community Woodland Network (Great Britain).
- 2005 Community Involvement Forest Policy Advice Group (CIPAG) established to advise the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel (2005-6).
- 2006 Woodland Grant Scheme (FCW) ends, to be replaced by the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant scheme.
- 2007 FCW forms 'Woodlands for People' division in new policy team.
- 2008 Quirk Review puts community asset ownership on the agenda in England & Wales
- 2008 Coed Lleol runs community woodland networking day at CAT, at which community woodland groups vote to form a community woodland association for Wales
- 2008 Conference hosted by WCVA and DTA 'Realising Rural Futures' discussed a Welsh Assembly agenda for 'asset transfer' to communities, which could include woodlands.
- 2008 Llais y Goedwig, the new association for community woodland groups in Wales, is constituted in November 2008.
- 2009 Welsh Woodland Strategy revised and re-launched
- 2009 FCW establishes 'Pathfinder Projects' to take forwards and research options for greater community involvement in WAG owned woodlands.

## 5. Community Woodlands in Wales

This section investigates a range of models and examples of community woodlands in Wales, which are then analysed and discussed in section 6. This list is not exhaustive, but given to illustrate the range of CWG models that are present in Wales. Further research is needed to find and document all the CWG's in Wales. Full case studies with links to further information can be found in Appendix 3, and a summary table follows.

**Table 1:** Summary of fourteen case studies of community woodland groups in Wales. Full case studies with links to further information can be found in Appendix 3.

Community Woodland Group	Start from	Location	Tenure	Wood Size (ha)	Legal structure	Group structure and function	Income and funding
<b>1. Coed Marros Ltd.</b>	2005	Marros, Carmarthens hire	Privately owned with a lease to the cooperative	35.4	Not-for-profit company / workers cooperative	Board of 3, with 3 voting members and 12 associate members	Initial investment from Coop members, Cydcoed, -C-Change Trust, timber sales
<b>2. Coed y Bobl</b>	1999	Devils Bridge, Ceredigion	Verbal agreement with Woodland Trust	7	Unincorporated Trust	10 members and a board of trustees	Membership, small grants
<b>3. Coetir Mynydd</b>	2003	Llandygai, Gwynedd	CWG owns the land	7	Private charity limited by guarantee	board of 8 and 64 members.	Cydcoed, maintenance money for upkeep of asset, small grants, membership
<b>4. Coppicewood College</b>	2005	Moylegrove, Pembrokeshire	Private landowner with 10 year management agreement with CWG	4.5	Charity	6 committee members and 20 members.	Courses, training and apprenticeships, small grants to subsidise course fees
<b>5. Blaen Brân Community Woodland</b>	2003	Upper Cwmbran, Torfaen	CWG own the woodland lease (originally 999 year) and pay the freeholder £13.50/year for the lease.	40.47	Trust group in 2003. Company limited by guarantee in 2005. Charity status in 2007.	11 Directors and 80 - 90 members	Cydcoed , membership fees, timber sales, Millennium Stadium fund, Environment Wales, Arson small grant, pony trekking
<b>6. Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group</b>	1988	Barry, South Wales	The land is owned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and managed by the CWG	2.85	Unincorporated voluntary association	Committee of seven and about 100 members	Entirely volunteer led, small grants
<b>7. Elwy Working Woods</b>	2009	Abergele, Conwy	Woodland Owners	45	Company limited by guarantee; Co-operative	3 members	£1000 BRE, woodland management, equipment hire, timber frame, charcoal.

<b>8. Golygfa Gwydyr</b>	1994	Llanrwst, Conwy	Management agreement with FCW	8	Company limited by guarantee	4 board members and 28 voting members	Cydcoed, other small grants, small income from theatre
<b>9. Growing Heart / Calon yn Tyfu</b>	1996	Boncath, Pembrokeshire	CWG owns woodland (purchased through Cydcoed grant)	132	Company with cooperative rules	3 members 3 prospective members	Cydcoed, BWW and other small grants, tree planting, seed collecting, firewood sales& timber
<b>10. Long Wood Community Woodland</b>	2003	Lampeter, Ceredigion	Management agreement with FCW	120	Community cooperative, Company limited by guarantee	8 directors, 30 members and 50-60 people involved in the woodland (volunteers, etc.)	Cydcoed II, sale of timber, Environment Wales, voluntary contributions by individuals, Menter Llanbed
<b>11. Nanteos Woodland Group</b>	1999	Aberystwyth, Ceredigion	Management agreement with FCW	24	Company limited by guarantee	N/A	Cydcoed
<b>12. Pobl y Fforest</b>	2001	Brechfa, Carmarthen-shire	Management agreement with FCW	1	Not for Profit company limited by guarantee	board of 4 and 65 voting members	Cydcoed, small charges for using the site, fundraising events
<b>13. Ruperra Conservation Trust</b>	1996	Between Newport and Cardiff	CWG owns the land	62	charity and Company limited by guarantee	13 trustees and 250 members	Cydcoed, Esmee Fairbairn and Heritage Lottery Fund
<b>14. Troserch Woodlands Association</b>	1996	Llangennech, Llanelli	CWG owns the land	32	Not-for-profit company	Board of 12 and 200 members	Cydcoed, BWW and membership

## 6. Discussion: issues arising

### *Motivations for setting up Community Woodland group*

Motivations for establishing a CWG are varied, even among the small number of case studies featured in this report. Each community woodland group emerged from a unique set of circumstances, dependent on the individuals involved, local culture, and the resources available at the time. The CWGs featured in the case studies section (see Appendix 3) each tell a different story. The most common reasons from the case studies are summarised below:

- É *Common interests / ideals amongst individuals.* Such as the wish to undertake activities related to sustainable living, traditional crafts, woodland education, rural enterprise, woodland management, etc. E.g. Coed Marros was set up by a group of individuals, originally from different areas of the UK, who wished to find a woodland in which to live a low impact lifestyle according to permaculture principles.
- É *Threat to a community asset,* such as the destruction of or threat to a local woodland, new housing development, woodland management perceived to be damaging, etc. E.g. Golygfa Gwydyr was set up to protest against the construction of log cabins for holiday lets in a local woodland.

- É *Wish to see local woodlands managed differently.* Such as a desire for continuous cover forestry (CCF) rather than clearfell, new footpaths or access needed, tree species relevant for local need, improving biodiversity and conservation, etc. E.g. Long Wood wished to engage the FCW in discussions on how the forest would be managed and influenced the decision to choose a CCF method.
- É *To fulfil an unmet need,* such as woodland burial site, outdoors education resource, etc. E.g. Pobl y Fforest was set up to find and manage a site for Forest School activities (among other reasons).
- É *Government schemes and grants.* Top down initiatives to increase public participation in woodlands, opportunities to access funding, etc. This is unlikely to be the sole motive but may trigger a group to form or shape the activities the group initially decides to undertake. E.g. Nanteos Woodland Group formed when several sole traders (woodland entrepreneurs) formed a group to access Cydcoed funding.
- É *Inspiration from other CWGs.* E.g. Visits to other groups, information about CW schemes, etc. Again this will not be a sole motive but may provide the impetus for a group to form, as in Cwmtalwg Woodland Residents Group which was inspired by a similar project in England.

These motivations, which are not mutually exclusive, show that a range of reasons exist for forming a CWG, and this may be one reason for the wide variety in structure, aims and activities of CWGs across Wales.

#### *Participation and community involvement*

Two issues must be considered here; firstly the participation of group members in decision making, which is considered in the following section on group structure and governance. Secondly, group consultation with wider stakeholders and the choice of which stakeholders and individuals can become members. Issues of how local people and other stakeholders can get involved are discussed below.

Some of the groups featured draw their membership from within a geographical area (See case studies 2, 3 and 12), whereas some have a non-geographical membership policy for individuals or organisations supporting their aims and objectives (See case studies 1, 4, 9). Some CWGs place specific conditions on membership, such as becoming part of a workers co-operative (e.g. case studies 1, 7, 9). The former can be defined as communities of place, those living in a geographical area, while the latter are based on communities of interest, a gathering of individuals with a shared understanding or goal (MacIntyre, 2002). Many communities of interest later widen to include members of the local geographical community not initially part of the group. Coed Marros (Case Study 1), for example, formed by a small group of incomers to the area, got funding from Cydcoed which allowed them to make links with the existing community around the woodland, begin a Forest School for local children, and run regular events which have had attendance of over 150 local people. All the groups studied in this report had some mechanism for the community to become involved in the project.

The issue of wider involvement of people living locally to a woodland is vital if groups are to play legitimate roles in local community affairs, and to avoid conflicts with other sectors of the community or interest groups using the woodlands. Some of these issues were brought to light in the case of the Calon y Tyfu (Case study 9), a workers co-operative currently consisting of three members. Local people can become involved through a 'Friends of Fynonne Woodland' scheme if they do not wish to join the co-operative. The group has, however, had difficulties with particular neighbours who have become anxious and angry about changes to the woodland and have lodged complaints against them<sup>6</sup>. The FCW commissioned Ben Reynolds Consulting Ltd. in July 2008 to do a post-Cydcoed project community consultation. This study showed that although many key stakeholders were very positive about the

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<sup>6</sup> Personal communication with members of the Cooperative, May and November 2008.

project, some local residents had the feeling of “being unable to influence the activities being carried out” (Reynolds, 2008).

This demonstrates the need for meaningful participation to allow involvement with decision-making and action. This case study has raised questions about the requirements under the Cydcoed programme for involving the local community. Cydcoed did ask for applicants to show community support but did not specify how this should be demonstrated (e.g. that a certain percentage of the local community should express an interest in the project).

Participatory forest management is a broad term referring to the “processes and mechanisms that enable those people who have a direct stake in forest resources to be part of decision-making in all aspects of the forest management, from managing resources to formulating and implementing institutional frameworks” (Schreckenber *et al.* 2006). Participation can be an ambiguous term used to describe many different types of involvement in forest management. McPhillimy (1997) adapts Arnstein’s (1967) ‘ladder of citizen participation’ to describe the different levels of interaction between community and forest management. Lower levels such as ‘consulting’ or ‘informing’ the public about forest management rarely satisfy needs as they give no rights over the resource. Lawrence (2006) provides a less linear model, describing the dynamic relationship between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ values in participation. Lawrence (2007) identifies an evolutionary pattern which community woodland groups can undertake, from ‘first generation’ where attention is on tenure and formal roles, through ‘second generation’ concerns emerging from experience of diversity and inequity, to ‘third generation’ where groups can address sustainability issues through participatory research and monitoring.

Lawrence (2007) notes that ‘second generation’ concerns regarding participation and involvement are key to ensuring equitable decision-making, avoiding conflicts, and ensuring long-term viability of the group. Often, such matters appear secondary to the initial establishment of a group and the arrangement of tenure over a woodland, and are therefore sometimes forgotten. Using this definition many of the groups in Wales are now at the ‘second generation’ stage where these matters become important, to avoid conflicts or to gain legitimacy. While some groups in Wales may follow this evolutionary pattern, others may not – many started with a direct interest in sustainability issues and/or involvement in aspects such as monitoring wildlife, before even consolidating as a formal group.

The extent to which CWGs in Wales successfully allow all those with a direct stake in forest resources to be part of decision-making and forest management is a matter which cannot be covered thoroughly within the scope of this report and deserves further research. There is a potential role for Llais y Goedwig to assist groups in gaining the interest and involvement of the wider local community, and ensuring that CWGs become representative of the local community who use and live near the woodland.

#### *Group structure and governance*

Many of the CWGs featured are companies limited by guarantee, which limits the liability of individual members and directors taking responsibility for an asset and is often a requirement of funding programmes. This includes most of the groups who are managed as workers’ co-operatives (they have the legal structure of a company but are managed co-operatively). Some CWGs are registered charities (often in addition to being a company limited) – this also widens the eligibility for grant funding and sometimes brings credibility in the eyes of beneficiaries and people dealing with the organisation. Almost all groups, whether having charitable status or not, have a not-for-profit structure where profits are re-invested in the group activities. Several groups, mostly those with smaller annual income levels and run solely by volunteers, are unincorporated associations. This may limit the groups’ capacity to own a woodland asset as the liability to individual members and trustees would be too high, but works well for groups that manage a woodland by agreement with another woodland owner, and do not wish to take on large responsibilities (see case studies 2 and 6). Other legal structures for CWGs, not featured in the case studies, do exist. For example, Broadleaf Woodland Enterprise (Mumbles Development Trust, 2009), is a Community Interest Company (CIC).

Most of the case study CWGs are membership organisations with voting rights and mechanisms for group decision-making. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the mechanisms of and equality in decision making within the CWGs. Further research to investigate how both governance structure and decision-making processes affect success and sustainability of group activities could be useful.

### *Woodland Tenure and ownership*

Secure tenure is generally agreed to be important for communities to become meaningfully involved in forest management (White and Martin, 2002; Romano and Reeb, 2006; Sunderlin, 2008). Tenure determines who benefits from the woodland. In the same way, peoples' willingness to put time and resources into caring for the forest resource is strongly influenced by the benefits they derive from the woodland, a specific project, or their activities. The type of tenure agreement possible depends on who the landowner is and the nature of the management rights transferred to the CWG. Below the following tenure arrangements are discussed: FCW management agreement, agreement with private landowners, co-management of Woodland Trust land, agreement with local authorities and CWG ownership of their own woodland.

The majority of projects funded by the Cydcoed programme were on Local Authority land (81 projects), 46 were on private land, 17 were owned by the group and just 19 projects were funded on FCW land (Owen, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the small number of Cydcoed projects on FCW land may indicate the lack of a clear framework for FCW to engage with community groups wishing to be more involved in managing FCW woodlands and the complications involved in establishing a working relationship and agreement with FCW from the perspective of the community woodlands.

Several of the case study CWGs had management agreements with FCW (See case study 8, 10 and 11) and experienced problems and limitations related to their tenure arrangements. FCW, due to their statutory responsibilities and previous experience with commercial timber production, enforced Health and Safety, liability, insurance and other regulations related to contractors onto community groups working within woodland. Several groups have expressed dissatisfaction with their management agreement with FCW, and the need to review these relationships is a point which came across clearly in the Cydcoed review.

The level to which FCW is willing to allow a CWG to take control of the woodland can affect the group's ability to meet its aims. For example, Long Wood CWG wished to manage the timber, but FCW had not anticipated this and the CWG had not been made aware in advance of the regulations that would be enforced for this to happen (Wylde, 2006). Golygfa Gwydyr (case study 8) have also had problems with their management agreement with FCW as, due to the location of the wood, FCW restrict the activities of the CWG. They are prohibited from making fires or using power tools and access is through locked forest roads. The above example calls into question the process by which the FCW choose suitable woodland areas to make available for community involvement. Further research and guidelines for FCW area managers on selection of woodland for the community use are needed. Issues such as access, facilities, Health and Safety, and ecological sensitivity are some of the issues that should be considered. FCW are currently investigating options which will allow greater community involvement in their woodlands, through their Pathfinder Projects, mentioned above, and the FCW 'Woodlands for People' policy team have expressed their hope that the new options investigated will solve some of the above-mentioned problems.

Possible exit strategies if the CWG were to fold must also be considered in the management agreement. This need is demonstrated by the case of Nanteos Woodland Group (case study 11), which folded at the end of the Cydcoed funding programme in 2008. FCW requested that the CWG remove all infrastructure from the site (woodworking barn, woodburning stove, wooden artwork, benches, composting toilet, etc.) before they leave, as no succession plan was in place to safeguard long-term benefits of public money spent on facilities and ensure a mechanism to find other local groups who could use the facilities as the FCW had no further use for them.

Groups working on private land (e.g. Case Studies 1, and 4) generally experience fewer problems with their tenure agreement, even if they wish to have a high level of involvement in woodland management. Coppicewood College (Case Study 4), for example, has a ten year lease that allows them to undertake all the activities they wish to do on the land, such as coppicing, education and training. The tenure agreement also allowed them to build a woodworking barn for activities and courses. Coed Marros (Case Study 1) was initially formed by a group of individuals from diverse backgrounds united in a common interest in woodlands, permaculture and sustainable living. Group members bought the woodland jointly as individuals, and then formed a co-operative to take charge of the woodland through a management agreement, while retaining individual ownership and investment.

Coed y Bobl (Case study 2) is in a unique position among the groups studied, as the only Community Woodland on Woodland Trust land. This CWG has turned down the offer of a lease from the Woodland Trust as they feel that this would be too great a burden on a small voluntary group. The informal agreement with the Woodland Trust allows the CWG to undertake all the desired activities. Thus good governance, collaboration and communication compensate for a lack of formal tenure agreement.

Other groups have taken on full ownership the woodland (Case studies 3, 9, 14). The CWGs with this tenure arrangement have full control of the asset but have to contend with the responsibility of owning the land in perpetuity. The ongoing costs of maintaining such an asset (tree safety work, insurance, liability, etc.) and keeping up the momentum of the CWG is a potentially daunting undertaking.

Local Authorities (LA) have a long history of working closely with the community and groups such as Cwmталwg Woodlands Residents Group (Case study 6). This group celebrated its 20 year anniversary in 2008, with no need for larger grant schemes such as Cydcoed. The majority of Cydcoed projects were on LA land (some of which were managed directly by the Community Councils), and there are many other CWGs on LA land which did not make use of Cydcoed funding. Many of these community groups do not have aspirations to carry out timber felling or make large changes to woodland management plans but use the woodland for social or biodiversity activities. Many such groups are 'Friends of' groups, or Residents Associations, taking the form of unincorporated voluntary groups which are reliant on the county council to lead on woodland management and financial matters. Further research into community woodlands based on LA land, their successes, longevity, and dependency on agencies such as the Councils, would be valuable, as there is currently no overview of these groups.

The woodland tenure arrangement has a significant effect on the activities and role of the CWG. While some forms of tenure limit the groups' activities, there is a balance to be struck between the freedom for a group to follow its own objectives and the significant responsibility a group takes on when it leases or owns a woodland. For some groups, an informal agreement, or agreement to co-manage, may be preferable, whereas other groups require a lease or freehold to carry out their aims. This may vary depending on the nature and aims of the group, and who the landowner is.

There is an issue of the extent to which publically owned land should be managed on behalf of local rather than public benefits. If CWGs wish to generate an income from the woodland, conflicts of interest may arise between local use and wider public benefits. This is one reason why public land sometimes appears to have more restrictions imposed on its use than private land. Such issues are especially relevant to the 'asset transfer' agenda if it is to be extended to public woodlands.

Llais y Goedwig is currently investigating options to undertake further research into the role of tenure in community woodlands, as this is important for the success of community woodlands in Wales

### *Woodland management in Community Woodlands*

The community woodland movement has evolved alongside a heightened public awareness of environmental issues, global warming and the need for a sustainable local economy. The majority of the CWGs have the aim of managing their woodlands sustainably, promoting native broadleaf species, and protecting wildlife, as well as benefitting their local communities. Often the wish to see woodlands managed differently (e.g. using continuous cover forestry, or reviving traditional skills such as coppicing)

is a motive for people to establish a CWG (e.g. Case Studies 1, 4, 9, 12 and 13). Some of the groups are more active than others in terms of planning for and carrying out woodland management on their sites. Groups that own a woodland have to do any woodland management planning and tasks themselves, or contract a specialist to do so. Other groups, such as many working on LA land, may rely on the landowner to organise and fund woodland management. Some groups are limited as to what they can do in the way of woodland management by the terms of their tenure agreement. The capacity and skills of individuals within the group may play a role in the level of practical woodland management that is done. For instance the woodland management that Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group (Case Study 6) carries out is limited by the capacity of its members who are mostly over the age of sixty. Other restrictions include the need to cover ongoing costs of group insurance for voluntary workers or for contractors. This is often not an eligible cost to be covered by grant funding. Only a few of the case studies in this report managed the woodland for timber (Case Study 1, 10 and 11). In these cases timber was an important source of income for other group activities. As mentioned earlier, organisations such as Coed Cymru and Small Woods Association offer support and advice to small woodland owners and CWGs, and many groups are in receipt of BWG grants from the FCW. There is, however, the potential to extend this support and develop participatory forest management through CWGs, which can allow forms of woodland management not otherwise profitable to be developed through volunteer involvement and subsidies from grants and training activities.

#### *Community Woodland Group income and funding*

As many CWGs have broadly social aims, public or charitable funding has often been used to support these community initiatives. Of the case studies in this report most had received at least small amounts of grant funding and several had benefitted from large grants such as Cydcoed 100% grants. Ten of the thirteen case studies received Cydcoed funding; several also receive funding from the Big Lottery Fund or Environment Wales. Such grants can allow a larger scale of activity to take place and can be important, especially in the initial stages of establishing group activities; however there is the danger that a large grant could make a small group very grant-dependent and lead to problems with long-term sustainability of activities. Some of the groups have avoided large grants and have developed other methods for sustaining their activities. Groups such as Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group (Case Study 11) stayed small with little grant money, run purely by volunteers and with these low overheads is the longest standing of the case studies in this report. Groups such as Coetir Mynydd (Case Study 3) are able to cover most of their basic overheads through membership fees from its members. Other groups manage their woods to provide a sustainable income for the project and those working within it through timber harvesting, woodland craft activities, or running training or social forestry projects. A good example of this is Coppicewood College (Case study 4) who get little grant money other than specifically for the purpose of subsidizing students on their course. The difficulty of relying on short-term grant funding has been expressed by several of the CWGs studied. This is an area that needs further research and study as well as potential new support schemes, to encourage groups to find ways of sustaining themselves from the woodland and the groups' activities and reduce reliance on short-term grant funding. Some level of advice and support is already available through the 'Sustainable Funding' initiative of WCVA for all voluntary groups in Wales.

## **7. Conclusions**

The interest in community woodlands in Wales has grown considerably during the last decade. Numbers of groups have increased, and some large-scale support schemes such as Cydcoed and 'Woods on Your Doorsteps' have been conducted. This is in keeping with wider trends for greater interest in the environment, and greater community empowerment. It can therefore be expected that support for community woodlands will continue to grow and develop in the coming years.

CWGs will benefit from further attention to policies and schemes which enable them to achieve their aims and there is currently significant interest in developing such support. Recent developments which support CWGs include plans of the FCW policy team for Pathfinder Projects to increase community

involvement in their woodlands; WAG interest in transfer of assets to communities; and the establishment of Llais y Goedwig as an independent association to represent and support community-led woodland groups.

This baseline report cannot cover all points, and further research into community woodlands in Wales is needed. Gaps in current knowledge and need for research include:

- A more definitive study of the history and development of community woodlands in Wales.
- A wider survey of CWGs in Wales – there is currently no overview of all groups working on private and LA land.
- An investigation of the importance of tenure issues to CWGs, and the potential of asset transfer of woodlands to communities. Llais y Goedwig members are interested in pursuing this research and hope to interest other organisations in working with them.
- How governance structure and decision-making processes within the CWG affect success and sustainability of group activities.
- The extent to which CWGs in Wales successfully allow all those with a direct stake in forest resources to be part of decision-making and forest management (both through decision-making and participation within the group structure, and involvement of wider stakeholders).
- Mechanisms and needs for supporting community woodlands in Wales, encouraging sustainable funding and social enterprise activities, and improving best practice in woodland management and community engagement.
- Researching and devising guidelines for FCW staff responsible for working with CWGs, and investigating needs for capacity building of FCW staff in relation to working with communities.
- Comparison with England and Scotland to investigate differences and similarities and exchange experience of successes and failures, including an overview of policy differences.

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## *Appendix 1 – Questionnaires and interviews*

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*List of people responding to questionnaires & requests for information:*

Richard Davies, FCW  
Barbara Anglezarke, FCW  
Alex Dauncey, FCW  
Mark Proctor, FCW  
Roz Owen, FCW  
Paul Bunton, Woodland Trust  
David Jenkins, Coed Cymru  
Gwynedd Davies, Tir Coed  
Becky Hulme, Tir Coed  
Jo Horsely, Environment Wales

*Community Woodland Groups:*

1. Coed Marros Workers Cooperative (Dave Petty)
2. Coed y Bobl / The People's Wood (Steve Wigfall and Loretta Wigfall)
3. Coetir Mynydd (Jenny Wong)
4. Coppicewood College (Nick Barnes)
5. Cwmbran (David Williams)
6. Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group (Anne Bryan)
7. Elwy Working Woods (Adrian Farey and Ruth Pybus)
8. Golygfa Gwydyr (Roger Davies)
9. Growing Heart / Calon yn Tyfu (Coop member Willow and web search)
10. Long Wood Community Woodland (Philip Swain)
11. Nanteos Woodland Group (web search)
12. Pobl y Fforest (Fay Sharpley)
13. Ruperra Conservation Trust (Sue Price)
14. Troserch Woodlands Society (Marian Slader)

## Appendix 2 - Summary of Organisations involved with CWGs in Wales

<b>Forestry Commission Wales (FCW)</b> <a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales">http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales</a>	<p>Forestry Commission Wales manages the National Forest Estate for Wales, i.e. 38% of Welsh woodlands. It implements the Welsh Woodland Strategy on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It provides funding and support for other woodlands, including through the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant scheme.</p>
<b>Woodland Trust</b> <a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</a>	<p>The Woodland Trust owns and manages woodland reserves for conservation, and promotes the planting of new native woodland. In 2000 it established the Millennium 'Woods on Your Doorsteps' scheme, and in 2003 established the Community Woodland Network and launched a dedicated website for community woodlands, <a href="http://www.yourwoods.org.uk">www.yourwoods.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Tir Coed</b> <a href="http://www.tircoed.org.uk/">http://www.tircoed.org.uk/</a>	<p>Tir Coed was established in 1999 by an alliance of countryside organisations to promote the benefits of woodlands throughout Wales. The organisation has evolved in tune with the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities of Health, Social Inclusion and Education and in 2006 became a charity. Tir Coed staff were involved in supporting the development of the Cydcoed programme and initially led delivery of the Cydcoed programme before the FCW took over this role.</p>
<b>Coed Cymru</b> <a href="http://www.coedcymru.org.uk/">http://www.coedcymru.org.uk/</a>	<p>Coed Cymru is a charity which supports better management of broadleaved woodland in Wales, founded in 1985. It employs officers in each region of Wales, in partnership with the county councils. These officers provide advice and support on woodland management issues, to woodland owners and to community woodland groups. Around 10% of the advice given is to community woodland groups, around 20-40 groups per year.</p>
<b>Small Woods Association</b> <a href="http://www.smallwoods.org.uk">www.smallwoods.org.uk</a>	<p>Small Woods Association supports the owners and managers of small woodlands, gives advice and runs training courses on woodland management, runs social forestry projects, and has a membership scheme and magazine.</p>
<b>Coed Lleol</b> <a href="http://www.coedlleol.org.uk">www.coedlleol.org.uk</a>	<p>Coed Lleol is a partnership project which is managed by the Small Woods Association and directed by a steering group made up of the FCW, CCW, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, NHS, and several community representatives. It aims to reconnect people and woodlands in Wales. In 2003-4 it ran an EU-funded Objective One project which supported community groups to run public woodland events. In 2005-6 it continued promoting woodland events and woodland activities for health &amp; wellbeing. From 2007, Coed Lleol focused on running networking events for community woodland groups and supporting the development of a new, independent association representing community woodlands in Wales.</p>
<b>Llais y Goedwig</b> <a href="http://www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk">www.llaisygoedwig.org.uk</a>	<p>Llais y Goedwig (Voice of the Woodlands) aims to support and represent community-led woodland groups in Wales. It was constituted in November 2008 as an unincorporated association. It has a board of 5 people and by February 2009 had 21 members, of which 11 were full voting members – community woodland groups. Membership is still growing quickly. The association was launched at the Welsh Assembly Government in February 2009. Coed Lleol currently acts as secretariat to Llais y Goedwig. An AGM and all-Wales conference is planned for autumn 2009.</p>
<b>Other agencies providing support to community woodland groups</b>	
<b>WCVA</b> <a href="http://www.wcva.org.uk">www.wcva.org.uk</a>	<p>Supports voluntary organisations in Wales. Advice on establishing and running an organisation.</p>
<b>Wales Cooperative Centre</b> <a href="http://www.walescoop.com/">http://www.walescoop.com/</a>	<p>Supports cooperatively run businesses and associations</p>
<b>Business Eye</b> <a href="http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/">http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/</a>	<p>WAG-funded support to business set-up, small businesses &amp; entrepreneurs</p>
<b>Environment Wales</b> <a href="http://www.environment-wales.org/">http://www.environment-wales.org/</a>	<p>Provides grants and ongoing advice &amp; support for environmental projects</p>

<b>Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)</b> <a href="http://www.ccw.gov.uk">www.ccw.gov.uk</a>	Government agency responsible for conservation of the environment in Wales. Provides grants and advice on conservation issues.
<b>British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)</b> <a href="http://www.btcv.org.uk">www.btcv.org.uk</a>	Supports volunteer groups to undertake environmental conservation tasks, often in woodland. Can provide landowners with voluntary workforce and support.
<b>Community Land Trust</b> <a href="http://www.communitylandtrust.org.uk">http://www.communitylandtrust.org.uk</a>	Supports community initiatives to own and manage land or buildings
<b>Community Enterprise Wales (CEW)</b> <a href="http://www.cewales.org/index.html">http://www.cewales.org/index.html</a>	CEW was established in 1993 as a Company Limited by guarantee, to provide support and guidance for social enterprises across Wales.
<b>Forest Education Initiative - Wales</b> <a href="http://www.foresteducation.org/country.php?ctry=w">http://www.foresteducation.org/country.php?ctry=w</a>	Supports forest education through small grants and local cluster group meetings. These meetings are cross sector and involve local forest agencies, educators, and individuals / groups with woodlands available for education activities.
<b>Forest School Wales</b> <a href="http://www.forestschoowales.org.uk/">http://www.forestschoowales.org.uk/</a>	Forest School Wales is a voluntary organisation run by trained Forest School leaders and interested partners who are helping to develop the Forest School network within Wales

### *Appendix 3 – Case studies of Community Woodlands Groups in Wales*

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Below, CWG case studies from around Wales are listed in alphabetical order (summarised in Table 2). This list is not exhaustive, but given to illustrate the range of CWG models that are present in Wales. Further research is needed to find and document all the CWGs in Wales.

#### **1. Coed Marros Workers Cooperative**

In Autumn 2005, four people met with the common aim of purchasing a woodland in which to set up rural businesses, enjoy and enhance biodiversity, and develop Permaculture in practice. They bought a 35 ha woodland near Marros, Carmarthenshire, chosen for the good climate, affordable land, and contacts in the region. With the support of the Wales Co-operative Centre they formed Coed Marros Ltd., a Workers co-operative registered as a Company Limited by guarantee in 2006. Coed Marros Cooperative is guided by permaculture ethics and principles<sup>7</sup> whilst following an overall permaculture design plan. They aim to make the site self supportive in energy and water supply, and as far as is practicable, building materials and food supplies.

The group applied for and secured a Cydcoed grant to develop community woodland areas and to build a barn for forestry work and timber processing<sup>8</sup>. The group made early links with neighbours and the local community, and have held several open days and Forest school sessions for the local schools, which have all been well attended. Since then many visitors from the neighbourhood and from other land projects, or with shared interests, have participated in training such as horse logging, Forest School and tree planting. Coed Marros aim to continue building the woodland facilities for the use of the local community and as a training resource. The aim is to create a viable timber resource and mix in trees that provide food crops like sweet chestnut and fruit trees.

Contact details: 07956435094, [info@coedmarros.com](mailto:info@coedmarros.com) , [www.coedmarros.org.uk](http://www.coedmarros.org.uk)

<sup>7</sup> UK permaculture network: <http://www.permaculture.org.uk/default.asp>

<sup>8</sup> FCW Cydcoed project report: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6ZCCNJ>

## 2. Coed y Bobl / The People's Wood

The Coed y Bobl Trust, a community woodland group based in Devils Bridge, was set up in December 1999 with the aims of managing the woodland with and for the local community to improve recreation, access and the biodiversity of the woodland<sup>9</sup>. The group was set up in response to the Woodland Trust (WT) Millennium Woods and 'Woods on your Doorstep' scheme<sup>10</sup>. Steve Wigfall, named Woodland Champion at an initial meeting in December 1999, co-ordinated an appeal for individual financial pledges from the local community, to be redeemed at the end if sufficient money was raised. The initial target of £16,500 was exceeded and provided funds to purchase the woodland and woodland maintenance for the first few years. In addition, they undertook doorstep community surveys from the outset, in order to be as fully inclusive as possible.

The Woodland Trust hold the deeds and proof of purchase and the Community Woodland Group manages it through a verbal agreement<sup>11</sup>. The woodland will remain a 'Millennium Wood' for the community for one thousand years through the 'Woods on your Doorstep' agreement. If the Coed y Bobl Trust winds up, all of the assets acquired by the group will return to Woodland Trust. The group has been offered a lease agreement but they have declined due to the financial burden this could place on the small voluntary group.

The woodland is 7 ha of clear-felled conifer plantation on one side of an upland bog. The group put together and carry out the management plan for the woodland. Some of the land was allowed to regenerate naturally with birch, willow and mountain ash, other areas were 50% replanted with native broadleaf such as oak, alder and beech. The voluntary work carried out has enhanced the wetland woodland habitat. Almost half a mile of permissive pathways has been put in through the wood for community access. The group took on a 'stewardship of the land' approach, involving the community, volunteers, local school and youth groups in the management of the woodland. The results from this approach have been extremely successful, with the group winning many awards<sup>12</sup>.

Coed y Bobl is an unincorporated Trust; liability rests with Guardian Trustees in their Trust Deeds. Currently the group has ten members. The only formal meeting is the AGM, and informal meetings occur on volunteering days on-site. Anyone can be a member, and can also join as a trustee if they can prove they can bring special expertise. A recent survey included all households within a 1km radius showing that 85% of the respondents use the woods regularly, and 96% highly praised the project in all or most respects.

The group is in a unique position as the only CWG on Woodland Trust land. As a result there have been variable levels of institutional support for the group which appears to be dependent on the enthusiasm for community involvement of the regional officers. Other constraints have included overcoming social, cultural and language barriers, and ensuring that the group is acting as inclusively as possible<sup>13</sup>.

*Contact Details:* Steve Wigfall, email [swigfall@btinternet.com](mailto:swigfall@btinternet.com)

## 3. Coetir Mynydd

In 2002 a historic dam was threatened with demolition by the landowners, the villagers gathered together to raise awareness of the demolition which was in contravention of planning regulations and the dam was spared. Subsequently, residents in Mynydd Llandygai and vicinity formed a private charitable company limited by guarantee called Coetir Mynydd in 2003. The company then purchased the dam for a nominal sum along with 7 ha of woodland in April 2004. The aims of the group are : to promote the enhancement, management and safety of woodland and common land in the Community of

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<sup>9</sup> Coed Lleol directory page:

[http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_comprofiler&task=userProfile&user=154&Itemid=3&lang=en](http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com_comprofiler&task=userProfile&user=154&Itemid=3&lang=en)

<sup>10</sup> Millennium Commission: <http://www.millennium.gov.uk/cgi-site/awards.cgi?action=detail&id=219>

<sup>11</sup> The Woodland Trust: <http://www.wt-woods.org.uk/CoedyBobol>

<sup>12</sup> The Woodland Trust: <http://www.treeforall.org.uk/Wales/News/Coed+y+Bobol+wins+the+cup.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Steve Wigfall, personal communication.

Llandygai, Gwynedd; to conserve, for public benefit, the area known as Parc yr Ynys near Mynydd Llandygai; to advance public education in woodland, wildlife, the environment, the countryside, local history and heritage

The Group has a board of 8, and 72 members. Members pay a subscription fee of £5 per year that covers public liability insurance and basic running expenses of the group. The group defines community as those living in the geographical area and 20% of local residents have been or are members. A recent survey of the community elicited a response rate of 45%.

The CWG undertakes woodland management and has a woodland management plan through Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW). The group set the objectives and the work is carried out by volunteers and contractors for arboricultural work. In 2006 the group received a Rural Wales Award from CPRW<sup>14</sup>, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, for the management of their woodlands. The group received Cydcoed funding to repair and restore traditional boundaries to the woodland and some activities for local youth. Coetir Mynydd cover basic costs through annual membership fees and small grants. In the longer-term they intend to develop a micro-hydro scheme to fund maintenance of the dam and woodlands.

*Contact details:* CoetirMynydd@aol.com, www.coetirmynydd.co.uk

#### **4. Coppicewood College**

Coppicewood College was set up in 2005 by individuals who had worked and managed the woodland since 2002. The small woodland based in Cilberran, north Pembrokeshire, is actively managed for coppice production using traditional methods, and only hand tools. The group evolved from an interest in coppicing, traditional rural skills and allied crafts. Coppicewood College set up as a charity in 2005. The group has six committee members and approximately 20 members. The woodland is in a rural location and approximately four of the local residents are directly involved in the project. The wider community can participate in the woodland by attending courses, doing the six month apprenticeship or joining the regular volunteer days. It is hoped that through the educational and volunteering programmes, people will acquire the skills and inspiration to practice the methods elsewhere.

The group has a 10 year lease with a private landowner. The woodland was badly neglected and is gradually being returned to full production. The group have full control of coppicing and woodland management, educational and craft operations on the 4.5ha leased woodland. The woodland is managed as an active coppice site with standards. The work is carried out by volunteers and students on courses and apprenticeships. The group earns income through running courses and apprenticeships. They have received some small grants to subsidise course fees for people on low income (Ernest Cook trust).

*Contact details:* 01239 881 394, www.coppicewoodcollege.co.uk

#### **5. Blaen Brân Community Woodland, Cwmbran**

In 2003 Cwmbran Community Council received a letter from children at Woodlands primary school asking about visits to the Blaen Brân wood in Upper Cwmbran and by the owner of the same wood who was interested in involving the local community in his woodland. A community meeting was set up from which a number of people agreed to become trustees for a group called Coed Gwaun-y-fferiad Community Trust, all sharing a desire to help look after the wood and encourage community use of the woodland. There were 9 initial trustees and the declaration of Trust was made in July 2003. The group then became Blaen Brân Community Woodland, a company limited by guarantee, in 2005 and achieved charity status in 2007. Blaen Brân Community Woodland received a Cydcoed grant to purchase the woodland lease and carry out a range of infrastructure improvements.

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<sup>14</sup> Rural Wales award: <http://www.cprw.org.uk/awards2006.htm>

The 40ha wood is a mix of old beech wood, mature conifers and newer planting over the last 10 years. The group owns the woodland lease and is obliged to keep to the terms of the lease and use the area for forestry purposes, and to maintain the boundary fences. They are not allowed to erect permanent buildings. Within the agreement they do have the use of stone on the site and the right to fully manage the wood. The main use of the woodland is to replant and restore tree cover to felled areas, and to provide an area for local people to use for recreation. The group runs educational walks such as ‘woods in winter’, wildflower and fungus forage. The wood is managed by a woodland agent who joined the Trust, and who works with the other Directors on a woodland management plan. Volunteers from the Directors undertake some of the management, and members are involved in larger-scale operations such as bracken bashing, tree planting or litter picking. Anyone can become a member as long as they sign up to the aims and objectives of the group. Most members are local, from Upper Cwmbran, but there are some further afield outside Wales.

The group was faced with some challenges such as the deliberate lighting of fires, rubbish dumping in the area, and illegal use by road bikes. Initially the group was not sure what community support there would be but found that the local community has been very positive. The group has had some difficulties developing a good relationship with the freehold owner who communicates only via his solicitors. The practical aspects of working as a group and taking account of individual strengths, skills, and time capacity (with most Directors working full time) was also a challenge. The group had support from Cwmbran Community Council (in holding meetings, getting venues, etc), and from Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (local council for voluntary action) in drawing up the Trust document and then Memoranda and Articles of Association. TVA and the community council both gave small start up grants, and the community council continues to make a room available for Director meetings.

*Contact details:* [www.blaenbran.org.uk](http://www.blaenbran.org.uk), [enquiries@blaenbran.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@blaenbran.org.uk)

## **6. Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group**

The Cwmtalwg Local Nature Reserve is on the edge of the town of Barry, South Wales, and consists of 2.85 hectares of deciduous woods. The land is owned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and managed by the Cwmtalwg Woodlands Residents Group for the benefit of the local people and wildlife. This group was formed in response to Council plans to fill in a hollow, demolish an overgrown hedge and culvert a small stream in Barry in 1987. Inspired by the Pocket Park scheme pioneered by Northampton Council, local resident came together to protect the area and proposed to the Council that they should manage the woods and hedge for the benefit of local people and wildlife. The idea of partnership between the community, conservation organisations and Local Authorities is now familiar, but this was 1988 and Agenda 21 wasn't formulated until 1992. The Council agreed a trial period of five years; this was then extended for a 25 year term and covers three hectares in all. Money was raised from various sources, and teams from BTCV (Cymru) and other volunteers helped Group members to improve the site which was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1996<sup>[1]</sup>.

The group is run entirely by volunteers who meet several times a month for about two hours; it is a social event that volunteers enjoy. The group also run nature walks on the first Sunday of the month and annual teddy bears picnics. The group has stood the test of time, celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2008. It started out small with little funding and progressively grew, work happened gradually on a voluntary basis and this allowed the group to adapt to change. One of the concerns of Anne Bryan, founding member of the group, is the ongoing viability of the project into the next generation. The majority of the committee are now retired.

The Group had a Woodland Improvement Grant from the Forestry Authority, which paid 50% of the cost of tree felling as part of woodland improvement. The Coed Cymru officer visits the wood annually with Group members. The Council helps by felling dangerous trees and with roadside grass cutting and

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<sup>[1]</sup> Vale of Glamorgan site for Cwmtalwg nature reserve:  
[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/enjoying/visit\\_the\\_vale/activities/conservation\\_\\_wildlife/nature\\_reserves.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/enjoying/visit_the_vale/activities/conservation__wildlife/nature_reserves.aspx)

trimming back trees encroaching on the road. For bigger tasks, such as path construction, more volunteers are involved, notably from BTCV Forest Farm Cardiff, and Barry Comprehensive School.

*Contact details:* [www.cwmtalwgwoods.co.uk](http://www.cwmtalwgwoods.co.uk)

## **7. Elwy Working Woods**

Elwy Working Woods are a newly established cooperative located in the Elwy Valley, near St Asaph. Members have experience establishing and micro-managing broadleaf woodland, harvesting timber and processing using a wood mizer. Members are currently using the products of the local timber yard to produce traditional timber framed structures, furniture and gates. The group's initial projects included purchasing an alpine tractor and 1.8 tonne forwarder for management of small woodland, the development of a prototype timber framed sustainable home Ty Elwy and negotiating with the FCW to allow involvement in managing the neighbouring Tan y Gaer woodland.

Current constraints include the negative response from FCW regarding the cooperative having a practical input in the management of Tan y Gaer woodland. The group has found that poor communication with FCW has been one stumbling block. Another problem is the large population of fallow deer in the area that makes establishing woodland and coppice management impossible without expensive fencing. The woodlands that the group own were historically part of a large estate, and the hunting rights have been retained by that estate. The cooperative is unable to satisfactorily implement their woodland management plans due to overgrazing by deer and the fact that they do not have the right to control this problem themselves. They have appealed to the Forestry Commission Wales, who have joint hunting rights in the area, and set up a 'deer management group' but so far have been unable to resolve the issue<sup>15</sup>.

*Contact details:* Adrian Farey (Co-director) or Ruth Pybus (Secretary) 07946 832385 or email [r.pybus@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:r.pybus@tinyworld.co.uk)

## **8. Golygfa Gwydyr**

Golygfa Gwydyr aims to promote local regeneration through community-led initiatives that support environmentally and economically sustainable projects leading to greater social inclusion at the Caerdroia woodland site in Gwydyr Forest, near Llanrwst. The group has four board members and 28 voting members. Anyone in Conwy can join the group. Approximately 60% of members are local residents and socially excluded groups provide 15 person days volunteer time per week.

The group was set up as a limited company in 2004 to protest against the construction of 100 FCW log cabins for holiday lets alongside Llyn Parc. The aim was to secure an unspoilt landscape and reduce traffic burdens on local residents. The group received a Cydcoed grant to support establishing the Caerdroia Theatre and the setting up of a Community Management Agreement with FCW, for which there is no ongoing support. In 2005, FCW signed a management agreement with the group that allows community activities in accordance with Golygfa Gwydyr's aims. This agreement restricts the use of power tools to maintain the woodland and binds Golygfa Gwydyr to the FCW byelaws and Forest Design Plan. Vehicular access to the site is limited due to the location and the policy of FCW to lock access to the woodland and restrict vehicle access.

The woodland is 8 ha and, although it has no dedicated management plan, it is within the FCW Forest Design Plan. The group aspires to become more involved in forest planning and management but this is limited by the terms of the agreement<sup>16</sup>. The group has received Cydcoed funding and is now in

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<sup>15</sup> Ruth Pybus personal communication

<sup>16</sup> Roger Davies, Chair of Golygfa Gwydyr, personal communication.

discussion with FCW about becoming 'Pathfinder project', and has expressed an interest in increasing security of tenure through lease of the land.

Contact details: Roger Davies 07792 237 927 or email [rogerd@golygfagwydyr.org](mailto:rogerd@golygfagwydyr.org), website <http://www.golygfagwydyr.org>

### **9. Growing Heart / Calon yn Tyfu**

Calon yn Tyfu purchased Ffynone and Cilgwyn woodlands using a Cydcoed grant which was used primarily for the purchase of the land. Before this the woodland was in private ownership with minimal intervention in terms of woodland management. Calon yn Tyfu has undertaken woodland management to remove invasive species, improve access and create infrastructure with the aim of converting the woodland to native broadleaves, with an emphasis on sustainability, diversity, education and improving access for the public. This work was funded by the Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) grant.

The group currently has 3 members, 3 prospective members, several workers and some volunteers. Decisions are made by consensus of all those taking responsibility for a particular area of work. Members are expected to be able to work cooperatively, and to fit in with the rest of the group. There is a one pound membership fee. The group aims to engage actively with the wider community but doesn't yet advertise, relying on word of mouth.

Contact details: (01239) 841675 or email [growingheart@cooptel.net](mailto:growingheart@cooptel.net), website [www.growingheart.co.uk](http://www.growingheart.co.uk)

### **10. Long Wood Community Woodland**

Long Wood is a 120 hectare woodland running along the hilltop, north of Lampeter, between the Teifi and Dulas valleys. A steering group of local residents was set up in 2002, who sought to engage Forestry Commission in discussions to make the woodland a local resource for education and social activities, and to provide timber for local business and craftspeople.

In 2003 a community co-operative was formed by a group of residents and representatives of the community councils of LLangybi, Llanfair Clydogau and Lampeter. who entered a management agreement with Forestry Commission on the site. A new Forest Design Plan was agreed which would see Long Wood return to a native broadleaf woodland in a generation though mostly Continuous Cover Forestry. Subsequently a grant from Cydcoed enabled the group to embark on a number of new projects:

- É Construction of a new bridleway, wildlife pond and car park which will improve public access and make recreational activities more enjoyable for local people and visitors to the area
- É Creation of a viewing area with a log-cabin shelter and picnic tables
- É Thinning neglected areas of conifer woodland, and the clearing of three areas of windblown trees which were then replanted with broadleaves by the group, local volunteers, and local schools.
- É Establishment of a tree nursery in the wood to provide native broadleaf trees for the on-going replanting
- É Establishment of Longwood Forest School site within the wood. Seven local primary schools access the Forest School teaching programme on the site, using our own trained leaders.
- É Erection of new interpretation panels to show the paths and points of interest

In addition the group has run regular open days and educational walks and received the support of local voluntary groups engaged on path clearing and maintenance. A 25 year Sylvicultural plan has been professionally drawn up for future operations. The group has a limited management agreement with FCW, and are involved with FCW as a 'Pathfinder project'. The group has expressed an interest in

increasing security of tenure through long term lease of the land. It is the only CWG so far in Wales to harvest timber from FCW land, but experienced significant constraints in doing so. The constraints encountered in dealing with FCW are documented in a research project<sup>17</sup>.

*Contact details:* Philip Swain tel. 01570 493284, [www.longwood-lampeter.org.uk](http://www.longwood-lampeter.org.uk),

### **11. Nanteos Woodland Group**

Nanteos Woodland Group was set up in 1999 by a group of local woodland owners, forest workers and enthusiasts and was based in the lower Ystwyth Valley near Aberystwyth in West Wales. They were a non-profit making company committed to sustainable woodland management and integrated development, to diversify and strengthen the local rural economy. The group received Cydcoed funding<sup>18</sup> but folded at the end of the funding period in 2008. The Forestry Commission Wales as legal managers of the woodland, demanded that the woodworking barn, composting toilet and all other infrastructure created by the group during the Cydcoed project was removed before the group left the site.

*Contact details:* The Nanteos Woodland Group website is no longer online but can be viewed here: <http://www.pixelwave.co.uk/NWG/index.php>

### **12. Pobl y Fforest**

Pobl y Fforest came into being in 2001, following a series of meetings held over a two year period under the auspices of the local Community Association. The group is set up as a Not for Profit company limited by guarantee. The group has a board consisting of 4 individuals. There are a total of 65 voting members who pay a one-off membership fee of £10 (this is currently being changed to an annual fee of £5). Membership is limited to people with an interest in the Brechfa Forest, a clearly defined geographic area. All public events are open events advertised in a ten mile radius and via the group mailing list. Within the immediate Community Council area approximately 10% of the residents are involved.

The main motivation for setting up the CWG was the wish from the local people that the locally FCW managed Brechfa Forest be managed as a resource for local people: Craftspeople working with wood wanted to be able to access small volumes of local timber; tourist-related businesses wanted to develop mountain bike trails and horse riding routes; Walkers wanted to improve way-marking; Forest Schools wanted to provide sessions for local schools and training for Forest School Leaders; the community wanted more say in how the forest was managed.

The group uses and cares for a small section of the Forestry Commission managed Brechfa Forest in Carmarthenshire. The woodland is mostly used for Forest School sessions and for training Forest School leaders. The building is used for school groups, training courses, craft and wildlife workshops, community events and health and well-being activities. The group secured a 21 year lease of a building and surrounding forest area from the National Assembly for Wales via FCW in September 2003. The lease states that the site can be used for forest school and community activities and that FCW may make use of it when it is not being used by the group. The site cannot be used for commercial activities or for residential (including camping) purposes. Overheads such as insurance and site maintenance are covered by making a small charge for using the site. The group undertakes fundraising at events, and also received a grant from the Cydcoed 1 project<sup>19</sup>.

This woodland is about 1 ha of a larger FCW woodland. This is mostly neglected conifer plantation. Part of the site is Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) and part plantation over enclosed grazing land.

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<sup>17</sup> Wylde (2006) New Structures of Governance: Unpacking the mechanisms and motivations underlying Forest Management Partnerships. The case of Long Wood Community Woodland.

[http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_details&gid=7&Itemid=31&lang=en](http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=7&Itemid=31&lang=en)

<sup>18</sup> Forestry Commission Wales project report: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6EQFXA>

<sup>19</sup> Forestry Commission Wales project report: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6EQFPQ>

The woodland area is designated for use as a Forest School site; management of the site is carried out by the user group. As the number of users increased, the process became more formalised for all users to have an equal say in how the site is managed. The management objectives are concerned with preventing damage to the site from overuse, encouraging biodiversity and addressing Health and Safety issues.

The biggest challenges of running the CWG were getting people with a wider range of interests to work together as a group. Waiting for grants, directives about what could be done, and moving goalposts all meant that initial enthusiasm dissipated<sup>20</sup>.

*Contact details:* Fay Sharpley on 01267 202221 or email [Pyffgwernogle@aol.com](mailto:Pyffgwernogle@aol.com)

### **13. Ruperra Conservation Trust**

Ruperra Conservation Trust formed in 1996 with the aim of raising money to purchase and conserve Ruperra Castle. Although funding was received from Cadw and the Architectural Heritage Fund for a feasibility study in 1997, the Castle, its outbuildings and 17 acres surrounding it were sold to a private owner in 1998. Two years later, the Trust was able to purchase Coed Craig Ruperra, a 150 acre Planted Ancient Woodland Site to the north of the castle and once part of the Ruperra estate, with funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Countryside Council for Wales, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Cadw and many other trusts and private donors. The Trust hopes to return the woodland to an ancient semi-natural state, protecting the biodiversity of the site while also providing access and information to the general public.

The Trust is a registered charity and Company limited by guarantee, with thirteen trustees and a management group consisting of representatives of the trustees and expert advisors. It has a large membership of 250 with a smaller active volunteer group involved in practical conservation work. The local community is involved through practical and educational events on the site.

*Contact details:* 07977 599181, email [ruperra@googlemail.com](mailto:ruperra@googlemail.com), [www.ruperra.org.uk](http://www.ruperra.org.uk)

### **14. Troserch Woodlands Society**

Troserch Woodlands Society (TWS) is a community-based society set up to acquire and manage Troserch Woods, a 32ha mixed woodland near Llanelli in Carmarthenshire. Thanks to a grant from Cydcoed, the woods were purchased in 2006 for community enjoyment and conservation. The Troserch Woodlands extend northwards from the village of Llangennech, up the valley of the Morlais River. The TWS now has over 200 members and exists to manage and maintain the woods, to secure public access, and to promote participation and awareness of environmental issues.

On advice from solicitors, the TWS steering committee set up a non-profit company Troserch Woodlands (Property) Ltd (TWP) to take on formal ownership and management of the woods. This is a company limited by guarantee, composed of the elected executive committee of TWS, accountable to all society members and committed to the aims and objectives of the TWS. This company status, limited by guarantee, protects individual members from unlimited liability in case of claims or loss. The TWS has its own bank account for funds raised, from which it supplies the money necessary for works and maintenance to the account of TWS (Property) Ltd. The TWS constitution, on a Charity Commission model, provides for an executive committee of 12 people elected by all members at an annual general meeting. Membership is open to anyone over sixteen, who agrees with their objectives or shares their ideals.

TWS is dedicated to bringing this area of mainly conifer woodland slowly back to broadleaf forest, support biodiversity, and to find the necessary funds to do it. TWS recently clear felled approximately 5ha

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<sup>20</sup> Fay Sharpley, personal communication.

of conifer and replanted with 9,000 deciduous trees. These were mainly of local provenance. This work was supported by a Better Woodlands for Wales grant. TWS has regular members' working parties for general maintenance and are developing picnic sites, new trails and interpretive signs. TWS hope to set up a Forest School in the near future in conjunction with the local Infant and Junior schools and encourage the young people in our community to become attached to their local woods.

The main problems TWS have encountered have been in trying to maintain the ideal of free public access but curb the activities of motorised vehicles and limit damage to walking tracks by horses. The area is not large enough for separate activity areas.

*Contact details:* Marian Slader (Chair) by email [marianslader@aol.com](mailto:marianslader@aol.com) [www.troserschwoods.co.uk](http://www.troserschwoods.co.uk)

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