

Countryside Management Association Gordon Miller Award 2016



Project A

Name of individual, organisation or project being nominated: Pontrhydfendigaid Community Woodland(Coed Y Bont)
Where is the activity/project being carried out? (location & region) Pontrhydfendigaid, Ceredigion, Mid-Wales

Nominee Contact details – CMA needs to be able to contact someone about this nomination (NB personal details these will not be published without explicit permission)

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About the activity/work/project

<p>Overview (150 words max) Please summarise the activity/work/project, being clear about what was achieved and explaining why the nomination has been made</p>	<p>The Community Woodland started in 2008, instigating talks with the Forestry Commission. A constitution was set up in 2011 and a Management Agreement with NRW was signed in Autumn 2012. In 2013 the group dwindled down to a few people, but with the work of just these few people, the committee was extended in the Autumn of 2013. Since then we have been successful in gaining financial assistance from various organisations, Which has enabled us to carry out wildlife surveys, build paths and ponds, a notice board, Education Shelter, projects with the school, youth club and Vincent Wildlife Trust, purchase work tools, brush cutter and various forms of training. I have nominated our woodland , as I think we have shown dedication and commitment to a beautiful Woodland with character and something collective to give to the community for years to come, both to educate and assist in conserving wildlife</p>
<p>What was done (500 words max) Please describe activity/work/project in more detail</p>	<p>2008 Pontrhydfendigaid Community Woodland was founded at a public meeting.</p> <p>2011 Pontrhydfendigaid Community Woodland Association was confirmed as an Unincorporated Association in a written Constitution.</p> <p>2012 40 bird boxes installed. 10 year Management Agreement with FCW signed, joined Llais y Coedwig.</p> <p>2013 Dormouse boxes built and installed. Routes of proposed access footpaths were digitally plotted by FCW. We were represented on the Llais y Goedwig stand at the Royal Welsh Show, which is now a yearly occurrence, Survey boards were laid out for</p>

	<p>toads and reptiles, Funding from Environment Wales was accepted .Policies written covering: health and safety; equality and diversity; Welsh language; environment; volunteering; children and vulnerable groups. A bench and two picnic tables installed. Rebranded our project as 'Coed y Bont' . Restructured and expanded the Woodland Committee via an open day and door to door survey using the resulting info. Joined The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), obtained the appropriate public liability and accident insurances now paid each year.</p> <p>2014 Hand tools purchased via funding. Eleven more nest boxes were installed. Set up a Face Book page to promote and advertise activities. Started a monthly programme of volunteer work parties for various management and maintenance tasks. Received a grant for the costs of more hand tools, wildlife surveys, educational and wildlife survey equipment, publicity materials, a gazebo, a secure storage container and signage. Management Agreement was revised and extended to 12 years running from 2014. Wildlife surveys, funded by the Environment Wales grant, were undertaken by Radnorshire Wildlife Services. Bird surveys were undertaken by Coed y Bont's ornithologists. By mid 2014 there were 61 nest boxes in the woodland, 78 bird species have now been seen or heard in the woodland. We were awarded with a grant of £82,000 for the construction of new 'easy access' footpaths, pond excavation and for improvements to the picnic area next to the car park at the woodland entrance. The planning application was submitted by NRW and approved, but subject to conditions. Received a grant of £918 from Ceredigion County Council specifically for the improvements to the picnic area. Having satisfied all planning issues, the work to construct the new access paths began.</p> <p>2015 Agreement made that the woodlands could be included within the buffer area for the Mid Wales Red Squirrel project. Became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The First Leaflets were printed to publicise the Woodland The new paths in Coed Dolgoed were completed. Info board was erected. Coed y Bont was offered the building of an education shelter by Hydro Schemes UK Ltd. Received a Grant from Environment Wales for the costs of an Official Opening event. Planning application for the proposed shelter paid. We held the 'Official Opening' of the Coed y Bont project with Iolo Williams. Received planning approval to construct a wooden shelter next to the picnic area and car park at Coed Dolgoed.</p> <p>2016 Education Shelter built. Pine martin Boxes built and erected Community Artist projects, training, strimmer and tools purchased with award funding. Family Open Day</p>
<p>Outputs/Outcomes (300 words max) Please provide some facts and figures (e.g. no of schools / vols engaged, events delivered, acres improved/linked, partners/joint working),</p>	<p>In 2013 with the assistance of CAVO two of our committee went on a course on how to engage the community in environmental projects. We held an open day, followed by a door to door questionnaire. 20 people in the village, assisted There was a high number of people who were actually aware of the community woodland project, the level of support was 98% .There were additional benefits arising from the questionnaire survey. Most grant applications require evidence of community support. The data from the survey proved invaluable in our subsequent applications for</p>

<p>how the activity/work / project was innovative or demonstrates best practice. Sell your project!</p>	<p>funding and 25% were not aware of the Community Woodland but were after this. There was therefore an overwhelming level of support and a large number willing to help. Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, forty two different volunteers had, between them, devoted 1640 hours of work to the Coed y Bont project. Our primary school and well attended youth club have worked on a number of projects with our Woodland and have attended Open Days. We have various wildlife events, which started in 2014, throughout the year monthly from about March/April through to Oct/Nov with anything from 6-30 people attending. We have a monthly work party with between 6-12 people regularly attending. Our Woodland is 24.2 hectares (60 acres). We have improved our woodland by the addition of easy access paths on the lower area of the woodland and have carried out some drainage work on other paths. We have a management agreement with NRW, who have ownership of the land. Site meetings have been held to discuss advice and funding sources with a number of organisations, including: Natural Resources Wales, Environment Wales; Ceredigion County Council; the Amphibian and Reptile Society; West Wales Wildlife Trust; the RSPB; CAVO (Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations); Visit Wales</p>
<p>Learning (300 words max) What was key to the success of the activity?</p>	<p>The key to the success was initially the sheer hard work of a just a few of the committee up until October 2013, when with assistance from CAVO we organised an open day and carried out a survey, which lead to an extended number of about 13 committee members (currently 14). We have then gained or re-gained a number of people with varying expertise, but above all giving time and effort to this fabulous project. The signing of the management agreement in 2012 and the extension of it in 2014 from 10-12 years. We have a wildlife group that is important in leading the ecological surveying of the woodland, arranging and organising the wildlife events, assisting with partnership issues with the management of the woodland and liaising with the work party in maintenance. It is important that we keep a core number of work party members and do our best to increase the number slowly but steadily. The effort by a few of the committee has been very important in gaining various amounts of funding for certain projects within the community woodland. However, it has also been necessary to continue avenues of funding to pay for everyday things such as fuel for strimming, insurance for the woodland e.t.c For this we have raised money at the local Bont Show, other local events, personal donations, personal donations at events and we have a 100 Club for members of the woodland, of which we have about 115 members. It has also been important to set up an e-mail contact list of which we call 'Friends of Coed Y Bont', which has a number of around 80-100. To make this woodland a success it has taken just a small number of people to take the bull by the horns and make things happen.</p>

<p>Downloads, videos, images (please add links or attach documents/2 -3 images for use on the CMA website and wider promotion eg press releases).</p>	 CoedYBont 5j 720p.mp4
<p>Quote from nominee One / two sentences describing value of project/successes from someone directly involved</p>	<p>This project has transformed a neglected area of ex-forestry commission land, now NRW, into thriving community woodland, rich in wildlife and a fabulous tool for environmental education. This has been made possible by a small core of committed volunteers who have tapped into funding avenues and made this dream happen.</p>
<p>Quote from someone who has benefitted (100 words max)</p>	<p>Bont Youth Club have worked closely with Coed Y Bont woodland group ever since our group was formed. The partnership between Bont Youth Club and Coed Y Bont has been positively reciprocal. Coed Y Bont has offered educational opportunities through numerous projects, encouraging our young people to learn more about nature and woodlands. This partnership has included projects such as woodland wildlife nest box making, wood carving sessions and nature walks, providing the young people of Bont Youth Club the opportunity to develop new skills and ideas together with positively enhancing their personal, social and educational development through community activities</p> <p>Peter Bradley</p> <p>Youth Leader</p>

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Signature: *Chris Harris*

Name: Chris Harris

Date:25/09/16