

**Title: Local Authority and National Park Biodiversity Officer Group Actions**

**Produced by: Local Authority and National Park Biodiversity Officer Groups**

***Background/Progress***

Local authority and National Park biodiversity officers from both south and north Wales hold regular meetings to discuss issues of common interest and to progress regional and joint initiatives. This paper to note summarises some successes, regional projects and planned future projects across Welsh LBAP areas.

**Successes**

- **Powys: Afon Cain Access Scheme:** Sustainable community wetland area comprising ponds, scrapes and swales with native planting on former grazing land, designed to improve river quality. Delivered by volunteers from local community groups and schools, with support from the Environment Agency, and a small Community Strategy related grant for the native planting scheme. View pictures at: <http://www.goodmangraphics.co.uk/Llanfyllin-Riverside-Project/>
- **Conwy: Conwy County Borough Council Biodiversity Improvement Project:** CCBC has given a corporate mandate to produce the Biodiversity Improvement Project. The Biodiversity Improvement Project has identified ways in which the whole Council could improve its practices for the benefit of biodiversity. Having a directive from the top will increase the likelihood of the recommendations being implemented.
- **Powys: Rhayader Community Wildlife Project:** Led by Rhayader 2000 with support from local natural history society volunteers, Rhayader by Nature, and the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. Funded by CCW, the Big Lottery Awards for All fund, Powys County Council's Community Welcome Scheme and Community Enablement Support Fund. Three way-marked routes, illustrated leaflets, viewing benches and interpretive panels. Also four 'Wildlife Areas', an artificial sand martin nesting bank above the River Wye, swift nesting boxes built into St Clement's church tower.
- **Gwynedd: Habitat workshops:** Bringing the Local Biodiversity Partnership and ecosystem groups together to discuss priority actions for the area, prioritising meaningful actions with input from the ecosystem groups.
- **Carmarthenshire: Mynydd Llangyndeyrn Common project:** Aggregates Levy funding to reinstate grazing on common and restore BAP habitats.
- **Newport: Biodiversity in Schools project:** BiS Officer in post for 2 ½ years delivering biodiversity and outdoor education support to 58 schools in Newport, and delivery of habitat creation and management in School grounds to provides outdoor learning opportunities in line with curriculum

objectives. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has also developed a similar project for schools in Blaenau Gwent.

- **Awareness Projects:** Gwynedd: Hedgehog project: Hedgehog recording, community engagement, school visits, Conwy and Anglesey Schools projects, Denbighshire wildlife gardening project.

### **Regional project case studies:**

- **Flintshire/Denbighshire: Alyn Valley Himalayan balsam project:** working with a large project group including, local authorities, EA, NWWT, local conservation and volunteer groups attempting to eradicate Himalayan balsam from the Alyn valley, now in its 3rd year. The project has succeeded in greatly reducing the amount of Himalayan balsam in the upper catchment and raising awareness about the issues surrounding Himalayan balsam.
- **Conwy/Denbighshire/Flintshire/Wrexham: North East Wales Barn Owl project:** To gain an understanding of the distribution of the barn owl across north east Wales. The project raises awareness, installs and monitors nesting boxes and provides advice to landowners.
- **Denbighshire/Flintshire/Wrexham: Urban bat project:** 2<sup>nd</sup> year of this project working with the Bat Conservation Trust getting communities involved in bat recording by loaning out detectors to volunteers who undertake a basic bat survey of their local area.
- **South East Wales Winter Bird Feeding project:** 5 Local Authorities (Torfaen, Newport, Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent) and Gwent Wildlife Trust have been implementing a project to sow crops and provide feeding opportunities for wintering farmland birds, using Environment Wales funding.
- **South Wales Wetlands project:** The Environment Agency is helping local authorities in south east Wales (Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire) identify and develop a series of 'mini' projects and supporting these through £30,000 collaborative funding. The aim will be to restore and create wetland habitats including ponds, wet woodland and marsh.

### **Planned future projects**

- Flintshire/Denbighshire: Alyn and Wheeler Living Landscapes project with focus on habitat connectivity along the river valleys
- Torfaen Biodiversity Management System: Russell Cryer (TCBC) currently developing a 'biodiversity management system' as part of evolving LDP; looking at shifting decision making to a more upfront approach using a tiered site system.
- North Wales: Awareness & Recording project working with Cofnod
- Conwy: An investigation into the development of a large-scale riverside ecosystem project
- Carmarthenshire: Project to undertake Sea buckthorn clearance at Pembrey dunes - £20k funding to undertake work this winter.
- Conwy: An investigation into a large-scale moorland project with the RSPB and other partners
- South East Wales Wildlife Sites Project: SE Wales LA's, Wildlife Trust and SEWBReC have formed a working group to look at a regional Wildlife Sites

project aimed at delivering habitat management on grassland and heathland sites in need of restoration.

**Action Requested**

- That the Steering Group note and endorse the work of the LBAP officer groups

YES/NO