



TIR COED

Tir Coed Directors Report

Six Monthly Report

September '03 to March '04

1. Introduction

The last six months has been a very productive time for Tir Coed and a time of great change. The Rural Recovery funding granted in August 2003 provided us with sufficient security and confidence to assist a range of local groups and organisations and bring forward and deliver projects more quickly. At the same time we have been able to review our core objectives, remit and internal systems.

Good progress has been made over the last six months against both our three-year plan and Service Level Agreement (SLA) targets, as well as contributing to the five central objectives of the *Woodlands for Wales* strategy. Indeed, we are currently achieving against almost all our original targets set out in the SLA. However, we are not achieving in the following areas: *Implementing ILM in Assembly Woodlands, Local Youth BMX park, Wood-fuel initiative and Health Impact Assessment*. There are a number of reasons why work on these projects has not begun yet, many of which are beyond our control. However, during the next financial year these objectives will be reviewed.

Our key projects over the last six months have focused on the following themes: social inclusion, health and well being and woodland management and enterprise. In March 2004, a Directors sub-group meeting was conducted to discuss Tir Coed's remit. It was recognised that Tir Coed's forte is to work in these areas, with particular focus on socially disadvantaged rural communities. This has given us a clear direction to follow for the coming financial year.

Although much of our work still focuses on the Ystwyth Valley, the secured funding and the appointment of a new Project Officer means that we are now looking further afield, in particular at the southern part of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, and further north into Gwynedd and Powys. The aim is to take forward the lessons learnt in the Ystwyth Valley and replicate what worked well in other areas. We also aim to concentrate on areas of greatest rural deprivation and research is currently underway to identify possible areas that may benefit from our work. This work is also being accompanied by a series of networking and publicity drives in the new areas.

Below you will find a summary of our main activities over the last six months, and an indication of the outputs these activities have created. The sections that follow also indicate which objectives of the *Woodlands for Wales* strategy our activities apply to.

2. Key Activities

Woodland for People

Motorbiking in the Woods

"I thought we would just be stuck in the class room again but I love it!"

In November 2003 the *Motorcycling in the Woods* training project commenced at Tyn Bedw/Cwm Newyddion woods, Pontrhydygroes. The pilot project assists six young people that are excluded from, or do not attend school. The aim of the project is to provide an alternative form of education, and an opportunity to improve self-esteem, team working, communication skills and new practical skills in a woodland setting. Basic mechanics, health and safety, bike controls and riding skills are taught by two instructors from south Ceredigion. These will lead to Open College Network qualifications if the course is successfully completed.

During the early stages of the project, a number of problems were encountered such as battling with insurance and identifying an appropriate woodland site. These problems were eventually overcome thanks to strong partnerships with organisations such as the Forestry Commission and Ceredigion Children and Youth Partnership.

In February 2003, the original 'pilot' period of the project came to an end. As a result, a meeting was held to review the project. Feedback from the young people involved was very positive and both themselves and the instructors expressed an interest in the course continuing. As a result, the course will now continue until the summer break.

Motorbiking in the Woods	Total Outputs 03/04	Total Costs 03/04
No. young people benefiting	6	£5,769.32
No. young people receiving training	6	
Part-time jobs created (formerly unemployed)	2	
Partnerships formed with groups/organisations	7	
FC Woodland sites used	2	
<i>Outcomes: increased self-confidence and range of skills learnt, improved behaviour of young people.</i>		

Other initiatives that promote the *Woodlands for People* theme include:

- Mental health woodland workshops
- Youth Offending Team outdoor activities
- School tree planting sessions
- Craft skills taught in woodland environment e.g. wood turning

Coed Ty Llwyd

Since the beginning of the Coed Ty Llwyd Community Woodland project in the autumn of 2003, Tir Coed has worked closely with the management group (Nanteos Woodland Group) and has assisted project development. This has involved: raising awareness about the project, facilitating meetings to discuss management and use of the site, encouraging key service providers working with disadvantaged groups to use the site, facilitating training for support workers and running courses on the site. The purpose of the project is to create a woodland that is better managed and has direct community involvement and ownership. This is the type of woodland management concept that Tir Coed is hoping to facilitate and support in other areas over the next financial year.

A New Emphasis on Woodland Management

Woodland Management Day

In September 2003 a Woodland Management Day was held in Llanfarian. In total, about 20 people participated and representatives from FC, Tir Coed, Small Woods Association and FCA were present. The day included a range of presentations, discussions and woodland site visits to both private and publicly managed woodlands. Everyone appeared to enjoy the day and discussions were lively and useful.

Woodland Management Day	Total tputs 03/04	T
No. attendees	20	£70
Woodland site visits	2	
No. self employed assisted	12	
No. women involved	6	
<i>Outcomes: Private and public woodland sites visited, increased awareness of management systems, silvicultural practices and biodiversity.</i>		

Tir Coed is currently in discussion with the Forest Stewardship Council, the Forestry Commission, the Forestry Contractors Association and the Soil Association to devise a training package that fully explains the principles of forest certification to key beneficiaries. In addition, this will enable Tir Coed to promote and advise on sustainable, responsible methods of forest management.

Wales as a Location for World-class Forest Industries

Timber Conversion Demonstration

In September, a timber conversion day was held in the Ystwyth Valley. Over 90 people observed a range of on-farm sawing demonstrations. This included two mobile saws, wood chipper and processor and various other forms of machinery. It proved to a successful information and networking day for all involved.

Timber Conversion Demo	Total Outputs 03/04	Total Costs 03/04
No. attendees	92	£2006.21
No. contractors supported	5	
Client feedback (completed sheets)	54	
No. machines demonstrated	5	
<i>Outcomes: Increased potential for income generation and sales of local products. Networking opportunity for local contractors and woodland owners.</i>		

Timber Auction

On Saturday 11 October, Tir Coed held its first timber auction at IGER farm, Trawsgoed near Aberystwyth. Timber used in the conversion demonstration in September was auctioned on the day and in total 80 lots of a variety of timber were up for grabs. Sales were slow to start and although not all the timber sold it was a good first auction with timber growers and end users networking effectively.

It is anticipated that another timber auction will be held in the future although it was felt that a professional auctioneer and more on-site preparation before the day would improve the event.

Timber Auction	Total Outputs 03/04	03/04
No. attendees	45	£10 (fee for advert)
No. vendors	9	
No. lots	80	
Total no. sales	70	
<i>Outcomes: Increased sales of round and sawn timber into local market, increased internal networking, reduced cost of transport & purchase. Local timber bought at the auction has been used in local building.</i>		

Training

Due to a high demand for training courses and support for new-entrants into the industry, Tir Coed held a series of training events during the winter of 2004. These included:

- 5-day basic Chainsaw training for potential contractors, Hafod Estate, Jan 26th-31st (5 candidates)
- Basic chainsaw assessment, 11-12th February (3 candidates passed)
- 2-day Hedgelaying training course, 12-13th February (8 people attended)
- 1-day hedgelaying training course, 21st February (4 people attended)
- 3-day Instructional Techniques Course, 17th-19th February (8 attendees)
- 3-day Medium Tree Felling Course (4 candidates)
- Medium Tree Felling Assessment (4 candidates passed)
- Wood Turning Course, January 5th-6th (3 participants)
- Green wood working day, 27th March (5 participants)

A Diverse and Healthy Environment

Tree Planting

Last autumn, pupils from Ysbysty Ystwyth primary school helped to secure the future of indigenous oak trees in the Ystwyth Valley by taking part in an acorn collection session. The pupils monitored the progress of the saplings at a local tree nursery over the winter before replanting part of a National Assembly woodland in March.

An addition, a tree planting session was held in partnership with Forestry Commissions Social Team in March 2004. This involved people that attend a local mental health unit planting native species in Assembly woodland. These sessions had a strong educational theme emphasising the importance and raising awareness of woodland species and habitats.

Tree Planting Sessions	Total Outputs 03/04	Total Costs 03/04
No. tree planting sessions	2	No cost.
No. people involved	39	
No. clear-fell sites planted	2	
<i>Outcomes: local people taught to plant and care for trees</i>		

Tir Coed also provides advice and support to woodland owners and contractors on an ad-hoc basis. Part of this advice is to encourage owners and managers to increase the biodiversity of their woodlands.

Tourism, Recreation and Health

Multi-user Trail Study

In September 2003, a tender brief was put together for the Ystwyth Valley multi-user trail feasibility study. This study was completed and culminated in an open meeting in December where the consultants discussed the Coed Maen Arthur mountain bike trail with the community.

A subsequent economic impact assessment was commissioned by Pentir Pumlumon in March and is currently underway.

Ystwyth Valley Woodland Health Open Day

In September a health open day was organised by Tir Coed in the Ystwyth Valley. This proved to be a highly successful event and we were blessed with good weather. Welsh celebrity swimmer Catrin Davies opened the event and a number of health organisations and health food organisations provided a range of information stalls at the local Community Centre. Over 200 people attended and participated in woodland walks and around 30 teams participated in our orienteering/woodland quiz competition.

Health Open Day	Total Outputs 03/04	Total Costs 03/04
No. participating organisations (stalls)	10	£573.69
Participants on woodland walks	90	
Total participants	200	
<i>Outcomes: Day included children's nature trails, young people involved through youth clubs, Cardiac nurses have started woodland programme for patients to walk in woodlands, partnership formed with Ceredigion Walking to Health Partnership to promote walking to older people.</i>		

Healthy Walks Booklet

In partnership with the Forestry Commission and Coed Lleol, Tir Coed also produced a *Healthy Walks in the Ystwyth Valley* booklet in the autumn of 2003. This was distributed to doctor's surgeries in the area and is now being used by community nurses to promote woodland walks to patients.

Healthy Walks Booklet	Total Outputs 03/04	Total Costs 03/04
No. leaflets produced	2,000	£1,000
No. Doctor's surgeries distributed to	5	
<i>Outcomes: Promotion of woodlands as a resource to assist primary health care, community nurses now using the booklet to promote walking to patients.</i>		

3. Publicity and Policy

The following publicity activities have taken place over the last six months:

- Re-designed, updated and fully translated website launched in winter 2003
- Tir Coed listing in Carmarthenshire Sustainable Guide
- Tir Coed listing in Sustrans guide
- Re-designed Tir Coed flier for use at events and meetings
- Press release in FC Connect bulletin
- Attended series of meetings with 'new' organisations
- Attended funding fair for mental health support organisations

Tir Coed is an active member of the following boards, partnerships and strategic groups:

- Carmarthenshire Woodlands Forum
- Forestry Contractors Association Steering Group
- Small Woods Association Steering Group
- Wales Woodland Forum
- Wales Woodland Forum Community Development Sub-group
- Cei Dev Menter Group
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- Ceredigion Walking Your Way to Health Partnership
- Carmarthenshire Environmental Network
- Communities First Partnership

4. Staff Development

In December, Vic Williams joined the Tir Coed team as Project Development/Admin Officer. In the same month, the Ystwyth Valley Co-ordinator's contract came to an end and interviews took place. Gwyneth Davies was the successful candidate and we are pleased that she accepted her new fixed-term contract!

Staff training and development is key to Tir Coed's success. As such, over the last six months the Tir Coed Director has attended *Valuing People and Change* and *Become the Leader You Want to Be* courses, whilst the Ystwyth Valley Co-ordinator attended a *Participatory Evaluation Planning* course run by WCVA. The Project Development/Admin Officer is currently receiving training in editing websites that will enable Tir Coed to modify and update its site as required.

5. Issues/Problems Encountered

Over the past few months Tir Coed has been able to focus on delivery of projects and its core objectives. However, in February it was announced that the office currently occupied by Tir Coed in Victoria House was needed by the Forestry Commission. As a consequence, much of our time in February and March has been spent looking for affordable premises and making arrangements for the move. This has inevitably slowed down our project work and may mean we will need to review our project plan for the next few years to allow for the extra financial costs.

6. Planned Events for 2004-05

- Participation in the Small Woods Association Summer Festival
- Stall at the West Wales Wood Fair
- Woodland Management, Co-operative Working and Tree Nurseries training in Brechfa
- Establishing Renewable Energy group
- Presenting at the Wales Woodland Forum & Wales Off-Road Motorcycling Conference
- 'Building a Woodland Den' Workshop
- Drum making sessions with Youth Clubs
- Developing Maes Y Pwll Community Woodland, New Quay in partnership with Ceredigion County Council
- Community arts project with local disabled group in Carmarthenshire
- Activities with Carmarthenshire Probation Service
- Partnership project with SWA in Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire
- Training in Certification and Chain of Custody for key beneficiaries
- Second Woodland Health Open Day in July
- Visit from Lecturer and student from Japan
- Involvement with Neem Foundation project in Gambia

7. Thanks

Thanks to all our Directors for helping us secure funding for the next few years and thanks to the Forestry Commission for their support in developing projects in National Assembly Woodland.