

**Something to Shout about: VINE Year 1 Summary**

**In the first eight months of VINE being on the ground at project sites, Tir Coed have exceeded many of the outputs for the full three years.** This highlights the real needs that VINE is meeting.

A total of 873 individuals have been engaged in projects during Year 1, as well as providing 30+ freelance people much needed work opportunities in the rural areas VINE is based.

All three sites have been greatly improved by the volunteers' work, helping the wider community to enjoy the woodland as a recreational facility and increasing the bio-diversity of the flora and fauna.

- ◆ 38 people have been introduced to a variety of woodland skills on 6 training courses (two per site) and 26 have achieved accreditation
  - ◆ 110 Agored Cymru Credits have been achieved via 37 completed units at Level 1 & 2. For some, this has been a real source of pride
  - ◆ 33 have progressed into further training, education or employment from being NEET or unemployed before joining the course
  - ◆ 23 Improvements to the woodlands' facilities and access have been made including compost toilets, shelters, gates, stiles and pathways
  - ◆ 325 people from the wider community have attended VINE Open Days, having a chance to try out some new skills, learn more about the woodland on their doorstep, and have their say over what they would like to see happening in the woodland
  - ◆ 522 people have engaged with VINE Special Activity Days; bespoke sessions facilitated for a range of needs and abilities, including:
    - ◇ children with autism
    - ◇ children in care
    - ◇ mental health groups
    - ◇ elderly groups
    - ◇ family centres
    - ◇ minority communities and more
  - ◆ Local primary schools have been able to access their woodlands and learn more about nature; all rating experiences very highly
- Considering that on the ground activities only started in April these statistics are exceptional.

*"I had a thoroughly wonderful time and its something I want to repeat, I would recommend it to anybody who's disabled or able bodied"*

**Special Activity Day participant**



**STOP PRESS**

**Tir Coed's  
Festive Fifteen  
Birthday  
Bonanza**

**Sun 14 Dec**

**Aberystwyth  
Rugby Club**

**Come and Join us**

*See page 2 for details*



**Inside this Newsletter**

- **Festive Fifteen**
- **VINE Updates:**
  - **Lampeter**
  - **Llanfarian**
  - **Llanidloes**
- **Apprenticeship Project**
- **Partnerships: Harvesting The Knowledge Project**
- **News**
- **WiseWoods Wales**

**Festive 15**

**TIR COED**

**Celebrate**  
an authentic Christmas for  
Tir Coed's 15th birthday

Natural Christmas decoration workshops  
Local and original craft stalls  
Santa's Grotto hand-crafted by  
Wise Woods Wales  
Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and  
Christmas Buffet  
Plus... carols, storytelling and much  
more

Free entrance from 3pm  
Sunday 14th of December at the Rugby Club,  
Abergystwyth

Followed by a Twmpath and Christmas food  
from 6pm, 5 pounds or free for under 12s

## Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Lampeter - Training Course 2

### Introduction to Coppicing and Coppice Products - September to November 2014

Activity Leader:	Tony Eames
Support:	Ben Allen
Sessions:	22
Total no. volunteers:	9
No. volunteer days:	114
No. volunteer hours:	687

Volunteers on the VINE Introduction to Coppicing and Coppiced Products course learnt how to survey, clear brash and fell small trees. They also learnt how to construct and install a stile and create steps from coppiced products, so as to open up and create an interesting new footpath, all under the experienced leadership of Tony Eames and supported by Ben Allen. Four of the participants worked

towards Agored Cymru Units and 6 of the volunteers created beautifully crafted items. Four chairs were crafted from coppiced products and 2 volunteers worked together to create a beautiful Ash Gate.

Sadly, not all 9 of the participants who originally started, could commit for the duration of the course, 2 were unfortunately unable to continue due to unforeseen health issues.

One day had to be postponed due to high wind. The stove in the sheltered area was put to good use at the Forest School during the coldest days of the course.

#### Feedback:

*"It has helped with my CV"*

*"Learnt new skills using tools and making things and enjoyed being sociable"*

*"This course has helped me massively with knowledge given by tutors and a great knowledge of experience in woodland management and coppicing"*

*"It has helped me gain confidence in using tools with wood. Also helped my mental health by being outside in the natural environment"*



#### Accreditation

Agored Cymru Unit	Level	Total Achieved
Introduction to Coppicing	1	4
Coppice Products	2	4

#### Progression

Volunteering	2
Training /Further or Higher Education	2
Employment/ Self-Employment	1

Activity Leader:	Sally Harvey
Support:	Anna Thomas
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers	18
No. volunteer hours:	36

Activities were organised at Long Wood for this year's Women In Tune Festival. The sessions were restricted to girls and women and offered 'off-site' activities as part of the Women In Tune programme. These practical sessions enhanced and added value to the diverse programme of events and activities at this annual local festival, situated nearby Long Wood Community Woodland.

18 participants learnt about traditional tools used for whittling and carving, and developed green wood craft skills, under the instruction of Sally Harvey and Anna Thomas.

Participants made mallets, stools and even a bow and arrow to take away with them. All were very keen and eager to learn new skills and enjoyed working in the soothing natural environment. A selection of comments about what individuals learnt and enjoyed follows.

#### Feedback

*"The use of different woodworking tools, how to make a stool or mallet"*

*"That I'm not as bad at woodworking as I thought I would be! I made a mallet"*

*"Using a draw knife and shavehorse"*

*"How to make a mallet, how to work wet wood"*

*"To use lots of woodworking tools"*

*"I learnt to make a small three legged stool with a decoratively carved top"*

*"Even beginners can quickly learn to use tools"*

*"How to use draw knives, selecting wood for the task, watching what other people did and learning from the group"*

*"How to make a bow and get arrows"*

*"Green wood skills, making pegs to make an animal"*

*"Being out in the woods, working with women in a group and learning how to use tools"*

*"The whole experience"*

*"The environment, hands on with the tools and finished item"*

*"Working in a women's space, learning new woodcraft techniques"*

*"The beautiful setting – helpful teaching and nice company"*

*"Making a stool. Being able to get on with it but having the tutors there if I had a question"*

*"I really enjoyed doing /creating and learning things I have never done before. It was great, helpful and supportive and lovely being outside"*

*"Fantastic, have enlarged my skill base, loved it"*

*"Thank you for making working with you and the project so easy."*

*"I only heard good things about the workshops" Women In Tune organisers*



Activity Leader:	Emma Sampson
Support:	Meinir Evans
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	9
No. volunteer hours:	18

Another session organised as part of the programme of activities for the Women in Tune event, located nearby in Llanfair.

The walk was led by knowledgeable wildlife enthusiast, Emma Sampson and included nine of the women who were attending the local music festival. The wildlife identification walk provided an opportunity for participants to take a stroll in

a relaxing environment, on a lovely sunny afternoon, and discover the wealth of wildlife at Long Wood Community Woodland. The session went really well, with participants keen to discover the background to how the Community Woodland was established, and the variety of habitat and species on site.



#### Feedback

##### What was learnt?

*"Saw badger droppings, identified several wild flowers and plants and looked at ferns and fungi, berries and animal habitat"*

*"Lots of names of plants we recognise but didn't know names of"*

*"I learnt to identify lots of plants & how to tell which animal has eaten a hazelnut by the discarded shell"*

*"Names of several plants, ferns, fungi .... & about the community management of the woods"*

*"Different wild plants and trees and about wildlife habitat"*

*"Different plants and hedgerow design, oh and badger loos!"*



##### What did you enjoy?

*"All of it: lovely walking slowly through woodland being able to ask questions and discuss with other walkers"*

*"Interesting stories of plant names"*

*"It was perfectly pitched"*

*"All of it was fantastic I really liked learning about the medicinal plants"*

*"Lovely informative afternoon, with lovely guides"*

*"Walking slowly, noticing, learning and sharing details I'd usually pass by"*

*"Being in a group and two great guides"*

*"Gentle observation"*

All participants were keen to do this activity again and one stated that they would bring visitors with them on their next visit.

*"I really enjoyed the challenge of coming up with a route and plenty of talking points for the wildlife walk. I really enjoyed the process and felt it went really well, I was very pleased with the feedback I got. We were lucky to get nice weather and such keen and enthusiastic participants"* **Emma Sampson**



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

### Art Based Play Day Session for Children - 28 August 2014

Activity Leader: Lea Wakesman  
Support: Jane Trewin  
Sessions: 1  
Total no. volunteers: 7  
No. volunteer hours: 42

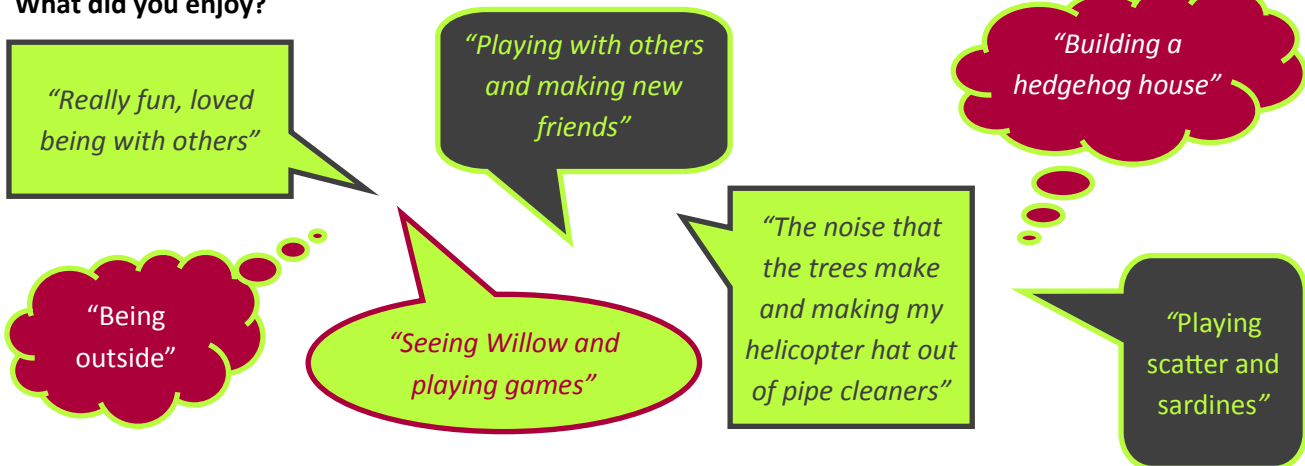


These sessions were arranged to offer children an opportunity to play freely and enjoy being outdoors at Long Wood Community Woodland.

As well as the free play sessions, the children had opportunities to create works of art and develop circus skills. The day was split up into different art based activities; a bee hive activity which was very directed and materials were provided. Lots of materials were also provided to make magic wands and hair pieces. The next activity, making hedgehog houses, was much more led by nature and the children's imagination. The day was finished off with a free play activity where items of circus equipment were available to use. The feedback from both the children and the Leaders was fabulous.

#### Feedback

##### What did you enjoy?



The participants rated the day on a 1-10 scale as follows (10 = Excellent)



*“All activities were received well by the children, they were free to be creative as well as learning new skills. I feel the mixture of directed and non-directed play works well, catering for the differences in all the children. It was also good to see the older children taking an active role in guiding the younger children. Lots of fun had by all who attended”* **Lea Wakeman**



## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Day

### Wildlife Monitoring - 15 & 22 September 2014

Activity Leaders:	Scott Roe
Volunteer Support:	Meinir Evans
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers	11
No. volunteer hours:	66

These sessions were planned to introduce wildlife surveying methods and provide datasets on the wildlife in selected parts of the woods.

Four areas were selected for monitoring, including the pond and the area around the new visitor centre. Two sections in the plantation area, which is due to be thinned, were selected so as to establish a baseline of the wildlife present.

Further surveys of this area are planned in 2015, which should allow the group to record and measure the positive impact of thinning on the plantation area, as more light reaches the forest floor and regeneration is encouraged.

Every participant was provided with a factsheet titled 'Introduction to Wildlife Survey Methods', and a colour guide book to identify local wildlife, created by Scott Roe. The sessions received very positive feedback and the volunteers involved are keen to use the skills learnt in further surveys.

#### Feedback

*"I discovered different mosses and learnt how to look for different wildlife – I am now more mindful of wildlife"*

*"I learnt about different Dragon Flies and a little about mosses. We also discovered that not much grows in a plantation area due to poor nutrition"*

*"A great introduction to field ecology"*

*"It was a wonderful insight into how to monitor wildlife"*

*"Fascinating to discover the diverse wildlife habitat at Long Wood Community Woodland"*

*"The ID sheets that Scott provided were excellent, especially on animal signs"*

*"Taking the time to discover, I enjoyed pond dipping and how light effects wildlife"*

*"A friendly like minded group. I enjoyed the identification and the informative discussions on the philosophy of ecology"*

*"Meeting such knowledgeable enthusiasm is always a joy"*

*"My first biodiversity sessions at Longwood were very rewarding and the volunteers really did contribute to creating the beginnings of an ecological monitoring programme for the site. I'm so pleased to see Tir Coed putting biodiversity and monitoring at the heart of their community woodland work"* **Scott Roe, Field Ecologist at Vital Ecology**



**Ecology**

## Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Day

### Camfan (Mental Health Drop-in Centre): Art Installations - 3 & 10 November 2014

Activity Leaders:	Mark Folds
Support:	Jane Campbell (Maj)
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers	10
No. volunteer hours:	40



Camfan, the Gwalia Care and Support Drop-in Resource Centre, based in Lampeter, caters for adults and their families who are experiencing mental health issues.

Camfan clients have often benefitted from being able to access the therapeutic nature of the woodland setting, and decided they would like to create something artistic or sculptural for their local woodland. Sessions were arranged for clients, to work with community artists, to explore these ideas further, and plans were hatched for creating some signage for use in Long Wood Community Woodland.

Most of the group were familiar with the woods (one participant having been involved in tree planting in his younger years locally, whilst working for the Forestry Commission, Wales) and could therefore draw on individual experiences.

Many creative ideas were developed and participants were helped to research online, which allowed them to collect imagery for use in the final designs. All participants were engaged in the design and making processes. The group worked hard, learning various techniques in design, transferring their designs onto wood and learning to carve. The hard physical demands of carving meant that a few of the group, who had motor difficulties, could not work continuously for long periods, but each individual worked to the best of their ability.

The centre was enthused by the level of involvement and achievement attained by individuals during these sessions, and are keen to host more, so that potentially more clients could be involved.

#### Feedback

*"I believe the momentum and interest started by this project, should continue in the Spring, with a client visit to the woods"* **Mark Folds**

*"This project animated the clients that got involved and seemed to draw out artistic qualities that they had forgotten they had, since leaving school. Conversations were initiated during shared drawing about past occupations and memories of good times. The clients seemed delighted with the idea that their artwork would be public locally, and that we might have an opening ceremony when the signs would be displayed."* **Jane Campbell (Maj)**

#### What was learnt and enjoyed?

*"Skills - How to carve wood", "Woodcrafting and controlling tools", "Everything was perfect", "Fantastic"*  
Further sessions are being planned so that the group can install their signs, on site at Long Wood.





Activity Leaders:	Benjamin Grey
Support:	Rob Smith Eifion Wakefield (Tir Coed Apprentice)
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	52
No. volunteer hours:	156



This Open Day was arranged as part of the inaugural *Make Together Festival* on Saturday 4 October, organised by Lampeter Chamber of Trade, to celebrate local crafting talent and opportunities.

Located in Victoria Hall, Lampeter and across the road at Parc yr Orsedd, there was great interest from the public. Tir Coed's VINE and Apprenticeship projects joined forces to provide a Master Class in carving spoons and spatulas. Led by experienced woodsmen and carvers Benjamin Grey and Rob Smith, and ably supported by Tir Coed Apprentice, Eifion Wakefield; people of all ages were helped to experience and enjoy some hands-on crafty woodwork.

It was wonderful to see the children and young people having-a-go at creating their very first spoon or spatula. The expert guidance of the Activity Leaders meant that many spoons and spatulas were crafted to a very high standard. This event certainly sparked an interest in green wood carving for quite a few visitors and participants, as many were very proud of their creations by the end of the day.

The green wood craft sessions complimented the other crafts on offer in the Victoria Hall and made people aware of the breadth of creativity possible from locally sourced materials.



**Feedback:**

*"It was fantastic, we need more of these types of activities organised for parents and children to enjoy"*

*"My boys were so proud of the spoons they created, and I'm sure this is a start of a new found hobby"*

*"My son thoroughly enjoyed his afternoon at Parc yr Orsedd making a spoon and spatula. It is fantastic to see children and young people engaging in traditional craft skills in an age when technology and media take up so much of their time"*



Roundwood Shelter Construction - August to November 2014

Activity Leader: Jamie Miller  
 Support: Ray Miller  
 Sessions: 25  
 Total no. volunteers: 15  
 No. volunteer days: 175  
 No. volunteer hours: 1050

The focus for Training Course 2 has been the construction of a roundwood timber-framed



Volunteer shelter, to be used as the base for future VINE activities on site.

This latest build project helps to further improve the facilities available for groups at Coed Tyllwyd, and aims to enhance the woodland experience by providing wet weather cover, and a hub for activities.

The original design for the building was a standard rectangular shape using square-cut timber. Fortunately however, the project was able to employ the services of Tŷ Pren and Jamie Miller, an experienced and creative timber-framer, who designed a more impressive building, that sits naturally in the woodland surroundings. All the wood for the building has been sourced from within Coed Tyllwyd, and the sawn timber has been processed by Tir Coed's Social Enterprise, WiseWoods Wales (based at the site).

The shelter has been built by a group from the Rathbone Centre in Aberystwyth; part of a UK-wide youth charity that helps young people who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) to transform their lives through learning.

The centre offers participants a variety of opportunities to improve their skills and qualifications, through practical support, positive experiences, activities, challenges and work placements. This Training Course proved very popular with the young people as it offered both practical skills and accreditation. Although attendance fluctuated considerably at the start of the course, it soon steadied to a regular, enthusiastic core group. The course has allowed participants to establish a routine and gain practical skills from working with carpentry as well as developing social and teamworking skills.



**Feedback**

*"I really feel as if I'm achieving something"*

Rathbone staff have observed increased motivation and commitment from participants as a result of this project too.

*"The participants have always been excited to attend the activity days, and are sad to see the course coming to an end. They have thoroughly enjoyed themselves."*

**Accreditation**

Agored Cymru Unit	Level	Total Achieved
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	2	7

**Progression**

Volunteering	3
Training /Further or Higher Education	10
Employment/ Self-Employment	2

## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Tim Plant Anabl CEREDIGION Disabled Children's Team: Woodland Experience - 1, 15 & 22 August 2014

Activity Leader:	Ben Grey Andrew Dugmore
Support:	Milo Ames Eifion Wakefield Adam Rees
Sessions:	3
Total no. volunteers	13
No. volunteer hours:	182

Tim Plant Anabl is a multi-agency partnership team set up between Ceredigion Social Services, Education and Hywel Dda NHS Trust; to co-ordinate services for children and young people aged 0-18 (and their families) who have a learning, physical or sensory disability that causes significant difficulty in daily living. The provision aims to minimise the impact of the disability or illness and maximise each child's integration into society.

Three separate sessions were organised for a group of youngsters from this Aberystwyth team to give a range of practical opportunities in the outdoor environment.



**Three-legged Stool making:** Benjamin Grey, supported by Milo Ames (Tir Coed Graduate Apprentice) and Eifion Wakefield (current Apprentice) worked on skills to allow members of the group to make three-legged stools. Demonstrations followed by practical experiences in crafting the various elements of the stools, saw individuals using draw knives and shave horses to shape legs and seats.

The participants were quite shy and nervous at the start of the session, but as the day progressed there was a significant transformation in their attitude and behaviour, and by the end of the day they showed much more confidence. All participants thoroughly enjoyed developing new skills.

**Survival skills and orienteering :** This activity with Andrew Dugmore developed a range of survival skills in the woodland, including how to make dens, light fires, track and catch animals and collect food. The day was made fun for the participants, by learning through playing games.

Some of the participants found it difficult to engage with the task and mix with others, but the majority found some confidence in each other, and were able to enjoy the activities.

**Spoon Carving:** The spoon carving session provided a great follow on from the stool making experience. Again led by Benjamin Grey, this time participants were able to concentrate on creating a useful kitchen implement; starting with a block of wood, splitting it, shaping and then carving a design. Each individual fully engaged with the task and enjoyed being taken through the processes of carving, from raw material to finished product.

The participants became relaxed in the woodland setting and were comfortable when working on the tasks.

Participants were able to take home their finished items and it was evident from their smiles how much they had enjoyed the session.



### Feedback:

*"The atmosphere in the woods was very pleasant."*

*"Enjoyed shelter building and using a fire steel"*

*"Enjoyed doing different activity to daily routine"*

*"The sessions were great"*

*"Nice to see the young people having fun!"*

*"More time and a longer session"*

## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Penparcau Family Centre: Art and Craft in the Woodland - 21 August & 30 October 2014

Activity Leader:	Lea Wakeman Jenny Dingle
Support:	Anna Thomas Jane Rigby
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers	43
No. volunteer hours:	285



Penparcau Family Centre returned for more busy Activity Days. The first, combined a selection of art based activities designed to suit the woodland environment, with some circus skills, to ensure that younger participants had plenty to keep them occupied.

The Family Centre was overwhelmed by the response from families to attend on each day, and this created a significant difference between the planned number of participants and the actual attendees. This meant that some activity sessions became oversubscribed and a little awkward to manage, as it was difficult to ensure that everyone had a chance to do each of the activities. However, most enjoyed what was on offer even though some found the woodland environment to be out of their 'comfort zone', and some found the session too long.

Participants were given the freedom to decide how long they would engage in activities, and some chose to leave slightly earlier than others. This allowed for differences in concentration and enjoyment whilst also helping to ease the pressure of the large group size on resources.

The second session provided a variety of activities on the theme of Halloween; including making potions, brooms, dens and bat shaped toast, playing games and finding images of creatures that live in the wood at night.

This was another successful day with everyone having a good time. The children were able to take home the brooms and products they made in the woods.



### Feedback:

"More of the same!"

"Excellent"



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Coed Tyllwyd Volunteer Days - 8, 15 August, 10, 24, 31 October & 14 November 2014

Activity Leader:	Gavin Doram Rob Smith
Support:	Polly Williams
Sessions:	6
Total no. volunteers	12
No. volunteer hours:	114



Coed Tyllwyd Volunteer Days have been set up as a way to sustain regular maintenance work around the site.

A variety of people have been involved, most being out of work and seeking ways to gain valuable practical skills and volunteering experience.

Six sessions have been completed so far, with the group concentrating on pathway maintenance or upgrade and improving the safety of access with steps.

The footpath leading to the proposed volunteer shelter build site was the first to be tackled, with the physically stronger participants working hard to move a lot of earth, in order to create footings and consolidate the ground.

Following this, two flights of steps have been constructed, to ease the climb to the shelter build project site, and make the footpath less hazardous to walk.

The weather conditions have, on the whole, been quite good for most sessions, but it was noticeable that a stormy day reduced the volunteer numbers greatly. The enjoyment factor is obviously a big influence for participants on these days, and so it is no surprise that bad weather and uncomfortable conditions affect attendance. A big thank you to all the volunteers who have helped so far.

### Feedback:

- The participants felt that if the woods were to be better advertised, and if there could be a map put on Facebook, this would help people reach the woods
- Asking people individually is a better approach to gathering potential volunteers
- A suggestion, to hold a weekly volunteering session, could make raising the profile of the volunteering opportunity easier
- It would be worth having signs on the main road at Llanfarian, advertising the woods and directing people to it, as people often find it difficult to reach. It would be a way of helping more people engage with their local woodlands too



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Three-day Sustainable Woodland Management Course - 15, 16 & 17 Oct 2014

Activity Leader:	Bob Shaw
Support:	Rob Smith Ben Allen
Sessions:	3
Total no. volunteers	14
No. volunteer hours:	254



**Day 1:** was an introduction to woodland crafts, where the participants were able to learn about the traditional woodland crafts of a forest, and then put some of these skills into practice.

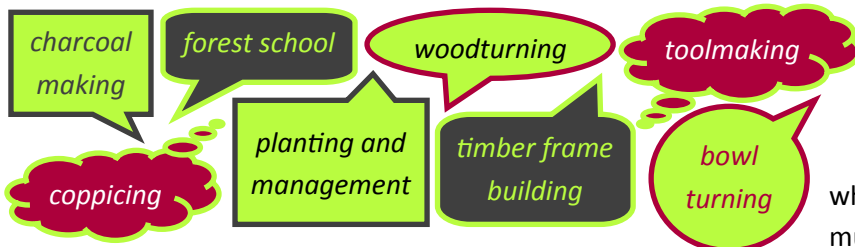
**Day 2:** was an exercise in felling small trees, and making fence posts, gates and hurdles from the wood which they sourced.

**Day 3:** was a woodland management focused day. The participants were able to learn from Bob Shaw (a hugely experienced local woodsman), the theoretical reasons for woodland management, and then this was put into practice, where the participants undertook management of an area in Coed Tyllwyd Wood.

These sessions were very successful, with the number of voluntary participants being consistent over the three days of the course. The participants saw Bob as an excellent tutor, and were keen to move on from this series of days, to do a Woodland Management course with us in Coed Tyllwyd.

The interest in having a regular forest school activity is also still quite strong.

A few ideas were thrown around as to what activities people would like Tir Coed to arrange in the woods such as:



A potential group of people have been reached who would be willing to undertake a course of Woodland Management at Coed Tyllwyd, and who would then be useful in getting much of the required work done.

### Feedback:

*“Excellent tutor, empathetic, massively knowledgeable & encouraging and with kind spirit and vision. Actually getting to make items myself from start to finish, felling to end piece.”*

*“More hours in the day so that the activities can go on for longer.”*

*“Smaller groups would be nice”*



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

### Actif Woods Wales: Foraging and Willow Weaving - 17 & 24 October 2014

Activity Leaders:	Chloe Griffiths (foraging) Alice Midmore
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers:	22
No. volunteer hours:	66



The Actif Woods Wales, Aberystwyth group had a chance to engage with some foraging and willow weaving activities. The majority of participants were vulnerable older people, with a range of visual impairments and mobility difficulties. They were able to participate in activities outdoors, which they were interested in, and where their impairments or lack of mobility was not restricting their enjoyment.



The participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves, which is evident from the photos taken. Smiles all round, and all of the participants enjoyed the relaxing environment of the woodland, and tucking in to their woodland picnics. We were fortunate to have good weather; the woodland environment may not have been so enjoyable to the group if the weather was bad that day. When the Tir Coed Shelter is built, it will give a more sheltered spot for people to set up base camp. Work needs to be done to improve the pathways in the woodland so as to improve the accessibility to people with visual impairments. This is under way with the volunteer days. Some of the less fit/confident participants found the steep nature of the woodland quite challenging.



The weather was sunny all day with a breeze. The participants had visual impairments and their abilities/balance was impaired for a variety of reasons. One of the participants suffered from vertigo, another was a young girl of 16 with severe visual impairment and a guide dog. An elderly man was completely blind. The safe environment and the happy atmosphere meant that all the participants could enjoy their day.

It was rewarding to hear that people had tried something new, and tried willow weaving and foraging, when they did not have the confidence to do this individually. They would like to come and visit Coed Tyllwyd on another occasion.

#### Feedback:

*"I enjoyed the way plants of the edible kind have been pointed out and explained. I learned a lot"*

*"I enjoyed learning new things, the glorious walk in the wood, making willow crafts, hedgerow foraging, wonderful tutors including Geraint, Chloe and Alice. Wonderful weather"*

*"Lovely tutor – Alice. Activity was well explained. Good company"*  
*"Company, laughter, tuition with the weaving"*

The support staff that came with the group were very impressed with the activity day, and were keen to arrange another session.



## Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Borth Family Centre: Forest School Day - 28 October 2014

Activity Leader:	Sally Harvey
Support:	Alice Midmore
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	37
No. volunteer hours:	111

A day of Forest School activities for Borth Family Centre, with experienced Leader, Sally Harvey gave participants lots to smile about.

Families had an opportunity to take part in activities, such as den building, leaf identification, walking the woods, making crowns from leaves, eating picnics, willow weaving, making dream-catchers and much more.

The weather was kind, with sessions throughout the whole day avoiding the rain! This was an exciting, fun-packed day which demonstrated simple, creative ideas working with natural objects, that could be repeated at home or on family trips outdoors. A successful day all round.

The feedback from the tutors, participants and family centre leaders was excellent.

### Feedback:

"The children had a brilliant time."

"It was really good"

"Lovely: eating, playing & helping each other"

"I like this!"

"All lovely, thank you."

"All was great"

"Great and fun for all"

"It was a successful day, very busy in the woods with plenty of people and activity"

Sally discovered a great site, within the woods, that is suitable for forest school activities. The plan is that this could be developed further in future, to be made a little more accommodating for visiting groups.





## Llanfarrian VINE - Open Day

Tir Coed & WiseWoods Wales, Coed Tyllwyd Open Day - Saturday 20 September 2014

Activity Leaders:	Rob Smith
Support:	WWW staff
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	35
No. volunteer hours:	105

For this Open Day, large banners and posters were put up in key places where traffic was



passing and people were walking. A few of the visitors had seen the posters around town, and based on that alone, they attended. Visitors arrived, using the car park provided, the Ystwyth Transport mini bus, and by following the Ystwyth Cycle Trail. The Open Day was unintentionally arranged on the same day as the Llanfarain Village Agricultural Show. However, this actually proved to be an advantage in the end, as people who came to the Open Day first, continued on to the Show (using the minibus to move between sites), and other show-goers later made a trip to the woods.



Families enjoyed a treasure hunt around the woods, and the children enjoyed the woodland environment, face painting and have-a-go activity sessions.



Rob Smith was demonstrating traditional woodcraft techniques on a pole lathe, as well as wood splitting and carving spatulas and spoons. After listening intently, whilst information and instruction was being given, visitors soon became absorbed in the practical elements of these taster sessions. Children and adults alike were well engaged in these activities, and clearly enjoyed the hands-on experience.



There was much interest in the possibility of establishing a regular forest school for the children, and for children whose parents have chosen to home-educate.

Andy Bakewell presented the work of WiseWoods Wales at their base site workshop, and conducted demonstrations on the saw mill, tractor and crane. Examples of the range of products that WiseWoods make were also on display.

Tir Coed and WiseWoods staff were pleased with the outcome of the day, as there had been plenty of opportunity to talk to the public and promote the work of both organisations. There was much interest in the role that the organisations have in woodlands locally, and a number of volunteers were recruited.

### Feedback

*"A very positive day"*

## Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Llanidloes - Training Course 2

### Work Site, table and benches - August to November 2014

Activity Leader: Colin Titley  
 Support: Dave Thomas  
 Sessions: 25  
 Total no. volunteers: 8  
 No. volunteer hours: 816



As there were no pre-existing facilities on the site, the trainees on this course created two sheltered activity areas: one for the training courses, with a workbench, seating and a store for materials; the second, being a purpose built, wheelchair-accessible seating area. Considerable ground works were completed, including felling larch for shoring up areas of sloping ground that needed levelling. The training area has since been used by groups on activity days. The multi-function seating area, designed and built by the trainees, consists of an octagonal solid oak table, accessed by a wheelchair ramp. The trainees have completed the complex, attractive, well-designed, sculptural table structure, which is built to last. The design allows up to four wheelchair users to access the activity space, alongside seating for eight able-bodied volunteers.

Of the eight trainees, two were new, and six used this as a progression from the previous course. The team have worked hard, working well together, particularly during the ground-work, earth-moving and levelling. All have enjoyed being engaged in the design process and two trainees worked on CAD designs at home, and later presented these to the Town Council as part of the approval process. The contribution of trainees has been much appreciated by visitors to the woods, and has met with their approval. Future groups will now benefit hugely from these facilities.

#### Feedback

*"It gets me out, I've met new people, exercised so I've got fitter, learnt new skills, and have a sense of achievement that my table design was accepted"*

*"It's made me go out more, instead of being in the house all the time"*

*"It's broadened my outlook and made me appreciate the natural world"*

*"I'm more proactive. It's something to get up for because I enjoy it. I can relax with people that I don't really know, who are on the same wavelength."*

*"I get a good community feel out of it. I'm not under pressure"*

*"It's improved my social confidence and ability to be part of a group. There's a point to it. When we're here we're away from drink & drugs and stuff"*

*"I wouldn't even have considered doing something like this before, but it's given me the necessary skills"*

*"I do feel more confident now"*

#### Accreditation:

Agored Cymru Unit	Level	Total
Construct Ancillary Structures to Access Routes	2	6

*"I've noticed a big change, 'x' & 'y' were extremely withdrawn and communication was very difficult, but since they've been on the course, they're now initiating conversations with a smile you didn't see before. It's given them a sense of purpose"* **Sandra Jones**, Chief Librarian



## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Conservation Days - 28 August, 25 October & 23 November 2014

Activity Leader:	Gavin Doram Dave Thomas
Support:	Dennis Stanfield
Sessions:	3
Total no. volunteers:	9
No. volunteer hours:	50

The conservation team completed work on the large living willow sculpture at Allt Goch woods. This was created previously by volunteers

on a social risk project run by local charity Compton's Yard Trust in 2007, but had not received any regular maintenance work needed to keep it in good health. It is much loved by people in the town and this was an opportunity to save the sculpture before the damage became irreversible. The team cut back dead wood, pruned the willow and put in support where it had grown weak. This will encourage healthy regrowth in the Spring. Branches growing around the sculpture were cut back to allow more light to reach it. Suitable willow branches were heeled in around the compost toilet, built on VINE Training Course 1, as they have the effect of dramatically speeding up decomposition within the chamber, as well as being a beneficial use of the nutrients on offer.

The group then moved to an area of the woods which has become dominated by beech, that had been selected by expert Scott Roe on the Biodiversity Monitoring days as a suitable test site for removal of beech, to allow other species to recolonize the area. Beech trees emit a growth suppressant which severely inhibits any other species, and very few species were found in this area, although young oaks are present. This site had been surveyed, so it will be possible to see in the coming year, the difference that has been made in biodiversity by the work undertaken.

Young saplings were removed and dead wood and brash was broken up to create habitat piles for wildlife.

The volunteers were enthusiastic and worked well together as a team. There was a good working atmosphere and a lot was accomplished.

### Feedback - what was learnt and enjoyed:

*"About the regrowth (on the willow)", "Taking tops off willow to increase lower growth & let in light"*

*"How to plant saplings" - "Don't damage the bark", "How to weave the willow"*

*"About best way to manage a willow structure, using various tools correctly and safely"*

*"Clearance of beech saplings allowing other species to regenerate"*

*"Better to use young willow for replacements as more resilient and faster growing"*

*"Very satisfying seeing the end product, engrossing, camaraderie, teamwork, fascinating, very enjoyable"*

*"Planting the willow - I've wanted to plant trees for years. How much we achieved. That people really want to be here and take care of the willow sculpture"*

*"It's good having someone who knows what they're doing (activity leaders) it makes such a difference"*

*"Good to have a mixed group"*

*"I think it's really valuable, nice to be part of something that other people can share, contributing to the community which is really rewarding. It'll be nice to walk past and see the fruits of my labours growing and have a sense of shared ownership"*



## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

### Llanidloes Cubs: Woodland Activity Sessions - 17 & 24 September 2014

Activity Leaders:	Adam Thorogood
Support:	Polly Williams
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers:	18
No. volunteer hours:	72



These woodland activity sessions went very well. A mixture of adventure and practical woodwork skills kept the Cubs busy and engaged. Adam was excellent at gaining and keeping the group's focus, and in keeping the activities fun and interesting.

#### Feedback

##### What did you enjoy?



##### What did you learn?



##### Would you like to do this again?

Everyone enjoyed the sessions very much and didn't want to leave the woods at the end of each day.

The Cub Leader, stated *“I can't believe that we're not going to be going back in the woods again”*

## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

### Kaleidoscope: Woodland Activity Day - 12 September 2014

Activity Leader:	Sarah Hulme
Support:	Philippa Farmery
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	4
No. volunteer hours:	12

A series of three sessions was planned for clients from Kaleidoscope, a Support Service for individuals with drug and alcohol issues. Kaleidoscope, is a UK wide, forward thinking organisation, committed to finding high quality and imaginative ways of supporting individuals who are

often disadvantaged by their drug use or by society, and works to provide life enhancing services and opportunities to people in their own communities. Kaleidoscope offers support to individuals so that they are empowered to make positive changes in their own lives.

Liaison with one of the Substance Abuse Workers, generated positive interest from the clients. So suitable times and dates were fixed, transport from Newtown organised and activities prepared. Unfortunately, even though a good number of individuals (9) plus a volunteer member of staff had signed up to participate in these activities, only four attended the first session. This was disappointing, as many could see the benefits to be gained from the opportunity.

The group diminished further after lunch, as one participant became a little overwhelmed by the social aspects of being in a group situation. The remaining three, however, thoroughly enjoyed the session and were keen to attend again, wanting to encourage more Kaleidoscope clients to join in too. Only two of the volunteers felt comfortable completing the evaluation.

After this initial session, circumstances changed, and it became clear that two of the keen participants were going to be unable to attend further sessions for health reasons. This sadly meant that the remaining sessions had to be cancelled. The support worker explained that this was the nature of the client group, and it was not an unusual situation. As an example she cited a weekly support group they set up at the centre in Newtown, which had been running for 4 weeks, and as yet no-one had attended.

#### Feedback

"Enjoyed the whole experience"

"Nice people"

"Whittling, walking & learning"

"Thanks"

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 =Excellent), How much did you enjoy the activity?

10

8

#### Tutor Feedback

*"It went really well. The participants seemed to really enjoy being in the woods and had lots of experiences to talk about and share, as well as how they would like to be in the woods more. It just felt nice and relaxed walking in the woods, talking and gathering materials for making things and blackberries to cook with. I think the blackberry welsh cakes (cooked on an open fire) went down really well. It was a shame more people couldn't come, but I think those that did, really enjoyed it and they were keen to come back."*



**Sarah & Philippa**



# Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Llanidloes Outreach Group: Activity Days - 28 August & 25 September 2014

Activity Leader: Cath Rigler  
Terri Sweeney  
Support: Polly Williams  
Sessions: 2  
Total no. volunteers: 9  
No. volunteer hours: 58

Another two sessions were organised for the Llanidloes Outreach Group after a request to extend activities at the end of the Summer. These sessions helped the group to meet its goal of participating in an outdoor activity once a month, and encouraged time



spent in the woodland. As several of the group have mobility problems, combined with lack of transport, this is something they are rarely able to do. However, the group have been benefitting from the new facilities and improvements made to the activity area access at Allt Goch, which has been completed by the participants on the Llanidloes VINE Training Courses.

As members of the group rarely get out to exercise, a short walk in the woods was included as part of the session. The group were also keen to cook on an open fire, so the Activity Leader prepared this as a celebration during the last session. Both sessions went well. As this group rarely access the natural environment, due to physical impairment, low confidence and lack of transport, a specially designed evaluation was used to gain feedback about what was learnt or enjoyed. A selection of responses follows:

### Feedback

“Reminded of lovely nature & beauty”

“It’s more fun outdoors”

“It’s nice to be reminded of ability to walk a short distance”

“Learn something new each time I come”

“How to use things from the woods to make art”

“Fresh air, the smells of the wood, the earth, the walk, just being outdoors”

“Using the fire wok & kettle to make tea”

“Learning a new skill”

“The quietness & company”

“Beautiful woods & everyone enjoying themselves”

“How to make a dragonfly with different materials”

“This wood is light”

“Making memory mobiles”

“The nice smell after the rain, on the trees, spending time with friends”

“Peace & tranquillity”

“Clean air, friendship, finding something new”



What do you feel you have gained from the Tir Coed activity sessions?

“Improved confidence”

“New experiences”

“Relaxation”

“Feeling of well being”

“A sense of being involved with the community”

“Thank you very much Tir Coed for giving us a wonderful experience. We’d love to do it again next year, please”

## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Land Art Activity Day - 26 October 2014

Activity Leader:	Terri Sweeney Polly Williams
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	5
No. volunteer hours:	13



A day set aside for being inspired by nature. Participants were given the chance to work with local artists using their own imaginative energies and natural objects found in the woods, to create remarkable pieces of land art.

The session went very well, and everyone who took part had a great time. The final results, as shown in the photos, were stunning, and created a lot of interest, not only from visitors and passers-by on the day, who stopped to find out what was happening, but also on facebook too. This proved to be a very good way of attracting people to the project.



### Feedback

*"I enjoyed the setting, the woods were really lovely. The activity leaders were very helpful, well prepared in terms of materials, reference books, good ideas. It was nice to meet new people as well"*

*"I enjoyed working with the artists and picking up on their knowledge, but was also pleased that Terri (artist) took me up on my idea for a different way of doing the leaf garlands.*

*The artwork we produced was really beautiful and inspiring"*

*"I made a mandala and my husband*

*put it on facebook. We had over 50 hits and I've had loads of people say how fantastic it was, and that it's encouraged them to create some land art themselves"*



*"I think it was a massive success. The artwork produced was fantastic!*

*There was a calm and creative atmosphere among the group of participants, it was a wonderful day and I really enjoyed it. It would have been good if even more people had come"*

**Polly Williams**



## Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

### Willow Sculpture Day - 26 October 2014

Activity Leader:	Beryl Smith
Support:	Alice Midmore
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	7
No. volunteer hours:	25

One of the requested activities, on the first Open Day Consultation event, was a willow sculpture session. This activity day was the result.

A purely inspiring and imaginative day was spent creating and siting a unique willow sculpture in Allt Goch woods. Various techniques were learnt, with a range of natural fibres and materials being used to weave a monumental mushroom.

The session was a great success with everyone enjoying themselves



#### Feedback

##### Enjoyed:

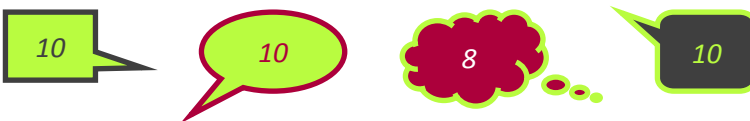
*"Creating something beautiful with natural materials, with lovely people in the woods. I really enjoyed lashing the joints, very satisfying, and seeing it put together in situ"*

*"Everything, it was great. It was lovely, really enjoyed it and it's a sense of achievement. I think it's nice to add something to the woods, to be a part of something like that. I took my friend up to see it. You're outside, it's a lovely environment. You couldn't be anywhere nicer, being out in the fresh air"*

*"The place and the people. I enjoyed the willow sculpture very much"*

*"Being part of something that's standing in the woods"*

On a scale of 1-10 (where 10 = Excellent)



##### Learned:

*"About willow sculpture, about materials, and lashing"*

*"That I'm not very good at willow weaving, and how hard it is to do properly!"*

*"I'd never done monumental (willow) weaving before.*

*It was very soothing and produced a nice feeling doing it"*

*"New weaving techniques to use with willow, and one of the key things - when you go there (to the woods) you connect with people, and it may lead to something else"*

*"It was ambitious to create a sculpture in one day, but we did it. I think it was a real success.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed it and I really don't think that we could have made it any better" Beryl Smith*





## Llanidloes VINE - Open Day

Coed Allt Goch Open Day - Saturday 30 August 2014

Activity Leaders:	Dave Thomas Chloe Griffiths
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	50
No. volunteer hours:	144

Despite a wet and windy day, the Llanidloes VINE Open Day was a huge success. Fifty members of the local community walked to the woods to enjoy a variety of activities, including charcoal burning demonstrations, children's art activities, guided nature identification walks, face painting and perhaps most importantly, lots of yummy cakes and tea!

This was a great opportunity to ask members of the community what activities they would like to see happening in the woods, and to suggest any improvement works that would help their enjoyment. The local press also came along to photograph the grand opening of the Allt Goch compost toilet, and Tir Coed Director, Ffion Farnell gave a short speech thanking everyone involved as she cut the ribbon. It was lovely to see so many people enjoying the beautiful woodland.

### Feedback:

*"Lovely activities for children and nice to be in the woods"*

*"I learnt a lot about stuff I didn't know"*

*"Good mix of people, things happening at different times, well staggered. Very informative, well-organised, great facilities. Educational in an enjoyable way. Really good atmosphere. Well done to those who built the toilet- it means people can spend longer in the woods"*

*"(I enjoyed it) very much. Thank you all. What an unusual afternoon, engaging creatively with the natural world and lots of enthusiastic volunteers!"*

*"Very good, with a great communal atmosphere"*



## The Apprenticeship Project - Wood Construction Apprenticeship

### Update and Completion

Wood Construction Apprentice, Eifion Wakefield has continued to develop his skills with mentor, Benjamin Grey. Eifion has demonstrated that he can adapt his skills to the challenges of each new task or situation. He has been as happy working on his own projects as helping others to find joy in developing their own practical craftwork skills. Eifion has shown a real flair for engaging with people (both old and young alike), whether supporting trainees starting out on Tir Coed courses, or members of the public attending Open Days, he has approached each situation with a calm enthusiasm which has, in turn, built his own confidence. He has demonstrated practical and social skills, discussing and engaging with participants/visitors about issues relating to the environmental and economic aspects of traditional crafts. Eifion added to his huge range of experiences in the last few weeks of his Apprenticeship by providing demonstrations at the following events:



#### Lampeter Make Together Festival

This inaugural event was set up to celebrate the rich diversity of talent for craft skills in the area. Its aim, to promote the activities and skills of local craftspeople, whilst encouraging more to 'have-a-go' and experience the practicalities, pleasures and benefits of using local materials and resources.

Tir Coed highlighted the use of locally-sourced timber, and helped people understand a little more about the nature of wood and its uses in building traditional frame structures as well as its uses in the home. Workshops making spatulas and spoons were offered to give 'hands-on' experiences.

- **Eifion**, spent the day demonstrating his carving skills and enthusiastically supported and aided people of all ages to achieve success in their own craftwork.



#### Apple Day Festival, Lampeter

An annual event, hosted by the Organic Fresh Food Company and Lampeter Permaculture Group, this day brings together local skills and crafts during this community apple pressing. The focus was on everything local (particularly the apples) but also highlighted sustainability, food production, resources and materials.

- **Eifion**, demonstrated skills using a variety of traditional hand tools, and showed how, through his apprenticeship, he is preserving rural crafts for the future.



This final six-month Wood Construction Apprenticeship came to an end in October, bringing to a close this very successful, two-year Prince's Countryside Fund Apprenticeship project. Eifion is now self-employed, and continues with regular work, including commissioned pieces from contacts made at these Open Days.

## The Apprenticeship Project

### End of Project Report

The two-year Apprenticeship Project has been a huge success, and Tir Coed has achieved much more than we originally hoped for. From the achievements of individual apprentices through to the positive impact on other participants, and the external interest in the future development of the project, the total number of beneficiaries is staggering:



THE PRINCE'S  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

- 6 x individuals, as apprentices
- 5 x local businesses, as placement providers
- 30+ young people, motivated and encouraged by apprentices as role model
  - 79 individuals, inspired by potential of participating in apprenticeships
- 1200+ members of public, as recipients of demonstrations at local community events and other open days/shows/festivals and markets
- 12 x Tir Coed staff & trustees, 10 x WWW staff & directors and Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF) as an organisation, all benefit from the promotion, publicity & kudos of the apprenticeship programme

**Totalling 1325+**

There has been hugely positive impacts on individual apprentices: being introduced to a variety of new experiences; accessing 'industry standard' training to improve their employability; being recognised for their work within the community and for their potential in future employment; being given opportunities to hone skills, gain knowledge and develop career direction.

*"When I look back at what I've gained & achieved I've progressed incredibly. I've gained skills and qualifications that I was not in a position to pay for otherwise. If it hadn't been for this Apprenticeship I would have had to have opted for work at levels well below my abilities or would have had to move away to work, as work was proving very difficult to find. It's given me a direction to follow, as well an income that I can depend on. ... It's what I've wanted to do for years now; I feel very lucky ... The quality of training I have received in the past 8 months has given me the skills and competence to continue working within woodland management far beyond what I originally expected."* **Tony Vallance, Woodland Management**

*"Knowing that I've got the basis of a solid career in the woods makes my 'teenage father experience' less terrifying. I am proud to be able to contribute to my baby's welfare. I have definitely increased my woodland management knowledge, and I feel so much more confident of my skills. I know what I want to do now – work in the woods. It's been a brilliant 'next step' up for me. Meeting new people and making contacts has been a great part of it. Gaining my chainsaw ticket is extremely handy, as it gives me the chance to get more work. This apprenticeship has really got me into a focused, working head state, and has given me the confidence and responsibility to move on."* **Milo Ames, Woodland Management**

*"I do feel that I achieved a great deal during my short apprenticeship placement. I have found it relatively easy to find work with the new skill sets I have attained, and have since found sufficient employment in the local area, not only building timber structures but also applying the theories I learnt to other jobs using different materials. It has given me a great confidence for the future, and I feel so grateful to have found a living that I not only enjoy, but is good for the wider world, due to its sustainable nature. The only thing I would say is that the placement was far too short for learning such a massive topic, especially when some apprenticeships are years long."* **Chris Owen, Wood Construction**

*"The apprenticeship, has opened more doorways to jobs in proper forestry work, given me loads of opportunities and I've met new people, so it's given me more contacts locally. I had good fun and learnt lots."* **Aaron Kinsella, Woodland Management**

*"The experience has been invaluable, and I value greatly the friendships and connections I've made. I feel that I've reached far beyond my modest expectations. It has greatly increased my confidence and social skills and feeling of self-worth. I've developed skills to interact as a team member and leader and through demonstrations, interacting with the public has become more comfortable for me. My placement has been a vital period for me to develop skills, which will be very useful in any field I choose to pursue. I've made connections that will allow me to find other future employment"* **Eifion Wakefield, Wood Construction**

All the Apprentices have successfully moved on to further employment since completing their placements.

## The Apprenticeship Project

### Final Report *continued*

The achievements of this project go beyond just reaching the targets set, as the benefits have reached a far wider audience than predicted (evidenced by the vast numbers of people who have been helped), boosting the local economy and proving that there is a real need for further, similar projects in future.

The main aim of the project was to focus on the employment and training of Woodland Apprentices. This proved to be highly successful as all Graduate Apprentices remain in work. For these individuals the opportunities and experiences offered throughout their placements have been key to developing the confidence to move on. They each received the following:

- Focussed work-related woodland skills training, specialising in Sustainable Woodland Management or Traditional Timber Frame Construction
- Support developing a range of traditional rural skills, with all gaining sufficient experience to enable post apprenticeship progression
- Access to training for Industry-standard tickets
- Access to Level 3 Agored Cymru accreditation
- Help to remain in the local area, and progress into meaningful paid employment related to the training they received
- Opportunities to highlight their own skills and knowledge whilst promoting the apprenticeship project, and demonstrating the value of skills training for the rural economy

Each Apprentice has been a true ambassador for the rural sector, the work of Tir Coed and for PCF.

The final outcomes for each apprentice have been impressive, and feedback from Placement Providers has been gushing, but it should not be forgotten how important these individuals are to local businesses and how this project has provided mutual benefits. We would like to thank all our placement providers for their support in this successful project.



*“The apprenticeship project has been very valuable for us. We have been able to attract high quality people who have been great assets to WiseWoods. We have also been able to give them a very thorough and well-rounded training experience. Tony is an integral part of WiseWoods now. Aaron and Milo are highly employable woodsmen. The 8 month period would probably be better as a 12 month period to enable the apprentice to see the woodland for a full year's cycle. In my opinion, the Princes Countryside Fund Apprenticeship is the ideal way for someone with limited, or no experience, to become a fully-fledged and efficient forestry worker, and as such highly employable. WiseWoods Wales is very grateful for the opportunity of hosting woodland management apprentices and would very much like to see the scheme repeated in the future.”* **Andy Bakewell, WiseWoods Wales Business Manager**

The Prince's Countryside Fund has been extremely supportive throughout this project and Tir Coed would like to thank them for the positive impact they have had on so many lives locally.

A new funding application has recently been submitted to PCF, to extend the Apprenticeship Project further and build on the experiences of the past two years. The plan is to offer twelve-month Apprenticeships this time, with added business and financial training incorporated, so that individuals develop essential employment survival skills too. We await the outcome in December.



## Partnerships

### Harvesting the Knowledge Project: Update

#### New Harvesting the Knowledge Project Co-ordinator



Eva Walters is the latest addition to the Tir Coed team. She is co-ordinating the *Harvesting the Knowledge* project, focusing on marketing and branding of the products. Before now, Eva worked in a similar role at a documentary film production company, but has always had an interest in getting involved with Tir Coed or a similar organisation to apply these skills.

the happy museum



*"I'm so pleased to be working on such a worthy cause and for a Charity that brings so much positivity to the lives of the locals, boosts local economy and makes steps towards a greener way of life"*

#### Product Launch

The participants are currently developing a series of quality, sustainable kitchenware craft products, for sale in the Ceredigion museum shop. After a number of training days and workshops with Bob Shaw at Coed Tamsin, the four participants are now ready to start work on the product line. The order is for 60 items and the range will include spoons, bowls, plates, chopping boards and rolling pins, to be found for sale from February 2015.

The products are all locally sourced and crafted using traditional practices passed down from generation to generation. These crafts not only stimulate local economic prospects and maintain our woods, but link us back to our roots and the traditions of our past.

The Ceredigion Museum's large collection relating to local woodland craft and industry is being utilised here as a tool for achieving knowledge on the history of these objects, and also as a basis for inspiration to create new products. We hope to be promoting opportunities to take a step away from imported mass-production and a step towards more sustainable products that support rural people and the environment.

Please come along and support this project, by heading to the Ceredigion Museum shop from February 2015, where you will find a brand new and original collection of local crafts for sale!

And... For an intimate chance to meet the participants as they showcase their work with the new range open to the public, come along to the **Product Launch** at the **Ceredigion Museum** on **Saturday 7 February** at **2pm**. All welcome!

**Contact:** [htkcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:htkcoordinator@gmail.com)

01970 633 088/01970 636 909

[www.harvestingtheknowledge.tumblr.com](http://www.harvestingtheknowledge.tumblr.com)

[www.museum.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://www.museum.ceredigion.gov.uk)

[www.tircoed.org.uk](http://www.tircoed.org.uk)





## News

### Events & Visits

#### Festive Fifteen

Supported by:



ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI  
LOTTERY FUNDED



If you haven't already heard, Tir Coed will be celebrating its Fifteenth Anniversary in style this month, with the **Festive 15** event.

This event will be fun for all the family; whether you want to browse the Christmas market stalls, attend a workshop in wreath making, hear some wintery tales from a winter wonderland or dance the night away at the twmpath, this is the party for you!

All welcome at the Rugby Club on **Sunday 14 December!** See you there!

For more details, see poster on **page 2**.

#### Visits



Tir Coed was very pleased to invite Emyr Roberts, the Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, to Coed Tyllwyd for a tour of the charity work being undertaken through the VINE project, and the work of our Social Enterprise, WiseWoods Wales. Emyr Roberts took a short walk around the wood, guided by Ffion Farnell and Andy Bakewell, which he seemed to enjoy.

Tir Coed and WiseWoods Wales also welcomed Dylan Jones of Coed Cymru, who showed us some very innovative ways of using Welsh timber, and was inspired by what is being achieved at Coed Tyllwyd.

Nick Young also came to advise us on badger habitats and how best to look after them, which was a very informative and interesting meeting.

We would like to thank everyone for taking the time to visit the innovative partnership between Tir Coed and WiseWoods Wales.



#### Ystwyth Transport Reach Out Project: MiDAS Minibus training



THE MILLENNIUM STADIUM  
CHARITABLE TRUST  
YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ELUSENNOL  
STADIWM Y MILENIWM

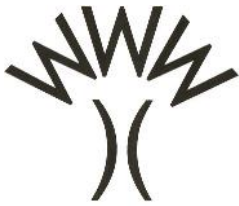
The Reach Out Project, set up by Ystwyth Community Transport Group, is a new initiative funded by Big Lottery to support groups of young people by providing Accessible, Affordable, Community Transport throughout Ceredigion.

The Project also provides free MiDAS minibus training for youth leaders or anyone working regularly with young people, if they are over 21, with at least 2 years driving experience. This allows groups to then use the Reach Out Project minibuses for a small donation towards their sustainability.

Tir Coed and WiseWoods Wales have benefitted hugely from this training and support. So far, Meir Evans (Lampeter Project Officer), Geraint Blayney (Llanfarian Project Officer), Ffion Farnell (Tir Coed Director) and Zoe Temple (WiseWoods Wales) have all successfully completed the training.

This has given access to transport for several Activity Days and Open Days which has meant that, for many of the participants and visitors, issues of rural isolation have been less of a barrier to reaching the project sites.





## Update



This quarter has seen the end of a summer of wonderful weather. Leaves are beginning to fall, and we are happy to be able to start felling again now that the nesting season is over. WiseWoods is starting to mature as a business, and people are starting to come to us, through word of mouth, to buy milled timber and wood products. Sadly, this quarter our Operations Manager, Rob Smith, has left us to concentrate more on his own woodland business. His craftsmanship, management and teaching abilities are much missed, but Tony and Mark (our on-site production staff) together with our apprentices and volunteers, have worked very hard and have managed to continue to produce amazing products to tight deadlines.

WiseWoods Wales continues to owe a great deal to RAY Ceredigion and Ceredigion County Council, for providing a steady stream of high value contracts for us. We are also expanding our product range to include smaller items, that are easier to send by courier, which will enable us to access markets all over the UK. With funding becoming ever more scarce, we are working hard to achieve full self-sufficiency through the sale of goods and services.

## Partnerships

**Tir Coed** has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of Ffion Farnell (Director of Tir Coed). Projects are running at sites in Powys and Ceredigion, with many activities occurring in Coed Tyllwyd (the WiseWoods Wales managed woodland). Geraint Blayney, Tir Coed Project Officer for Coed Tyllwyd, has recently run two projects at the site; one to build a new Tir Coed shelter (designed and facilitated by Jamie Miller), and one to improve the access tracks and to build steps. Both of these have been progressing nicely. This quarter has also seen the completion of the double compost toilet on site, much to the relief of all concerned! It is an impressive structure and works very well indeed.



WiseWoods' funding support from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), is due to finish on 31 March 2015. Public sector funding is suffering from cuts in government spending, so funding previously on offer from NRW is now in greater demand from many third sector organisations. Two chances to access funds from NRW were on offer: the first was to enter an open competitive process, and the second by invitation only, to join a Joint Working Partnership (JWP) with NRW. The latter is only available to organisations that directly help NRW achieve their stated outputs. Fortunately, Tir Coed and WiseWoods were invited to submit a JWP bid together. So, the Tir Coed and WiseWoods Directors collaborated to work on this, and the outcome should be announced in January 2015.

**RAY Ceredigion's** natural playground project, in Drefach, has enabled WiseWoods to complete our biggest shelter to date. Negotiations have also continued for the design and supply of a play feature for Aberarth Community Council. Large projects are great to be involved with, but it often takes a very long time and many meetings to agree the exact design, price and location of bespoke play equipment. The good news is that it looks like this is going to be our most ambitious play feature yet. WWW is very grateful to RAY Ceredigion's Manager, Gill Byrne, for her continuing practical and financial support, and for her belief in the organisation.



## WiseWoods Wales (WWW)

**Roger Bray and Building Covert** helped WiseWoods fulfil one of its aims; working with other local small woodland owners for mutual benefit. Roger Bray owns a small woodland in Capel Seion called *Building Covert*. Happily for us, this woodland is flatter than Coed Tyllwyd, and is full of Douglas Fir trees big enough and straight enough to make good saw logs. WWW are paying Roger a good rate for his standing timber; felling his trees and using them for our saw logs. Fortunately Roger's wood is only 30 min tractor-drive away from Coed Tyllwyd. Another example of local



synergy came after some particularly heavy winds. Several trees in Roger's wood were blown down by the winds, so WiseWoods was able to use these trees, firstly, to run a windblow training course, and then for saw logs. Normally dealing with windblown trees constitutes a considerable cost to small woodland owners, but in this case we actually managed to pay Roger for the windblown timber we took out.

**Gerard Carton (local contractor)**, has volunteered with WiseWoods for several days per week over the past year. He already had his own gardening business, but his time with WiseWoods has given him the confidence to bid for more challenging contracts. Gerard took on the job of building a raised boardwalk in the local Llanfarian School, and he managed to do so with the advice of WiseWoods staff, and by using WiseWoods timber. He also employed another local person in the course of this work and completed it to a high standard. This is a prime example of the Social Enterprise supporting and coaching local people in the development of their skills and confidence.

**Coed Cymru's** Dylan Jones visited WiseWoods with a view to helping develop new products from the particular timber species present in Coed Tyllwyd. Dylan spent a whole day discussing our species and processes with us, and has subsequently made an order for timber billets, for making end-grain flooring and pin boards. Dylan also put us in touch with specialist business consultants, who are helping us develop products and markets further afield. We are very grateful for Dylan's time and enthusiasm which have been donated for free!

**Outdoor Learning Wales (OLW)**, Aberystwyth group had its inaugural event recently. WWW attended and offered a stilt making workshop for all delegates. We hope to be an active member of this group offering our services in organising educational events and equipment.



Lianne Bird taking part in stilt making workshop

### Staff

**Operations Manager, Rob Smith** has moved on to concentrate on his own woodland, manufacturing and training business. Rob has been with WiseWoods since the beginning, supervising both production and volunteers on site. He is a very skilled wood-worker and skills teacher and since he left, has been busier than ever. We all wish him every success that his hard work obviously deserves.

**Woodland and Marketing Assistant, Pat Riley** has been funded for a six-month placement through Jobs Growth Wales (administered by Hyforddiant Ceredigion Training). Pat had been volunteering for WiseWoods for about a year, whilst taking a course in blacksmithing in parallel with his woodland work. He is going from strength to strength and is now an important member of the production team.

**Countryside Management Diploma Placement Student, Ian McMahon** had volunteered for WiseWoods prior to starting his course. He then decided to spend his placement period with us as well. Ian had a very broad range of skills already, so he was an extremely capable member of staff from Day One. His ability to tow a trailer (not to mention owning a very nice 16 foot, twin axle example himself), and his tractor driving and welding skills, have made him invaluable. We are very grateful for the time he has been able to spend with us as a volunteer.



### Training

#### Chainsaw training and assessment; maintenance and felling small trees

Pat Riley and Ian McMahon received chainsaw training from Manager, Andy Bakewell. A mixture of intensive training days, and lots of on-the-job training has proved to be the very best mix of opportunities. Pat and Ian also participated in refresher training a few days before their assessment. Happily both Pat and Ian passed with flying colours.

WiseWoods trained chainsaw operators are always complimented on their depth of knowledge and confidence with the saw. This is only achievable with the quality and variety of training opportunities available at WiseWoods.

**Windblown tree training** is normally difficult to access, not to mention expensive, so it was good to have the opportunity to give this rare experience to WiseWoods staff and volunteers. Using a chainsaw, hand and tractor winch to deal with storm damaged trees, is one of the most dangerous and exciting things you can do with a chainsaw. You have to be sure that the people you are training, are at a sufficient level of confidence and ability with a chainsaw before embarking on this training, or disaster could result. Fortunately for us, Roger Bray's woodland offered a plethora of opportunities to deal with many different damaged tree scenarios, so the two days of windblown tree training was beneficial for all involved.



### Events

**Ray Ceredigion's National Play Day** was attended by WWW, this year, for the first time. The day took place in Aberaeron park and was visited by hundreds of families. WiseWoods took along several pieces of play equipment, including stepping stones, a log climber and a balance beam. We also built some stocks, where people could throw wet sponges at their friends, which proved to be a very popular activity, as it was a really hot day.

Unfortunately, the day didn't yield much in the way of orders or contacts, but it was good to support RAY Ceredigion on what was a highly successful day.

**Housing Associations Big Day Out** was hosted at Plascrug Leisure Centre by Aberystwyth's three major housing associations; Mid Wales Housing, Tai Ceredigion and Cantref.

WiseWoods held a stall outside, with a log climber, stepping logs and the Wendy House, just before it was installed in Bow Street. Although it wasn't an obvious event to attend, several contracts and potential orders were taken.

**Llais Y Goedwig Networking Event** was hosted at Long Wood Community Woodland, in September. This was a collection of small woodland owners and countryside organisations, coming together to share experiences. This was very useful for all concerned. It served as a means of sharing information, making contacts and gaining a feeling of solidarity for working in a difficult market sector. WiseWoods and Tir Coed's experience of setting up and running a Social Enterprise was of great interest, especially the commercial side of our business.



## Products

### Delivered

**Bow Street Wendy House** was finally installed, much to the delight of the local kids, who were all really excited about it. It was a pleasure to be able to provide something for them to enjoy. Several months later it remains well used and not vandalised.



We designed and installed our most ambitious structure yet. This was a **6m x 4m shelter in Drefach**, mounted on steel knife plates bolted to a concrete plinth. This was a challenge due to its sheer size, and also due to the distance away from site. The build went really well and the community group are delighted with it.

Even more ambitious was our furthest flung project so far, a very complex **Play Area for Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr, near Brynamman** in the valleys. The production staff excelled themselves, staying away for two nights and installing eight pieces of play equipment, to make a playground for a new primary school. We were competing against a quote for a similar playground from a mainstream manufacturer. The school were very glad they chose us because they got a much more characterful playground than they would have got from any of our competitors.

Mark designed a **wooden tractor** for local property manager Martin Samuel. We are very pleased with the result and hope that the design will catch the eye of other potential customers.

This quarter has also seen continued demand for **milled timber**.

### Upcoming Jobs

We are currently under negotiations with Aberarth Community Council to provide a play feature for their sea-front play area. This is another exciting project as we are designing a feature that we haven't seen before (and therefore neither has anyone else!), so watch this space!

Lastly, we are due to complete the design for the Denmark Farm combined wood-store and bicycle shelter which should be installed over the Winter months.



## Business Development

With our set-up funding tapering off, there is an ever greater need to increase sales to achieve financial independence and sustainability. We are currently developing a new range of products that we will be able to deliver by courier (without the need for us to install them). We are also starting to develop a range of Woodland Skills courses, that we hope to pilot shortly.

## Summary

WiseWoods is becoming well-known for providing high quality, unique products for the local market. We are now pushing to expand our horizons, to deliver hand-crafted Welsh products to the whole of the UK market. This is a new and exciting development for us, and we are looking forward to the new experiences and challenges this will present.