



VINE Success!

350 people have engaged with VINE since March 14 and 30 freelance people contracted!

Welcome to this summer edition of the Tir Coed Newsletter.

This Newsletter is crammed full of activities and events. It has been a very busy time for Tir Coed and WiseWoods with a lot of shows and visits to contend with. There has been a growing interest in the VINE project and it is great to see so many people from different walks of life engaging with the woodlands in their locality.

Tir Coed is pleased to announce that since March 2014 when the VINE 'on the ground' activities began the VINE project has engaged 350 people in woodland activities and has given work to 30 people over the 3 sites:

- Llanfarian - Coed Tyllwyd
- Lampeter - Long Wood Community Woodland
- Llanidloes - Allt Goch Woodland

We have also had some political support with a visit from Mark Williams, MP for Ceredigion, who praised the work of WiseWoods Wales and Tir Coed in the Cambrian News.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the positive work undertaken over the last 3 months in this bumper edition.

Darllen wch yn Hapus

Happy Reading



Thumbs up for Tir Coed
after separate visits from Ceredigion MP, Mark Williams and The Tudor Trust Trustees

Join us for Tir Coed's Festive Fifteen



Birthday Bonanza
Details coming soon

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Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Lampeter - Special Activity Day

Family Centres Play Day - 27 May 2014

Activity Leader:	Sally Harvey
Support:	Emma Sampson
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	68
No. volunteer hours:	272



The special activity day for Lampeter and Llanybydder Family Centres on 27 May was a wonderfully magical day with 68 people attending, the youngest being only 3 months old. Families were encouraged to play freely and enjoy the wonders of the woodland at Long Wood Community Woodland under the guidance of experienced Forest School Leader, Sally Harvey.

Ceredigion MP, Mark Williams attended towards the end of the day, and had an opportunity to see what the site and the session had to offer.

Everyone who completed the evaluation stated that they would wish to do the activity again.

Feedback:

"What didn't we learn, we enjoyed everything.

My oldest boy enjoyed starting a fire and the little ones enjoyed getting muddy!"

"Learned to work as a team. We learnt how to start a fire and want to buy the kit; We enjoyed making dens, carving an animal, starting a fire and finding bugs, playing in the woods, team building and popcorn making."

"How to make fire and have fun with things around you.

We enjoyed all of it but really liked digging and looking for insects."

"I enjoyed building a den and the children enjoyed exploring."

"The kids learnt how to make dens and how to interact with other children.

The children enjoyed everything about the forest, the camp fire and how to make pop corn on the open fire."

"Maybe include - Discussion on what animals live in the woods, and arranging Halloween and Santa Grotto."

Participants from Llanybydder Family Centre were so impressed with the play day that they created a model of a fire pit at the Family Centre the following day. Stating on Facebook:

"The parents and children enjoyed so much yesterday, that today we made a model of Long Wood.

Thank you."



Activity Leaders:	Benjamin Grey Lea Wakeman
Support:	Eifion Wakefield Jayme Davies
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers	77
No. volunteer hours:	231



The first of three VINE project Open Days planned for Long Wood Community Woodland, kicks off in style.

A wonderfully magical Family Fun Day event was

held at Long Wood Community Woodland on Saturday 14 June.

77 people visited the woodland to learn circus skills and create dream catchers with Lea Wakeman, whilst close by, at the woodland theatre site, experienced woodsman Benjamin Grey and his Tir Coed Apprentice, Eifion Wakefield taught people of all ages the skills of carving green wood to create spatulas and spoons.

There was quite a production line going all afternoon with many proud faces all round on the completion of their crafted creations. Sessions were only supposed to run between 1-4pm, but due to considerable interest, serious demand and total dedication from the activity leaders, these did not finish until 6.30pm! Huge Thanks must go to Ben & Eifion and everyone else who made this possible.

Feedback:

"The kids and I really really loved it. Please let me know of other events like this, it was fabulous! and Ben was so patient with all the kids."

"Absolutely fantastic day and the kids thoroughly enjoyed. We will definitely be back for more!"



Lampeter VINE - Training Course 1

Field Carpentry - June to August 2014

Activity Leader:	Benjamin Grey
Support:	Milo Ames Kelly Cutler
Sessions:	18
Total no. volunteers:	8
No. volunteer days:	112
No. volunteer hours:	672



8 dedicated volunteers signed up to this 3 month

course, to improve access routes at Long Wood Community Woodland. The group have progressed well during their time together with all parties demonstrating their efforts with many picking up new skills, and in some cases honing existing ones to a higher level.

The group have been working under the guidance of experienced woodsman and mentor Benjamin Grey, supported by Milo Ames and Kelly Cutler. A variety of projects has been undertaken including: improving the access areas of the Bridleway at the main car park, manufacturing and installing horse styles, & beautifully crafted ash kissing gates & field gates; and designing and constructing a new and more interesting entrance route via new paths, bridges and steps for forest school participants to access the site.



A diverse range of abilities is evident within the group, with some members showing good leadership qualities, practical delegation and good decision making, whilst others have shown a great ability to crack on and get the job done. All volunteers are demonstrating a positive work rate and share a good level of humour throughout. They have had plenty of opportunity to show their own personal strengths and weaknesses. They have worked very well and have grown together to create a good group dynamic which



has been clearly displayed through the quality of their work. The group are working through a Level 2, Agored Cymru unit, 'Construct Ancillary Structures to Access Routes', which will evidence individual skills and contributions as well as giving certification to fully recognise achievements.



"They are a pleasure to tutor and I would look forward to working with any of the group again in the future." Benjamin Grey

Feedback so far

"It's built up my confidence and skills of working in the woodlands. I have achieved more than I expected"

"Enjoyment from getting out of the house and learning"

"It's helped a lot, with experience and lots of knowledge. It's also a very good therapy, being out in the woods, working with like minded people. It's helping me both mentally and physically"

"It's helped me learn a couple of things here and there, it has also helped my CV"

"It's helped me get experience in the woodlands and learn new skills"

"I've really enjoyed my time at Long Wood, it's enabled me to gain skills in using tools and making things out of wood"

James Kendall, Project Manager, Coedwig Gymunedol Long Wood Community Woodland stated: *"The new gates look very professionally made, the volunteers can be really proud of their work. The improvements will compliment the new Visitor Centre nicely, boosting the woodland entrance, seen and used by visitors. On behalf of Long Wood, thanks to the volunteers and Ben's team for their hard work and creativity."*

Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

Visitor Centre Construction: Eco Build Skills - 28 & 29 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Jamie Miller
Support:	Ray Miller
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	10
No. volunteer hours:	700

These special activity days were offered as part of the development of the Visitor Centre at Long Wood Community Woodland. The sessions provided a unique opportunity for volunteers to develop eco build skills, providing a chance for participants to develop straw bale walling and timber cladding skills under the expert guidance and leadership of Jamie and Ray Miller.



Feedback

All who responded, stated that they would take part in the activity again and two stated that they would definitely do the activity again.

What did you learn?

"Straw bale insulation techniques and peg making"

"How to do straw bales and sawing straight"

"Sawing straight, straw baling, roofing boards and stake making"

"Peg, hazel stake and straw bale walling, use of hand tools, draw knives, froes and augers"

"Using hand tools like draw knives, augers and froes, learning how to saw straight, working with green wood, measuring up and peg

making, stake making, constructing of building wood and straw bales and working with environmentally friendly building products"

"Wood science, construction techniques using environmentally friendly materials making build components"

What did you enjoy?

"Everything I've learned and feeling useful, I really enjoy making pegs on the shave horse using the hand auger and bashing in the stakes"

"Working on the project, learning new skills and learning from the Leaders"

"The sense of achieving traditional products and buildings learning new skills that I can apply to my own home environment"

"Everything, All of it"

Most of the volunteers stated that nothing could have made their experience better, however some stated that the following activities would have made their experience better:

More courses like this available.



By having it on the national curriculum.

By having enough working tools for everyone.

Could do with more tools.

Improve organisation and availability of tools

50 % of respondents rated the event as a 10 on a scale on 1 to 10 with 10 being brilliant! 😊

25% rated the event at 9 and 25% at 7/8



Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Days

Play and Green Wood Craft Sessions for Looked After Children - 28, 29, 30 & 31 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Jo Steadman
Support:	Ben Allen
Sessions:	4
Total no. volunteers	20
No. volunteer hours:	160

These sessions were arranged at Long Wood Community Woodland for

'Looked After Children' in the Ceredigion area, as part of the first week of their summer programme.

The children and young people were encouraged to play freely and enjoy the natural environment of the woodland whilst learning about the different types of trees and wildlife, preparing and lighting a fire and cooking tasty popcorn.

Wonderfully constructed dens were created and detailed personalised beads were made. Volunteers even learnt to wind and make cord from natural materials.



Feedback

The children who completed the evaluation form stated that they would wish to do these kind of activities again.

The following skills were learnt:

"How to tie wood together to make a strong structure"

"Using natural resources to make things"

"How to make a strong rope"

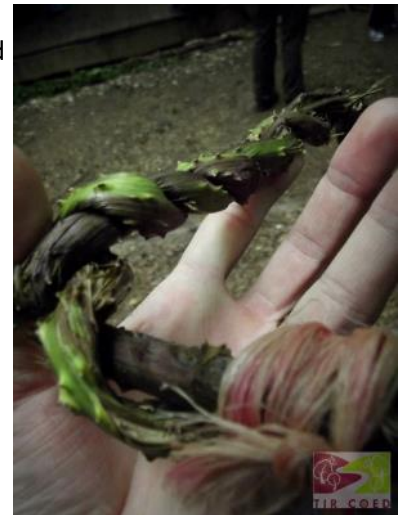
"How to build dens and make a rope out of brambles"

and they most enjoyed:

"Building a shelter"

"Everything!"

"Making dens"



50 % of respondents rated the event, 10 on a scale on 1 to 10 with 10 being brilliant!

☺

25% , 9; 25% , 8



Lampeter VINE - Special Activity Day

Circus Skills, Art and Craft Play Session - 31 July 2014

Activity Leaders:	Lea Wakeman
Support:	Jane Trewin
Volunteer Support:	Jayme Davies
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	20
No. volunteer hours:	110

The children thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful day at the woods starting with a nature trail, creating crowns from identified leaves and



wild flowers on route. Once at the Forest School site the children created magical dream catchers and developed a range of circus skills, under the expert guidance of Lea Wakeman. The session was supported by Jane and Jayme, who were both very attentive and responsive to the needs of the individual participants, making it an incredibly enjoyable day for all. Even the rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of the children to enjoy themselves.

Feedback

Eleven children who completed the evaluation form stated that they would wish to do the activities again, with many indicating that they would definitely attend future VINE activities.

The following skills were learnt:

"Hula hoops and walking the slack line and decorating a stick with wool and ribbon"

"Making a dream catcher"

"Anything can be accomplished if you set your mind to it – I think it was fabulous"

"The importance of only taking items that are already on the ground for the wildlife crown and not pick living items"

"That I can enjoy outside and not sit indoors all day"

"About cutting trees down"

"About different plants"

"That I was able to enjoy nature with friends"



And they most enjoyed:

"Making dream catchers and braids for hair"

"Hula hooping"

"Dream catchers and making dens"

"Playing and walking on the slack line"

"Making a stick and decorating it in pretty colours for my friend"

"Doing the circus skills"

"Everything, team work, crowns, dream catchers lovely walk"

Most children were completely happy with their experience, however some made the following suggestions to make it even better:

"Make things out of mud and creating muddy puddles"

"Make items out of clay"

"Forage for food snacks"

80 % rated the event as 10 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being brilliant!

10% , 9 and 10% , 8 😊



Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Llanfarian - Training Course 1

Compost Loo Build - May to July 2014

Activity Leader:	James Davies
Support:	Gavin Doram, Tony Vallance Aaron Kinsella
Sessions:	19
Total no. volunteers:	8
No. volunteer days:	78
No. volunteer hours:	468

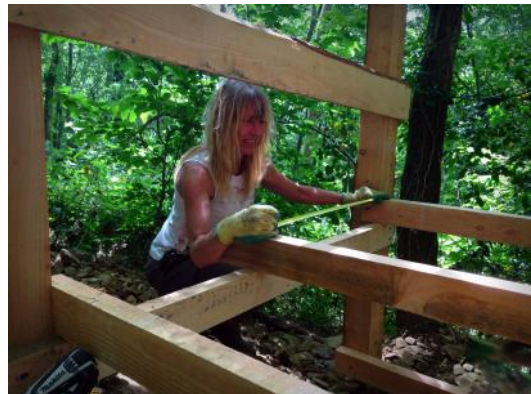


The compost loo build has progressed spectacularly! The committed team of VINE volunteers have worked diligently to see this project through. The course has been led by carpenter, James Davies, with Gavin Doram, Tony Vallance and Aaron Kinsella providing the support.

There have been between 5-8 volunteers weekly, all partaking in building this important structure. The build is looking great, and the quality of the craftsmanship is evident in the professional finish of the build at each stage.

The volunteers are enjoying their experience, and are looking forward to each session. They have learned a variety of skills, from woodworking to groundwork. All the wood has been sourced from Coed Tŷ Llwyd woodland, and has been professionally milled by the WiseWoods Wales team. The Tir Coed participants were given an insight into the way wood milling works, as well as the work of WiseWoods Wales.

The structure will provide an important facility for the local community wanting to use Coed Tŷ Llwyd Wood, and will enable more people to spend time in this beautiful environment.



Llanfarian VINE - Open Day

Coed Tyllwyd Open Day - Saturday 5 July 2014

Activity Leaders:	Rob Smith Anthea Cox
Support:	Anna Thomas
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	35
No. volunteer hours:	71

The Llanfarian, Coed Tŷ Llwyd site had its first VINE Open Day on Saturday 5 July. We were lucky to have nice warm, sunny weather, so people called in on the site throughout the day. They came to see a wood carving demonstrations by experienced woodsman Rob Smith, and the children were able to enjoy Forest School activities with Forest School leader Anthea Cox and Anna Thomas.

Visitors came from Aberystwyth, Llanfarian and Llanilar, with some using the Ystwyth Cycle Trail to get to the site. Around 35 people attended, with most of these signing the register to keep in contact with Tir Coed.



There was much interest in the work that is being done, with people showing real interest in becoming volunteers in the woodland.

The visitors enjoyed the experience of being in this natural environment. This highlighted the importance of getting the community involved in their local woodlands, including primary school children. People were pleased to hear that the woodlands are open for the public at all times, and were excited at the possibility of working on a number of small projects to improve the woodland environment.

Many people thought that the value of the woodland is important for everyday life, especially in education. A great day was had by all.



TIR COED
OPEN DAY AT
COED TŷLLWYD
WOOD, LLANFARIAN

Come along and see what we are doing!

Enjoy: **Tir Coed VINE Project**
Greenwood crafts and demonstrations

A woodland walk and guided tour of Llanfarian wood with experienced woodsman, Rob Smith

Forest school activities for the children with
Anthea Cox

To find out more, visit our website: www.tircoed.org.uk Write to: llanfarian@tircoed.org.uk
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TirCoed.Charity Call: 01970 636 909

Saturday 5th of July
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Car parking will be at Llanfarian Community Hall, with a minibus shuttle service between the carpark and Wood. Refreshments provided.



Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Introduction to Forest School: Penparcau Family Centre - 10 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Anthea Cox
Support:	Anna Thomas
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	21
No. volunteer hours:	63

Twenty One members of the Penparcau Family Centre participated in an introduction to Forest School day with Anthea Cox and Anna Thomas. The



children, (the majority being under 4 years old), were read stories and given a variety of activities to do which involved playing with objects and items found in the woodland. These included making clay figures, building dens, finding woodland animals and roasting a few tasty marshmallows over a small fire at the end of the day.

The participants were brought to the woodland by minibus loaned from the Ystwyth Reachout Project. This meant that the participants were able to attend the day of Forest School, without the hassle of trying to park at the woodland site.

The day was a great opportunity for the children to get a taste of being in the forest environment, and to do different activities from the usual in-door activities of modern life.



It was said by the Penparcau Family Centre manager, Kath Morgan, *"These days with VINE have given opportunities for families to do activities and visit different environments, which they may not have done previously, or that they might have been a bit apprehensive of doing with a young family if these opportunities had not arisen."*

There were plenty of smiles all around, and great enthusiasm was shown for the next Activity Day the Centre had planned for 24 July.



Llanfarian VINE - Special Activity Day

Forest School Fun: Penparcau Family Centre - 24 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Polly Williams
Support:	Anna Thomas
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers	25
No. volunteer hours:	100



Another excellent day was had by the members of the Penparcau Family Centre. Twenty five members met up for another day of Forest School fun with Forest School leader, Polly Williams, with Anna Thomas providing the support work.

The participants had a choice of a range of activities, from building dens to creating puppets.

The sun was shining, but the cool environment of the woodland provided a peaceful place for the young families and children to play safely, and learn some basic Forest School skills.

The feedback from the day was very positive, with the majority of the participants rating the day with 5/5 stars on the evaluation sheet.



Volunteering In the Natural Environment (VINE) - Llanidloes - Training Course 1

Compost Loo Construction - May to July 2014

Activity Leader: Colin Titley
 Support: Dave Thomas
 Sessions: 26
 Total no. volunteers: 9
 No. volunteer days: 177
 No. volunteer hours: 1062

Nine Volunteers started the training, of which eight stayed the course. All 8 have completed level 2 accreditation, with an Agored Cymru unit, 'Construction of a basic

Wooden Shelter'. The group have achieved an incredible amount over this three month period.

All necessary permissions and approvals for the building were attained from the Town Council, community groups and the Planning Department, enabling the construction of a much needed compost toilet on site. The group accomplished the task within the timescale and have built an attractive, well-designed and functional building which is also wheelchair accessible.

Trainees have gained a wide range of skills, including tree felling, ground works, and carpentry, from the large scale to the fine detail, such as a beautiful door handle for the building. Despite a wide difference in backgrounds, skill levels and ages, the trainees have really gelled as a team, working well together with a sense of camaraderie and growing confidence.



Trainees were asked what they would tell someone who was thinking of joining a Tir Coed training course. The comments speak for themselves.



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Feedback

"Interesting & varied"

"I've learnt quite a lot. It's been good fun, a good experience, something new"

"Brilliant. Good course, well-taught"

"Very professional, (the tutors). Everything was really interesting. We learnt a lot and I feel they can rely on us to do everything now. They can leave us to work on our own.

Got on well with everybody.

Very enlightening and enjoyable. I'm also very awestruck by Colin & Dave and their expertise. I will look forward to coming back again to another session"

"Go for it, because you may as well!"

"Do it. Very educational, instructional, good fun. Beats sitting indoors!"

"I've never thought of doing this sort of thing before...but I've been pleasantly surprised and I think a lot of people would be. It would open their eyes."

"Come and do it. You'll experience new horizons, do something you've never done before"

Accreditation:

Agored Cymru Unit	Level	Total Achieved
Construction of a Basic Wooden Shelter	2	8

Progression

Volunteering	7
Course - Tree Surgery	1

Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Conservation Days - 31 May & 28 June 2014

Activity Leader:	Colin Titley
Support:	Gavin Doram
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers:	8
No. volunteer hours:	48



It was suggested that some activity days were made available to do conservation work in Allt Goch, to improve footpaths, remove invasive beech saplings and create habitat piles from the large quantity of brush left behind by management work done prior to the VINE project. Community group, *Friends of Llanidloes woods*, as well as other members of the local community were unhappy about the damaged paths and brush left in the woods, and it was felt this would be a popular activity. The plan was to begin at the entrances, so as to improve accessibility and have an immediate visual impact. This would also help to show that VINE is working positively to improve the woods for the local community.

On the first of these conservation days, the group of four volunteers removed branches overhanging the footpath at the Van road entrance, and assessed this access point to the woods. VINE has received feedback from members of the community expressing difficulties in negotiating this path, particularly for people with mobility problems, and especially when wet. The group split into two and worked from the car park entrance - one clearing beech saplings and creating habitat piles from brush, the other, reshaping steps and redefining the footpath.



The large living willow sculpture at the centre of the woods has been long overdue for maintenance work and has suffered from dieback and storm damage. The sculpture is very popular with local people and interest had been expressed in doing some work on this, by members of Both Coed and others. Advice was sought from willow expert Beryl Smith, who had helped to build the structure, and it was decided that

the second conservation day would be used to cut back and repair the structure. Eight volunteers attended and worked with activity leaders to remove deadwood from the willow sculpture and cut back overgrowth, as well as retying the structure into shape and weaving branches back in. The cut withies were saved for planting around the compost toilet (to improve decomposition).

Feedback

What was learnt and enjoyed:

"Maintenance of footpaths. Safety when clearing fallen/cut branches"

"About maintenance of the woods and different types of trees"

"How to use a Silkie saw and create a habitat pile"

"How to keep willow alive when cut. A bit about the compost toilet"

"All of it, it was very educational"

"As always...being outside in the woods. Met some nice folks I didn't already know"

"Being part of a team, working together doing something positive"

Is there anything that would have made it better?

"There were quite a few people working on quite a small thing, so perhaps another task to exploit full human resource? It's a minor, minor thing though...I enjoyed it"

Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Care of our Woodlands - 7 June 2014

Activity Leaders:	Bob Shaw Ritchie Stevenson
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	7
No. volunteer hours:	28



This session was organised as a result of the interest shown in Bob Shaw's talk at the Launch Day in April, and the need for an in-depth sharing of knowledge about sustainable woodland management principles and techniques. The aim is to hold another activity

day in early winter, when the sap is down, which will enable people to see another element of the seasonal woodland cycle, whilst also giving practical opportunities for people to get involved in the work.

The session explored caring for & managing woodland, through the seasons and for the future, specifically applied to the Allt Goch woods. It was also geared to what people wanted to learn. Woodland craft activities also gave volunteers some hands-on experience.

A total of seven volunteers attended the day even though the weather was wet and dreary. Bob Shaw took the group into the coppice area to discuss how it could be managed to sustain the life of the trees, looking in particular at the sections under squirrel attack and the benefits of coppicing for ground flora and biodiversity. Bob also indicated where, in the overcrowded sections, the thinning out of standards could favour the high value timber, such as oak. He talked about the different trees growing in Allt Goch, their properties, uses, economic value, and impact on biodiversity. He described practical management techniques, such as coppicing, high pruning and thinning. Bob then led a walk around the woods pointing out where thinning would be advised and how clearing wide margins along footpaths would again help to increase biodiversity.

Later, Ritchie Stevenson introduced the group to green wood craft and after lunch people chose whether to go further afield into the woods with Bob or stay with Ritchie to make a three legged stool. Bob took a small group to the non-intervention area, largely oak with an area of chestnut coppice, and advised about the management and use of these areas. Most people didn't want to leave, and stayed on to chat well after the end of the session.

Feedback

A range of interesting data was collected from the group, including interests in woodland management, green woodcraft and future practical aspirations. These will help to inform and direct the planning of other events.

What did you learn?

"Coppicing good practice. Potential uses of materials from woods, dormouse issues, an idea about timber quality issues"

"Some good little details of wood management. When and when not to do things"

"Squirrels are naughty"

"(How to use) Rocket stove and how to make a green wood stool"

"Stripping bark, sawing logs, tree and wood identification"

What did you enjoy?

"All of it, every minute"

"Great in depth talk by Bob"

"Making a stool"



Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Animal Homes - 10 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Chloe Griffiths
Support:	Jenny Dingle
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	37
No. volunteer hours:	102

This busy activity day was designed and planned in response to contact



made by Lisa Stead, the reception class teacher at Llanidloes Primary School. The class were learning about animal homes and so activities focused on practical, 'hands on', experiences of building homes in the woods. The logistics of working with a class of 32, which needed a ratio of 1:4, were challenging, but

together, a schedule emerged that ensured best use of time, space, resources and expertise. The children walked up to the woods in the morning and were transported back after the session.

After an initial safety talk and explanation of toilet arrangements the class divided into two groups, each spending an hour with VINE activity leaders learning about and building animal homes, and an hour with the teacher and parent volunteers creating fabulous mud monsters!



The VINE activity leaders Chloe and Jenny found out what the children knew about different animals that lived in the woods, their homes, and what was needed in a home. The children explored the clearing, looking for, and finding animal homes used by small mammals and invertebrates, as well as examining beetles, spiders and slugs that they found. The children shared their discoveries and then went on a short walk to spot a large squirrel drey and possible bat roosts. This led on to the building of a "hibernaculum", or habitat pile, from sticks and mud, which would provide a wonderful home for creatures that might include beetles, birds, toads and spiders. Before the two groups swapped over, and during lunch, Chloe and Jenny shared beautiful examples of animal homes, including a wasp's nest and a goldfinch nest.

Feedback

All thirty one children enjoyed the day and were keen to return, many didn't want to leave the woods at all at the end of the session!

What they learned:

"About building nests, building habitat piles and making homes for insects"

"Looking at things close up (with a magnifier) made it more interesting"

"a squirrel's nest is called a drey"

"How to catch spiders"

What they enjoyed:

"Catching a slug was fun"

"Splating mud (with the teacher)"

"Making the house (habitat pile)"

"Finding creatures"

Improvements:

"Real animals living in the homes"

"Longer session"

"a toilet (teacher's comment)"

Tir Coed appreciates the time and effort Lisa put in to make the day possible, and were very impressed with how attentive and observant the children were. A great success.



Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Woodland Management & Biodiversity Activity Day - 16 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Bob Shaw
Support:	Scott Roe
Sessions:	1
Total no. volunteers:	5
No. volunteer hours:	21



A woodland management plan has been identified as a good step forward for the Llanidloes VINE site, in order to plan sustainable intervention for the course of the project. Bob Shaw offered to lead this, with the idea of including Tir Coed Project Officers from all three VINE sites and any other interested parties. By using Allt Goch as an example the principles could then be applied to the other sites. Discussions relating to the co-ordination and implementation of monitoring across the sites, highlighted the considerable crossover between sustainable woodland management and biodiversity. For this reason Scott Roe was invited to input on the day: to explain biodiversity monitoring, how it will be carried out on the VINE sites, offer advice on suitable interventions, and help in how to select control areas for non-intervention.

On the day, Bob Shaw covered the history of the woods, what is desirable for a healthy diverse woodland, how intervention can enhance this, the current issues which the Allt Goch woods face, and the aims of sustainable woodland management. Scott Roe then described what to look for when carrying out a biodiversity survey, setting objectives, and the methods used for different types of habitat. A guided walk then looked at different types of habitat, identifying particular species and advising on suitable interventions, including consideration of types of timber, seasonal management and uses.

Feedback

What was learned?

"Lots. In one word!"

"Woodland management techniques, how to improve the health and biodiversity of the woodland, what a healthy woodland should look like, the current threats to woodland, and the sort of woodland practices to be avoided"

"The benefits of woodland management; methods for biodiversity surveys"

"Common ground between sustainable woodland management techniques and biodiversity; practical information to form a plan"

"Some of the finer details of woodland management. It was good to pick Bob's brain"

What was enjoyed:

"Spending time in the woods and having an insight into the way woodlands function"

"Having time with knowledgeable tutors"

"A shared vision and understanding, learning to have a positive relationship with nature"

"Knowledge being shared directly with the activity leaders who will be doing the work with volunteers in the woods"

Improvements:

"Further days would be beneficial"

"A little more structure and focus-difficult to keep to time constraints when there's a whole world in one square metre in the woods!"



Llanidloes VINE - Special Activity Day

Biodiversity Monitoring - 18 & 19 July 2014

Activity Leader:	Scott Roe
Support:	Chloe Griffiths
Sessions:	2
Total no. volunteers:	8
No. volunteer hours:	53

The plan for this Biodiversity Monitoring was to carry out an initial site survey at Allt, Goch, to gather as much information as possible about the plants and animals, over a two day period. Scott Roe, acting as Activity Leader, also stayed overnight to gather as much data as possible.

Scott set out the methodology, monitoring

techniques and which areas of the woods were to be used for the collection of data. Booklets were distributed for marking off key indicator species, as well as information hand-outs. A combination of observation and instruction gave practical methods for gathering information and before setting out to do so. The group saw moths caught in the moth traps, ground beetles in pit-fall traps, used nets and beating trays to capture invertebrates, made species lists in selected areas (or compartments of the woods), and gathered marked nutshells to learn about mammal species. Some species of birds and insects could be marked off simply by observation. Types of habitat, features and animal homes were also recorded.



Feedback

What was learned and enjoyed:

“Different methods of catching insects & invertebrates for identifying; types of habitat; That we can identify mammal species by marks on nuts; about key indicator species”

“How to monitor; that there is more than one type of woodlouse”

“How to identify different animals eating habits by nuts”

“Different ways of trapping wildlife; that “bug” is a scientific name and about the bug’s tube; what other wildlife is about in the woods; that butterflies and hoverflies are really difficult to catch!”

“Importance of lichens in learning about air pollution; increased knowledge of wildflowers; how much there is to know! That bramble clearance may not be the best for biodiversity; more about dragonflies”

“The identification of more than 100 species of plants, grasses, trees, moss, moths, dragonfly”

“Identifying various wildflowers I did not know”

“How beautiful & interesting moths are and how many varieties present; What plants are present, how to identify & information about; that there is a more ancient section of woodland”

“Variety of flora (in particular) that I was previously unaware of”

“All of it: the methodology, the bigger picture, the fine detail, the excitement of discovery and understanding what a particular species means in terms of the whole”

“Being shown the creatures captured and told about them; seeing a bug through a (magnifying) lens; the friendly and interesting company”

“The environment-nice place to be; learning something new; doing something different”

“Great group of people with very real interest and enthusiasm; the joy of discovery- finding an ancient woodland indicator!”

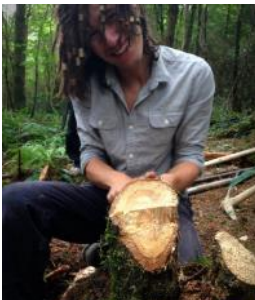
“Just being in the woods! All of it! All the extra bits of knowledge and interest that the group added”

Improvements:

“Can’t think of anything other than MORE!”

The Apprenticeship Project - Wood Construction Apprenticeship

Update



May saw the start of the final Wood Construction Apprenticeship. We have been excited to welcome **Eifion Wakefield** on board, and have high hopes for this unassuming 17 year old. Eifion has really taken on the challenges of this post with gusto. He has immersed himself in everything woodland craft related, and is soaking up each experience with enthusiasm. He has been thrown in at the deep end by his mentor, Benjamin Grey, with a variety of experiences and projects to stretch and challenge his skill base. These have included: designing and



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constructing a contemporary chair, fitting windows to a bird hide, designing and constructing a long drop compost toilet, planning a building to replace a woodland kitchen space, and supporting a range of activity sessions and Open Days for children, adults and other trainees. Eifion has adapted to each new situation, demonstrating skills from spoon carving to stool making, bridge building to gate construction. Eifion has approached each with quiet eagerness and has proved himself very capable.



We have now said our fond farewells to the last two Woodland Management Apprentices, with them having completed their eight month placements.



Aaron Kinsella leaves **WiseWoods Wales** having made a huge impact on the staff and volunteer team. His strength, commitment and humour will be much missed. In his last few months, Aaron and Kevin achieved their chainsaw licences, both passing with flying colours. This has helped Aaron to secure some extra paid employment. He has also been working as a support leader for Tir Coed's VINE project. Aaron recently met Mark Williams, MP during his visit to WiseWoods Wales. He chatted about his experiences as an apprentice. Aaron understands all too well the difficulties of living in a rural county and relying on public transport (Aaron made a 4 and half hour round trip each day). As a result, he decided to save some of his wages each month towards driving lessons, which should enable him to access the work in this sector more easily in future.

Kevin Rabbitt leaves Coedwig Gymunedol Long Wood Community Woodland having contributed significantly to the work of the project. Kevin has been a key member of staff in the process of felling and milling timber from the site to use in the new visitor centre building. Kevin has also regularly worked with the Wednesday Volunteer group at the site, demonstrating his skills and expertise in supporting a range of woodland management tasks.



Kevin was recently invited to get involved in the World Wide Woodlands: Forest Governance UK event at Long Wood, where he ran a workshop demonstrating traditional crafts to delegates from Central Africa, South America, China, Nepal and South East Asia. Well done, Kevin.

Since leaving, Kevin has found some employment and has more in the pipeline.



Tir Coed congratulates Aaron and Kevin on their achievements and wishes them both all the best for the future.

Partnerships

Harvesting the Knowledge Project: Symposium

On Friday 13 June, a *Harvesting the Knowledge* Symposium about craft, heritage and woodland, was held at Cwm Rheidol Visitor Centre. *Harvesting the Knowledge* works with people with experience in greenwood crafts and woodland management, to share knowledge about the craft objects in the Ceredigion Museum collection.

One of the aims of the project is to promote social enterprise through traditional crafts, by creating a range of wood craft products, which relate to the Museum's collections, to sell in the Museum shop, and hopefully helping to kick-start the participants' self-employed careers.

A Variety of people were invited to take part in the symposium to give talks on their area of expertise. The Symposium aimed to address the questions:

- *Is there a future for traditional woodland crafts?*
- *What are the benefits of working the land by hand?*
- *Are crafts important?*
- *Can we continue to work the land in a meaningful, sustainable way, in a world where we are at arms-length to the land around us and the way that our food and resources are grown and managed?*



- *Can craft survive in a digital world?*
- *How do we reconnect with our environment in a capitalist economy?*

For a full account of the day, visit this lovely blog by Greta, a trustee of the Heritage Craft Association, who gave a talk at the event.

<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/sense-of-place/harvesting-the-knowledge-in-ceredigion/>

And the Harvesting the Knowledge blog:

<https://www.tumblr.com/search/harvesting+the+knowledge>

Nanteos Fete and Market Research

The *Harvesting the Knowledge* project had a stall at the Nanteos Summer Fete on the Sunday 22 June. The day, which was blessed with glorious sunshine, was a great opportunity to test out the local market. Several of the *Harvesting the Knowledge* participants brought along their crafts to sell, whilst Ceredigion Museum and Tir Coed staff asked visitor's market research questions, to help us ascertain what products would be popular and the prices people are willing to pay. This information will now be used to guide the product development element of the continuing project over the next few months.





TIR COED

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News

Visits & Shows

Mark Williams, MP

Ffion Farnell and Andy Bakewell gave Mark

Williams, MP a guided tour of the WiseWoods Wales, Coed Tyllwyd site, explaining the three fold approach of WWW & Tir Coed; social, economic and environmental enrichment. Mark Williams was so impressed with what is being achieved, that he wrote to the Cambrian News, praising the work of the Charity and the Social Enterprise.

"It was excellent to visit Tir Coed and WiseWoods in Llanfarian, and see the innovative work that is being undertaken in both a voluntary and paid capacity. The opportunities for leisure, education, training, social enterprise and conservation in our woodlands are immense, and it was good to see Tir Coed and WiseWoods rising to that challenge."

Most importantly, the visit saw Mark Williams meeting with some of the people that Tir Coed and WiseWoods Wales have helped, whilst at the same time taking the opportunity to have a go on the saw-mill!



The Tudor Trust

Tir Coed was pleased to welcome Catriona and Monica from the Tudor Trust, for a meeting of staff, trustees, tutors and project participants. Tudor Trust have been supporting Tir Coed financially for a number of years, and their support has been crucial to the continuation of the Charity. Tir Coed staff and Trustees gave a guided tour of the VINE project in Long Wood, introducing them to some of the volunteers who have been creating beautiful gates and fences. It was a great opportunity to show them the positive work of Tir Coed, which they both seemed very impressed by.

The Royal Welsh Show

Tir Coed attended the Royal Welsh show on the Llais y Goedwig stand. It was great to speak with different woodland organisations and community woodland groups. Thanks to Rosie and Fay from Llais Y Goedwig for organising the stand and welcoming so many woodland organisations to the show.

New Llanfarian Project Officer



Oliver Morris had to leave Tir Coed after a short time of working for the VINE Project. We are very happy to announce that **Geraint Blayney** has now taken over as Llanfarian project Officer and has been in post for a couple of months. Geraint became a real asset to the team during his Jobs Growth Wales placement and we are thrilled to have been able to offer Geraint this progression.

"I am very pleased to have been given the role of the Llanfarian Project Officer with Tir Coed. I have been looking for a project to which I can get fully involved with, and am excited by the difference the Tir Coed project will have on Llanfarian wood, and the opportunities which are being created for people in the surrounding area."

Team Building Day



Tir Coed and WiseWoods Wales staff and their respective Trustees came together for a fun-packed Team Building day at Coed Tyllwyd. This was the first time that all had been together for any kind of event. The day saw three teams battle it out, to get the Golden Ystwyth Egg to safety.

A lot of laughter was had along the way, with lessons in how to work together for a common cause, using time wisely, making the most of the skills within the group, being aware of, and looking after resources as well as discovering how individuals react and work under pressure (and the levels they might sink to! Mentioning no names) - the pictures speak for themselves!

Everyone had a great time and thanks go to Daf Morris-Jones and his team for facilitating such a fun day. If you would like a similar team building day

contact Daf on: 07980 266523





Update



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales



This quarter has seen the end of spring and the beginning of summer, and a welcome relief to the difficult weather we endured throughout the winter. The perpetual mud and wearing waterproofs every day are now just a memory, to be replaced with beautiful dappled sunshine through the lush green leaves - and just one or two horseflies!

As ever, this has been a time of change for WiseWoods. We went from the majority of our income coming from external funding, to being 70% self-supporting. This was made possible by a series of well-paying contracts coming through RAY Ceredigion (an Aberaeron based play charity). These contracts are now ending and so a wider customer base is needed to continue our activities. The good news is that WiseWoods Wales is still here, and prospects are looking promising.

Partnerships

Tir Coed, our parent charity, has made a welcome return to the WWW base site, Coed Tyllwyd, after a short absence during which, Director, Ffion Farnell has been organising a major new fund-raising initiative and whole new programme of projects. One of these is based in Coed Tyllwyd and we are starting to reap the benefits of a wonderful synergy between the two organisations. Tir Coed has started by improving the infrastructure on site by building a compost toilet. Tir Coed will hopefully continue to help WiseWoods, by carrying out woodland management tasks, which are not economic for us to do ourselves, and by looking after the footpath network. WiseWoods is providing timber and expertise, as well as some staff helping out as activity support on days when they are not working for WiseWoods.

RAY Ceredigion, has continued to offer WiseWoods contracts and business. The plan over the coming months is to participate in a free play day in Aberaeron in August, as well as completing two more large projects – one in Drefach (a 6m x 4m shelter) and one in Aberarth (a climbing structure with steps, a slide and a tunnel).

WISE Network, is supporting WiseWoods with a biodiversity survey being carried out by specialists from Swansea University. One of our major outputs for our funders NRW and Environment Wales is to increase the level of biodiversity in the woods through our woodland management activities. This survey will enable us to gauge the positive effects our activities are having.

Bob Shaw Timber, as a local producer, is providing a proportion of good saw logs, at favourable rates, for WiseWoods to use, when Coed Tyllwyd (our home woodland) struggles with timber quality or supply. This fulfils one of our central aims; of boosting the local timber industry.

Business Wales, offers advice via their business advisor Jeremy Tindall. He has given advice on WiseWoods' business, website and publicity material. A recent training event on business branding should also prove invaluable with big changes happening over the course of the coming year.

Outdoor Learning Wales, are setting up a new local group in Aberystwyth and we are privileged to be a part of this. OLW has sprung from the former Forest Education Initiative (FEI) and aims to get more people to learn and appreciate the outdoors through a series of small funded projects.

Long Wood Community Woodland, provides a perfect partnership for the sharing of expensive kit. Long Wood has loaned WiseWoods its saw mill blade sharpening machine in return for WiseWoods providing chainsaw training for their Apprentice, Kevin Rabbitt. This item is something WiseWoods would struggle to afford alone, so in return for a weeks use of the machine we donate our part worn sharpening stones, which enables us to keep our blade costs to a minimum.

Site Infrastructure

As mentioned earlier, we will shortly benefit from a joint venture between Tir Coed and WiseWoods with the building of a compost toilet. Due for completion at the end of July, it will provide great relief to all WiseWoods staff!

Future needs for the site are coming more into focus as we consolidate our product range. It has become clear that we need as much flat production space as possible, a large timber storage area, a dry and comfortable canteen, a bigger area for the mill and an on-site office. The full plans will be drawn up shortly with help from local Design Engineer David Rayner. We hope to provide an exemplar off-grid office with wood fuel heating and LED lighting, computers, internet and printer powered by a 12V battery, recharged by solar panels and the on-site generator.

We have had considerable problems with the drive system on the saw mill. Apparently the manufacturers recognise this and have introduced an updated model and a retrofit kit for our mill. The trouble is that this kit costs £1,300! We seem to have come up with our own solution with the fitting of a centrifugal clutch at a cost of £160. We are crossing our fingers, but if it continues to work, our productivity and quality should see a big improvement.

We are sadly saying goodbye to our faithful site Daihatsu 4x4, to be replaced with a Land Rover Discovery, fully reconditioned by Julian Bird of Llangwyrfon. This will be a great asset to us as the new vehicle can carry 6 passengers, tow a 4 tonne trailer, and has good brakes (something sadly lacking in the Daihatsu).

Events

Aberystwyth Show

Last year we put all our efforts into the Aberystwyth Show displays with a large practical demonstration and a bespoke wooden display shelter. This year, we increased the size of our trade stand, but didn't do the practical demonstration. This time we occupied the whole of our corner by the entrance and made a finished products display with information boards, a 'Nail It' competition where competitors had to compete to hammer a 6 inch nail into a log and a small playground with a large Wendy House, log climber, wooden railway engine with carriages, and stepping stones. Secretly we were hoping to repeat our success by retaining our Best Trade Stand in Show title, but it was not to be – we only got Third Prize.

However, we were not too dismayed, as we had a visit by MP, Mark Williams and his wife, and the press release written by Zoe Temple, was published in the Cambrian News a fortnight later. WiseWoods volunteer Pat Riley proved to be the perfect showman, and managed to take well over £50 by selling nails to competitors in the 'Nail It' competition. Who knows how successful these events really are. Sales from the event totalled £127, but we did manage to give away 150 business cards and many brochures.



Rheidol Fun Day

WiseWoods attended a free Fun Day put on by Statkraft at the local hydro power station visitor centre. It was jointly organised by NRW who put on an environmental section to the event. Last year, we provided 20 bird box kits, that were constructed on the day by visiting children. This year, the event was much more widely publicised with over 1000 visitors. The WiseWoods stand was busy all day, and 30 bird boxes were made by members of the public (mostly children). The demand for bird boxes continued even after the show had officially finished!

Other Events

This quarter we had a special visit by Mark Williams, MP and we also had a joint Team-Building day with Tir Coed staff and trustees – these events are covered in the Tir Coed part of this newsletter.

Products

Delivered

It has been a quieter time this quarter, due to the slowing down in the number of playground contracts. Four, very large (and solid), planters were delivered to The Shared Earth Trust at Denmark Farm Conservation Centre, and we hope to be designing and building a combined firewood shelter and bike shed for them in the coming months.

A beautiful Wendy House, for the housing association Cantref, has been designed and built. It is to be installed in Bow Street, but is currently in storage, awaiting a planning decision. It has already had an outing, where it was very well received, as part of the display at the Aberystwyth Show.

One of our Very Solid benches has already been provided for another Cantref project, on a housing estate in Fishguard. This installation was especially enjoyable, as Jill Lowry and her maintenance team assisted with the installation, and appeared to really enjoy the process!

The Aberystwyth Show stand provided the impetus for the designing and building of our first WiseWoods bed and a wooden railway engine with carriages for a toddlers play area. Both items have been much admired, but sadly not to the extent of receiving any orders as yet.



Tony (one of our site staff), designed a rustic fence and gate for the Aberystwyth Show, which resulted in an order for a pair of gates to be installed at a domestic property near Penrhyncoch – this was promising as domestic sales have been very much in the minority up to now.

Through one of Tir Coed's contacts, we received an order for a Smoking Shelter, for a sheltered housing project in Aberystwyth. This was very successful, and they received a far superior product for the same price they would have paid from a catalogue firm. We also designed the shelter to exactly fit their space and we installed it for them. The customer was very happy with the product and the service.



Our first domestic order for our Very Solid benches was delivered and installed in Llandeilo. This is encouraging on two fronts: it was a domestic sale, and an order from further afield, extending our reach.



We are very grateful to local property developer, Martin Samuel, for having had faith in WiseWoods products from the very start. Martin ordered a second Very Solid picnic bench from us for his holiday cottage in Ponterwyd. The cottages look fantastic with WiseWoods benches, planters and picnic tables – in fact it makes our most impressive display yet!

Another of Tony's designs was a low cost vegetable box, for a new Veg Box scheme based in Llanfarian. We sold 20 of these special boxes, which were designed to stack easily and to give the scheme a more up-market feel.

This month has also seen a large increase in demand for milled timber. We have completed some sizeable contracts for five or six local customers.

Upcoming Jobs

Our most pressing current job, is to build a 6 x 4m shelter, for RAY Ceredigion in Drefach. This is a special challenge because it will be built on concrete pads constructed on site by the customer, and it is also a very long distance away. For the first time, we will be hiring a very large trailer, and we will be towing it with our new 4x4, which has greater towing capacity. Work on this project is well underway, and is due for completion at the end of July.

We are currently in 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! We have also been asked to quote for designing a wooden tractor and trailer, with in-built slide. We are very excited to do this one.

Lastly, we are due to complete the design for the Denmark Farm combined wood-store and bicycle shelter which should be installed in late August/early October.

Business Development

Now that the initial funding from the Ceredigion Social Enterprise Growth Fund is over and the jobs from RAY Ceredigion are slowing down, there is a great need to concentrate on Business Development. To this end, Zoe Temple (our Admin Assistant) has applied to Santander to help fund the post of Business Development Manager for one year. We very much hope this will be successful, and it will be a great leap forward if we can afford to have Zoe in this role for another 12 months at least.

Zoe has been concentrating on the publicity side of the business for the past 6 months and has submitted regular press releases to the Cambrian News. We seem to have an article in the paper every other week!

We have designed and had printed a new brochure and business card, which we are now using to contact schools, councils, caravan parks and owners of public spaces. These brochures have been well received, but we have yet to gain any orders from them. Similarly the Aberystwyth Show and the Rheidol Fun Day were very successful in terms of the numbers of visitors to the stand, but it is very difficult to gauge whether or not they were worthwhile, in terms of raising the profile of the business and gaining orders.

We also hope that the connection with Mark Williams, MP will have some positive outcomes, in terms of encouraging funders to engage in funding the continuation of worthwhile projects, rather than constantly looking for something new and letting established projects founder.

We are very encouraged to receive news that the Tidy Towns Project (headed by Rachel Mills of Ceredigion County Council) has been successful in gaining £14K for local projects to be delivered through RAY Ceredigion and WiseWoods Wales. We very much hope that we will be able to deliver most of these contracts.



Volunteers and Apprentices

We have just said goodbye to our latest Long Term Woodland Management Apprentice, Aaron Kinsella, who has been with us for 8 months. Aaron has been a great asset to the team and has grabbed this opportunity with both hands. The scale of his commitment can be seen by the fact that he travelled for four and a half hours, every day by bus, in order to work with WiseWoods.

During his time with us Aaron has studied hard and has passed his chainsaw felling licence, and he is well on his way to gaining his driving licence. Aaron is currently working with local tree surgeons, Arbcore and as a support worker for Tir Coed. Aaron is much missed on site, and we fully expect him to develop a successful career in the forestry sector.



We were delighted to be able to offer chainsaw training to Long Wood's Woodland Management Apprentice, Kevin Rabbitt too. Kevin shined throughout the training and, like Aaron, passed his chainsaw licence with flying colours. The assessor made special comment of how well both candidates had been prepared for the assessment, and that you could really see that they had had a lot of consolidation training and real forestry experience. Well done guys.

Zoe Temple continues to be a vital part of the admin and business development side of WiseWoods. She has applied for further funding to extend her employment with us for another year – so we are crossing our fingers that she will be successful with this.

Zoe is currently looking at redesigning our website in line with our more commercial focus, and she will also shortly be taking her minibus driving test to help ferry volunteers back and forth from the site.

We are currently offering another traineeship, this time as a Woodland and Marketing trainee. Interviews will be taking place for this post within the next few weeks.

We are also pleased to have been able to offer placements to two University students on the Countryside Management course. Leo Marjoram and Anthony Taylor have been with us for a few days a week for several months, and they are now coming to the end of their placement periods. We wish them all the best with their course, and thank them very much for all of their hard work.

Volunteer numbers have been low recently despite several newspaper adverts. We are still very keen to have volunteers working with us, and we can offer them a unique combination of hands-on training that is difficult to get anywhere else. Please let anyone you know who may be interested, that we are still very much looking for new volunteers.

We would very much like to thank our volunteer team with special mention going to Pat, Ian and Gerard. We are very relieved to have Gerard back on the team after his chainsaw accident where he injured his left foot whilst doing a private job. Gerard showed impressive commitment during his recovery by getting a lift in and hopping around site doing whatever he could.

Summary

WiseWoods is becoming a more established and more complex business as every month goes by. There is a constant process of improving our product range, production processes and public profile, and a constant battle to cover costs to ensure that cash flow remains positive. What is never in doubt though, is the positive impact WiseWoods is having on the woodland, the local community, and the people who work with us. We are currently on the cusp of breaking into new markets and developing our on-site infrastructure. We hope that we can survive, support the Tir Coed charity, and provide a good example to others, showing that it is possible to run a sustainable business from small woodlands with poor access.