



ecodyfi newsletter and annual review 2004



Annual review for the year 2004-5 from ecodyfi Co-Chair, Aled Griffiths



Farmer Aled Griffiths, ecodyfi Co-chair

What is it that makes the Dyfi Valley special? I'm sure we all have our own take on this – landscape, culture, language, Owain Glyndŵr, CAT....and a growing reputation for bringing these things together. Ecodyfi is at the heart of this and it's important work.

At one level it's about bringing people, natural resources and business activity together to

improve our quality of life for the long term. Articles in this newsletter illustrate some of our effective work in specific communities and with particular issues and projects.

It's also about bringing people together. The valley's strengths include the expertise and new ideas that have arrived in the area during the last 30 years - and how many of these fit well with traditional values such as respect for the land. But there is much work to be done in breaking down the barriers that still exist between the different parts of our community.

One highlight of 2004 for me was the conference we organised in June about the proposed Dyfi Biosphere Reserve. At first sight this looks like an environmental initiative, but we discovered that we can use this

prestigious UNESCO designation to help farmers and strengthen the Welsh language locally as well as protecting our habitats and encouraging responsible tourism.

We said goodbye to Co-Chair Nic Dunkley, one of ecodyfi's most active board members, this year. I'd like to say a big thank you to her for so much hard work.

We're delighted that the Welsh Development Agency and Environment Wales have agreed to continue backing us for another three years. Perhaps what they see as special is a community keen to benefit from protecting and using its environmental and cultural assets. That's what we call sustainable community regeneration. Join us.

March 2005

What is ecodyfi?

- The community regeneration group for the Dyfi Valley
- With projects in waste, renewable energy, tourism, community planning, transport and more
- Committed to strengthening the local economy through careful stewardship of natural and cultural resources
- Managed by a Board of 17 local farmers, business people and other volunteers
- Supported by the Welsh Development Agency

Ecodyfi Board

Aled Griffiths, Glantwymyn, Co-Chair 2003-

- Alun Jones, Cadfarch
- Andy Rowland, Machynlleth
- Charles Arch, Pennal
- Ellen ap Gwynn, Ceulanamaes-mawr
- Gill Jones, Glantwymyn
- Guy Pargeter, Llangynfelin
- Jonathan Hill, Machynlleth
- Marit Olsson, Corris

Martin Ashby, Glantwymyn, Co-Chair 2003-5

- Nick Smyth
- Nicola Dunkley, Llangynfelin, Co-Chair 2003-5
- Paul Allen, Corris
- Peter Jones, Cadfarch
- Ruth Owen, Corris
- Teresa Walters, Borth
- Tom O'Kane, Llangynfelin
- Ursula Byrne, Ysgubor y Coed



Farmers Gwen Lloyd and Charles Arch discussing horticulture at the Dyfi Biosphere Conference.

Horticulture culture

In 2004 we began a project to stimulate horticulture amongst farmers of the Dyfi Valley. Ecodyfi directors Charles Arch and Aled Griffiths have been working with Tom O'Kane of ecodyfi and Gwen Lloyd of Farming Connect. The aim is to increase locally grown fruit &

vegetables in order to reduce wasteful transport, keep money in the local economy, encourage farm diversification and improve local diets. Throughout the year we ran a series of farm visits and continue to seek ways of encouraging local growing.



Sustained support for sustainable transport

Ecodyfi have been busy taking the fuss out of the bus! Following on from our *Getting around the Dyfi Valley*, we began a three year Dyfi Travel Guide Project this year, aimed at promoting car free travel options to both local people and visitors in the Dyfi Valley. Transport representatives from Ceredigion,

Gwynedd and Powys Council and Lloyds coaches are all enthusiastic and willing to provide financial assistance. Joy Jones of Machynlleth Tourist Information Centre says "It's one of our most popular leaflets"



Ecodyfi supporting the local economy



Helping People Power On



“We want to make sure that our community benefits from the wind’s energy”, said John Williams, Chair of Bro Dyfi Community Renewables

Ecodyfi is helping members of Mid Wales’ renewable energy co-operative, Bro Dyfi Community Renewables, to develop its second project—a 500 kilowatt turbine on Mynydd Glandulas at Pantperthog. “We’re looking forward to welcoming new shareholders so that we can do more. Climate change threatens us all, and we want to make sure that our community benefits from the wind’s energy”, said BDCR Chair, John Williams.

The group already owns a 75 kilowatt turbine at Cilgwyn, near Machynlleth, which has been generating clean electricity since April 2003. In December 2004 it generated a record 14,700 kWh and in January

2005 produced 17,127 units. Since local houses use an average of half a kilowatt continuously, this output was equivalent to the consumption of nearly 50 typical households during January.

BDCR members are the 54 shareholders, 50 of whom live in the Dyfi Valley. The dividends they receive keep the profits in the local economy, whereas money spent on the big utilities has no chance of supporting local jobs. They are now feeding their experience into the review of the UK’s climate change strategy.

The co-operative says that the value of small projects based in the community should not be

over-looked in the search for more dramatic measures.

“Every little helps”, said John, and illustrated this by explaining that 7.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide have been saved by turning down fossil fuel power stations this January alone as a result of the “People Power” turbine’s production.

Ecodyfi and BDCR jointly won the prestigious Eurosolar UK Award for best commercial enterprise in 2004. Judges commended their “guts and determination to make this happen as a community and for showing how such a project can be delivered”.

Further info at www.ecodyfi.org.uk/energy/energybdc.htm

Local Shopping in the Bag



Award winning local butcher Will Lloyd says “Shopping locally makes perfect sense”

Look out for our ecodyfi shopping bags, only £4 from Ty Bro Ddyfi, and you’ll be doing your bit for the local economy AND the environment. The bag’s slogan promotes local producers, eating healthy locally produced food and a reduction of food miles—and the bag itself provides an alternative to single use plastic.

Will Lloyd, local butcher and

Chair of the Machynlleth Chamber of Trade explains that shopping local is “about getting the cash into the loop of the local economy and keeping it there. If I sell lots of meat, the farmers who supply me earn more money, then they have more money to spend on local goods. And so on and so on. Shopping locally makes perfect sense. I’m pleased to see ecodyfi promoting it.”

Gweithio prynu bwyta tyfu
YN LLEOL LOCAL
working buying eating growing
www.ecodyfi.org.uk

The bags are made with jute, a natural and biodegradable product. When discarded after a long life, the bags totally decompose leaving only valuable nutrients.

Bikers boost local economy



Riding the cli-machx. Photograph: David Perrott, Dyfi Mountain Biking

ecodyfi provided fund-raising and project management services for Dyfi Mountain Biking’s new cli-machx trail, at Ceinws,

The group aims to bring an additional £250,000 into the local community this year through visitor spend in accommodation, restaurants, pubs and shops. They will be working with WTB to provide “welcome” training to providers in the area in the Spring, in

time for what the group’s Chair, David Perrott hopes will be a “boom in mountain biking”.

The project was funded by the Wales Tourist Board and Countryside Council for Wales joint fund Adfywio, the European Regional Development Fund, the Forestry Commission, Powys County Council and the Dyfi Enduro event committee.

Get Growing!



We are now encouraging gardeners to get growing too, with free organic garden training. Our practical course for this year is full up, but contact us today if you want to join our postal or web course. See www.ecodyfi.org.uk/growing/index.htm

Happy with Real Nappies?

Ecodyfi's 'real nappy trial' began in July 2004. The experiment has encouraged 5 sets of parents, plus those who have followed their progress in the press, to consider using reusable nappies.

The parents were provided with a variety of modern washable nappies with funding from Environment Wales and then were asked to report back on progress.

When asked how the nappies compared to what they had envisaged, all said they had been pleasantly surprised, finding the real nappies a lot easier to use than expected.

Positive points have included

the environmental 'feel good' factor: "It's good to know that we're not increasing the amount of rubbish thrown out every week—that's a good start for Angharad" said new mum Danielle. The healthy nature of the nappy material against the baby's skin, good absorption and decreased nappy rash were also mentioned. All recognise the significant cost savings to be made as compared with continually buying disposables and some of the parents have invested in further sets of real nappies.

As to be expected there have also been a few problems, such as the bulkiness of the nappies on newborns, or difficulties



Parents sharing their experience of Real Nappies

with drying. While most parents found that the increase in washing did not cause difficulties, one family that doesn't have a washing

machine has now started using disposables. Parents will continue to report back over the coming months.

What Ceinws really wants

Ecodyfi is helping the newly formed Heulfryn Regeneration Group to develop an ambitious plan for Ceinws. After a public meeting held in May 2004, Ceinws elected a steering group to take the plan forward. They hope to establish a play area, a meeting place and other facilities at the Forestry Commission site. But affordable housing is the top priority.

The meeting heard the results of the recent community consultation organised by ecodyfi with Communities First, and supported by the Welsh Development Agency, the Forestry Commission and Glantwymyn Community Council. Those present were enthusiastic about the opportunities created through the Forestry Commission's willingness to let the community lead the way in planning the site's future.

The new Chair, Trish Andrews, emphasised that the group wants all parts of the village "to feel involved—and to get involved! We'll start with the play area because it's the easiest part to get done", she explained, "But

we're ambitious and need plenty of willing hands." "Andy at ecodyfi", she says "has been really helpful; they've found the funds, brought people together and helped get things started."

A group of small new technology businesses is already using one of the abandoned buildings on a temporary basis.

The results of the community consultation can be read online at www.ecodyfi.org.uk

"We want everyone to feel involved—and to get involved" says Trish Andrews, Chair of Heulfryn Regeneration Group



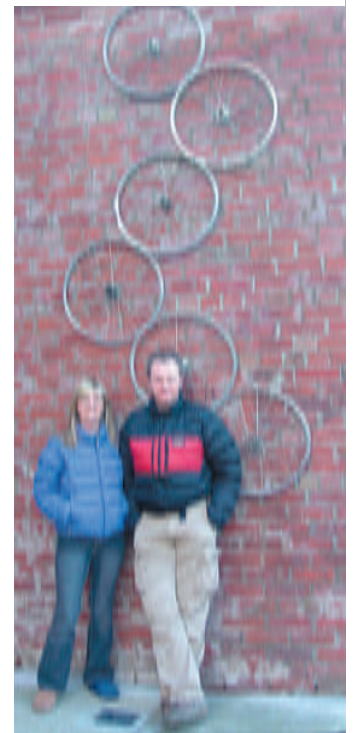
Reditreks: ready for action

Tammy and Tegid Humphreys are the proud new owners of Reditreks bunkhouse in Machynlleth and business is booming with 100 mountain bikers already through their (very stylish) doors.

Tammy and Tegid were also successful in being awarded a Wales Tourist Board capital grant towards the project, through the Dyfi Valley Tourism Growth Area scheme administered by ecodyfi. As well as being a busy bunkhouse owner, Tegid is the local milkman. He also finds time to guide mountain bike rides and, with 5 other local directors, run Dyfi Mountain Biking.

Dyfi Mountain Biking is the group who has worked with ecodyfi to build the exciting cli-machx mountain bike trail in the Dyfi Forest at Ceinws.

What's the secret of all this success? "The mountain biking!" says Tegid "It's the best in Britain. That's why people come to us and that's why they'll keep coming back."



Tammy and Tegid outside Reditreks Bunkhouse in Machynlleth



More about ecodyfi



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www.ecodyfi.org.uk

- An information resource for all local people
- Membership form on-line—join us for £1, we need your support.



Save Cash & Save the Planet—Friends of the Earth.

Practical suggestions for lessening our impact on the environment in the home & garden, DIY, transport, work, health, food, holidays, banking. See ecodyfi feature in the 'Time Out' section.

Books

52 Weeks to Change Your World

Allan Shepherd & Caroline Oakley

"With this book we can all make a difference" – *Future Forests*
A whole year of creative opportunities to change the world we live in. Whether you're an arm-chair campaigner or a dedicated doer, ambitious action man or domestic goddess, this book has something you can do to make a difference.

2004 112pp 1 90217 518 2
100x130mm £4.99



AGM 2005 and members buffet

Don't miss the AGM
Thursday June 16, 7.30pm
Machynlleth Bowling Club

Getting together

In June 2004, ecodyfi held its first community dance. It was aimed partly at informing people about ecodyfi's work, and partly to bring all sectors of the community together to have fun. We'll be holding another in June 2005—check out the web-site and *Dyfi Diary*—perhaps your group would like to be involved too?



Ecodyfi Manager, Andy Rowland, calls the dance with "The Backroom Band"

Finance and funding

Income	£
Grants & donations	100,503
Earned	8,714
Other	7,379
total	116,596
Expenditure	
Staff	54,420
Consultancy	3,974
Information	10,126
Other	25,380
total	113,900
Surplus	2,696

