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Dear Members and almost members¹,

There have been events, email updates, a website and we have not been idle but nevertheless, the Board admits it has been lax in maintaining contact with our fellow members of Llais y Goedwig. Sorry! - this is not a great way to build up a pro-active community of like minded people which is what was promised.

You will be aware of Coed Lleol's activities in support of Llais y Goedwig (LlyG) but are perhaps less aware that LlyG is a fully voluntary organisation which aspires to be grass-roots led and represent the interests of people who are taking responsibility for local woods and using them to sustainably develop their communities, environment and future. This makes the development of LlyG challenging as we need to work out how to generate ideas, agree what is and isn't appropriate for LlyG to take on and obtain a consensus of members. At the same time we need to move forward with establishing LlyG as a key interest group with Forestry Commission Wales and Welsh Assembly Government and thinking about funding the work that LlyG might do. So please do send through ideas and things you think LlyG could do for you to the Working Group either through Coed Lleol (see address above) or directly to the Board. Even better come to a Working Group meeting and our AGM! The Coed Lleol project can help with travel expenses to Working Group meetings and there will be subsidised places at the AGM for members.

One idea that is being kicked around by the Board is that LlyG could help facilitate the development of a woodland produce marketing group. The need for such a group was raised at the Coed Lleol network meeting in CAT back in 2008 as there was no central place in which potential customers could easily locate local suppliers of wood products and services. There is a funding opportunity coming on line soon to help co-operatives establish e-commerce so this could potentially become a real project if you want to see something like this happen.

Is this a sensible idea? Is it something that interests members? Is it something that LlyG should be doing? Is this too much of an overlap with other similar initiatives and it would be best to let them get on with it or offer to support them? Please contact Jenny or Roger if you would like to join a discussion group on these issues or have any comments you would like to contribute.

We have representation on the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel which is responsible for the development of the Action Plan arising from the Woodlands for Wales Strategy. It is therefore important that we have a clear mandate and agreement on policy positions from the membership to feed into the Action Plan.

One project proposal which has already been submitted by the Working Group is an Expression of Interest to the Responsive Grant Mode Funding of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This is for a piece of research which the Working Group considered necessary so LlyG can form an informed policy position and developed appropriate support mechanisms for groups looking to purchase land. This arose from the current WAG initiatives for 'asset transfer' which is the transfer of buildings and land to communities. The objectives of this project would be to:

- Develop a policy position on the transfer of public woodland to communities

¹ Where are your forms???

- Support community woodland groups in the acquisition of tenure and usufruct of private and public woodlands, building on evidence-based models of asset transfer and management
- Make suggestions to WAG on financing and other mechanisms to facilitate community access to woodlands.

We expect to hear whether this is something the JRF would like to fund by the 21st August and if they do like it a full proposal will be needed by the 2nd October. Please let us know if you would like to help develop the full proposal.

There are two events planned for the autumn where we can meet to discuss and take forward these and any other ideas you wish to propose. These are a regional networking event in Ebbw Vale on the 9th October and the AGM and national conference in Lampeter on the 20-21st November.

We need to hear from you now if you have any burning issues you wish to put on the LlyG agenda and for workshops at the AGM.

Best wishes,

On behalf of the Board:

Roger Davies, Chair, Golyfa Gwydyr 01492 640203 rogerd@golygfagwydyr.org

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Dave Petty, Coed Marros, Treasurer

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