Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership Meeting

Partneriaeth Natur Ceredigion
Ceredigion Nature Partnership

Minutes

Date:	20/07/26
Location:	Caerwedros Memorial Hall – Hybrid Teams

Present

Eryl Evans (Chair)	EE	County Councillor Llangybi , Ceredigion County Council
Gillian Clark (Minutes)	GC	Coordinator, Ceredigion Nature Partnership
Fiona Moran	FM	Biodiversity Assistant, Ceredigion Nature Partnership
Jake Rayson	JR	Biodiversity Assistant, Ceredigion Nature Partnership
Chris Harris	CH	Biodiversity Assistant, Ceredigion Nature Partnership
Norman Birch	NB	Trees and Hedgerows Officer Ceredigion County Council
Sarah Smyth	SS	Senior Ecologist Ceredigion County Council
Leah Ludgate	LL	Student Aberystwyth University
Alison Heal	AH	Former Senior Ecologist, Ceredigion County Council
Claire Hannington	CHa	National Trust
Paul Taylor	PT	County Recorder, Butterfly Conservation
Rebecca Wright	BW	Natural Resources Wales
Rosie Hemsley	RH	Ceredigion Badger Group
Sean McHugh (Online)	SMH	Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Sian Jones	SJ	Translator
Silyn Roberts	SR	Ceredigion Barn Owl Project
Wayne Lewis	WL	Hafod y Wennol Swift Tower

1	**Apologies:** Chris Harris, Bob Jacques, Tim Strang and Joan Swannell. An additional apology was received from a member who did not wish to disclose personal

	circumstances.

2	**Notes of last meeting and matters arising**
	No matters arising from the previous meeting. Minutes Agreed

3	**Introductions from attendees**

4	**Dates of Future Meetings**
	Online: Tuesday 22nd January Location TBC – Tuesday 20th April

5	**Coordinators Update**
	GC provided an update on funding discussions with Welsh Government. There had been encouraging indications regarding future support for the Partnership, although confirmation had not yet been received. The Partnership had requested increased revenue funding, not only to support staff but also to provide assistance to volunteer groups and to help maintain projects and infrastructure. **GC** reported that discussions had included the possibility of a four-year funding cycle. This would provide a more realistic period for planning and delivering projects, rather than concentrating set-up and delivery into a much shorter period. The Partnership was also awaiting a decision about establishing its own social media presence. In the meantime, it continued to use Council channels. **GC** hoped that the Partnership would be able to communicate through its own channels by January 2027. The tender process for two stone wildlife towers had been completed. One was being progressed through the Challenge Fund and the other through the Local Places for Nature scheme. **GC** reported that the successful tender had achieved a very high technical score. Following press coverage, the Partnership was preparing clarification about the funding arrangements, including the fact that the work was not being funded through Council Tax. The contractor was also interested in issuing a statement alongside the Council. The required exemption was still being pursued before work could begin. Locations had been identified and the

	project would be ready to proceed once approval was received. **GC** reported that two of the presenters had pulled out the day before the meeting and requested that the final presenter **WL** be allowed to present in the morning to avoid lengthy delays between sessions.	
	GC to check that **EE** is happy with the ToR before translation.	Friday 13th November deadline

6	**Presentations**	
	Wayne Lewis - Hafod y Wennol Swift Tower Silyn Roberts – Ceredigion Barn Owl Project	
Actions	Introduce **NB** and **SR** regarding volunteers work for the Ceredigion Owl Project.	

	Member Updates and Discussion
7	**Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd** **AH** reported that she had recently been elected Vice Chair of Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd (the Welsh Naturalists' Society). She explained that she had not yet attended a meeting in this new role and was still finding out more about the responsibilities involved. **AH** introduced the Society's activities, including its regular Saturday walks held at locations across Wales, with events organised in different regions. She also highlighted the Society's publications, particularly the Cyfres Enwau Safonol, a collection of reference booklets providing standard Welsh plant names. The books allow users to look up a plant by its Welsh, English or Latin name. **AH** had copies of the publications available and 11 sets were purchased by the Local Nature Partnership for attendees who wanted them. She encouraged members of the Nature Partnership, and schools across Wales, to make use of these resources.
8	**Natural Resources Wales** **BW** provided an update on work relating to restoration in the Pumlumon area and the Sustainable Farming Scheme. The first agreements had been completed, with a further group expected before Christmas. **BW** also referred to SSSI notifications and monitoring priorities. Work was continuing on habitat mapping and the development of an evidence base to support ecological networks and ecosystem resilience. **NRW** was considering how information about habitats, protected sites and

	nature reserves could be brought together to inform future collaborative work. This work was at an early stage and further information would be shared as it developed. The discussion also touched on funding constraints and the resources available to support site management and monitoring.
9	**National Trust** **CH** reported on work at Rhos Rhyd, where cattle collars had been introduced to help manage grazing and scrub. The approach had been successful, with the cattle undertaking more of the management work than had initially been anticipated. The site had responded positively, and further survey work was planned for the following year to compare results with baseline surveys undertaken before the project began. **CH** also reported on a Tree Council workshop hosted by the National Trust, which had provided an opportunity to learn more about the work of tree wardens and volunteers.
10	**Ceredigion Badger Group** **RH** provided an update on the Ceredigion Badger Group, which had grown to 33 members. Ten volunteers were prepared to undertake badger rescues, and further training was being planned in north Ceredigion to increase local capacity and share the workload. The group had been working more closely with other badger groups in Wales and had taken part in discussions with the Badger Trust. **RH** raised concerns about the Senedd vote relating to the return of a cull in Wales and explained that the group was seeking further information about how any proposals might be implemented. The meeting discussed the possibility of landowners declaring their land to be a badger-cull-free area, and the practical implications of such an approach. Members noted that further information and evidence would be needed before organisations such as the Council or National Trust could consider what action might be possible on their land. **RH** also referred to a planned peaceful gathering and lobbying activity at the Senedd towards the end of November. Members were encouraged to consider signing the relevant Welsh Government petition.
11	**Butterfly Conservation** **PT** reported on an exceptionally good year for butterflies, with high numbers of records across the county. There had been notable numbers of Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow butterflies, as well as reports of other migrant species. **PT** commented that Clouded Yellow numbers had been particularly striking and that it would be interesting to see whether any were recorded early in the following year, which might indicate overwintering in the UK. Marsh Fritillary larval web surveys had been particularly challenging because the life cycle had progressed earlier than usual. Surveys began earlier than in previous years, and the team had surveyed nine sites for adults and 19 sites for larval webs. New records included sites where larval webs had not

12	previously been found, as well as locations where the species had been absent for a number of years. **PT** explained that volunteer availability had limited the number of sites that could be surveyed, particularly because much of the work took place during school holidays. Assistance expected from NRW had also been more limited than anticipated. At Cors Caron National Nature Reserve, survey results had identified substantial numbers of larval webs. **PT** discussed the effects of previous vegetation management and grazing difficulties. Areas that had been cut back had subsequently produced good growth of wildflowers and food plants, with encouraging butterfly records. The approach to further cutting would be reviewed in light of these observations. Brown Hairstreak egg surveys were due to begin in the first week of November, including work at the Welsh Wildlife Centre. Volunteers were welcome, and no previous experience was required, although access to a vehicle would be necessary for some sites. **PT** also highlighted the annual count at the Nature Wise Community Forest Garden in Cardigan, scheduled for Saturday 21 November. Members discussed the unusual butterfly records, the possible effects of hot weather and drought, and the wider movement of species northwards. **Wales Biodiversity Partnership** **SMH** thanked the Partnership for its work on Wales Nature Week and the Ceredigion Nature Festival and commented on the value of the events and associated outreach. **SMH** reported that Welsh Government's Wales Climate and Nature Action Plan had been announced. The plan was at an early stage and was intended to bring climate and nature action together through a cross-government approach. A Climate and Nature Board was expected to oversee the work, chaired by the Cabinet Minister for Sustainability and Climate. **SMH** also referred to the biodiversity summit taking place in Armenia during October. The summit was expected to review progress against global biodiversity targets, including the 30 by 30 target and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. **SMH** noted the importance of Local Nature Partnerships in delivering practical local action and indicated that further information would be shared as national policy and funding developments became clearer.
Actions **GC** to investigate whether the petition would be suitable for publication in the newsletter.	Deadline: 30th Sept.

	Staff Updates and Discussion
12	**Jake Rayson**

	JR gave a presentation about developing the Partnership's website and mapping work, and how these could help bring together projects and activities taking place across Ceredigion. The proposed approach included developing partner profiles and maps showing organisations, sites and projects. The Partnership had identified approximately 80–85 potential partners. Mapping would help make existing activity more visible and could support collaboration between organisations and communities. **JR** explained that mapping could extend beyond habitats and wildlife features to include information relevant to local resilience, including risks associated with fire, flooding and pollution. This could help communities identify existing resources, understand local vulnerabilities and plan practical responses. The presentation considered how mapping could be developed with partners through a package of support. This could include preparing a partner profile, producing a map, undertaking a bioblitz or baseline survey with a local school, and developing community mapping of habitat features and local risks. The importance of recording existing management plans was highlighted. Making agreed plans and site information more accessible could help ensure that management decisions were understood and that work already undertaken was not inadvertently undone. **JR** also discussed the use of OpenStreetMap and the potential for mapping wildlife infrastructure, including swift towers. The Partnership's website and newsletter were being developed, with the newsletter also offering a way to maintain contact with members. Other projects included QR-code fixed-point photography, which was still being progressed, and planned Stori Wyllt work with primary schools. Four primary schools had taken part during the previous year, and **JR** hoped to extend the work to more schools in 2027. There was also interest in exploring community enterprise and agroforestry opportunities, potentially involving County Farms, outdoor learning for schools and support for agroecological livelihoods. Members discussed how practical projects could encourage wider participation and help connect environmental work with local food systems, farming and community resilience. The discussion recognised the importance of supporting local supply chains and ensuring that land management policy considered the effects of both under-management and over-management. The potential for mapping to support emergency planning was also discussed. Members noted the value of identifying communities that already had flood plans or other local arrangements, as these could provide a starting point for wider community mapping and resilience work.

13	**Norman Birch** **NB** provided an update on the development of the Ceredigion Tree Warden Network, supported by the Tree Council. The network was in its early stages. More than 20 expressions of interest had been received from potential volunteers following recent publicity. Further information was being gathered through membership forms so that volunteers' interests and skills could be understood. **NB** explained that the scope of volunteer activity was still being developed. Possible activities included monitoring young trees and saplings, identifying planting opportunities, supporting community planting and reviewing Tree Preservation Order records to check whether trees remained in place. Insurance arrangements were being discussed to establish which activities volunteers could undertake and what cover would be required. Community Councils across Ceredigion had been contacted and invited to become involved, although responses had not yet been received. **NB** explained that the preferred approach would include community representatives who could organise local activities with support from the network, rather than requiring the Council to organise every activity centrally. The Tree Council could provide training, grant support and advice on funding opportunities. An open day had also been held at a tree nursery and the nursery had offered to host a further event for volunteers once the network was more established. A joint introductory training session was being planned with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, drawing on its experience of running a tree warden network for more than ten years. A member suggested contacting Rachel Carter at One Voice Wales, who was already working with some community councils and could help identify groups interested in becoming involved. NB welcomed the suggestion. **Sarah Smith** **SS** explained that she continues to work as a Planning Ecologist while the Council's restructuring process remains ongoing. The future structure of the conservation team and the arrangements for staff are not yet clear. **SS** is supporting **GC** with the allotment grant funding for AberEco Hub's community food-growing project at the University. The project is progressing well, with the first claim for 50% of the funding expected to be submitted at the end of October. She is also working with the Marine Protected Areas team on a

	proposed accreditation scheme for the Cardigan Bay Marine Code, as part of the Nature Fund Round 6. The proposal includes funding for a full-time Water Ranger for three years. Initial discussions had taken place, with an application planned for November and a funding decision expected after Christmas. **SS** also noted that she continues to deal with day-to-day planning work. She commented on the swift tower presentation, explaining that she and her planning ecology colleagues regularly recommend swift boxes as an enhancement in planning applications, and that it was useful to learn more about the benefits of internal nest boxes. **SS** introduced **LL** a student from Aberystwyth University. **FM** reported that work on the National Forests project had continued, with the creation of the Dyfi Biosphere woodland group progressing and monitoring work planned at two further sites. Scouts and the local community had contributed to the management plan for one of the sites, with work being planned to improve the woodland for biodiversity. Owl boxes had also been purchased for erection on farms, in partnership with Tir Canol, as part of the project. Work on the Wildlife Towers project was also progressing, with research being undertaken into different structures suitable for a variety of sites. **FM** had been working with local primary schools to help pupils learn about woodlands and search for minibeasts, with work involving secondary school pupils planned for the term. The Teifi Coastal Project is coming to a close at the end of the year and there will be a Teifi Coastal Project Conference on Thursday 19th November at the Fisherman's Rest.	