

Ffynone and Cilgwyn woodland community winter / spring 2011 newsletter

Another winter has gone and we thought it was time to update everyone on what's been happening in the woods. And what is planned.

We are aware its been a while since the last newsletter but we thought it would be good to get on with what we had been talking about for the past year or so and do some forestry, and social networking.

Forestry operations

We have now made a start with thinning work and we have found ourselves in different areas of the woods getting, timber to order. Our most asked for wood has been Norway spruce logs, to the major sawmills, and Douglas fir logs to local self builders. Thinning operations in each area are adapted to suit the orders and the woodland. Predominantly we have been removing the larger Norway spruce as these are at optimum diameter of 60cm/(2ft)at the base. This means we can open up the canopy by removing the fewest trees. With the Douglas fir, we have been felling the bendy ones leaving the straightest to grow on as there is a developed market for larger Douglas, which means the trees left could be left to grow for another 40-80 years.

We started to clear fell the Western hemlock patch upstream and North of the waterfall, but our machinery broke in the cold spell and some of the trees started to blow over so we decided to get local contractors, West Wales Timber to do the job. Currently this is well under way, once completed this will be the end of the clear fell operations, with the rest of the woodland being managed by continuous cover techniques.

We have been busy with the delivery of our seasoned hardwood firewood loads during the winter, and we have started cutting our supply for 2013 now as we have next years in stock already.

We have also been milling timber for various orders including a big agricultural shed near Fishguard and the new community centre at the Lammas project, Glandwr..

Training

There has been a steady stream of training courses most of which have been the basic chainsaw course. A group of us registered for the new all Wales program Focus on Forestry First this has meant 4 workers were able to attend a Harvester operators course as well as a medium tree course for trees up to 30 inches.. A group also attended a first aid at work course, with a long list of courses planned for the next 12 months. Any one interesting in applying directly for 75% funding towards forestry training should contact FFF directly on -0808 178 2757.

The **Mountain bike group** are still hoping to build a course in the woods and despite a delay hope to start work during 2011, we plan to move the gates at the top of Glan rhyd which will open an extra car parking area for the mountain bike riders to use.

Social events

Several exciting events have taken place since the last newsletter :

Pembrokeshire Guides Used the site in October when they held a whole day orienteering event which included Guide groups from throughout Pembrokeshire.



Royal Forestry Society - the weather was fine and a group of around 20 Members from all over the U.K. walked and talked around the whole length of the new tracks. The members included various heads of industry (mostly retired) many of whom had had involvement with Ffynone over the last 40 years. This gave a great opportunity to discuss in detail some of the peculiarities of the site, and forestry intentions back then as well as current forestry management plans. Everyone agreed the new tracks were a great improvement from a forestry perspective as well as a social one, and some attendees even went as far as saying it was their best meeting ever.

We also had a day in August when the **Pembrokeshire horse riders association** had a day of riding in and around the woodlands. We built a ford next to the army bridge to help the more cautious riders access the whole circuit and from various feedback we have had, everyone enjoyed themselves.

Last meeting

The last meeting in Bwlchygroes village hall was quite poorly attended, unlike all the other meetings we have held, so we thought we would give it a rest before the next one. However Richard Dobbins from Tivy Bird Ringing Group, kindly gave an interesting talk on the bird and flying insect life in Ffynone and explained some of the benefits of removing conifers, especially from rivers and converting back to native species. He also explained about the value of adding bird boxes in the woods for various target species. We have started to build some already for pied flycatchers and plan to do more with the schools. We also discussed building resting benches and picnic tables to place around the site. Pat from Ty Isaf has kindly offered to build some. We are still working on the design for the notice board for the Cwm Ffynone entrance car park that was also discussed at the meeting.

Next meeting

Bwlchygroes hall on Thursday 7th April at 7.30pm. We will be discussing the next 5 years, and how more people can get involved.

FSC registration

There was a hiccup with the registration whereby a number of stakeholders weren't contacted, this seemed to take ages to resolve, but thankfully the process is back on track and FSC should be contacting some people again shortly. Apologies if you get contacted twice or if you have been missed out so far, anybody wanting to have an input into the process should contact Marie-Christine Flechard at Wood Mark on -0117 914 2435.

5 year Report

Unbelievably it will be 5 years since we started the process of this project. As such we plan to write a 5 year report on progress so far. We will try to write what we we have experienced so far and also hopefully lay an outline of what we plan for the next five years. Basically though the first 5 years have been about doing the legal and official paper work, installing the hard infrastructure i.e. tracks and fencing and the social development which has included explaining the changes to the general public and building links with interested parties and organised groups, and working out how so many people can use the site with the minimum amount of impact on other users. The next 5 years is likely to be about soft infrastructure, play areas, picnic tables, adding more tree species etc. and the social development should hopefully start to reach into the fabric of the local community from the good links we have been building already.

Calon yn Tyfu: 01239 841675, growing-heart@btinternet.com, www.growingheart.co.uk

