



Tirwedd Adfer Y Ddawan

Restore the Thaw Landscape

Mel Stewart & Ceri Williams
Restore the Thaw Landscape Project





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Mewn Partneriaeth â
Llywodraeth Cymru
In Partnership with
Welsh Government

Thanks to funding from Nature Networks National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funders, the Council is co-ordinating a three-year programme of work to make biodiversity improvements along the River Thaw its tributaries and surrounding landscapes.



[illegible]



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The project aims to benefit local wildlife, landowners and the community, and will provide various opportunities for organisations, community groups, and volunteers to partake in the conservation work.





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As part of this project, we will:
Engage with our local community...



Through citizen science projects, surveys, volunteer work parties, events, school programmes, walks and talks, interpretation and the River Thaw Festivals.





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Working with a wide range of partners....



South and West Wales
De a Gorllewin Cymru



amphibian and reptile
conservation



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales



Ymddiriedolaeth
Genedlaethol
National Trust





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For a whole range of species





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In a wide range of habitats carrying out activities,
including

Fencing to exclude stock, protect
sensitive habitats, improve access





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Pond enhancement
and creation





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Wildflower
meadow
enhancement and
creation, seed
collection





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Tree, hedgerow
and orchard
planting to
improve
connectivity



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River restoration
work, remove
barriers to
fish migration,
flood protection





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What we've been
up to from July –
September 2023

Events and
promotion





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What we've been
up to from July –
September 2023

Including visits to Vale Show, St Athan fete, Bat walk, family engagement at Porthkerry, Community Councils, Big River Watch, Water vole training.





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What we've been
up to from July –
Septemer 2023

Site Visits to local farms,
wildlife sites across the
Vale , river locations,
small holders





Site Visits





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What we've been
up to from July –
September 2023

There is an ever increasing
number of landowners
requesting to be involved in
the project





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What we've been
up to from July –
September 2023

Volunteer and Community
Engagement





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What we've been
up to from July –
September 2023

We have worked with a range of
volunteers and organisations
already including Innovate Trust,
EGIS, Wildlife Trust, Smart Rivers
and local volunteer work parties.





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Outcomes and Legacy For People

- Create two 3 year full time posts – **Restore the Thaw Landscape Project Manager** and **Restore the Thaw Landscape Project Officer**
- Work with a large group of partners, create a steering group which will then become self-sustaining as a River Catchment Partnership once the project finishes. To work with at least **25 different partner organisations**.
- Schools – We plan to engage with all schools within the project area, plus all those that are adjacent - this will be 29 primary schools, 5 Comprehensives and 1 Special needs school. We plan to work with 20 schools with 3 classes from each school which is **x1,800 school children** engaged.
- Run Landowner Engagement events - **x50 new landowners** engaged in projects.
- Run several large promotional events for the whole range of the local community – x3 large events and at least x9 smaller events through the 3 years of the project – minimum of **3,000 people** over the 3 years. Promoted through the **Thaw River Festival** banner
- Run many volunteer work parties, working with Innovate Trust, Vison 21, Age Concern, VOGC Youth team, Amelia Trust, Dyffryn, to run at least 10 practical conservation work parties per year throughout project = 30 volunteer session (10 volunteers at each session) - To engage with at least **300 volunteers**





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Run several Citizen Science programmes including, adder surveys along coast and inland, otter spraint collection for DNA analysis, SmartRiver project measuring river quality, bat detecting sessions . To Run at least **x4 Citizen Science programmes.**

Run a range of monitoring and surveys projects to include both species and habitats, e.g., ponds for GCN and toads, pollinator/invertebrate surveys, grassland surveys, Black Oil beetle on Wales coast path, bat surveys in woodlands, edges and rivers, otter wildlife cameras out throughout catchment (also for other species) To run at least **x6 survey programmes.** This equates to **x1,720 volunteers** taken part in a range of activities over the 3 years.

Undertake the whole range of tree planting from hedgerow and copse creation, orchard reinstatement, woodland infilling (especially where felling has occurred due to ash die back) with community involvement - to plant **x1,500 trees by community groups.**

Access - To have made **8 physical improvements** to allow easier access to the new nature networks through pathway stabilisation, new kissing gates, pathway clearance, but also through videos, blogs, use of social media to have allowed digital access to all areas of the project.

We would like **to be imaginative in who we engage with** so that we can work with groups and individuals that might not normally get involved with this type of project - so work with organisations like Motion Control Dance, Local art groups, home education groups, but also engage with some of the businesses located in the project area, for example Wales Airport ,Aberthaw Cement Works, Cardiff City Region at old Aberthaw Power Station, Bro Athan , - there are several local businesses located in Barry that carry out small scale biodiversity projects at Porthkerry. We would look to build on these.





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Outcomes and Legacy for wildlife

Protected sites - For all **SSSI and protected sites to be in a better condition** and more resilient to climate change and other impacts, and better connected to each other and the river system, by removal of alien species, appropriate scrub removal, tree planting, fencing, and hedgerow planting **x 31,000 trees planted**

X10 hectares of lowland meadows and calcareous grasslands areas will be improved which are richer in biodiversity, including plants, invertebrate, birds and fungi, help create connectivity, with improved field margins and riparian corridors.

The River Thaw and its tributaries will in a better condition than they currently are. This will have been achieved through: the provision of **3.5 km of riparian fencing** with **alternative water provision** - to prevent bank side erosion and poaching by livestock

At least **x10 fish access improvements** through removal of culverts, fitting fish passes and removal of weirs

Riverside planting of trees to aid in flood defences and provide otter habitat - planting at least **x10,000 trees** in riparian locations.

Great Crested Newts and Toads - To have undertaken targeted habitat creation and ongoing management at a range of sites in suitable condition will improve conditions for GCN and Toads. Create **5 new ponds and reinstate 10 existing pond locations**.





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Adders - To have undertaken targeted creation, restoration and management of suitable habitats in the project area, in particular hibernation areas; plus helped with the management of predator threats and recreational disturbance; reducing the risk of fires; and increasing public awareness and appreciation. To have found at least **4 new sites for adder in project area.**

Bats - To have surveyed a range of woodlands, meadow edges, and river corridors within the project area, and gained a much better knowledge about species distribution, foraging routes, hibernation sites and undertaken **at least 2 habitat creation projects with bats as the focus**

Eels - To have **released 900+ European eels** which have been cared for by the 18 school classes, while the students have learnt about their intriguing life in the wild and the challenges they face in their natural habitats.

Otters - To have undertaken **DNA analysis of x200 otter spraint** samples so that we can 'recapture' the same individuals allowing us to identify population range, movement and size. To have surveyed the catchment to find breeding areas, lay-up areas, identify river and road crossings and **created 2 suitable breeding holts**, populate future habitat creation and complete big gaps in otter research.

Water vole - To have created a suitable riparian landscape that will support the **release of 150+ water voles.**

Beavers - To have created a suitable enclosure at Amelia Trust Farm with suitable habitat for the **release of a pair/small family unit of beavers.** The beaver project would also act as a catalyst on better understanding and promotion of a lost native species.





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