

Chairman's Report 2018-2019

Summary

A busy year which has seen continued active involvement from our volunteers and the development of Court Wood into a really beautiful workspace for our woodland activities.

Total Hours = 1123 (9% higher than last year), excluding litter-picking.

Total Hours Litter-picking : no figures currently available, but estimate similar to last year.

Total volunteers = approx. 40 (down from 69 last year), plus circa 30-35 litter-pickers..

PV panels ; Performing well. Shareholders now paid off in full!

Finances – healthy (see Treasurers report). Healthy revenue, and we have been able to purchase a new brush cutter for Woodland activities.

A litter-prevention (signs and bins) campaign was jointly funded with donations from MCC, Landmark Trust, Abergavenny Tourist Board and McDonalds.

Main achievements

- A few new volunteers in both main areas (Woodland and Litter-picking).
- A great effort once again from our core of “regulars” – Thank you to all of them!! You know who you are!
- Over 400 followers on Facebook – thank you Andrea. Social media extends our reach way beyond the local community and ensures we keep up to speed with other like-minded environmentalists.
- Circa £2500 of firewood sales : 25% higher than last year.
- 19 bags of firewood (same as last year) and 15 bags charcoal given to volunteers.
- 189 bags Charcoal sold, mainly through the Garage, (vs 139 last year). A reflection of the wonderful summer we had!
- A varied and exciting range of craft courses have taken place in Court Wood : special thanks to Roy, Isis & Mick for sharing their expertise and patience.
Chairmaking (proving particularly popular), Spoon carving, Shaker boxes, Spinning & Hurdle making.
- Litter prevention : after supportive meetings with Monmouthshire County Council and the local Community Council we embarked on a campaign of litter-prevention using a combination of signs and bins. We now have 7 bins and 40 signs installed around the community. This is very much a trial, probably lasting about 12-18 months and we will be reporting regularly on progress.
- Donations : Two new benches were crafted and installed in the village hall play area.
- An additional 100 or so new trees have been planted in Court Wood in a new formation recommended by Rob Davies (Woodland Trust & CEG volunteer)
- A tree survey has been completed for the top two sections of Court Wood. This will enable us to enhance and update our Woodland Management plan. Thanks go to Rob Davies for this fine piece of work.
- Ken continues to maintain and improve the Bird boxes in Court Wood (Thanks Ken!), providing some wonderful photographs too. He has recently added a further 21 boxes as well as removing some of the old boxes damaged by woodpeckers.



- Shows : CEG attended The Royal Welsh Show (July), Llanthony Valley Summer Show (August) and the Xmas Court Fair at Llanvihangel Court. Our stand was well visited at all three events. Crowds seem to be particularly drawn by craft demonstrations (thanks to Andrea and Roy).
- Social events: A wonderful canoe trip on the Wye (thanks Craig!), a summer bbq at Trout Cottage and a winter kiln-burn/bbq in Court Wood were all well attended.
- Walking Group : a new community walking group was launched in February with the first walk being attended by a healthy mix of people and their dogs. Thank you Ian for making this happen! Walks will be held each month throughout the Spring/Summer months – weather permitting.

Main Events of our year

- April : Great British Spring Clean litter picking
- July : Royal Welsh Show – Bulith Wells.
- August :
 - Llanthony Show
 - Social summer bbq at Trout Cottage
- September : Canoe trip social
- November : Litter Strategy meeting at MCC County Hall Usk.
- December :
 - Llanvihangel Court Xmas Fair
 - CEG social bbq in Court Wood
- Regular craft courses throughout the year (too many to list here).
- Several demo days at Llwyn Celyn.
- February : Walking group launch.

Disappointments

- Woodlanders has never really got going again due to a lack of organisation and leadership.
- What's On Crucorney has lapsed somewhat due to a combination of slow website speed and short notice from organisers of events.
- The long-promised wood carvings for the village hall Play Area are still not finished.
- The signs and bins have not been universally welcomed. Lessons will be learned.

Skills /People

- Many people have now spent time in the beautiful setting of Court Wood, learning and practising new skills such as splitting and cutting wood, charcoal burning, weaving etc, or maybe picked up valuable carving tips from Roy...in addition to this
- We now have four more chainsaw license holders trained and qualified for crosscutting and chainsaw maintenance.
 - Judy Parsons
 - Tim Maish
 - Ian Tremlett
 - Simon Kitchen

Some of these will soon be going on to add the felling qualification during 2019.





And once again I'd like to put on record my personal thanks to Andrea and Belinda for their fantastic work throughout the year as fellow Officers of CEG. Their support and expertise is absolutely invaluable.

CEG Structure and Organisation

As from April this year CEG has now become a Community Interest Company (CIC), and will officially be known as Crucorney Environmental Community Interest Company Limited. Quite a mouthful! Thank goodness we're already known as CEG and this will probably remain the case. This change allows us to more freely trade goods and services whilst still ensuring that the benefit and profit goes to the community that we live in. Instead of a constitution we now have articles of association (available to view on our website), and as with any registered company, we have to submit tax returns each year. Importantly also, the liability of the officers is limited in the same way of any limited company.

We have also applied for charitable status for the PV panel operation. We have done this to try and ensure that the PV panel profit can be managed somewhat independently and make awards to worthy organisations and causes in our community. It also means that it has to be managed and governed according to the requirements of the Charitable Commission which is open to transparency and scrutiny.

It's worth pointing out that we have only been able to make these changes because the Woodland Group is now earning sufficient revenue and profit to support itself financially, thanks to healthy firewood and charcoal sales. Long may this continue.

Andrea and I have decided to step down from our current CEG roles at the end of the next 12 months. We feel that the Group needs new energy and impetus to now take it forward and hope that at some point during the year ahead someone will step forward to receive the baton. We have very much enjoyed our time as Chairman and Secretary of CEG. We hope we have made a positive difference and would like to thank all those who have given their time and support to the Group during the past 5 years.

Links & Associations

- Crucorney Community Council –We continue to report monthly to CCC and I regularly attend their meetings.
- KWT – Keep Wales Tidy ; regular contact via Tom Ward-Jackson.
- Allotment Society – occasional updates, but v. little interdependency.
- Heating Oil – group buying still ongoing and growing in membership
- Green Valleys – links via Gareth Ellis.
- Landmark Trust – We continue to build links with Llwyn Celyn and have been invited back to provide more craft demonstrations at their open days in 2019.
- Monmouthshire County Council : to discuss what more can be done county-wide to reduce litter.
- Plastic Free Abergavenny – supporting them in their efforts to reduce the use of single-use plastic.
- Llais-y-goedwig : regular contact on all matters relating to community woodlands in Wales.





- Focus First on Forestry : a WG/EU funded organisation helping to develop skills in the forestry sector. This has enabled us to access subsidised training courses.

Forward Plans for 2019/20 :

New challenges and objectives for 2019/20 to include :

- Achieve charitable status for PV panels
- Bed in the new CIC organisation and processes
- Review litter-prevention strategy and trial results
- Ensure a smooth handover to the new Chair and Secretary

Other news :

CEG would like to record thanks to Mrs Julia Johnson and her family, the owners of Court Wood, for her continued support during the past 12 months.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Jackman".

David Jackman
Chairman
14th April 2019

