

Carmarthenshire Landscape & Heritage Grant Scheme Evaluation Report

May 2011 - December 2014



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

This project distributed small grants in Carmarthenshire between July 2012 and December 2014 in two different streams: Landscape & Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage. The project was based at the Tywi Centre, Llandeilo and was funded through the European Rural Development Programme (RDP). The Landscape & Biodiversity strand allocated and administered grants in one round to landowners and farmers to enable them to restore, create, enhance and conserve habitat, biodiversity and landscape and implement actions to protect habitats and species that reflect priorities as identified within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). Grants were up to £5,000 and £92,901.23 was allocated to 22 projects.

Cultural Heritage offered grants between £1,000 and £15,000 to community groups and organisations; the grants supported activities that celebrated and promoted cultural heritage. £519,101.10 was distributed to 55 projects in 4 funding rounds.

The evaluation involved speaking to as many people as possible particularly at the different stages of the grant process and also after completion. The process and particularly the outcomes and impact for people and places and biodiversity in Carmarthenshire were focused on. Two grant officers, one for each stream, promoted the scheme and worked with interested people and groups from the first expressions of interest, through the application process and to completion of the work. Their dedication, professionalism, considerable expertise, communication and interpersonal skills ensured this success. Grant applicants all commented on their excellent work.

The Landscape & Biodiversity officer worked part-time; she visited sites many times and used a robust scoring system and specifications for standards of work. The knowledge she passed on and her advice and support was of a very high caliber and appreciated by the grant recipients. A management plan was produced for all sites and this will ensure a legacy. Many habitats have been restored and the land and many species of wildlife have benefited. Most would not have undertaken the work had it not been for this grant scheme.

The cultural heritage officer worked tirelessly throughout, running workshops for potential applicants, visiting projects and supporting people from the first expressions of interest to completion. There was a diverse range of projects such as interpretation panel, walk leaflets, use of IT to interpret history and heritage, art installations, sculpture and theatre costumes; all these helped people and groups to discover, celebrate and share the rich culture of Carmarthenshire. Tourism in the county will benefit greatly.

Both strands have left a lasting legacy: people have learned a great deal, community groups increased their capacity and people learned how to manage their land. It is hoped that this excellent work continues and recommendations include adopting a strategic approach that ties in with other strategic priorities including: rural economic growth, diversification, community cohesion, tourism and green tourism, health through recreation, sustainable development.

Crynodeb Gweithredol

Dosbarthwyd grantiau bach yn Sir Gaerfyrddin rhwng mis Gorffennaf 2012 a Rhagfyr 2014 trwy gyfrwng y prosiect yma. Roedd dwy ffrwd: Tirwedd a Bioamrywiaeth a Threftadaeth Ddiwylliannol. Lleolwyd y prosiect yng Nghanolfan Tywi, Llandeilo a chafodd ei ariannu drwy Raglen Datblygu Wledig Ewrop (RDP). Ddyrannwyd ac a weinyddir grantiau Tirwedd a Bioamrywiaeth mewn un rownd i dirfeddianwyr a ffermwyr i'w galluogi i adfer, creu, gwella a diogelu cynefinoedd, bioamrywiaeth a thirwedd a gweithredu camau i adlewyrchu

blaenoriaethau fel y nodwydyn y Cynllun Gweithredu Bioamrywiaeth Leol (LBAP). Roedd y grantiau hyd at £5,000 a dyrannwyd £ 92,901 i 22 o brosiectau. Cynigodd y ffrwd Treftadaeth Ddiwylliannol grantiau rhwng £1,000 a £ 15,000 i grwpiau a sefydliadau cymunedol i ddathlu a chodi ymwybyddiaeth am dreftadaeth leol. Cafodd £519,101 ei ddosbarthu i 55 o brosiectau mewn 4 rownd ariannu.

Fel rhan o'r gwerthusiad siaradwyd a gymaint o bobl â phosibl, yn enwedig yn y gwahanol gyfnodau o'r broses grant a hefyd ar ôlcwblhau'rgwaith. Mae'r canlyniadau a'r effaith ar gyfer pobl, cymunedau a bioamrywiaeth yn Sir Gaerfyrddin yn hollbwysig. Roedd dau swyddog grant, un ar gyfer pob ffrwd; buont yn hyrwyddo'r cynllun ac yn gweithio gyda phobl a grwpiau o'r camau cyntaf wrth iddynt dangos diddordeb, drwy'r broses o wneud cais hyd at ddiwedd y gwaith. Roedd eu hymroddiad, proffesiynoldeb, arbenigedd sylweddol, sgiliau cyfathrebu a rhyngbersonol wedi sicrhau llwyddiant.

Bu'r swyddog Tirwedd a Bioamrywiaeth yn ymweld â'r safleoedd sawl gwaith a defnyddiwyd system sgorio gadarn a manylebau ar gyfer safonau gwaith. Rhoddod gwybodaeth a chynghor o safon uchel iawn i bob un a chynigodd am grant. Cynhyrchwyd cynllun rheoli argyfer pob safle a bydd hyn yn sicrhau etifeddiaeth tymor hir. Mae llawer o gynefinoedd wedi cael eu hadfer, mae'r tirlun a llawer o rywogaethau o fywyd gwyllt wedi elwa. Ni fyddai'r rhan fwyaf o bobl wedi ymgymryd ar y gwaith onibai am y cynllun grant hwn.

Gweithiodd y swyddog Treftadaeth Ddiwylliannol yn galed iawn trwy gydol y prosiect, yn rhedeg gweithdai ar y cychwyn ac ymweld a phrosiectau a cefnogi pobl a grwpiau o'r ymadroddion cyntaf o ddiddordeb i'r diwedd. Roedd ystod amrywiol o brosiectau, megis paneli dehongli, taflenni cerdded, defnyddio TG i ddehongli hanes a threftadaeth, gosodiadau celf, cerfluniau a gwisgoed theatr; Bu'r holl waith yn helpu pobl a cymunedau i ddarganfod, dathlu a rhannu diwylliant cyfoethog Sir Gaerfyrddin. Bydd twristiaeth yn y sir yn elwa'n fawr o'r prosiect.

Mae'r ddwy ffrwd wedi gadael etifeddiaeth barhaol: mae pobl wedi dysgu llawer, mae grwpiau cymunedol wedi cynyddu eu gallu ac mae pobl wedi dysgu sut i reoli eu tir. Y gobaith yw bod y gwaith ardderchog yn parhau ac mae'r argymhellion yn cynnwys mabwysiadu dull strategol sy'n cyd-fynd â blaenoriaethau strategol eraill gan gynnwys: twf economaidd gwledig, arallgyfeirio, cydlyniant cymunedol, twristiaeth a thwristiaeth werdd, iechyd trwy hamdden a datblygiad cynaliadwy.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Landscape & Heritage Grant Scheme was based at the Tywi Centre, which is a heritage training and information centre in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. The grant scheme had two grant distributing strands: Cultural Heritage and Landscape & Biodiversity. It was funded through the European Rural Development Programme (RDP) which aims to develop the economic infrastructure in rural areas through creating employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship.¹ Axes 3 and 4 of the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 relate to the quality of life in rural areas, and locally based approaches to rural development.² This Grant Scheme was procured by Carmarthenshire County Council through the West Wales European Centre (WVEC), which acts as the lead body for RDP projects in Carmarthenshire. The Grŵp Cefn Gwlad oversees Carmarthenshire's Rural Development Plan and RDP activities in the county and WVEC reports to this group.

The Scheme began in May 2011, with the first grants allocated in July 2012; it worked across the county to distribute grants for the improvement of the rural environment, economy, communities and the quality of life in rural areas in line with the aims of the RDP.

Cultural Heritage:

This strand offered grants between £1,000 and £15,000 to a maximum of 80% total costs; capital and revenue costs were eligible. Grants were allocated and administered grants for community groups and organisations; they were aimed at supporting activities that promoted the county's cultural heritage and distinctiveness and exploited the underused resources and traditions of rural Carmarthenshire.

Funds available for this strand - £519,101.10

The maximum grant available for projects - £15,000.

A minimum of 20% match funding was required

55 grants were allocated in 4 funding rounds

Landscape & Biodiversity:

This strand allocated and administered grants to landowners and farmers to enable them to restore, create, enhance and conserve habitat, biodiversity and landscape in Carmarthenshire and implement actions to protect a range of selected habitats and species that reflect priorities as identified within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). Priority was given to extending the range of species and increasing population numbers. A

¹ <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/grants-and-funding/rural-development-grants/axis-3-leader-funding-grants.htm>

²

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/ruraldevelopmentplan4wales2007/axes3and4/?lang=en>

maximum of 20 hectares of land could be included. Capital and revenue costs were eligible and grants were up to £5,000, to a maximum of 90% total project costs.

Funds available for this strand – £92,901.23

The maximum grant available for projects – £5,000

A minimum of 10% match funding was required

22 projects completed.

Each strand was managed by a Grants Officer: Emyr Price managed the Cultural Heritage strand and Anna Hobbs the Landscape & Biodiversity. The officers recruited applicants and worked with them from the initial expressions of interest through to completion of the work. There was a grant panel for each strand comprised of experts and representatives from statutory bodies. All applications came before the panels where each one was considered and funds were allocated to those projects that fulfilled the criteria. See Appendix 1 for information on the grant panel membership.

Staff were in place in May 2011 and Expression of Interest (EOI) forms were received between March and July 2012. The Landscape & Biodiversity panel met to consider these in July 2012 and the Cultural Heritage Panel in August 2012. The Tywi Centre manager was allocated one day per week to managing this scheme and there was a part-time administrator. The Scheme also reported to the Tywi Centre Steering group.

3. THE EVALUATION

The evaluation explores the experiences of stakeholders, in particular grant recipients, in order to demonstrate the outcomes and the impact the scheme had on people, heritage, communities, landscape and biodiversity in Carmarthenshire. Gaining authentic feedback from all those involved in and with the project was important. The evaluation is also concerned with how effective the scheme was in meeting its objectives and Performance Indicators. Detail on quantitative data can be found in the appendices. Research was conducted throughout the scheme and this enabled the evaluation to chart the process and record developments from pre-application to completion.

The main areas covered are:

- Did the Grant Scheme achieve its aims?
- Performance Indicators – were targets met?
- Processes - administration and systems
- Beneficiary experience
- Advice, guidance and support
- What elements contributed to success?

- Challenges and how they were overcome
- Outcomes – benefits and impact -short, medium and long term legacy.
- Unexpected outcomes and benefits

The main stakeholders:

- Grant Recipients
- The Tywi Centre staff
- The Tywi Centre Board of Management
- Individuals and Communities of Carmarthenshire
- Carmarthenshire County Council and The West Wales European Centre

3.1 METHODS

The main methods included desk research, face to face and telephone interviews and an online questionnaire was used towards the end of the project. See Appendix 2 for the grant applicant interview schedules.

Desk research- minutes of panel meetings and RDP documentation informed the findings and the schemes databases and spreadsheets were reviewed periodically.

Interviews with Grant Applicants and Recipients

Individuals on the Scheme's databases were emailed and informed of the evaluation and asked if they would participate in a telephone interview, or a face to face one as they preferred. Areas for exploration were outlined in the email. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes.

Before allocation of grants - 16 interviews - 8 from each strand.

The initial round of interviews was conducted with those who had engaged with the project and submitted Expressions of Interest (EOI).

Cultural Heritage

- Round 1: - 11 interviews (10 telephone interviews, 1 face to face).
- Round 2: - 9 telephone interviews (all those in receipt of grants)
- Round 3: - 7 telephone interviews - and an online questionnaire - 12 respondents
- Round 4: - 1 interview
- 5 people/projects were interviewed more than once during the course of the project

Landscape & Biodiversity

- 14 telephone interviews at the beginning and during work

- 12 telephone interviews on completion of the work - (4 of these were repeat interviews)
- 2 telephone interviews with applicant who withdrew

The evaluator attended events such as a workshop run by the Cultural Heritage officer and a European Grants open week in St Catherine's Walk, Carmarthen which attracted over 1,200 visitors. Other data which has contributed to the evaluation includes emails from grant recipients and those who completed an EOI but did not follow through or did not receive a grant.

Meetings/interviews with Staff and Grant Panels

- Grant Officers –meetings with Anna Hobbs and Emyr Price were conducted at regular intervals.
- WVEC Officers - Grant officers Nerys Jones and Rian Furlong
- European Projects Manager - Rhian Philips
- Tywi Centre Manager - Interview each year
- Grant panel members were interviewed (16 interviews in total: 8 from Cultural Heritage; 5 Landscape & Biodiversity - three people interviewed twice)

4. NARRATIVE

In May 2011 the officers began creating systems, marketing and promoting the Scheme, and ensuring the application forms and guidance notes were robust and fit for purpose. Information on standardized costs and specifications for materials were provided to applicants on the Landscape & Biodiversity strand and scoring systems were developed for both strands. As well as actively promoting the scheme the officers gave advice and information to potential projects and developed networks of expertise that would support future applicants. Site visits were made and the officers discussed and reviewed potential proposals. Expression of Interest (EOI) forms were sent out in February 2012, for Cultural Heritage Grants and in March and April 2012 for Landscape & Biodiversity Grants.

This constitutes a considerable delay from the start of the project which was due mainly to the logo supplied by WVEC being delayed pending approval by WEFO at the Welsh Government and the leaflet being redrafted many times. This late start had a substantial impact on the Landscape & Biodiversity grants in particular; it meant that a whole season had been lost. Work that could have begun in autumn and winter 2011 was delayed by a year.

The scoring system for the biodiversity grants was linked to LBAP targets and heritage landscape features, whilst the cultural heritage grants assessment was based upon

accessibility, participation, community engagement, heritage citizenship and cultural sustainability.

Officers worked closely with statutory bodies, with specialists and experts and with a range of organisations in order to ensure the best advice was available. Partners that supported the scheme included: Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Environment Agency (EA), Carmarthenshire County Council (the council) Conservation Officers and other specialists and consultants with expertise on specific topics such as planning, access, bats, butterflies, rare plants and listed structures.

Changes

The Grant Scheme was due to end in December 2013, however, in May 2013 the scheme heard that their application for an extension was successful and it would run until the end of December 2014. Deadlines for projects for both strands were extended.

Funding which was allocated in October 2013 was not made available until April 2014; this meant that some Culture & Heritage grants waited 5 months between November 2013 and April 2014 for approval.

A directive on changes to the Capital / Revenue split was communicated to the officers in January 2013. WWEC worked with them to ensure funds were reallocated. This caused difficulties but projects were all funded adequately without complications for the applicants.

4.1 CULTURAL HERITAGE

A great deal of promotion work was done in the first few months. The officer disseminated information through attending road shows organized by the County Council, WWEC, and the Carmarthenshire Tourist Association. He created networks, developed partnerships and links with community groups and organisations throughout the county including the tourism clusters, Menter Bro Dinefwr, the Community Bureau at Carmarthenshire Council, community councils, village halls, local history groups and other small interest groups.

Between April and July 2012 the officer ran nine workshops for those who had completed Expression of Interest (EOI) forms and / or had an interest in submitting an application. By the end of December 2011 he had visited 58 projects offering support to people as they developed their ideas and plans; providing advice on costings, practical issues and helping people produce detailed and accurate applications. 28 applications went forward to the first grants panel and just over half the funds were allocated in this first round.

There were 4 funding rounds. Deadlines for completion of the projects:

Round 1 – September 2013

Round 2 – January 2014

Round 3 – March 2014.

Round 4 - September 2014.

Projects were put on-hold between November 2013 and April 2014 pending a decision from the Welsh Government regarding the reallocation of capital and revenue funding. An extra £70, 000 from the Heritage Centre of Excellence project that ran at the Tywi Centre was made available for this strand of the Grant Scheme.

- **Expressions of Interest - 185**
- **4 Grant Rounds – 59 Applications**
- **Withdrawn - 3 Rejected - 1**
- **Completed projects - 55**
- **Total Grant – £517,010.44**
- **Match funding - £129,252.61**

The majority of projects took approximately 1 year to complete. Some took two years and one grant project took three years to complete. The fastest project took less than 6 months.

A diverse range of project and groups received grants, they researched, promoted and interpreted culture and heritage using a variety of media: sculpture, performance, text, images and through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). An end of project event held at Newton House, Llandeilo on December 3rd 2014 celebrated the achievements of the project.

4.2 LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY

There was only one grant round for this strand. Detailed and intensive work was done with prospective applicants at the beginning as they worked through and completed the EOI forms with the officer. The officer visited sites and made thorough explorations of their land and its features, giving advice on eligibility. The information was then reworked and revised and the officer made suggestions so that the maximum wildlife and habitat gains could be made. Specifications, guidelines and scoring systems were used. Consultants were at times employed to assist as necessary and experts were brought in to give advice on rare species for example.

Once the grants were agreed at the panel meeting in July 2012, the officer produced an offer letter which included a detailed schedule of work including standards required and a map. A Special Project category was created for those projects that fell outside the criteria but had exceptional biodiversity or habitat significance and potential. For Special Projects,

consultants, working under the guidance of the officer, produced management plans, including work schedules, maps and future management statements where appropriate. A management plan was created by the officer for all other projects.

The total amount allocated - £92,901.23

All moneys allocated to 22 projects

5 Special Projects

5. FINDINGS

"The two strands - Cultural Heritage and Landscape & Biodiversity - are very different" WWEC Officer

The majority of the findings are reported separately for the two strands under similar headings.

Performance Indicators

Output Description	Target	Target as from 1st April 2012	Target as from 28th March 2013	Achieved to date
Number of projects in support of maintaining, restoring or upgrading the rural heritage financially supported	50	50	65	61
Number of individuals advised or assisted to develop projects in support of maintaining, restoring or upgrading the rural heritage	10	10	20	22
Number of groups advised or assisted to develop projects in support of maintaining, restoring or upgrading the rural heritage	40	40	45	46
Number of consultation exercises undertaken	3	3	3	3
Number of interpretative materials produced	10	10	15	15
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	45	45	100	110
Number of activities that actively encourages or promotes action to address environmental sustainability	20	20	20	53
Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services	76881	76881	76881	0
Number of new services or facilities available to the rural population	25	25	25	42

5.1 CULTURAL HERITAGE

"Stories - they are the things that hold it all up" Project Officer

"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people." Mahatma Gandhi

The diversity of the projects that received grants is a key characteristic of this strand; see Appendix 3 for a full list of projects that have been supported. This section can only give some indication of this range and richness and it focuses on themes emerging from what people have said. People were unanimously positive about this grant scheme, commenting often:

"Good pot of money for projects that do not fit neatly into any category for other grant funding or where funding is being cut in the current climate" grant applicant

The quality of the work produced has been very high: *"People are in awe – amazing standard of work – high quality; we are proud and want people to come to see it!"* grant applicant

Community structures, sites of interest, facilities and community resources have been created, restored, enhanced or given a new lease of life. The living landscape, the stories of people and places have come to life through the rediscovery of stories and their telling to local people and to visitors. As a local resident and applicant said: *"This means new and different stories to tell visitors – we would not have been able to do it without the grant."*

The geographical spread across the county has been good and the work has all been done to ensure bilingual interpretation of heritage. See the website for a list of projects in the 5 county hub areas - www.carmarthenshireheritageprojects.co.uk

Promotion and Marketing - Recruiting Projects

The road shows organized by the County Council and WWEC were well attended and found to be very useful for disseminating information and promoting the scheme. The officer created networks, developed partnerships and links with community groups and organizations throughout the county. He attended all 10 Carmarthenshire Tourist Association meetings and sought to make links with tourism wherever possible.

How people found out about the grant scheme

Some people found out about the scheme from the Tywi Centre due to having been involved with it or having links with them in some capacity. Organizations such as the Dyfed Archeological Trust and the National Botanic Gardens for example had worked with the Centre. People who are active in the community heard through their networks. There was

also a comprehensive advertising campaign in the local and regional papers. Some people had seen information in Council emails and communications. Applicants commented:

"Pleased that there is this communication between the council and organizations like mine -so we can benefit when these grants come up" grant applicant

"The County Council is very good, I heard about it through them, I am on a committee" grant applicant

As the scheme progressed more and more people heard about it and some saw the work being done: *"I saw the fantastic work in Newcastle Emlyn Primary School and I had spoken to Emyr."* grant applicant

During the final year there was a widespread and effective network of contacts and less urgency to directly promote the scheme. During rounds 3 and 4 the officer contacted people directly.

The Initial Phase

The late start contributed to the officer becoming frustrated. Staff were eager to engage with projects and were limited in what they were able to do. Workshops were run prior to application deadlines for each round and this was a good use of time whilst waiting to begin administering the grants. At the workshops the officer gave a presentation and went through the application process showing examples of financial calculations. For round 1 nine workshops were held for those who had completed EOI forms and / or had an interest in submitting an application. In the following rounds the workshops were tailored for individual groups.

"The workshop at the beginning was very useful - I am so busy – this helped me focus and get on." grant applicant

Types of projects

- Panels –22 groups (74 altogether)
- Sculptures and murals – 13 groups (22 altogether)
- Equipment to deliver Heritage– 16 groups
- Websites/ Pages – 12
- Heritage Walks booklets – 12
- Historical Books – 8
- Audio trails - 8
- Historical Booklets – 5
- Phone Apps – 5

- E-books – 3
- Costumes – 3
- Historical Films - 2
- Others – u-turn box/augmented reality/ songs CD/ costume mannequins/ phone box/ QR links / restoring walls and structures

Natural heritage and landscape and biodiversity organizations were contacted in the hope of drawing the two threads together. 16 were identified through working with the Landscape & Biodiversity officer. Two projects applied. Many projects have enhanced the landscape through increased awareness of places, buildings and of the history and heritage associated with landscape features.

Large organizations applied as well as very small village groups. Towns and villages were represented in the applicants.

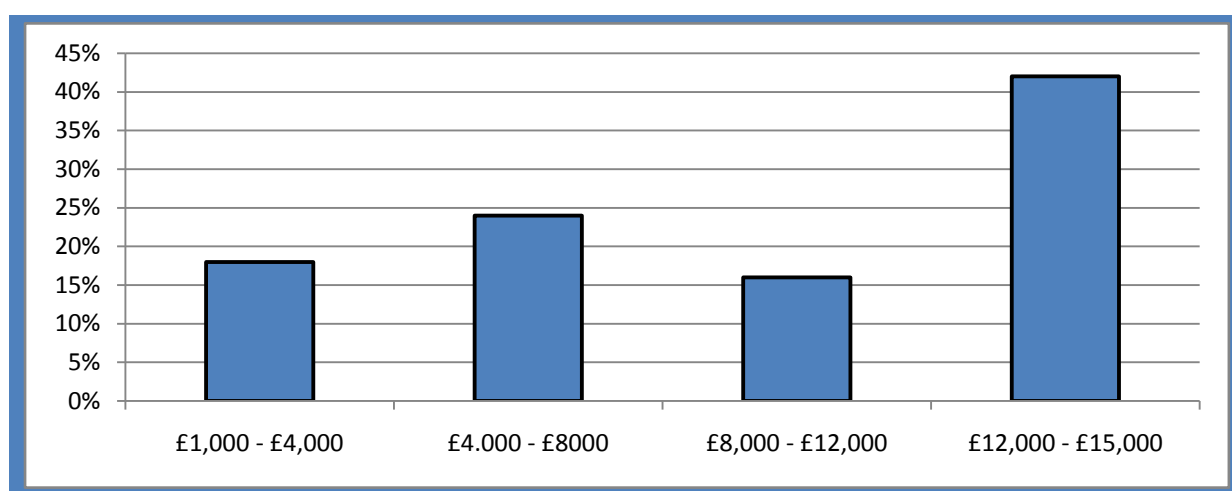
11 Grants for the full amount of £15, 000

The smallest grant was £1,095,

"£15,000 is a relatively small amount of money, it helped - we have not completed the work with this - but it was a big help." grant applicant

"£3,000 meant that we had a very successful project, this was lot of money for us." grant applicant

Distribution of the grants



The Grant Application Process

"The forms are all good – Emyr has gone to great lengths to make it all clear – for example the calculations - all laid out clearly." grant applicant

"One of the most painless processes I've been through in all the times I have applied for grants" grant applicant

During the process of putting a bid together the officer offered a great deal of support to applicants. He ensured eligibility and suitability and would offer suggestions and share information and knowledge with applicants. The advice, guidance and support provided by the officer was invaluable. The comment below illustrates how much his professionalism and knowledge, enthusiasm and support meant to people:

"Emyr visited me on 2 or 3 occasions during the time of writing the application - fantastic support and encouragement." grant applicant

The support at the early stages meant that bids were well thought through.

"The first form was onerous – but when we came to putting in the final application we realized how good it was – we had done most of the work – on reflection - good process" grant applicant

Grant Applications

The process of working intensively with those who submitted EOI forms ensured that only eligible applications went forward and that the applications were robust both financially and in terms of delivering positive outcomes for communities. Applicants commented that it was useful: *"By the time we came to write the application we had done the majority of the work – finding out, consulting and doing some of the costings etc."* grant applicant

Nobody wasted time completing applications that were ineligible; applicants had been whittled down through direct contact with the officer. *"Emyr told us what could be grant aided - saved time for all concerned."* grant applicant

One applicant commented: *"it is ironic that the paperwork and administration for £2,000 is about the same amount as what I needed for £200,000"*. Most of those interviewed said that the paperwork was manageable and the language clear. The forms had a very clear format and questions were written in a straightforward manner. See Appendix 4

"It is a lot of work - complicated - but you have to go through it - I understand the process" grant applicant

"The forms were good - simple" grant applicant

Individuals and groups involved in the application process varied from those who were experienced at completing grant application and dealing with bureaucracy to those who had never done anything like this before.

As the scheme progressed the officer was able to give examples of successful projects, share ideas and give advice on new and innovative ways of interpreting and communicating heritage messages and linking with tourism and landscape. One applicant sums up how many people felt:

"It has been a great deal of work, a double edged sword. I've put a huge amount of work into it. The grant is a big help – our organization could not spare the money, the work would not have been done without this money – so it was worth it."

Bilingualism

This has been fully supported throughout. A number of groups applied in Welsh:

- Round 1 - 4
- Round 2 - 1

Who was involved?

The majority of projects were initiated and completed by volunteers. Only two did not involve volunteer time.

"These people are amazing; the work they put in is tremendous. Hours, weeks spent researching, writing, getting this work done." grant officer

"The commitment and enthusiasm has been surprising, and the ideas - people have got such a lot of things they want to do and things to say." grant officer

Artist and specialists such as surveyors were brought in and paid to carry out many jobs from sculpture to technology installations. The projects involved people from the local communities as research was carried out to discover the past, uncover fascinating stories such as buried elephants or industrial lives in rural Wales.

Completing the work

There were no issues with project completion and payment: *"The money came very quickly once we sent in our paperwork."* grant applicant

Finishing a project involved two visits by the officer to ensure everything was done properly, that all the paperwork was completed and the grant amount was recalculated and checked for accuracy. He commented: *"it is Intensive work"*

"Closure was good - efficient - got the money through quickly." grant applicant

The Rounds

For Round 3 the Steering group advised the officer to approach groups who had ideas to progress, this made the most of and built on the work already done. People were appreciative of the opportunity to develop further work and to implement ideas.

"We have ideas to expand - costumed walks and semi guided walks" grant applicant

Ideas were easier to generate in rounds 2 and 3 as there were exemplars, a raised level of awareness and more confidence. Technology, particularly the use of QR codes, was noticeable in rounds 2, 3 and 4.

"Those applying in the final rounds are mainly those who have had grant previously"
grant officer

Challenges

This was the first project of its kind in Carmarthenshire and a WWEC officer pointed out that there were *"difficulties at the beginning that were ironed out"*. One of these was the deadlines: *"giving deadlines is not always realistic, as many of these projects cannot be tied down to an individual date"* grant officer

The delay from October 2013 to April 2014 when WWEC was waiting to hear about funding changes from WEFO was a challenging time for staff. This 5 month delay constricted the time scale for grants.

"There were many delays at the beginning - regarding paperwork - this was not good - it came from WEFO" panel member

"There should be better processes in place to ensure this does not happen - 6 - 12 month delay is not acceptable" panel member

The change in the Capital/ Revenue split meant a great deal of readjustment and work in order to ensure all projects received grants and completed. The officer wanted to allocate funds quickly and he was also working with new grant applicants for rounds 4, this was a difficult time.

"We were slow in getting approval for the award - We applied promptly but it was slow coming through" grant applicant

The Challenges Faced by Applicants and Projects

Grant applicants identified a number of challenges including: the application process,

changes in personnel or loss of personnel, financial difficulties particularly match funding, suppliers, planning and the democratic process.

The fact that the work was initiated and completed by volunteers for the majority of the projects meant that if someone left, was ill or even died as happened on one project, there were delays. For example the Gwili Railway project lost their manager and had to re-structure grant accordingly with the support of the officer. Some projects could not adapt and had to pull out.

"The burden on volunteers can be great - time and effort." grant applicant

Application process and Administration

Comments from applicants included:

"Lot of preliminary work - and you do not get paid for this!"

"He (officer) helped us a lot - we are not form fillers - he nurtured us through it"

"We are used to filing in forms - but there are always pitfalls"

Despite some people not having filled in an application form before and despite the complicated criteria and financial administration the forms were completed and project administration completed accurately with the help of the officer and project administrator. The grant scheme was made as streamlined and as simple as possible for applicants. Some comments from applicants:

"Administration and paperwork – application process - it is very bureaucratic, needs to be reduced and made simpler for lay people to complete."

"There is compliance constipation! Bureaucracy gone mad - it stops or slows down the work - inefficient."

Financial

"Some small groups are reticent to spend money – voluntary and community sector – They are frugal and careful." grants officer

The main difficulty faced by groups was having to pay for everything and complete the work before being able to claim the grant moneys. Grant recipients commented:

"If you have a grant you can only put in 1 application for money at the end – this is problem with cash flow."

"The major problem with the grant is that groups have to pay out and then claim back and there isn't any option for interim payments. To support a genuine community group there really needs to be a way of changing this as most groups are not going to have this sort of cash in the bank."

Many commented that retrospective payment of grant would disadvantage smaller community groups. Having interim payment made a difference. These were made available in Round 1 once individuals started putting their own money into the schemes and the difficulties became apparent. Grant applicants stated:

"We had to borrow - we managed it OK - but it was a bit of a problem for us"

"The only problem was raising the match funding at the beginning - we struggled"

"Emyr arranged for a staggered payment and this was a big help to us - interim payment"

"People rallied around to get the money"

A group that did not proceed with an application stated:

"We never went for the grant in the end. The need for complete payment up front rather than staged, and the temptation to throw in more and more elements to get to the required level finally made us withdraw to reconsider what we want."

Some people put in their own personal money, showing faith and commitment in their project and in the grant scheme.

Calculating the match funding and working out the volunteer hours was the most onerous thing for many. Match funding was a problem area:

"Volunteer time is the most hassle – it is the worst thing." grant applicant

"Emyr helped us with the match funding element, it was frustrating! We could not have done it without his help." grant applicant

The Democratic Processes

The democratic process is excellent but it takes time to consult with the community, to reach consensus and make joint decisions.

"Projects had to go before committees and to councils, then back to me – then back to the council / committee, it can take months" grant officer

Delays due to Suppliers and Planning

Planning applications were an issue for some, as one applicant said: *"Planning is costly - £300 per application"*. It can also be very slow: *"Doing things in the town is not easy. Need permission – for planning and also conservation planning"*

"One of the thing that holds projects up ... suppliers can be slow – the supply chain – independent contractors / workers/ artists etc. Most are fine but some have been very slow." grant officer

Those who did not proceed with applications

As organizations changed, their priorities changed and one project pulled out only to reapply later. Two projects withdrew having applied; one due to funding issues particularly the retrospective payment of the grant and the other because of planning problems however this organization submitted another application and completed. The officer kept records of all projects including those that did not submit applications and spent time with some of these suggesting ways to overcome their difficulties such as giving them details of grant giving foundations and trust.

"I should've realized, but I did not and had difficulties raising the money to make a start and it is very frustrating" withdrawn project

Ineligibility

The criteria were straightforward and only one project has an issue with them. It was turned down on the grounds that it was being carried out by an individual not linked to any organization and therefore did not meet the criteria. This person did not challenge the decision however.

Strengths and Success

"Very successful project - seeing the end results - impact - people are very grateful - made huge difference" WWEC officer

Information, Advice and Support

"Success is down, in no small measure, to Emyr's enthusiasm and hard work" panel member

"A Good balance of administrative and personal support from the officer- it made the difference - it is a major factor in the success of the project" Steering group member

"These are non- specialists – therefore Emyr has a strong role in offering advice and support" panel member

Some groups needed less support for reasons that included: more experience of grant applications, larger organizations with experienced staff. Some took a long time to develop their projects and to apply and this was commented on *"Emyr kept working with these small groups - a credit to him"* WWEC officer

- Round 1 - 9 Workshops held
- Round 2 - 8 Workshops held
- Round 3 - 12 workshops held.
- Round 4 - 10 workshops held.

Over 500 meetings took place with groups and individuals.

39 workshops prior to the application deadlines.

119 Promotional meetings with groups and individuals.

At the workshops Emyr gave a presentation, distributed 'help sheets' and explained about sources of information and support available. The costings were explained using a worked example and Emyr went through the scoring criteria. This level of support enabled many to go forward with applications. All those interviewed had nothing but praise for the officer, the level and quality of information given, the excellent communication and the time spent he spent with them patiently helping with the grant applications. Applicants commented:

"Excellent support from Emyr - Would give him 10/10 - He is efficient and supportive."

"The support has been excellent - I had a meeting with Emyr he was reassuring – quite reassuring."

"Emyr always has time - he checks everything"

*"Emyr has been fantastic – with everything! He explains well and worked **with us**"*

"When we initially came up with the idea we phoned him and he came out to discuss it with us - very useful – excellent - can't fault it!"

"Emyr is absolutely outstanding – the best grants officer I have ever come across - he is very clear."

As well as this personal face to face support there were guidance sheets and policies on equal opportunities for example sent to all applicants to assist them.

"Made sure we covered everything we needed - bilingualism" grant applicant

"Enjoyable things about living here - in Wales is meeting people like Emyr!" grant applicant

As the project progressed the officer had more and more experience to draw on, he gained knowledge and information and was able to share this.

"We know what we wanted but he gave us ideas about how we could best do it - it is of considerable benefit to us as a town council" grant applicant

"Emyr is brilliant - He has so much information - so much knowledge - Gives excellent support and advice. Because he knows so much from all the other projects he can pass this on - only he has all the knowledge" grant applicant

"The support has been exceptionally good - he (officer) is meticulous - he understood the concept totally - he knew what we were trying to achieve - he immersed himself in it" panel member

Flexibility

Being able to adapt to the needs of applicant so as to ensure the best results was important. Not having rigid or prescriptive criteria for the types of project was important, this allowed people to identify their own projects, to be creative and respond to unique situations and communities.

"It has been important to remain open to people's ideas – what they want to do"
grant officer

"It really has been a grassroots project" grant officer

The officer ensured that people were able to change applications according to need and this was appreciated: *"The panel we have looks really good - but we needed lighting to show it at its best - and fortunately the grant was flexible enough to allow us to change and buy this."*
grant applicant

Processes

The grants officer and the project administrator were meticulous in all aspects of their work. Each project has a substantial file, detailing the application, recording the time spent with them and what was discussed and decided. Financial records are clear, and all paperwork was kept as required: invoices, declarations, quotes, bank statements. Record keeping and accuracy is a factor in the success of the scheme.

"Criteria well laid out - it all worked well - no negative comments" grant applicant

Benefits and Impact

It is impossible to list all the benefits of this scheme; the full impact of some will be realized in the future and will impact on those beyond the scope of this evaluation. Below are areas that give an indication of the range of outcomes.

"It has had a big impact - reach." panel member

"A varied range of projects - big impact on areas from small projects - relatively small pots of money" WWEC officer

Without this grant most of these projects would not have happened. Grant recipients commented:

"Given us the opportunity to bring our dreams to reality - I know this sounds corny but it is true"

"We had ideas and we knew the potential - then when someone says - there is some money available for you - WOW"

"I have had this project on the drawing board since 2002"

"Without the grant we could not have had an interpretation centre at all"

Increasing the Capacity of Individuals and Groups - Learning, Skills and Confidence

Local talent, knowledge and passion was tapped into through this grant scheme, it empowered and enabled people, groups and communities.

"They have a great deal of skills and talent" grant officer

"People learn - incomers and also locals" grant applicant

"This has pushed people out of their comfort zones – It's been a positive experience for us; taken us to places we would not have gone to. We also hope the trails will do this literally – and keep footpaths open." grant applicant

Going through the process of developing a project, completing an application, administering the grant and completing the work was a valuable experience for individuals and collectively it benefited groups through developing their capacity:

"By the end of process some of us were already thinking about and planning another application for a following round." grant applicant

Research and consultations, designs, careful planning and financial calculations were involved as well as employing people and liaising with planning and access department.

"We've done the research – surveying for all the walks – they are between 6-10 miles - it is a big piece of work. We are aware of inclusion issues - the walks target all abilities" grant applicant

Grant applicants thought it was, as many said: *"Worth the effort"*

The officer saw how individuals and groups gained skills and increased their confidence.

"At the beginning they did not have many ideas and were very unsure about how to proceed, by round 3 they had a number of different ideas and they were so much more confident." grant officer

There is a strong learning or educational element running throughout: *"This project has included a lot of learning"* panel member. Not only have the applicants learned a great deal about the grant process but they have learned about their local area and heritage, they have researched and discovered and left a lasting legacy of knowledge and information.

"Local awareness and knowledge is increased - they now know more about their square mile - that is on their doorstep" grant applicant

"We have done a lot of research and discovered some unexpected things." grant applicant

Many project spoke of schools benefiting from the new resource, adding to their leaning; school visits, trips to new heritage sites and resources for communicating messages and educating have improved and people could already see the benefits. Applicants commented:

"We have had more school visits than ever"

"I was amazed how local children did not know anything about the area - this will help"

"Benefits us a great deal and also the public benefit from good quality talks and display materials"

"They can see the photos now and then use them - over 4000 - this has informed people - shown them that these photos are there - these will last a long time "

"To have the uniforms - it was significant - anniversary of WW1 - It allowed us to have another dimension to what we were offering people - we could talk about it. This year 2000 people came through the door" The Tin Shed



The Tin Shed

Technology and Innovation

The officer promoted the use of ICT as he saw how it can be used to good effect. Some have been surprised at how easy it was to incorporate IT and how much of an impact it had in expanding horizons and also expanding the reach of information and experiences. QR Codes have been used on a few projects and this enhances an interactive interpretation. ipads and interactive websites are other ways technology was used.

"I am glad we decided to go down this route. We are now on various websites and the QR codes have brought us into the 21st century. We have all learned a lot and it was thanks to Emyr's suggestions and support." grant applicant

"This has helped – we have moved from thinking just of an information board – we have been able to expand our thinking" grant applicant

"We have redone the website pages on Carmarthenshire site and we link this to the smart code on the history board" grant applicant

"Having this will attract people in - because it is an app - it is experiential - we have an android app too" grant applicant



Coffa Elfed



Newcastle Emlyn School

"It has made a big difference to the school - the reception area looks good - everyone comments - community - visitors - staff - parent - everyone - they look at the scenes - so it raises interest in history - the bench too - people look and comment on the nature carvings." grant applicant

"Our morale was low in the school this has given us a boost - it has raised everyone up - it has made a big difference to us" grant applicant

Synergy with Other Projects and Funding Partnerships

"We had a Heritage Lottery bid and funding from CADW for the centre- this has made it complete" grant applicant

Another example of synergy was the bursary apprentices at the Tywi Centre helping with building the carriageway wall at the National Botanic Gardens. Networks and partnerships contributed to success and links were made with many different organizations.

"This work has prompted us to think more widely and to work with others" grant applicant

The Grant Scheme project has built on work done by others in the county:

"Tremendous work has been done on Culture & Heritage in this part of Wales; it is of value for everyone." panel member

Networks will leave a lasting legacy as people make connections and continue to work together.

Tourism

Tourism has and will continue to benefit. Visitors can learn about the Culture and Heritage of Carmarthenshire; they will be able to walk and discover places with the aid of leaflets, online information and interpretation making their visits more enjoyable and rewarding.

"Holidaymakers will benefit – it looks to much better now and they have more choices of things to do" grant applicant

"We hope this will help with tourism, more people coming and staying in B&B's here." grant applicant

"Walking is becoming more popular - it is a major activity in South West Wales - So this will help all associated enterprises – accommodation" grant applicant

"It will attract more people to the area - the tourist experience - the visitor experience will be enhanced" grant applicant

"The Grant Scheme needs to have an impact on tourism - I think it will have a significant impact - all the different strands - interpreting history, walks, the use of technology, brining heritage to life - the stories of communities and people" grant officer

"All things are free – such good value for tourism in the county – in Wales" grant officer

The heritage corners are areas in village or community halls where a variety of interpretative resources are available and these worked in different situations. The officer suggested developing one in every community, where the history and heritage as well as the natural history of the area is interpreted and made accessible. He has put these ideas forward to the board of management and would like to see heritage tourism develop in the county. See Appendix 5

"The project has done a lot to enhance interpretation in the county. Also increase knowledge of this – how to interpret. There are now examples of good practice available for other projects and communities." grant officer

Recreation and Leisure

The project has enhanced people's experience of being out and about in Carmarthenshire through new amenities and resources, whether it is walking in town, villages or in the countryside, through the trails and leaflets that inform and add interest or through sculptures or interpretation boards.



Rural Regeneration & Community Cohesion

The existing infrastructure of partnerships and networks has been strengthened and the scheme has fostered good relationships and created networks and a plethora of new contacts as well as helping to integrate people in communities.

"We have worked with the local school and with other community groups; this project has increased our pride in the area." grant applicant

"Highlighted heritage and culture - it has helped incomers to understand the area they have moved to as well and helps integration" panel member

"Pride – ownership - it is all good stuff – not all about Debenhams This is about heritage – culture – history – tradition – but we are putting it across in a modern way, in our way." grant applicant

People came together to work on projects. Active citizens took a lead on many of the bids, project managing them; one person was involved in two bids on more than one occasion. Generally a range of different individuals contributed to one bid. Consultations were held and democratic processes were evident:

"We organized a public consultation to see what people wanted – the whole village. By the time we got to the application we were very clear about what we wanted to do." grant applicant

"It is really nice – we go on trips together – to the National Library of Wales– to the archives to look at documents relevant to our area." grant applicant

Involving as many people as possible also meant that more expertise, information and knowledge could be drawn upon:

"We contacted a lot of people in the area who had an interest in this – we wanted all the information to be correct" grant applicant

I also had help from the access people - countryside and access - prepared the site - I worked with them - very positive" grant applicant

Different people in the community can do so many different things – one does this – the other that - research – IT – administration – etc." grants officer

The grants have led to community cohesion as newcomers to communities learned about their new homes. There is an obvious renewed sense of pride through engagement and discovery and collaborative effort.

"Main benefits – for the two communities - to host the history in one place – getting all pieces of the jigsaw - it is a fluid community - and lots of broken links with the

past if we are not careful – so people new to the area will know what it means.” grant applicant

“The big impact – well it has social benefit – community cohesion – newcomers integrating more through this.” grant applicant

An intergenerational aspect was prominent in many projects and this adds to community cohesions and to a lasting legacy. *“Young and old involved – intergenerational work is so important – to share and to pass it on.”* grant applicant

The economy

Tourism will benefit and hence local businesses as people visit the area. The Scheme created jobs for local artists and craftspeople and also other contractors. Local people have had the majority of contracts to do the work. Sometimes specialists such as surveyors or designers were paid to help complete bids; this was worth investing in according to applicants:

“Paying the surveyor was worth it, he made our life easier – we needed his expertise”

Local Pride - A Sense of Place

When asked during the third and fourth rounds all respondents said the work had contributed to a sense of place and increased pride in their local heritage and culture. They discovered the richness of ancient and modern history. The following are comments from grant recipients:

“These things are unique - so different to anything they have seen before - the children see them - nobody else has anything like it - sense of pride! - it contributes to our identity too - we use on publicity for the school”

“Physical infrastructure clearly contributes to place - physical locality is improved”

“We want to maintain and pass on this information on - to everyone and it is for future generations.”

“This will attract people into the town and local people can benefit – they will become aware of history - I have learned a lot.”

The strategic Impact

The work impacts on many of the strategic agendas in Carmarthenshire from Culture & Heritage, to economic development, tourism, regeneration and diversification. The health agenda is also impacted as walking is promoted:

“Many locals don’t walk - so this might influence them to walk. Walking is good for you – fits into health agenda.” grant applicant

"Some projects are strategic – Carmarthen Town Trail – fitting in with economic and tourism agendas for the county council." grant officer

Disseminating Information and Publicity

"This work – these developments in communities – it now needs to get out to people – people need to know about it and use it – appreciate it" grant officer

Many projects had a launch or an exhibition which brought people together so they could learn about the excellent work done. A website is being developed and every project will have an individual page with photos and web links. The marketing officer at WWEC has sent out press releases, the grant officer commented: *"she is good - we have an excellent relationship with her – it is really good – she sends a lot out – I send her the info and she does the press release."*

There is a need for projects to advertise after receipt of the grant, but it is acknowledged that people are very busy and not everyone has the capacity to do this.

Visit Wales³ and Discover Carmarthenshire⁴ websites have links to the projects and the People's Collection at the National Library of Wales⁵ has requested all materials. Local projects such as the Llanelli Festival of Walks and other projects associated with the scheme will also link to the website.

"The website will be good - the benefits should be widely known - press releases"
panel member

The Future

"What about a One Stop Shop- where people can go for info about grant for culture and heritage?" panel member

"More money would be" grant applicant

"We would like to see bigger projects - a higher range possibly - different tiers of funding" grant applicant

These were some of the suggestions for the future and everyone thought it would be a shame not to continue or to have a similar scheme following on from this. A great deal of

³ <http://www.visitwales.com/>

⁴ <http://www.discovercarmarthenshire.com/>

⁵ <http://www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/>

time, effort and heart has gone into these projects; local expertise has been built up as well as networks and enthusiasm.

"One of the strengths of the project is that every project is so different" panel member

"People have benefited enormously from the grant project - they have had a boost"
panel member

"Everyone wants to carry on" grant applicant

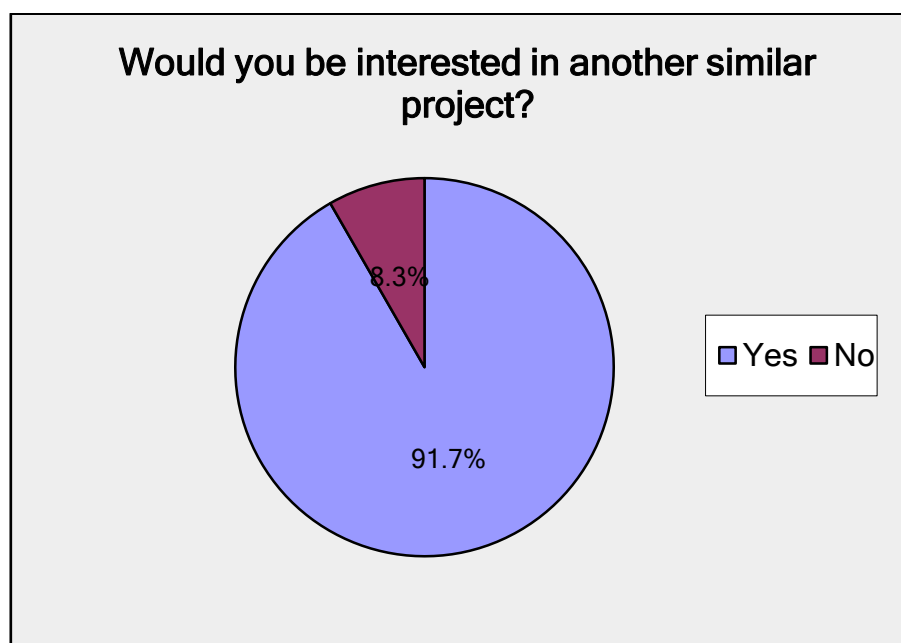
Commitment, passion and dedication can be summed up by these comments:

"We love our village so we will do it – we are happy to do it - It is tough though!"
grant applicant

"Everyone is happy and enthusiastic about the project." grant applicant

"We are very positive and very grateful for this opportunity to be able to access money" grant applicant

Innovative, creative work of a high standard is evident. There is a lasting legacy: people, communities and also infrastructure and the physical environment are enhanced. People have, with the help of Emyr and the expertise and support he has brought, been thinking in broad and open ways, not just producing walk leaflets for example, but considering the whole picture – stories, history, landscape, exploring all the links and connections. The officer has submitted a list of suggestions and ideas to the Tywi Centre and to the Steering Group - See Appendix 5



5.2 LANDSCAPE& BIODIVERSITY

"The landscape and its biodiversity is what gives Carmarthenshire its identity" grant officer

The 22 Landscape & Biodiversity projects are well distributed throughout the county. Each one has restored, renewed, replanted, managed, cleared, protected or conserved habitats to the benefit of flora, fauna and for people.

The projects are stand alone, however in order to realize the maximum benefits for habitats and biodiversity on a landscape scale the grant scheme would need to run for much longer in order to enable a strategic approach to be taken. For example, trying to encourage all landowners along a river to control Himalayan Balsam rather than just isolated individuals.

"The grant scheme starts to become well-known and to help to meet LBAP targets on the ground and then it finishes – this is not a very sustainable way to operate" grant officer.

A long term view could take into account flooding issues and wildlife corridors for native and endangered species for example; this would contribute to a sense of place which can, in turn, benefit tourism, culture and community.

A key feature of this strand was its seasonal nature. Hedging can only be done during a certain few months, and other activities have to take account of growing and life cycles such as nesting birds or insect development; the officer worked intensively during busy times in order to accommodate this seasonal pattern.

"It is a lot of up front work that NEEDS to be done – it is the nature of the work - there are fixed windows of time" grant officer

The extension to December 2014 made a significant difference. Without this some project would not have been able to complete. The Cultural Heritage strand had some money left in the Spring of 2013 after round 3 and the steering group recommended that £50,000 be moved to Landscape and Biodiversity as there were not many natural heritage themes coming through the Cultural Heritage grants.

When interviewing people for the second time towards the end of the project people were reporting on noticeable changes and benefits. *"More bird life now - we can notice the difference. "*

"The benefits have been quite amazing – we've been here 6 years and nothing had been done here for 40 – 50 years previously! Now the hedges are incredible! There are open hedgerows now – lots of new growth – kept the good trees – its looks really good – much better than I thought. Vegetation has come up that was not there before – fantastic of biodiversity – it looks amazing!" grant applicant

"Since the work we have seen a lot more birds - moorhens and ducks (Wildfowl) - they have come back" grant applicant

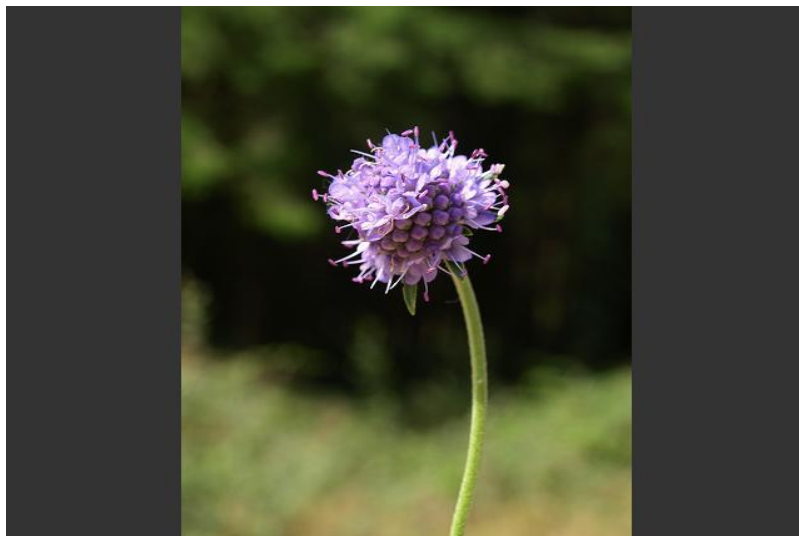
Types of Projects and Reasons for doing the Work

The smallest holding that applied was 1.5 Ha, and the largest was over 17 Ha. Some projects did not fit under the standard payment rate agreed for the Scheme but were of significant importance in terms of biodiversity. A 'Special Project' category was created for these and 5 projects were included.

1 - Fencing an area (1.6 Ha) of grassland and subsequently managing the grassland over a period of years. A plan was drawn up using consultants working under the grant officer's guidance and the grant recipients had to sign a management agreement. There would be no point in fencing land if it was not then managed appropriately.

2 - 2.95 Ha of marshy grassland fenced and managed alongside 0.8 Ha of grassland with scrub and Himalayan Balsam removal.

3 - A very species rich piece of land (2.4 Ha) fenced and restored. The Marsh Fritillary butterfly and the Devils-bit scabious that its larvae feeds on were protected and also other species including heath spotted orchids, wild caraway and bog bean.



Devils-bit scabious

4 - Fencing and removing scrub on another species rich parcel of land near a river - 3Ha of marshy grassland and 3Ha of pasture cleared. The Marsh Fritillary butterfly has been recorded on the marshy grassland at this site following the work undertaken under the grant.

5 - 0.3 Ha of woodland managed including removal of conifers and coppicing.

The continued management of these habitats is vitally important and the grants officer worked with consultants to draw up plans for the landowners.

Elements covered by the grants were: Hedgerow Restoration, Hedgerow Fencing, Parkland Tree Planting, Watercourse Fencing, Orchard Planting, Otter Holt Creation, Pond Restoration, Creation of Hedgerows, Planting Hedgerow Trees, Fencing Marshy Grassland, Planting Woodland Trees, Woodland Restoration, Fencing Neutral Grassland, Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes and Barn Owl Boxes. For a full list see Appendix 6. Clearing scrub and invasive plants such as Himalayan balsam was also included and orchards, walnut and parkland trees have been planted. The benefits were plain to see before the end of the project.

"The number of wild orchids has doubled since last year - it is marvellous - thrilling, I can hardly believe the difference in the land" grant applicant

Some people had been living on their land for many years; others had recently bought land and homes in the county. The main reason for applying was that due to cost they were not able to do the work: *"It would not have got done unless I had a grant"*.

Two people had thought to get rid of old hedgerow before speaking to the officer.

"I wanted to do the planting (200 trees) but I thought the hedges would come out - I thought they were past it. They have been restored - I thought - why not, let's give it a go - very glad I did, they look good." grant applicant

"I was planning to take the hedge out – it was more work to restore it than take it out - thought I'd give it a chance and so yes." grant applicant

Protecting and managing land with regard to livestock was important for many applicants:

"We need new fencing and more hedging to protect habitat from grazing animals - boundaries are so important." grant applicant

"Livestock and land management is the main benefit for me " grant applicant

Who did the work?

Most people hired contractors and many also did some of the work themselves:

"We got a chap that we have used before to do the work - and I made the bird boxes"
grant applicant

"Two guys doing the hedging at the moment – cursing!! I am too old to do it - so this was a great opportunity" grant applicant

"They put up 20 bird boxes - the contractor who planted the tress – it was part of the grant" grant applicant

"We are getting someone in to do fencing - I did coppicing and planted it all - I did all the hedging too" grant applicant

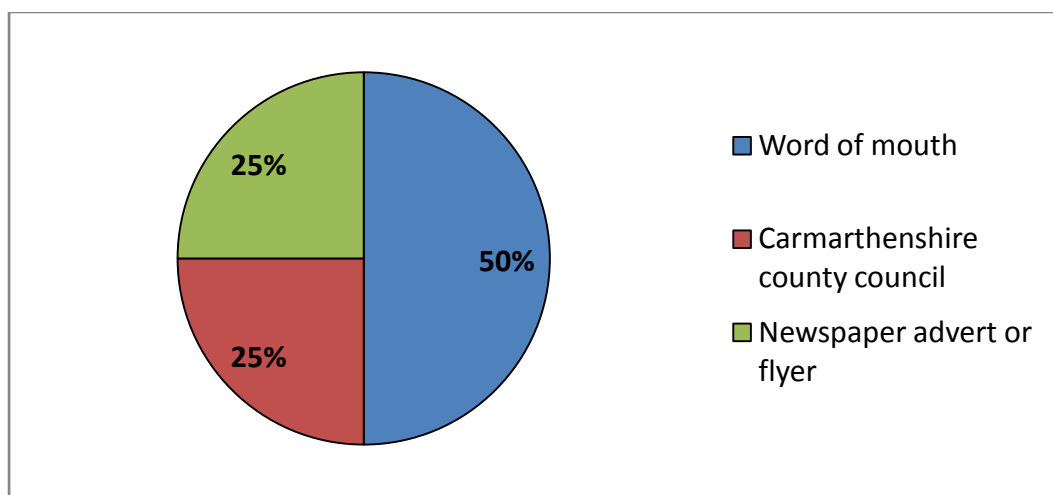
"We did most of the work - also WOOFERs (Working on organic farm volunteers)" grant applicant

The advice of experts was sought in some cases, the Butterfly Trust and Coed Cymru for example. The work done by consultants and contractors on the projects has all been done to a high standard, and quality is a hallmark of this strand. The officer and grant recipients have all been pleased with the work done to date.

Promoting the Scheme - Recruiting Projects

Similar to the Cultural Heritage strand a great deal of work was done in promoting the scheme and creating networks whilst the officers were waiting to begin administering the grants. The officer attended roadshows and event held by the County Council and adverts were placed in the local Newspaper and placed the County Council Website.

How people found out



"Well I think it could've been better advertised - I found out about it through word of mouth" grant applicant

Initial Phase

"I phoned the office and then Anna got in touch – and came for initial site visit – discussed it – and Ivy was brought in and we put in an expression of interest together

Anna is very good – came out before I even put in the application - to tell me whether it was worth putting an application in" grant applicant

Because of the delay the officer had time to visit all those who had expressed an interest in the grant scheme and work with them intensively ensuring eligibility and thorough applications that maximized the benefits.

The Grant Application Process

The forms were good, very clear, considering the complex nature of information required, see Appendix 4. The process could be streamlined but in conversation with applicants there was enough support to make it a reasonable process. Applicants commented:

"The process was straightforward - Anna came and looked around and told us what would be eligible and with would not be eligible - this saved a lot of time - we knew what would be approved."

"It was OK - Anna came out and helped with the technical stuff" grant applicant

"It was a lot of work - it was a rush to get it through"

"Payment was prompt - all paperwork was OK - I had to provide all receipts"

"Application and paper work – straightforward and simple"

"Form – overly complicated for level of grant"

Everyone was clear about what was eligible or ineligible, the costings and the scoring system were explained and clear. Guidelines and specifications for fencing, gates and hedging for example were given to all applicants.

"Guidelines - criteria for scoring - well laid out" grant applicant

"Pictures in guidelines were good – but I would have liked the opportunity to see ones that were already done - or talk to someone who has already done" grant applicant

No time was wasted due to a streamlined process. Record keeping and administration was meticulous with the officer and project administrator maintaining accurate databases and monitored projects consistently.

Completing the Work

The work involved in this project is seasonal; there is a growing season, and specific times for planting, cutting, trimming, and clearing. Each job has an optimum time and also times when it should not and cannot be done, for example laying hedges is done over a short period of time during a small window from November to March. The work on some activities such as pond creation and restoration needed to start as soon as possible, especially where planning permission was required.

"The seasons restricted us - we did manage to get it done though" grant applicant

Very few problems were encountered, due to setting up the scheme carefully and the lessons learned from the previous project of this sort at the Tywi Centre (Tirewdd Tywi). All applicants were given the appropriate information, advice and support to enable the work to be done.

Contractors, consultants and craftspeople were used, usually local people; a list was supplied by consultants and the officer had a list from the county council.

"We looked at 4 smaller contractors - they have more sympathy for this sort of thing – small scale – got quotes and then chose the one who could come the soonest – dim problem o gwbl" grant applicant

"Their work is of a high standard – professional hedgers" grant applicant

"Main fencing guy – recommended by farm shop - then he has a buddy who helps with the hedging" grant applicant

"I got the RIGHT people to do it had piece of mind throughout" grant applicant

"We had a craftsperson in - it is labour intensive" grant applicant

"We did not have any money to do it - the skilled person made a big difference" grant applicant

Challenges and overcoming them

The main challenges faced by grant applicants were the application process, finding the match funding, the retrospective nature of grant payment and the seasonal nature of the work.

"How it is paid! THE WHOLE thing done – it puts a huge burden on us (£4K) to pay everything! - a lot of money and tying it up for a whole year - the benefits outweigh this though" grant applicant

"The timescales are too small really" grant applicant

Interim payments were made which eased the burden on people considerably and an extension from December 2013 to December 2014 enabled projects to complete. This was a relief to many grant recipients who, due to the inclement weather, the slow start and the seasonal nature of the work would have struggled to complete the work.

"There was a push initially to get it done by August - now an extension still Jan - so much better – I would've had to take time off work" grant applicant

"She (Anna) kept contact throughout - reassuring" grant applicant

"I was a bit worried about the timetable" grant applicant

"we did not get to know by December – so by the time we got going it was midwinter - so too late to order stuff for that season – so good we have extension – cos we would not have been able to get it done" grant applicant

The Late start was challenging for the officer and for the applicants:

"We lost a year at the beginning - it was good that we have the extra year - the extension - without this - we would not have been able to complete." grant applicant

"There is an October- March window for much of the work in L&B - so the extension was REALLY important" grant officer

The late start was due to logos being agreed and to other administrative issues between WWEC and WEFO:

"If you need 6 months to a year to develop logos then this ought to be built in - this would be OK on a longer (5-10 year project) but it was disproportionate amount of time - lots of changes from WWEC at the beginning" grant officer

"During the first 6 months everything we sent to WWEC - went to WAG then back to WWEC - then back to us - wasted time" grant officer

This was frustrating for the officers and for potential grant applicants. Several months went by waiting for the leaflet to be signed off. It was a worrying time for the officer who said:

"If we have a very heavy or particularly wet winter then it may throw things out. If it does, there will be no time to play with."

The Application and Funding

The form filling and bureaucracy was a problem for some and also the fact that the grant was retrospectively paid. Applicants commented:

"Anna supported us through this - if she had not helped – i would not have bothered"

"Match funding a bit difficult"

"Retrospective money – VERY difficult! All paid out at end"

"Money comes after the work is done – so I have to find £5K then wait!"

"It would have been difficult without Anna sitting with me and filing the forms in together"

"The wording is not as clear as it could be – par for the course!"

Strengths and Success

All projects in this strand have gone well, with all the money allocated at the first grant panel and the work progressing as hoped.

Administration and finances

All documents that form part of the grant agreement were drawn up by the officer and are clear and well laid out, 'fit for purpose'. There were no problems and this is due to the diligence and careful planning done by the officer.

"The rates for the things we had to buy were good - what we would have expected" grant applicant

"It has gone to plan – as expected - we were able to do within allocated price and we will also finish in time now." grant applicant

The flexibility to make interim payments was important. Interim payments were made for certain stages of the work. The officer would visit sites to check the work before payment was approved. The payment procedure was then effective and efficient:

*"All very good – payment was straight way. Anna has been **extremely** helpful."* grant applicant

Information Advice and Support

This is a main factor contributing to success. The officer's level of expertise, her understanding and her passion was commented up on by all applicants:

"She was so helpful and talked it through with me – helped me measure up – she was ever so good" grant applicant

"Anna showed a great deal of sympathy and expertise - we are able to approach it with more confidence now" grant applicant

"She is very good – came out before I even put in the application - to tell me whether it was worth putting app in - She did a 'reci' first –we can fund this – we can't fund that. She made it all so clear." grant applicant

"Anna's very good – If I had a query she would respond quickly – she got back" grant applicant

"Contacted us to check on our progress – asked if we needed more help or advice" grant applicant

"I asked what was necessary - we spent an hour going round – she gave insights into the scheme and into biodiversity– very informative on many levels" grant applicant

Anna visited projects a minimum of 4 times, 5 times if an interim payment was made and often up to 7 times in cases where the grant recipient needed the support or advice.

- Initial visit
- 2 visits to work up the grant application
- An interim visit
- A final visit

"Because of the previous project under TAYO (Tywi Afon yrOesoedd), which was called Tirwedd Tywi, I made sure there was more contact with and support for the grant recipients - there were only 2 visits built in to the previous grant - this was not enough" grant officer

Anna shared her knowledge and expertise and applicants were very appreciative. Her suggestions led to a great deal more work being done and new habitats created:

"Anna has also given other ideas – she suggested a few things - very enabling - inspiring" grant applicant

"Anna was helpful and even though we did not do all the work - she gave us ideas for other and future work" grant applicant

"Anna came out - she suggested a corridor to connect the lake and river - for otters for example. We would NEVER have thought of this ourselves" grant applicant

Management Plans

All projects had a management plan drawn up by the officer; many included managing grazing by horses or sheep, protecting land and also grazing it to maximize biodiversity benefits.

"Putting in hedgerows – replacing historical ones – not much left just a few trees down near the river - been really neglected, over many years I think." grant applicant

"We bought 35 acre smallholding 3 years ago - a lot of the land is steep and none of the hedges or fences had been touched n 10 – 20 years – we did quite a bit but money was tight." grant applicant

"The cost of doing it was prohibitive – the grant means we can do it and the benefits are enormous to habitat and wildlife, I am thrilled." grant applicant

Benefits and Impact

Without this grant scheme most of the work would not have been done and the benefits would not have been realized. All grant recipients emphasized this point.

"The cost of doing it was prohibitive – the grant means we can do it and the benefits are enormous to habitat and wildlife, I am thrilled." grant applicant

"Impact on the landscape has been large for small sums of money" grants officer

"Done absolutely loads – made it stretched so far – we would never have been able to do anything near this much a without this grant" grant applicant

"We would NEVER have been able to do this" grant applicant

"I would not have done it without this grant and without the help of Anna" grant applicant

The work needed on these projects fell outside existing agi-environment schemes and so there were no other grants available.

"No pots of money that cover this sort of thing anymore" rural conservation manger

An unexpected benefit was a community one. The applicants had improved their land and were able to hold a music festival on it:

*"We held a small music festival on the land this summer - **the big cwtch** - we would not have done this without the fencing - so hundred and more people benefited"* grant applicant

Another benefit was a 'feelgood' factor and the fact that the benefit would be passed down to their children. Grant applicants commented:

"We have a feelgood factor - as a family - we know we have helped wildlife"

"This is for our children and children's children"

Habitat and Biodiversity

"This is the last bit of unimproved land (agriculturally improved) in the valley – this is a little 'private' nature reserve" grant applicant

"These habitats are precious; I don't think people appreciate their importance. This grant has enabled me to do something very worthwhile and it will have ripple effects." grant applicant

"The 23 acres not touched for 25 years – no fencing - the grant has put us on course to help repair the land" grant applicant

The work is reported to the Biodiversity Action Reporting System which is UK wide system and it has contributed to the LBAP - Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets for the county. The ecological impact is already being noticed by people and with proper management the impact will increase and be sustainable. Certain rare species such as the brown hair streak butterfly have been helped through the grant scheme.

"Clearing the land, the bracken, bramble and balsam - has opened up the land up for hunting territory for Barn owl - this will have positive knock on effects" grant applicant

"We have got a rare butterfly - brown hair streak - the hedgerow is crucial for it - the butterfly trust came out." grant applicant



Brown hair streak butterfly

Through the expert advice given by the officer new and different projects emerged:

"It has led to other things - through Anna's advice. The scrape and other things on the land that we would not have thought of – we are really enthused by this." grant applicant

The officer has looked at connectivity – wildlife corridors – and it would be interesting to see the benefits over time even though there are no plans to continue with funding the project and no follow on.

Raised Awareness - Information, Knowledge and Learning

"Raising awareness and education is important- one of the LBAP targets is to raise awareness - this was the basis of project - to meet LBAP targets" grant officer

"ECOLOGY - I wanted to get the message across - it is important that people understand the basic principles - to reinforce the message - have to repeat" grant officer

Not only has the scheme raised awareness, all those interviewed said they had learned a great deal about their individual parcels of land - the ecology and biodiversity. This will contribute to long term conservation. The comments below from grant recipients illustrate the learning that has taken place:

"I had already decided to go for it – she offered advice - it was brilliant, i learned a lot about my own land."

"I am happy to carry on doing work – I now have contacts and confidence and the contractors got work and they too have developed skills and confidence."

"I have learned a great deal – MASSIVE!"

"Feel like I have been through an undergrad in Land management"

"Sustainable management approach - i get it now"

"I had already decided to go for it – she offered advice - it was brilliant, i learned a lot about my own land."

"Anna showed a great deal of sympathy and expertise - we are able to approach it with more confidence now"

"This has upskilled us - we have a much better understanding of wild and native plants. We can now pass this knowledge on to our son"



Land Management and Conservation for the Future

The officer created plans for each project that expressed interest, whether they proceeded to application or not and consequently people know how to manage their own land and why this is important.

Applicants commented:

"The knock-on benefits are huge – uping the game as far as managing the land is concerned"

"It is quite a big area – I can get overwhelmed – this grant means I have to be very systematic – taking before and after photos – this has set in place a process of management – monitoring the return of species - Not done this systematically before – it is very satisfying."

"Generated a 5 year plan - so sustainability. This will knock problems on the head – time for things to be established – and the ongoing cost will stabilize."

"We did not know anything– now I know and we can do it properly"

Having seen what can be done, going through the process, having advice from the officer and having a management plan meant that people had a better understanding of their land

and of habitats and wildlife. They can now continue to manage their land and work on it for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape

"I am happy to carry on doing work – I now have contacts and confidence (she lost her husband)" grant applicant

Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism

Tourism will benefit in the county through the aesthetic restoration of landscape neglected for the last half century. A few of the applicants were involved in the tourist industry, having B&B accommodation or holiday lets. The enhancement of the aesthetics made a big difference according to grant recipients:

"Huge benefits to us – it is turning this place around – we have a holiday cottage and we want visitors to enjoy the valley too" grant applicant

"It just looks so much better now – all the hedges complete and as it would've been 50 – 60 years ago." grant applicant

Economic and Strategic Development

"Economic development is driving so many things - we have to demonstrate how what we do contributes to this - it obviously does - and in the longer term it is vital" grant officer

Contractors and suppliers of materials benefited and all the enhancements will benefit the economy in the long term through tourism. Contracts were offered to consultants and contractors for the work were offered locally and the local economy benefited. Grant recipients commented:

"Young local chaps did the clearing work – they were good – it was not difficult to find local contractors."

"The two guys doing the hedging - Their work is of a high standard – professional hedgers"

Tying in the different strategic strands for the county and indeed Wales was recommended.

"Strategic view is needed - with continuity for the grant work" grant officer

"A sense of place - tourism - culture - community - all go hand in hand" panel member

"Integration is what is needed - heritage - tourism - culture - Landscape & Biodiversity - recreation - economy - all of it!" panel member

Networks and local contacts

New networks have been created as landowners worked with specialists, contractors and the Tywi Centre. This work will have long term benefits for Landscape & Biodiversity and also for the people involved. Applicants commented:

"I have met some wonderful people, experts in their field through this – it is excellent - Ivy and Carl have a low impact tractor - I found them through word of mouth"

"I can't applaud Anna enough – she has led us through this – and I have met people through her"

There was a free Biodiversity Day - all grant recipients were offered this and the rural conservation manager commented on its success.

"Our neighbors have also benefited from this grant - from the work we've done - so it has helped create cohesion in the communities and in the county" grant applicant

Grants Panel

The panel encompassed a broad range of expertise, *"Good array of people on panel – diverse set of interests and expertise."* panel member

The panel offered assistance to the officer with the initial setting up, giving advice on costings and standards for example. At the meeting to discuss the applications the officer gave the panel an explanation of her detailed scoring system which she had adapted from the previous project (Tirwedd Tywi) with a great deal of consultation with experts and organizations such as the Countryside Council for Wales. All documents that form part of the grant agreement were drawn up by the officer.

Grant panel members all commented on the success of the scheme:

"Excellent project – shame not more money - Pot is far too small - it could do a lot more "

"The maximum contribution of £5,000 is good - enables smaller person - suits smaller landowner. These smaller projects – achieve more! So this has a bit impact – on a small scale."

"It would be nice if this was replicated all over Wales – it is a good example "

"Encourages jobs - Best spending money in the rural economy – getting local people to do work – bringing in contractors from the area – economy benefits "

"Maintaining Carmarthenshire landscape – habitats and local wildlife – discreetly targeted - it is doing what it set out to achieve - Good outcomes for conservation"

Those who work in biodiversity understood the implications of the delays and the difficulties faced as a result:

"Curtailed with the delays so work has to be done in 1 year. Anna has had one active season, ludicrous. She has done a lot considering. The funding body just doesn't get it – the seasonal nature of it - you can't manage a hedge in August – this is illegal. The team has tried to explain it to the funding body."

The Future

"It is worth doing - but it is a shame for it to be so short-lived - in terms of the whole of Carmarthenshire and sustainability?" grant officer

"It is a problem - these grants are short lived - the project is short lived - we do this wonderful work - then we're off - no continuity" panel member

The increased confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm of those who received grants and who received advice and support from the grants officers will ensure a legacy. The development of management plans will have a significant impact.

There is a need amongst landowners in Carmarthenshire for grants of this sort. The benefits have been substantial and it is hoped that the future for species such as the marsh fritillary and dormice might be considered in future planning at the county, Wales and European level.

"The maintenance could be built into the grant? A bit?" grant applicant

"Such a shame that they are not doing it next year!" grant applicant

"Glastir – all about the big farms – it does not cater for us – 'improved land only'" grant applicant

There were no maintenance costs built into the grants and there was no exit strategy for the project as recommended in the formative evaluation report.

5.3 FINDINGS ACROSS BOTH STRANDS

Several months went by waiting for the leaflet to be signed off at the beginning. The officers were frustrated but used the time well.

"If we have a very heavy or particularly wet winter then it may throw things out. If it does, there will be no time to play with." grant officer

"I only have one criticism – the offer was put on the table and then it was a year before I now have the EOI form - such a long delay! This was not Emyr's fault – something silly holding it up" grant applicant

Initially there appeared to be some communication difficulties between WWEC staff and the Grant Scheme staff who had a great deal of expertise and experience in their areas of work and were at times frustrated by a lack of appreciation by WWEC of some of the issues they faced. This changed and latterly working relationships were good with mutual respect and appreciation of their different roles.

The change in the definitions of 'Capital' and 'Revenue' posed difficulties. The officers were not notified until early 2013; it was a great deal of worry and work for the Cultural Heritage strand particularly who were concerned that they might not be able to fund projects. Luckily there was money from another project at the Tywi Centre that could be transferred and WWEC assisted with this.

"Whether it is revenue or capital pot does not make a difference to the applicants - but a big difference to the scheme - it is a shame that WEFO implemented these changes half way through - it is something quite fundamental - it was tough going at the time - trying to sort it out" WWEC officer

"This was a bombshell for us. We don't understand why we were not told about this sooner -- it is so late in the day and could affect a lot of people." grant officer

Some people in communities were frustrated at the delay.

"Our grant was approved in 2013 - we had to wait over 5 months to begin work - very frustrating" grant applicant

WWEC has been closely involved with the scheme throughout, working with staff, as an officer commented: *"We've been in a lot – we want them to have robust application form – to ensure there is no come back on staff"*. They also provide monitoring and audit services to the scheme checking eligibility of all financial transactions for compliance: *"as funders/agents – we are seen as agents between WG to deliver this – axis 3 and 4"* WWEC officer

WWEC approved all forms including guidelines, application forms, expressions of interest, beneficiary forms and terms and conditions.

At the beginning of the scheme outcomes, wider benefits and impact did not appear to be much of a consideration; the concern was with outputs linked with the claims: *"We have to make sure we're protected – considering risk - our reputation is important for future funding in the county – must keep risk to a minimum."* WWEC officer. However officers were interviewed at various points and latterly the focus has shifted to the outcomes and the appreciation of the impact of the grants on communities and culture.

"We are pleased - it has had a big impact - reach. It has engaged with a very varied range of projects - big impact on areas from small projects and relatively small pots of money. It has really helped communities" WWEC officer

Grant Panels

The panel meetings worked well. The officers sent out detailed notes before their meetings, so that they were well prepared.

Cultural Heritage: members of the panel were offered different areas of expertise including: compliance, community grants, regenerations, business planning and advice education and training, tourism and visitor experience, sustainability and heritage. The officer presented details of the applications at the meetings and he gave a summary of all projects in a slide presentation. Panel member have been helpful from the beginning; for example in designing the criteria, business planning and project management. Comments from panel members include:

"I have spoken to people who have benefited - heritage, culture, archaeology – very positive"

"Emyr is fantastic, a real asset"

"The building – the Tywi Centre is a good resource, community resource - helps with community relations"

One of the main comments was the need to raise the profile of the project and disseminate the good work.

Landscape & Biodiversity: the panel encompassed a broad range of expertise, as one panel member commented: *"Good array of people on panel – diverse set of interests and expertise."* At the meeting to discuss the applications the officer gave the panel an

explanation of her detailed scoring system. Grant panel members interviewed all commented on the success of the strand:

“Excellent project – shame not more money - Pot is far too small - it could do a lot more “

“It would be nice if this was replicated all over Wales – it is a good example “

“Encourages jobs - Best spending money in the rural economy – getting local people to do work – bringing in contractors from the area – economy benefits “

“Anna is excellent “

Commenting on the Grant Scheme as a whole, one panel member commented:

"This shows there has been a need – it has provided something people wanted"

7. CONCLUSION

Both strands of the project have exceeded expectations. Many people had ideas and hopes for projects and the grant scheme has enabled them to come to fruition. The scheme was seen as an excellent initiative and people were grateful to Carmarthenshire, the Tywi Centre and the grants officers. Many would not have pursued their ideas or reaped the benefits without the grants and the support and encouragement of the officers.

Both strands demonstrated a need for smaller grants; once people have the resources they are able to accomplish a great deal. For such small amounts of money enormous benefits have been reaped for individuals, communities, culture and heritage, landscape and biodiversity in Carmarthenshire. The Grant Scheme has demonstrated value for money.

The Scheme contributed to the priorities identified by Carmarthenshire County Council including the rural economy. The Cultural Heritage strand contributing substantially to identity and distinctiveness and the Landscape & Biodiversity strand contributing to Sustainability and Biodiversity through meeting the LBAP targets. Tourism and subsequently the economy have benefited substantially from Culture & Heritage projects. The restoration of land features and the maintenance of landscape also improved the aesthetics for the benefit of those who use the land for recreation. There was little evidence of the tourism infrastructure or organizations in the county being engaged.

A recent report by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David⁶ states that *"Research has shown that a coordinated approach to the development of heritage in Carmarthenshire is vital."* and stresses that *"Activity in the county must be strategic and include development of grass roots ideas alongside corporate projects."* (2014:117)

Delays and changes caused frustration however issues were resolved and all projects funded and completed successfully.

The main factor contributing to success was the caliber of the officers. Both were skilled professionals able to work well with people; they were friendly and approachable as well as having expert knowledge, understanding and passion for their areas of work. This was more than a job for them. Every single person spoke highly of the officers; their patience and support throughout the projects.

Working intensively with applicants has meant successful projects and high levels of beneficiary satisfaction with very little time or resource wastage. The scoring system worked well. Both strands built on the work they had done with previous projects at the Tywi Centre. Many of those who applied in Round 1 of the Cultural Heritage strand made applications in rounds 2 or 3, illustrating the need for projects to be staggered and more long term.

Difficulties for the beneficiaries were mainly to do with funding. Retrospective payment is not ideal. The levels of match funding seems to have been acceptable.

In Cultural Heritage the commitment of people who gave of their time (and some of their money) was notable. Pride in their community and enthusiasm for interpreting and communicating their rich heritage drove most projects, they were certainly 'grassroots' and promoted active citizenship. People had a wealth of ideas for projects.

Quality is a characteristic of all the work from the administrative systems and recording to the end results. The Grant Scheme has helped raise the profile of the Tywi Centre considerably and contributed to its excellent reputation.

The benefits are enormous and there will be a lasting legacy, the impact is cumulative and incremental. Many commented on how future generations will benefit. The Cultural Heritage strand in particular brought people and communities together and contributed to community cohesion. Both strands have increased knowledge, skills and understanding. A great deal of learning has taken place; there has been capacity building for communities and individuals and up-skilling was evident as projects used IT and developed skills such as project management and land management. In Landscape & Biodiversity people had

⁶ *Current and Potential Value of the Heritage of Carmarthenshire* (November 2014)

management plans and developed the knowledge and confidence to continue improving and maintaining their land.

People from all stakeholder groups said it was a shame that this scheme was coming to an end. The work deserves to be continued. There was no exit strategy and there appears to be no plans in place for future work. Both strands align with the Welsh Governments Future Generations Bill⁷ and this is a good reason for continuing and developing the work; short term thinking does not contribute to sustainable development, to healthy landscapes or communities.

The lack of continuity and strategic planning is short sighted. There are no quick fix solutions for rural regeneration and this scheme has shown that small amounts of money for relatively small projects make a big difference but in both strands the need for connectivity is stressed.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic

- A strategic approach that ties in with and integrates the strategic priorities of Carmarthenshire, Wales and global concerns should be adopted in future. Priorities include: rural economic growth, diversification, community cohesion, tourism and green tourism, health through recreation, sustainable development.
- The Future Generations Bill could serve as a template
- The Tywi Centre Board of Management, WWEC and the centre staff working together should develop outline proposals for future funding for both strands, whether they remain under the management of the Tywi Centre or not.
- Decisions about building on the work done by this grant scheme should be made as soon as possible to ensure continuity.
- Landscape & Biodiversity could be more integrated with Cultural Heritage and vice versa when developing future projects. UNESCO's Cultural Landscapes captures the need for integration for sustainability⁸

⁷<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/future-generations-bill/?lang=en>

⁸<http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>

- Linking with the skills and training agenda would benefit many grant recipients. Local and traditional crafts and skills being lost and people are aware of this and a strategic approach is needed to integrate projects.
- The process and impact of the Cultural Heritage work on tourism should be discussed with tourism organization and specialists. Tourism and tourism organizations should work more closely with 'grassroots' projects of this nature.
- Both strands could have two tiers of funding: small and larger pots of money so that different strategic priorities are met and different groups are able to access funding.

Operational and General

- Long term monitoring of habitat, biodiversity, cultural capital, community capacity and sustainability should be looked into and built into the planning of future projects.
- Long term follow up of the Landscape & Biodiversity could be done through the Welsh Government through their land based schemes for example.
- WWEC should consider having quarterly meetings as a group with all project managers or officers in order to maintain regular communication and to ensure efficiency. This could be built into project management plans.
- Interim payments to be made possible as a matter of course, and information about this included in guidelines.
- In future schemes, all grant recipients could meet at the beginning of projects (or funding rounds) to share experiences and offer support to each other.
- The excellent work of both strands should be disseminated as widely as possible through a variety of media to different audiences from local, national and specialist. Case studies could be used.