

# **Evaluation Report**

## **Tywi Heritage Centre of Excellence**

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## 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Heritage Centre of Excellence project based at the Tywi Centre Llandeilo ran between August 2011 and March 2014. Its aim was to address the skills shortage in the built and natural environment through offering short, affordable training courses using sustainable and traditional methods and materials. The courses were aimed at developing new and transferable skills with underemployed and marginalised members of the community and upskilling the existing workforce in the heritage building sector or environmental conservation field. Established training providers were commissioned and all courses were of excellent quality, with high levels of participant satisfaction. The training was well organised, with practical and theoretical elements and content relevant to participants needs. The majority of those who participated in the evaluation said they would be using their skills and knowledge to renew, maintain or renovate land or buildings; a few gained skills that would increase their career/employment prospects.

The evaluation demonstrates that the project was successful in achieving the positive outcomes outlined in the project bid; however the numbers attending courses were low. Original targets were set at 75 courses and 480 individuals being trained; the final figures were 47 courses held and 214 individuals trained. It has been a case of quality not quantity with mitigating circumstances that explain the fact that the project did not reach its targets, not insignificantly the economic downturn and increased competition. The project recording criteria was changed mid-project which caused some problems; this contributed in part to the project falling short of its potential. There was a ruling that only those from Carmarthenshire could attend courses and therefore bookings were low and courses had to be cancelled. Later this ruling was changed and people from outside the county were allowed to attend courses as long as Carmarthenshire residents made up the majority of participants, and even though the participants from outside the county did not contribute to target figures, their inclusion made running courses more feasible.

Other aspects of the project included: open days, school events, a demonstrator project and information leaflets all of which have been successful and show that there is a growing interest in heritage and sustainable building. The recommendations focus on the elements from the project that can be integrated into the Tywi Centre's work particularly maintaining the high standard of delivery. The Centre can learn lessons regarding marketing and the niche best suited to the Centre, possibly as a co-ordinating hub for information and training provision in Heritage building in Wales or South Wales. Finally, it is recommended that the Tywi Centre is supported and promoted as a national and International example of good practice.

## CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

### CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL - GWELLIANT SGILIAU CEFN GWLAD

Cynhaliwyd y prosiect Canolfan Ragoriaeth mewn Treftadaeth brosiect Ragoriaeth yng Nghanolfan Tywi, Llandeilo rhwng Awst 2011 a Mawrth 2014. Ei nod oedd darparu cyrsiau hyfforddiant byr, fforddiadwy a oedd yn defnyddio dulliau a deunyddiau cynaliadwy a thraddodiadol er mwyn mynd i'r afael â'r prinder sgiliau yn yr amgylchedd adeiledig a naturiol. Roedd y cyrsiau wedi'u hanelu at ddatblygu sgiliau newydd a throsglwyddadwy gydag aelodau tan gyflogedig ac ymylol o'r gymuned, a hefyd gwella sgiliau'r gweithlu presennol yn y sector adeiladu treftadaeth neu faes cadwraeth amgylcheddol. Cafodd darparwyr hyfforddiant sefydledig eu comisiynu i ddarparu'r cyrsiau ac oeddynt oll o ansawdd rhagorol, gyda lefelau uchel o foddhad cyfranogwr. Roedd yr hyfforddiant wedi'i drefnu'n dda, gydag elfennau ymarferol a damcaniaethol a chynnwys yn berthnasol i anghenion y cyfranogwyr. Dywedodd y rhan fwyaf o'r rhai a gymerodd ran yn y gwerthusiad y byddent yn defnyddio eu sgiliau a'u gwybodaeth newydd er mwyn adnewyddu, cynnal neu adnewyddu tir neu adeiladau. Fe wnaeth rhai ennill sgiliau a fyddai'n cynyddu eu rhagolygon gyrfa / gwaith.

Mae'r gwerthusiad yn dangos bod y prosiect wedi llwyddo i gyflawni'r canlyniadau cadarnhaol a amlinellwyd yn y cais prosiect; fodd bynnag, mae'r niferoedd a fynychodd y cyrsiau yn isel. Y targedau gwreiddiol oedd: 75 o gyrsiau a 480 o unigolion yn cael eu hyfforddi; y ffigurau terfynol oedd 47 cwrs a gynhelir a 214 o unigolion yn cael eu hyfforddi. Achos o ansawdd yn hytrach na maint ydy ac mae yna amgylchiadau sy'n egluro'r ffaith nad oedd y prosiect wedi cyrraedd ei dargedau. Rhaid nodi fod y dirywiad economaidd a mwy o gystadleuaeth liniarol wedi cael effaith. Cafodd canllawiau cofnodi eu newid yng nghanol y prosiect ac fe achosodd rhai problemau. Roedd hyn yn rhannol gyfrifol am ddiffyg yn y ffigurau terfynol: cafwyd penderfyniad ei wneud mai dim ond y rhai o Sir Gaerfyrddin a fu'n gallu mynychu cyrsiau ac felly roedd y nifer yn isel ac o ganlyniad bu rhai canslo cyrsiau. Yn ddiweddarach cafodd y penderfyniad ei diddymu a chafodd pobl o'r tu allan i'r sir caniatâd i fynychu cyrsiau (er bod y rhan fwyaf o'r cyfranogwyr o Sir Gaerfyrddin), ac roedd hyn yn gwneud rhedeg cyrsiau yn bosib.

Darperir elfennau eraill, gan gynnwys: dyddiau agored, digwyddiadau gydag ysgolion lleol, prosiect arddangos a chynhyrchiad taflenni gwybodaeth. Mae'r holl elfennau wedi bod yn llwyddiannus ac yn dangos bod diddordeb cynyddol mewn treftadaeth ac adeiladu cynaliadwy. Mae'r argymhellion yn canolbwyntio ar yr elfennau o'r prosiect y gellir eu hintegreiddio i mewn i waith Canolfan Tywi, yn enwedig i gadw ac adeiladu ar safon uchel y gwaith. Gall y ganolfan dysgu gwersi o ran marchnata a'r fath o waith arbenigol sy'n orau canolbwyntio arno, o bosibl gall fod yn ganolfan cydlynu a chanolbwynt cyd-drefnu ar gyfer gwybodaeth a hyfforddiant ym maes adeiladu traddodiadol a chynaliadwy yng Nghymry neu

De Cymru . Yn olaf , argymhellir bod Canolfan Tywi yn cael pob cefnogaeth a chael ei hyrwyddo fel enghraifft cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol o arfer da.

## 2 - INTRODUCTION

The Heritage Centre of Excellence is a training project funded through the Rural Development Programme (RDP) Axis 3, which is concerned with economic diversification and quality of life; it comes under measure 331, training and information. The project seeks to address the skills shortage in the built and natural environment through offering short and affordable training courses using sustainable and traditional methods and materials. The aims of the project include introducing new and transferable skills to underemployed and marginalised members of the community as well as offering upskilling the existing workforce in the heritage building sector or environmental conservation field. The training and advice provided is aimed at contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, biodiversity and heritage of rural Carmarthenshire as well as increasing the productivity of identified key sectors and creating opportunities for social and economic development. Raising awareness of and promoting the value of our natural and built heritage and the benefits of sustainable and traditional methods and materials was also a central aim in line with Sustainable Development. This project delivered training in line with this principle through using traditional methods and materials, appropriate to historic buildings.

Research<sup>1</sup> has shown that there is a shortage of vocational training in heritage building in Wales and a recent (2013) report on England and Scotland<sup>2</sup> by English Heritage found that insufficient information is readily available on the types of skills and materials people should be using on traditional (pre 1919) buildings, in part due to skills and knowledge gaps of building professionals or within Local Authorities, who subsequently do not provide correct advice.

The project officer, Tom Duxbury was appointed in August 2011. He designed most of the courses and procured delivery from three organisations:

**Keep Wales Tidy** - <http://www.keepwalestidy.org/home>

This is a well known national organisation that has a training branch and offers a range of specialist conservation training.

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<sup>1</sup> Page and Dean 2010 for Carmarthenshire County Council

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/social-and-economic-research/heritage-labour-market/traditional-building-skills/>

**Tŷ Mawr Lime** - <http://www.lime.org.uk/>

An established company supplying sustainable and traditional building materials and providing training across the UK in the use of these products, particularly lime, also thatching and dry stone walling. The Tywi Centre has worked with them extensively.

**Heritage Craft Alliance Ltd** - <http://www.heritagecraftalliance.co.uk/>

This is an accredited training and assessment provider specialising in the built environment and heritage building; they are based in north Yorkshire. The Tywi Centre has worked with them previously, on the Skills for the Future - Heritage Building Bursary Scheme.

**Courses began running in January 2012 and the project ended in March 2014.** A Steering Group was set up to support the Bursary Scheme and the Heritage Centre of Excellence; this group offers a range of expertise, advice and offers strategic direction. See Appendix 3 for the list of members.

**Targets**

Output Reference	Output Description	Original Target	Approved Target April 2014	Achieved	Achieved against original target	Achieved against April 2014 target
ECO.331.1	Number of individuals trained	480	185	214	44.58%	115.68%
ECO.331.2	Gross number of training days provided	480	170	224.15625	46.70%	131.86%
WO.331.1	Number of training courses held	75	36	47	62.67%	130.56%
WO.331.2	Number of training courses supported	75	36	47	62.67%	130.56%
WO.331.3	Number of mentoring schemes delivered	1	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
WO.331.4	Number of training courses held achieving 70% occupancy rate	75	12	14	18.67%	116.67%
WAO.331.1	Number of awareness raising events held	3	6	5	166.67%	83.33%
WAO.331.2	Number of consultation exercises undertaken	1	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
WAO.331.3	Number of feasibility studies undertaken	1	1	1	100.00%	100.00%
WAO.331.4	Number of interpretative materials produced	3	12	23	766.67%	191.67%

<b>Output Reference</b>	<b>Output Description</b>	<b>Original Target</b>	<b>Approved Target April 2014</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Achieved against original target</b>	<b>Achieved against April 2014 target</b>
WAO.331.15	Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	6	40	46	766.67%	115.00%
WAO.331.15	Number of activities that actively encourages or promotes action to address environmental sustainability	3	24	34	1133.33 %	141.67%
WAO.331.19	Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement / sustainability	3	1	1	33.33%	100.00%
ECR.331.1	Number of individuals gaining a qualification	9	4	4	44.44%	100.00%
ECR.331.2	Number of individuals implementing new skilled developed	200	60	84	42.00%	140.00%
WO.331.3	Number of individuals involved in a mentoring scheme	9	9	8	88.89%	88.89%
WR.331.3	Number of individuals returning to work as a result of project delivery	2	4	4	200.00%	100%

A formative evaluation report in September 2012 enabled feedback to be acted upon; the purpose of this summative evaluation is to present evidence on the overall performance of the project. It seeks to provide a comprehensive picture which includes understanding how the project achieved against the Performance Indicators in the initial bid and those that were agreed later.

Impact, and outcomes are looked at and the evaluation seeks to ascertain how the overall aims and objectives and broader outcomes were achieved. Highlighting good practice and success is important, and also the challenges that were faced, so that lessons learned can inform and feed into future projects and initiatives. The report concludes with a set of recommendations set against the wider context of Heritage Skills, policies and strategic priorities that the project is linked to.

### 3 - EVALUATION METHODS

Feedback was obtained from the main stakeholders:

- Course Participants
- Trainers and Training Providers
- Steering Group members
- Tywi Centre Staff
- West Wales European Centre

#### Qualitative Methods

Interviews were conducted throughout the project, so as to evidence progress and change. The numbers indicate the number of respondents.

- Online questionnaire to the Steering Group at the beginning of the project (4)
- Telephone interviews with Steering group members (6)
- Telephone interviews with members of the Steering Group towards the end of the project (4)
- Interviews, some face to face and some telephone, with organisations delivering courses: one round in 2012 and one round in the autumn 2013 (6)
- Telephone interviews with trainers who delivered courses (12)
- Telephone interviews with those involved in the demonstrator project (5)
- Interviews, some face to face and some telephone, with course participants in 4 rounds throughout the project (40)
- Online survey with courses participants (13) Summary Report is available in Appendix 4
- Emails from participants (5)
- Regular meetings/interviews with project officer Tom Duxbury
- Visits to courses and open days/school days
- Meetings / interviews with Tywi Centre manager
- Meetings/interviews with WVEC officers (2)

The interview schedules are available in Appendix 5

#### Quantitative Methods

Through the development of a robust reporting schedule in partnership with the evaluators, the project ensured that it would capture all necessary and relevant information for each of the courses being delivered. These included not only the required elements for reporting to the funder such as course details but also a variety of attendee information as well as feedback on levels of satisfaction for each course. Therefore for this evaluation the project



has been able to provide the evaluators with clear reporting tools containing all the necessary course information.

## 4 - ACTIVITIES

### Courses

As well as the three main course providers, other organisations also delivered courses such as Down to Earth; The Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) and independent trainers also delivered courses such as building an earth oven.

A broad variety of courses were offered, suiting a range of needs and expectations. Examples include: Introduction to lime; Hedgerow Management and planting; Hedge laying; Repair & Maintenance of Timber Sliding Sash Windows; Grassland Management; Pond Creation, Restoration and Management; Colm building and repair; Orchard Creation and Management; Apples - Identification, Storing and Cider Making; General Carpentry Repair and Maintenance; Woodland Management; Insulating you Old home; Renewable Energy. For a full list see Appendix 1. Many courses were cancelled and some were postponed, a list of these can be found in Appendix 2

Courses cost between £25 and £70. One day courses were up to £50 where most cost £35. A two day course cost up to £75 with longer ones over three or four days costing up to £140.

The training was aimed at increasing and diversifying rural skills and upskilling the rural workforce in line with sustainability objectives, giving people the understanding and skills to repair, maintain and improve the built and natural environment of Carmarthenshire; this in turn contributing to the longer term benefits for the rural economy.

Free courses, events and seminars were also a feature of the project, for example two free courses were 'Conservation of the commons' and two 'Old House Clinics'

### School days

**Two days were held in October 2012 and October 2013.** The project officer contacted local school clusters in the area, in 2012, 5 schools came and in 2013 three schools participated. Students were from year 10 following BTEC agriculture and construction courses (levels 1 and 2) and related subjects.

- 2012 - 64 pupils attended, this included 6 girls.
- 2013 - 42 pupils attended this included 1 girl.

The students moved from workshop to workshop, spending 40 minutes at each. All workshops consisted of an introduction which gave information about the materials and

history of the materials and techniques, describing how they were used in the past and are now used today. This was followed by demonstrations and hands-on activities.

The evaluator attended both days and interviewed teachers and adults accompanying the children, those running the workshops and also the students. A summary report is available in Appendix 6

## **6 workshops**

- Lime plastering
- Lime science
- Thatching
- Making bird boxes
- Timber Framing – roof
- Hurdle making – willow

## **Open days.**

Two open days were held in April 2012 and July 2013. There is a summary report on the Open day in 2013 in Appendix 7. These open days were well attended, 144 in April 2012, and 150 people in 2013. There were exhibitors and stall holders, demonstrations and talks. The days promoted the centre and its work and brought together expertise and information from a range of companies working in heritage and sustainable building. Consultations were carried out during the two days.

## **Information leaflets**

Two bilingual information leaflets were produced in March 2014 entitled 'Understanding Traditional Buildings'. They were written and designed by Helen Whitear and Tom Duxbury and are clear, attractive and accessible sources of information.

1. Traditional Construction: from 'clom' and thatch to town houses and terraces
2. How Old Buildings Work: making the most of your traditional solid-walled building

## **Demonstrator Project**

The rebuilding of the retaining wall on one side of the Carriage Drive at the National Botanic Garden of Wales was the demonstrator project. In the original bid there were two substantial demonstrator projects outlined, however due to the timescale, the late start of the project and the time spent on getting courses running it was decided to scale this aspect down. The project was sent out to tender and Heritage Building Maintenance, Andy Smith was successful. The work took 5 weeks in total and finished during the first week of September 2013.

Andy mentored 6 people (5 men, 1 woman) over the course of the project, two working with him for the first three weeks. Tom recruited these mentees; they were unsuccessful bursary applicants and others who had made enquiries at the centre. One has been taken on as a Bursary student, two are using the experience in their day-to-day work and one is looking at volunteering at other sites such as Cardigan Castle.

The contractor (Andy Smith of Heritage Building Maintenance) initially set-up the site and completed areas which were not finished by the mentees. The National Botanic Gardens were very supportive; they helped with digging, sorting and moving stone.



*Carriageway Wall – National Botanic Gardens of Wales*

### **The Heritage Building Bursary Scheme**

The Heritage Lottery Fund supports this project which is also based at the Tywi Centre. It is an Apprenticeship model and trainees learn their craft (masonry, carpentry and joinery and plastering) through placements with heritage building companies and training at the Tywi Centre and other locations. The trainees work toward an NVQ level 3 in Heritage Building. The Heritage Centre of Excellence project provided match funding for the Bursary Scheme through providing training for 4 Carmarthenshire based trainees.

### **Other**

#### **Coleg Sir Gar Heritage Courses**

Nell Hellier, the Tywi Centre manger and Tom Duxbury delivered 6 workshops for Coleg Sir Gar in 2013 and 2014 . The six “heritage” courses were delivered to NVQ2 level students studying Carpentry, Painting, Plastering and Bricklaying; they each received 2 hour

workshops. Two half day workshops were delivered to students on the HNC Foundations in Heritage. A total of 120 students benefited from these courses.

**The project officer attended many events, with stalls at the following:**

- Welsh Countryside & Coastal Management Fair – Llanerchaeron, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011
- Careers Convention – Parc y Scarlets, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013
- Beautiful Burial Grounds Conference – National Botanic Garden of Wales, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013

**The officer also gave talks and presentations:**

- Heritage talk to students – Ysgol Emlyn, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013, Heritage talk to students.
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Calch project – Sawdde Common & Llangadog Hall, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013 – display stand and talk on traditional buildings recognition and repair and maintenance.
- Carmarthenshire Vintage Society – Tafarn y Tanardy, Carmarthen, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013 – Hedgelaying and hedgerow management presentation.
- Building Limes Forum – Dublin King's Inn, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013 – HLF Bursary Scheme presentation.
- Dyfed Smallholders Association – Gremlin Club, Carmarthen, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 - Hedgelaying and hedgerow management presentation.



*Learning to lay hedges*

## 5 - KEY FINDINGS

### Analysis of data

No. of courses held	47
No. of courses postponed	17
No. of courses cancelled	10

No. of participants	214
Days Training	75

Many participants attended more than one course however a person can only be counted once, even though they might learn different skills, it is the individual that is counted. For example a person attends 2 courses learns 2 sets of skills but is only counted as 1 participant.

Three courses achieved the 70% attendance against target number of attendees figure for unique numbers, they were:

- Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas - The Good the Bad and the Difficult (15/04/2013)
- Conservation Value of Commons (10/10/2013)
- Bread oven Build & Bake (15/02/2014)

**Unique numbers** are allocated to each individual, not to each attendance/enrolment on a course. A person could attend multiple course but only be counted as one.

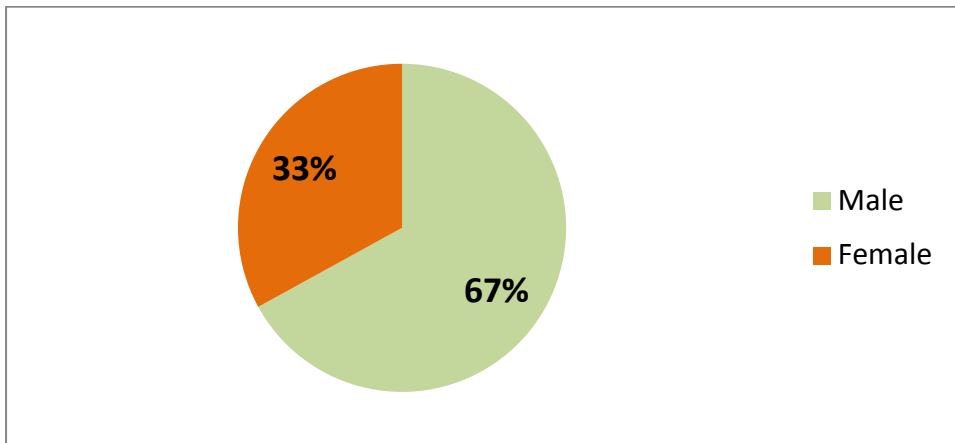
Six courses achieved the 70% attendance figure for supported participant numbers against target number of attendees:

- Hedge laying (1) 22 & 23/02/2012
- Old House Clinics (1) 19/04/2012
- Orchard Creation and Management (1) 20/9/12
- Woodland Management (2) 27/2/13
- River & Stream Management 17/10/13
- Introduction to Lime (5) 19/10/13

### Courses Achieving 70% Attendance against Target Number of Attendees

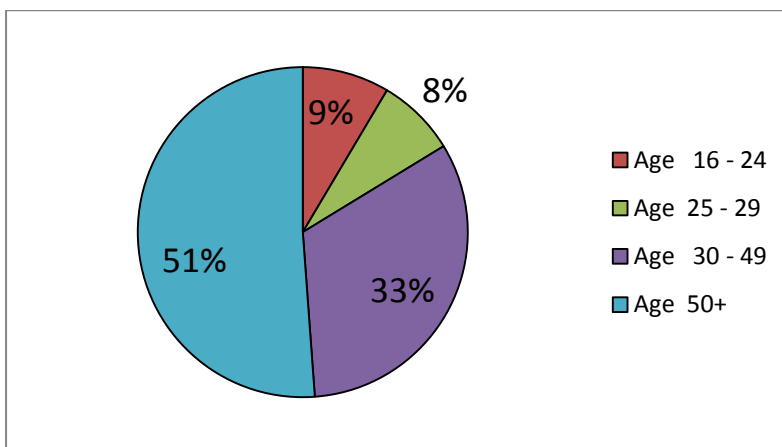
- **21% of the total courses achieved 70% attendance by supported participants**
- **7% of the total courses achieved the 70% with unique numbers**

## Male/ Female



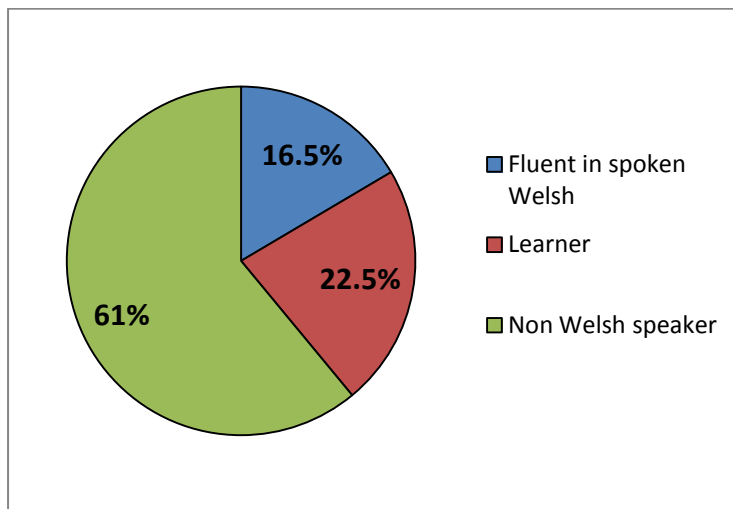
Male	67%
Female	33%

## Age Ranges



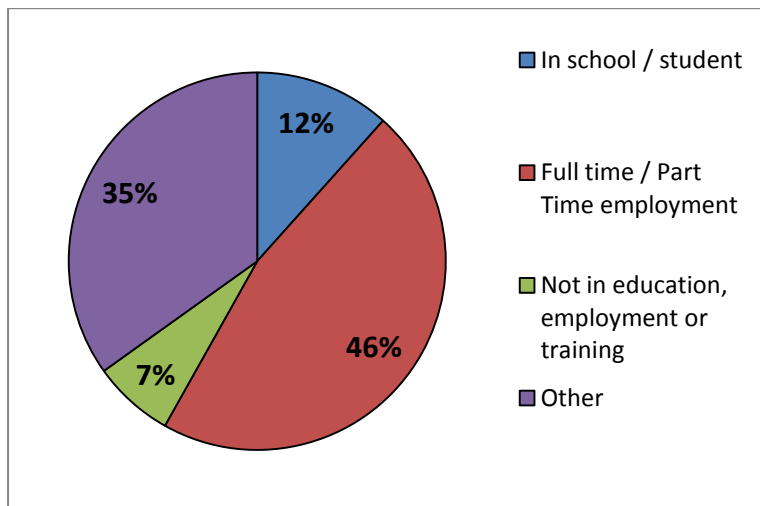
Age ranges	
16 – 24	9%
25 – 29	8%
30 – 49	33%
50+	51%

## Welsh Speakers



Fluent in spoken Welsh	16.5%
Learner	22.5%
Non Welsh speaker	61%

## Occupations

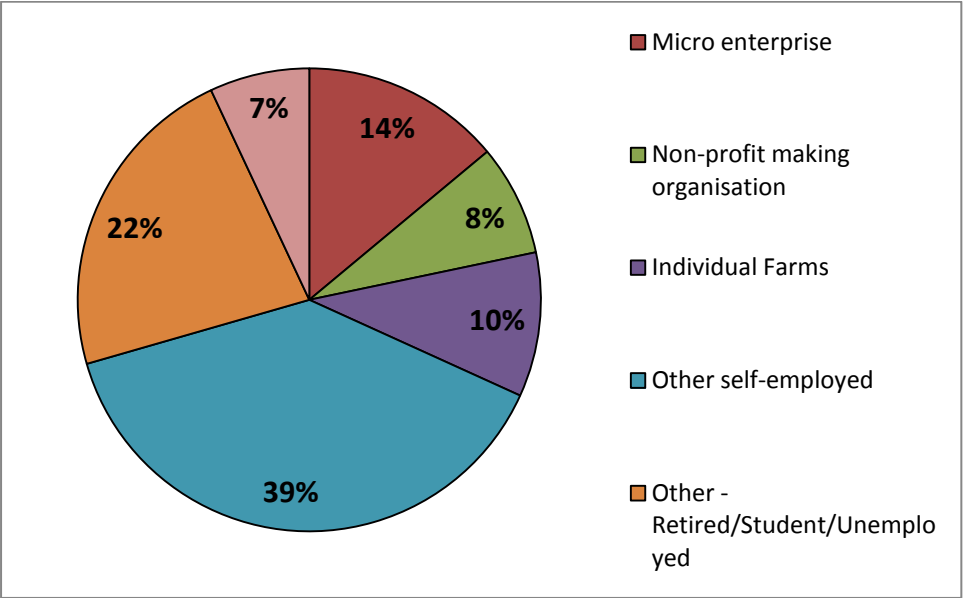


In school / student	12%
Full time / Part Time employment	46%
Not in education, employment or training	7%
Other	35%

Other was mostly 'retired'

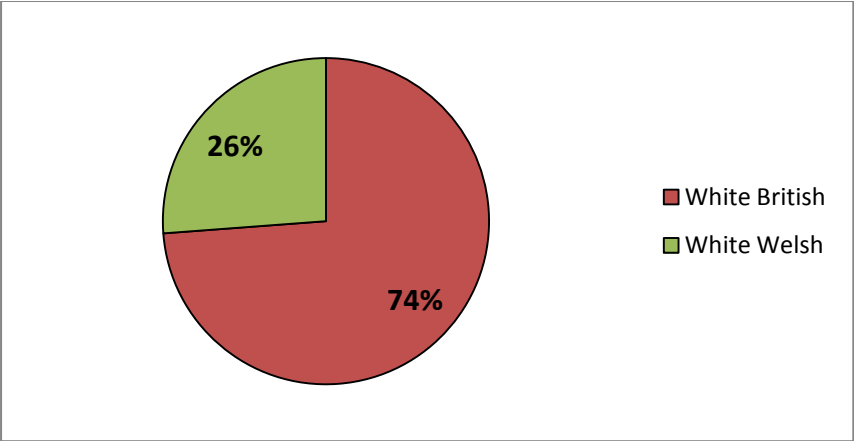


**Employment Status**



Micro enterprise	14%
Non-profit making organization	8%
Individual Farms	10%
Other self-employed	39%
Other - Retired/Student/Unemployed	22%
Public organisation	7%

**Ethnicity**



White British	74%
White Welsh	26%



## Performance Indictors and Project Reviews

During the first six months (January 2012 – June 2012) people from outside the Carmarthenshire RDP area were enrolled on courses however the guidance received from the Welsh Government via the WWEC, stipulated that that only people from Carmarthenshire RDP area were able to attend. Complying with this from June 2012 the project only enrolled people from Carmarthenshire on courses and many courses being cancelled due to low numbers. The evaluator queried this ruling with The Welsh Government on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2013; the project was informed that people from RDP areas outside Carmarthenshire were allowed to attend courses; with only those from Carmarthenshire and having a unique number, to be included in the final reporting figures and that the main focus should remain on residents within Rural Carmarthenshire.

The targets for the Performance Indicators were changed three times, new targets were submitted for an extension which was decided against and so these were retracted. A final set of Performance Indicators were agreed on in October 2013.

## Training Courses

Participants commented on the Tywi Centre as a venue and the excellent facilities there; they commented on the excellent staff, their friendliness, efficiency, their expertise and enthusiasm.

*“Good parking, lovely location, very relaxing & easy to get to”*

*“The site is excellent – for a rural training centre - well suited premises”*

*“Very good, the environment is welcoming, the facilities and comforts are fine. The Tywi Centre is a very fine place.”*

*“It is a lovely centre – felt lovely there – the staff are friendly – it was inspiring and motivating itself”*

## Quality of courses and satisfaction of participants

Feedback from trainers, training providers and course participants has been analysed for this evaluation. Participants also completed project evaluation forms, and this data has also been incorporated into the analysis along with the interview and survey data. Tom collated all information from course evaluations into a matrix and passed this on to trainers within a week of the course. A trainer said: *“This is helpful – useful – some actual written comments are useful”*.

**Overall levels of satisfaction, on a scale from 1-10 where 10 is excellent, all courses scored 8 – 10, with most people rating courses at 10. Only 4 ratings were under 8 - this is from survey and interviews.**

Courses are of excellent quality. One steering group member commented:

*“Tom brings in specialists to run courses – the courses people are getting are excellent training - the best!”*

People felt that they had learned a great deal and that was due to excellent trainers and well structured and delivered courses. The content was, for most people, at the right level and courses fulfilled or exceeded their expectations.

Many courses involved hands on work where participants were taken to habitats and features such as a pond, hedge or old buildings. The mix of practical and theory worked very well and the site visits were a great success.

*“There was a mini bus – we drove round houses in Llandeilo and looked at how they were renovating buildings It was seeing real things – other people and what they had tried – brilliant”* Participant

*“Theory to begin with - using projector and screen in the workshop then this is referred back to over the next couple of days.”* Trainer

The expertise and professionalism of the trainers including the teaching methods used and information given were rated highly by participants, see Appendix 4. Occasionally a course did not hit the mark with a few participants, as they had hoped for something different.

*“The course was very good but I had hoped for something a little more in depth so it didn't meet my needs but was a great course for people with an interest in creating ponds etc.”* Participant

*“I want to manage appropriately – for productivity – but with an eye to the environment – the course was the other way around! ... but I got a lot from it in other ways – I now have a different view on certain things – I now know it is not all about getting nutrients on and maximising productivity”* Participant

The courses lived up to the expectations of the majority of participants and of those interviewed all said they would like to attend more and would recommend the training.

*“Oh it really lived up to expectations - it was much better than I expected.”*  
Participant

There were often small numbers on courses; this situation sometimes favoured participants who then received more one to one teaching, however some trainers commented that this was a little disappointing.

*“small numbers good in a way - you can do one to one – you can deal with problems and specific things – that they want to cover - you can go into more depth!” Trainer*

*“Disappointed having only 3 people on a course but they got a lot out of it and they booked for the right reasons – they got what they expected from the days” Trainer*

### **Delivery and Content**

The trainers were excellent in relation to the knowledge they had and shared, the support they gave participants, the clarity of their presentations, their professionalism and the confidence people had in their experience and expertise. The style of delivery, pace, mix of methods and techniques used were all good.

*“Long day – pace was good – fine – not rushed – just right”*

*The level was very good, with a good mixture of theory and practical.”*

*“Lots of time to ask questions specific to your land and problems and they covered it really well, impressed.”*

*“All the tutors and facilitators were very knowledgeable and incredibly patient and helpful”*

*“The people who ran it were open and friendly – approachable - they want to help – they are enthusiastic.”*

*“Tutor - she was brilliant – delightful.”*

*“Good interactive session, flexible and tutor was responsive to our needs.”*

Courses were interesting and relevant and some of the training methods innovative, such as the question and answer format and use of real life examples. Trainers delivered courses in line with what participants specifically wanted wherever possible:

*“On the introduction, people had the opportunity to say what they were there for – so they geared course to what people wanted” Participant*

*“Dove tailed courses to fit into people’s land management needs – spot on for me.” Participant*

*“A fantastic opportunity as we were only 3 on the course. He gave us all the theory after finding out what we had specific interests in then after a demo plenty of opportunity for practicing. Throughout the 2 days he kept suggesting things particular to each of us. Very good teacher, attentive and supportive as well as being interesting and fun. Very much recommended!”*

*“Small group- tutor excellent & adapted content for group”*

Everyone thought there was a good mix of theory and practical work and courses allowed for participation, with opportunities for groups work and working with others. There were no negative comments about teaching.

Handouts, information and resources were good and information was sent out after the course. Some complained that the follow up was not always done.

### **Bursary Students**

Courses were run for them specifically and they also attended other courses. This enabled both groups to learn from each other. Trainers said that having them on courses was advantageous to all.

*“I enjoyed teaching them there are some very keen ones and the others are carried along with their enthusiasm.”* Trainer

*“They [course participants] learned a lot from watching the students who know what they were doing! – it was good – practical – live demonstration - group discussions – very good – they learned a lot from each other – the two group – from their own experience!”* Trainer

The trainers commented on their competence and enthusiasm

*“Bursary students – quite competent with some experience – easy teaching them”*

The feedback from bursary students on the courses were unanimously positive, as one said:  
*“It was all amazing and excellent”*

### **Free Old House Clinic Courses were a success, comments include:**

*“It was FREE – this was good – comprehensive and thorough day – enjoyable day – great day, learned a lot”*

*“We saw barn conversions in traditional techniques – it was the whole thing - roofs – timbers – walls – all of it. We asked the people who were doing the renovations questions – this was a good way to learn.”*

### **Cost**

Everyone felt courses were reasonably priced and good value for money.

The courses are excellent value for money; they are cheap in comparison with other training available; for example, Tŷ Mawr Lime offer a day's training at £115.

### **Organisation and administration of courses**

There was unanimous agreement that all aspect of administration was good and “excellent” was a frequent comment. The following quotes are from course participants:

*“All clearly explained in the beginning.”*

*“Very well organised – greeted by Tom – introduced lecturer – tea coffee, H&S.”*

*“The course was very well organised and everything ran very smoothly”*

Tom maintained close contact with participants once they had booked a place; he was conscientious at keeping in touch with participants and ensuring follow up when it was required. All the information sent to participants was clear and appropriate. Three participants commented that they would like more use of electronic means for booking and making payments:

*“It would be better if could all be done on line, but I realise not everyone likes this or has access to IT”* participant

One person said they did not know until the day before whether the course was running or not, they would have liked more email or phone updates.

Tom liaises with the trainers and lets them know beforehand about participants expectations so that they can plan accordingly. He also prepares and plans site visits and this has worked very well.

*“The external sites – I hadn’t visited before – Tom had chosen these and they were exactly what we needed”* Trainer

Steering group members commented on the efficiency of staff at the Tywi Centre

*“They are an efficient bunch at the Tywi Centre”*



*Old house clinic*

### **Feedback from Training Organisations and Trainers**

Some trainers were interviewed twice, once in 2012 and then once towards the end of the project in order to gauge any changes.

The training providers were keen to work with the Tywi Centre one said:

*“We were keen to build on that relationship and supply quality courses”*

The organisations all employ specialists and were able to supply the courses to the required specification. The training providers expressed concerns about the low numbers and the restrictions placed on the project by the EU rules.

*“We definitely would have liked to see more people on the courses – was it the application of the RDP rules that made it impossible to run course? Many cancelled because of low numbers, nobody benefited”* Training Provider

They all felt the centre and this project were important in upskilling people and also in disseminating information and raising the profile of heritage and sustainable buildings and also of skills to enhance biodiversity and landscape.

*“The project is filling a gap that’s been there for a long time”* Training Provider

*“It is promoting heritage skills and increasing peoples understanding of the Welsh historic built environment.”* Training Provider

*"It is a pleasure to work with the Tywi Centre, all the admin and organisation of the work has been good, they are great people to work with - we share the same ethos"*

Training Provider

*"The training itself has been very positive, the organisation was good – people know where they had to go and what they had to bring along"* Trainer

The trainers were all positive about the organisation and administration. There were site visits prior to the course running and Tom ensured everything ran smoothly for the trainers as well as the participants. One training provider said that they would have liked to have been consulted before hand about the evaluation forms so that they could ask particular questions. There were occasionally misunderstandings such as one trainer thinking his two courses were a pair but found out they were stand alone ones and was disappointed that people did not attend the two; there were comments about late notice for trainers and one not being sure about what material to bring but these were not usual and ultimately everything worked well on the day.

*"Communication with Tom was absolutely fine – I knew what I needed to do – we talked about the materials I needed and it was sorted."* Trainer

*"Better to get trainers in earlier to select site – too short notice. As it turned out it was good but.... if it had not been – then disaster"* Trainer

## **Facilities**

Comments from trainers:

*"The centre is perfect for this sort of thing – i could use it to illustrate points – helped my presentation – show them real repairs that had been carried out - space to move around – classroom is good"*

*"The facilities at the centre were great but It was very cold [in the workshops] in September , apparently the heating does not go on until October!"*

*"No drawing boards there! Squares etc. Drawing equipment!"*

*"The centre is great – everyone is friendly. The location and facilities are good and Tom is welcoming, he's excellent "*

## **Feedback on courses**

Courses have been very successful from the trainer's point of view. At the beginning trainers said that they were unsure about the audience and what they expected and needed

from the training, however all trainers said that the materials they had planned were suitable and that they were able to adapt the training to suit the needs of the learners.

Many courses had small numbers and this was often seen as a disadvantage, as participation and interaction was limited, however at times it was advantageous.

*"I was OK with 5 but wanted about 10 initially. Tom was disappointed at only 5. But I enjoyed it. The small number meant that those there learned loads."* Trainer

*"Strengths – for students – they have an opportunity – small numbers good for them – you can do one to one – you can deal with problems and specific things – that they want to cover – you can go into more depth!"* Trainer

The theoretical content of courses outlining general principles and history was important and participants also appreciated this. There is often a mix of people on the courses – a mix of experience and expectations, and so a tutor has to be skilled at pitching and pacing the courses.

*"Some people are quite competent with some experience – easier teaching them – not starting from scratch – one a builder – the other a National Trust volunteer, but some then needed a lot more."* Trainer

Trainers and Training Providers felt the Centre could do more or take a different approach to promoting the work:

*"How it is marketed? They could be bit more canny – go around getting in touch with groups – church groups – advertising in builders merchants – Local architects – targeted groups who are dealing with buildings all the time."* Training Provider

*"Cheaper than most courses – make more of this!"* Trainer

*"Marketing is the key thing – once people are there they get a lot out of it."* Training Provider

#### **Other comments included:**

*"Getting people to realise they could do it – getting out there and doing it – it's not so difficult"*

*"Able to look at 3 ponds – Tom had them ready – one at the centre – one in Dynevor park – and one near where Tom lives – within 10 minutes of centre"*

*"The course went really well, everyone seemed to enjoy and get what they wanted from it, the comments were really positive."*

*"Participants picked up all skills I would hope in 2 days – they gained the confidence to do all that on their own land"*



Many tutors commented on the satisfaction of seeing participants gaining the skills and confidence to work on their own land or buildings, the excellent facilities and the atmosphere of the Tywi Centre were also mentioned many times as part of the positive experience of trainers and participants. The staff was praised often.



*Home Farm – the Tywi Centre*

### **Feedback from the Steering Group**

This is a committed group of individuals with a range of expertise in the built environment, heritage, the environment, culture, education, grants and project management. Please see Appendix 3 for a list of members. One member commented: *“There is good attendance at meetings! Commitment from members”*

They could see how the project and the Centre was progressing, maturing and becoming successful

*“Tywi centre have learned a lot and are building on it “*

*“Wonderful to see how it has grown and it needs to continue to grow”*

The issue of the ineligibility of people outside Carmarthenshire was commented upon many times:

*“This is holding the project back – it is a severe limitation”*

The steering group hoped the project would achieve the following:

*“That the number of people capable of delivering heritage skill work will be expanded in West Wales”*

*“To deliver quality training and advice to both industry, apprentices and the general public. To become a heritage training focal point for south west Wales. To change the perceptions and actions of home owners (both new & existing) who are about to undertake change to their properties. Offering practical and simple guidance to ensure costly mistakes or the loss of important features are avoided.”*

*“To develop the Tywi Centre as a Centre that is respected in the industry as a deliverer of high quality, relevant training. To gain a reputation that reaches far and wide, not just locally. “*

Steering Group members have a broad strategic view and saw the Training Project as part of the wider remit of the Tywi Centre.

*“It all works - the whole programme at the Centre.”*

**Sustainability and the Future** are areas of concern for the group and always feature in meetings.

*“Things will change in terms of funding – so much scope here.”*

*“Financial independence and stability is needed – planning for future.”*

*“To have the flexibility to respond to opportunities as they arise – but can’t at the moment.”*

Suggestions from the steering group include: engaging with the industry more, looking at what professionals and contractors need and conducting a needs analysis with local communities and developing more partnerships and collaborations.

*“LANTRA have a programme – Tywi Centre needs to offer something between the homeowners and this”*

*“Weekend courses for professionals?”*

*“If they want to have an impact – Tywi centre needs to get to the workforce that are doing the repair and maintenance.”*

## Open days

Open Days are excellent for marketing, raising the profile of the project, enabling consultation, collaboration with other organizations and they also helped the project

achieve its aims of dissemination information and raising awareness of the issues of heritage building and skills. People were able to learn about the centre and what it offered and also to gain information about training. Consultations carried out meant that the project gained information as to the types of courses people wanted and on views about the event. This information enabled a more strategic approach to future planning. The evaluator attended the Open Day in 2013 and conducted a consultation - see Appendix 6 for the report.

## School days

The two School Days were successful. See Appendix 7 for a summary report on the two days, with feedback from the students, teaching staff and workshop facilitators. The School day in 2013 was particularly successful, the students and the teachers were more engaged, and there was more interest and enthusiasm than in the previous year. It is difficult to clearly state reasons for this, it was probably a combination of those particular students being more receptive, and likewise the teaching staff being more interested and supportive of what the day was trying to achieve.

Members of the steering group said

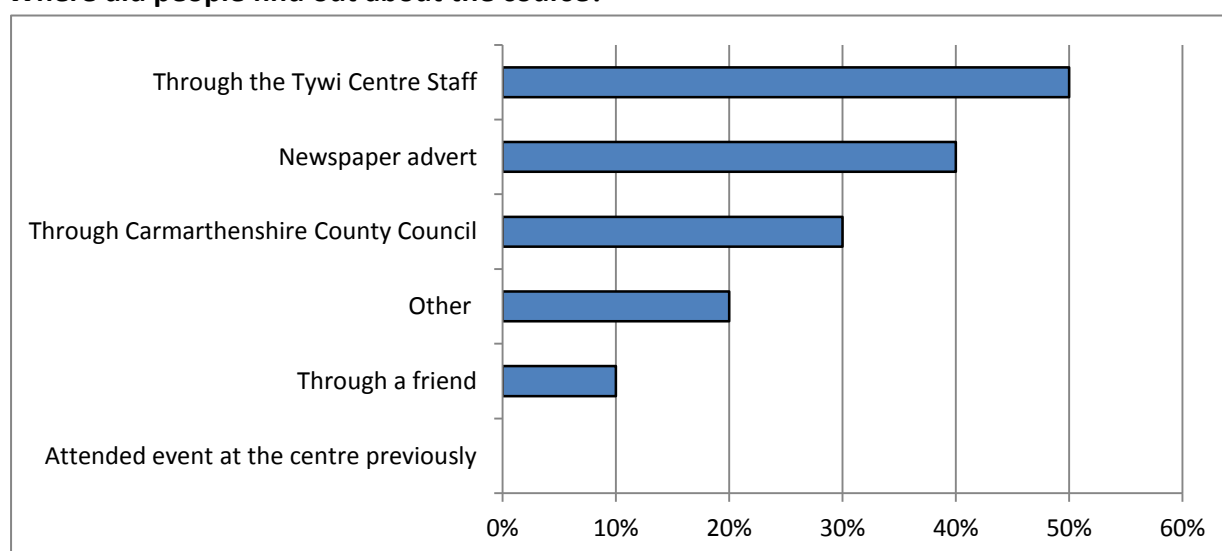
*“Schools work is clearly very successful – had an impact – makes a difference, immensely valuable”*

*“Home owners and professions – we are preaching to the converted often – so reaching young people is very important”*

## Marketing and communications

**From the Survey – 2014.**

**Where did people find out about the course?**



The other category included: Online Searches, an email from the Tywi Centre, a stand at a local show and Pembrokeshire college. Often people found out about it from more than one source: *“ I initially saw the centre’s web link from the CADW site, And then attended the Open day earlier this year”*. This evidence is in line with the interviews.

All project information was bilingual. The Course Calendar was sent to everyone on the Tywi Centre database/ mailing list regularly. It was also sent to those who have attended courses and to relevant organization such as CADW, Colleges in the region, the National Trust and smaller organization and local groups such as the Dyfed Smallholders Association and careers organizations.

Adverts were placed in local papers regularly, the Carmarthen Journal and The Post which is a local community magazine covering Carmarthen and the east of the county. Adverts are also placed in the Carmarthenshire News (the free county paper) which has elicited some immediate response but not much overall. Events are also advertised on the County Councils Website. The Post has had the best response overall.

A glossy brochure was not produced because of the constant changes, including course cancellations, making it untenable. Instead photocopied course Calendars were produced, as a more sensible and cost effective alternative.

Tom utilized the broad network of organizations and individuals that the Tywi Centre has worked and engaged with including: Carmarthenshire County Council, The National Trust, National Heritage Training Group, Construction Skills, CADW, The training providers, colleges, Heritage Building companies; Dyfed Archaeological Trust and many more.

**Mailings** made use of the Landscape and Heritage grant scheme database; however this did not elicit much response.

**Open Days** were advertised though distributing leaflets in the area as well as adverts. Banners outside on the Centre brought people in and the wide range of activities, demonstrations and events, and its appeal to families as well, meant these were extremely useful days for raising the profile of the issues and also the centre. The days were enjoyable and informative, inspiring people to visit again, however the project did not take full advantage of them to market courses.

Steering Groups members said:

*“It is important to get message out there about how well it is doing”*

*“Blowing own trumpet – case studies – the centre must do this”*

**The WWEC RDP website features the Heritage Centre of Excellence project with photos and quotes from course participants.<sup>3</sup>**

The marketing of the project was commented on by participants, trainers and training providers:

*"I found out through the Carmarthen journal – then phoned him up – Tom – not enough detail in the paper – advertisement"* Participant

*"Marketing is not so good - could be a lot better"* Training Provider

*"I did put name down to get more information – wanted to find out more about lime and about thatching – lead – I haven't heard anything – nothing at all – disappointed – annoyed – I would've gone onto these – I was keen – wanted"*

*"Disappointed I have not heard anything from the centre, I did express an interest in other courses"*

The Steering group had many suggestions and comments about marketing including:

*"They could make use of others organisations to promote the courses they run - putting links of websites."*

*"Need to get message out to more people - wider"*

*"Need a plan to get more people there – building awareness – more collaborative working – getting the message out – etc"*

*"Get young people and schools in more – create a buzz"*

Meeting everyone's expectations and marketing effectively is a challenge, the project could have reached out to the wider community more, raising its profile with community groups for example and also in parts of the county furthest from Llandeilo.

## **Challenges and Suggestions for Future Developments**

The main challenge faced by the project was the number of courses cancelled and the low attendance figures. A number of factors influenced this: the EU rules on eligibility and those allowed to attend courses; cost and marketing.

Those people spoken to expressed disappointment at courses being cancelled

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.wwec.org.uk/English/rdp/Pages/phase2\\_projects.aspx](http://www.wwec.org.uk/English/rdp/Pages/phase2_projects.aspx)

*"I wished to do the traditional stone and slate roof course, but disappointed when there was not enough interest for it to run."* Participant

Comments about the EU restrictions include:

*"EU funding rules are mad and have had a detrimental effect on the project - benefits hampered – people lost out. Wasted of money and resources!"* Steering Group member

*"What is killing it is that they can only get people from Carmarthen."* Training provider

Other comments from the Steering Group on this issue:

*"This is going against the grain of what ministers want to see – partnerships and cross boundary working – sharing resources and expertise"*

*"The Tywi Centre has their arms tied – it is restricting the Tywi Centre – it needs to get out there and build its reputation – they could do so much more."*

*"If the courses don't run Carmarthenshire people are not benefiting either – it does not make sense"*

Courses were reasonably priced, however as a Steering Group member commented:

*"TAYO started all this, courses were free then and even though these are cheap people do not want to pay or do not have the money in this present economic climate"*

Widening the range of groups it works with was recommended in the interim evaluation particularly in light of feedback from the Steering group. This has been a challenge for the project.

*"Talked of widening the scope of the courses - Young farmers clubs possibly - they do training – good to develop partnerships with other groups - draw in people who would not pick up on an advert – being more proactive in establishing links"*

Steering Group member

*"Awareness raising across the board is important – owners of houses – a need for professionals to have more training in this area too!! The specifies!"* Steering Group member

Young people and professionals in the building sector, from specifiers to craftspeople, were the two groups that it was suggested the project could have engage with more. The project has made a start and the Tywi Centre can build on the good work that has contributed substantially to the reputation of the centre and its work.

The Steering Group had many ideas for future direction.

*“Training project more difficult than the bursary scheme – the Carmarthen restriction is a shame. There are obvious linkages here. The work they are doing involving schools – will have a long term benefit – encourages children to develop an interest and go into careers in this area.”*

*“Awareness raising across the board is important – owners of houses – how to treat and use material – through to the bursary training – a need for professionals to have more training in this area too!! The specifiers particularly.”*

*“Training to council staff – building control officer – highways – housing officers .”*

*“NEETS – worth working with them”*

**A needs analysis was suggested:** *“A needs analysis is possibly onerous – but at the moment they are developing courses – in terms of what they think and what they can deliver – but you have to adapt to fit the market – possibly a re-think of what they need to deliver for the long term and their ability to deliver this.”* It was also suggested to do an analysis with the local community to find out what they really wanted.

### **Suggestions for course**

Course participants and those that attended open days were asked what course they would like to see run at the Centre in future. Lime was asked for many times including more in-depth work and theory; general heritage construction and sustainable building; stone work and dry stone walling; building restoration, lead and lead windows; land management; management of ponds, orchards; general carpentry; forestry; tree and fruit tree management; beekeeping; roofing; renewable energy; using chainsaws; hedge laying; ponds and pond management;

There were suggestions for courses on history, geology and local and Welsh culture. Some people wanted more practical and some more theory. It was a broad range of suggestions with requests for ongoing and follow-up course.

*“More of the same and more, more, more please”*

*“Refresher and further courses would be useful.”*

### **Meeting a need**

*“People putting in the effort to see what they need and the Tywi Centre is providing it.”* Training provider

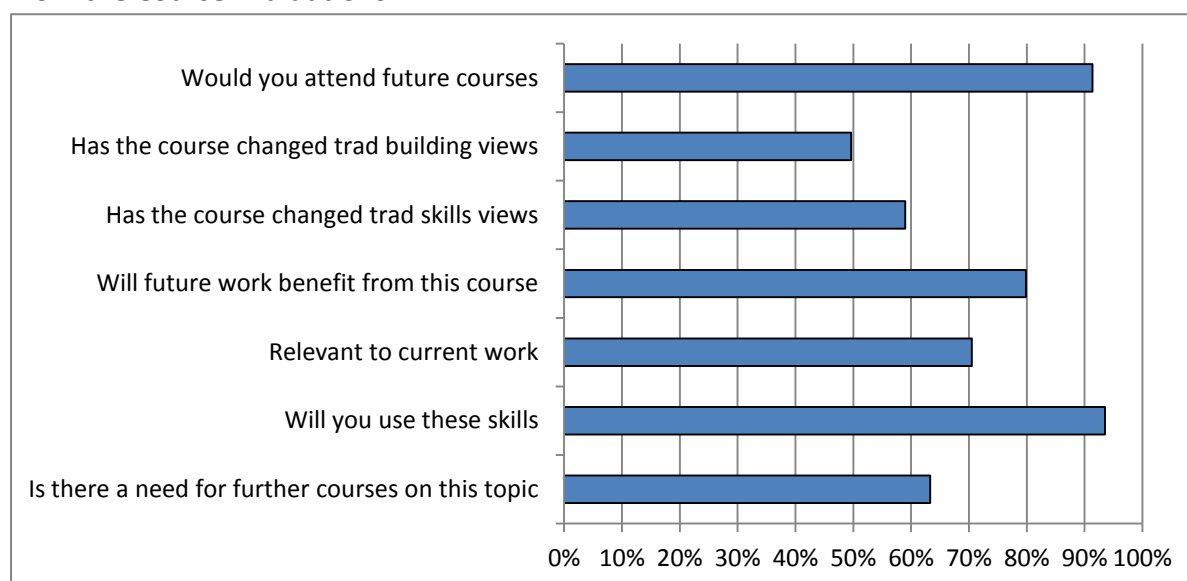
Research commissioned by National Heritage Training Group, Cadw and ConstructionSkills<sup>4</sup> into heritage skills training in and around Wales in 2007 identified that there was a significant skills shortage in the heritage sector. The Heritage Centre of Excellence project was in response to this identified need.

Understanding people's motivations, their expectations and what they hope to gain from the training and what use they will be putting it to is essential information in order to construct a training programme.



*Pond Management*

### From the Course Evaluations



<sup>4</sup> [http://www.nhtg.org.uk/uploads/files/nhtg\\_skillsresearch\\_wales\\_report2007\\_englishlang\\_tcm27-11121.pdf](http://www.nhtg.org.uk/uploads/files/nhtg_skillsresearch_wales_report2007_englishlang_tcm27-11121.pdf)



It is clear that people will be putting their skills to good use and that there is a need for more courses. Courses are meeting a need, they are relevant; they are influencing individuals and having an impact on the built and natural heritage.

### What influenced peoples decision to attend

#### From the Survey



#### What people hoped to gain from attending:

*"Improved understanding of factors influencing land and pond management"*

*" Meeting like-minded people"*

*"A basic level of skill and knowledge for me to develop further through practice."*

*"To gain a better understanding of the subject, and benefit from the trainers expertise."*

*"Improve my carpentry and joinery skills in the heritage sector"*

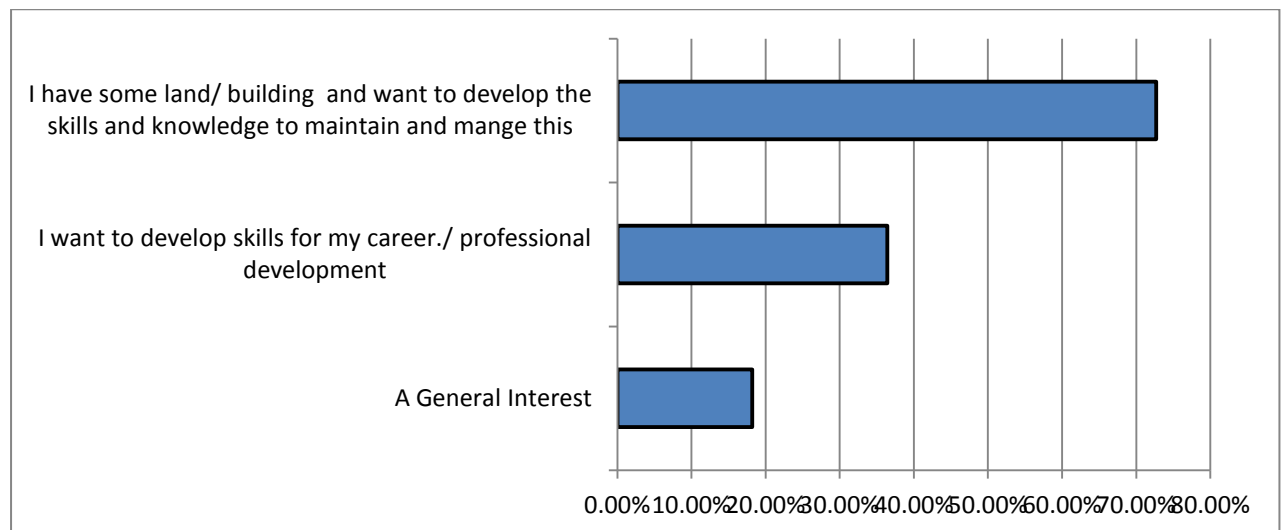
*"I needed to obtain sufficient skills to enable me to lay a 50 metre hedge surrounding my garden"*

*"I wanted to increase a very basic knowledge on lime product's and their application"*

*"Motivation – 300 yr old house – lime mortar – so wanted to be responsible about how we went round repairing it"*

## Reasons for Attending

### From the Survey



The reasons across both natural and built heritage courses were similar. People wanted to manage their own land, or maintain renovate and restore their property, understand what they needed to do and be taught techniques for doing so. Many had recently bought land in the area and wanted to learn about managing it sustainably or had bought an old house that needed work. They wanted to feel confident to do the work themselves, to understand about materials and techniques using a traditional and sustainable approach. This would also save them money and mean that they could maintain their property in the longer term. Comments included:

*"Information and guidance on how to look after a traditional stone house – how to care for it and look for problems and what you should do - especially about damp"*

*"The technical details useful, very useful indeed."*

*"I am a practical person – I have a Welsh house – want to improve– we have some land also and I want to use sympathetic, traditional methods and materials."*

*"As the owner of a listed Building I am very aware of the necessity to maintain the integrity of Heritage buildings."*

*"We have an old cottage which we are in the process of renovating."*

*"Able to work on own land or buildings, instead of employing people to do the work – money saving"*

*"We live on a farm with neglected hedges which need laying. The cost of having this done professionally would be very high so we wanted to learn ourselves"*

Some participants were working in the construction industry and some were volunteers working in construction or in conservation related areas. They attend courses to enhance their skills and their professional career.

## Benefits and Impact

Home owners and land owners have clearly benefited from this project. All participants whose views fed into the evaluation said they would be applying what they had learned as a result of attending the courses. The courses clearly inspired and increased confidence, participants commented:

*"I might have a go myself now after the course – it make me look at the basics of damp – draining etc. I was really motivated and inspired by the day."*

*"I do a certain amount of hobby, DIY woodwork on my own house and land – and also for other people – I will use this new knowledge - definitely."*

*"I came back home and looked at problems here – and yes the courses were spot on - 90% of what I needed to know."*

*"Have my own land – want to manage it as best I can – so theses courses are invaluable for me."*

*"We feel privileged to be in this area and to be able to find out about this and it has really helped – we are restoring on old farmhouse and the land around it"*

*I will be using some of the skills and knowledge gleaned from the course, especially with regard to Pointing and Plastering, Also the use of lime as mortars opposed to cement*

Trainers commented on this:

*"The people on the course were more confident and would come back and do more courses- land management particularly"*

*"They now have a lot more confidence– they will actually tackle the problems they have got there"*

Individuals had benefited in many ways from increased confidence, new insights and understanding, attitude change and, of course, new knowledge and skills. This would in turn benefit the built environment and landscape and biodiversity as all participants were applying their new knowledge and skills to personal projects and professional work.

*“Ecological impact can be considerable, if people are confident and will do it – it will improve landscape – and these people will pass on skills – and if they employ someone they will expect standards – they will know their stuff.”* Training provider

*“Participants picked up all skills I hoped they would in 2 days – confidence to do all that on their own land now.”* Trainer

*“Nice to see smallholders getting trained up – rather than getting it all wrong!”*  
Trainer

*“The maintenance of the landscape does need trained people- so yes this is needed – it’s good.”* Training provider

*“The commercial fishery man – he benefited from seeing how to not do it - The wildlife aspect alongside the commercial - he might do this - he enjoyed”* Trainer

*“Well if people are confident and will do it – it will improve landscape – and these people will pass on skills – and if they employ someone they will be able to specify and know if it is a good job”* Trainer

#### **Up skilling professionals or volunteers, contributing to employment and employability.**

*“This course has been really helpful – it has helped me get work - From the back of this course – someone on the course asked me to do work and now I include Sash window restoration is not part of my business – it has opened up another avenue for me”* Participant

This person was a carpenter and wanted to specialise more in heritage work. He also went on to say:

*“Got lots of work from it - Tom has been really helpful”* Participant

*“From a construction background and wanted to learn about new things and new ways of doing it”* Participant

Those who participated in the demonstrator project reported that it had been a good experience, Andy Smith the stonemason had *“plenty of time to show us”* as one of the mentees stated, all those spoken to said that they learned a great deal from working with him. The two volunteers / mentees who spent the first three weeks on the project kept work diaries and submitted reports to the Tywi Centre recording the progress of the project.

## **The Tywi Centre**

The Heritage Centre for Excellence project was concerned with developing skills; the training elements and all other aspects such as information dissemination and promotion were seen as key elements in the strategic aims of the Tywi Centre. The project has contributed to the skills agenda; it has benefited local people as well as benefiting the built and natural heritage of Carmarthenshire.

*“Now that it’s here – you wonder why it hasn’t been here for years. The Tywi Centre is a base from which things can expand.”* Course participant

## **The Economy, Society and Culture**

Developing Sustainable and Traditional skills is in line with government agendas. The green economy, sustainable development and how this project is fitting in with such initiatives was mentioned and also the importance of integrating the Built and Natural environment.

Fit with Wales’ strategic objectives:

One Wales, One Planet<sup>5</sup> states headline indicators for sustainable development and this project will contribute to:

- A sustainable economy – increasing Gross Value Added by getting more people into work or increasing the number of hours they currently work through providing training to help them achieve this aim.
- Wellbeing – with participants increasing the number of hours they work or gaining skills their wellbeing will improve as a consequence.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/090521susdev1wales1planeten.pdf>

## 6 - CONCLUSION

The Tywi Heritage Centre of Excellence has contributed to raising awareness of the built and natural heritage and the need for skills training. It has provided training courses of excellent quality, and course participants reported high levels of satisfaction, with the majority applying their new knowledge and skills, therefore impacting upon buildings, landscape and biodiversity. The Performance Indicators are low in comparison with original targets, but they do not reflect the value of the project and its wider impact. A project extension was possible but the Centre decided to end the project in March 2014 to concentrate on other developments.

Courses were a mix of theory and practical, trainers were highly skilled and all those who participated in the evaluation praised the Tywi Centre. There were a few negative comments regarding organization and course delivery style but feedback was generally positive with regards to all aspects of the delivery. The project officer managed the project and organised courses to a good standard, this ensured that trainers and course participants had a positive experience. Occasionally courses were cancelled at short notice and follow up was not forthcoming and these aspects should be addressed in future projects.

The 2013 report 'Heritage Counts' from English Heritage<sup>6</sup> highlighted the impact of the economic recession on demand and supply as a consequential knock-on effect on training provision, and investment by contractors in training is seen as a luxury and not essential. Project courses were cheap with some free ones; however the economic climate affected people's decisions. This is not the main reason for the low numbers; it is one factor to consider. Competition is also increasing with more providers offering training.

In the UK there is a growth in heritage skills training, with some local authorities (Essex and Lincoln for example) offering it, however there is no similar provision in South West Wales. Academic courses exist in heritage building but there is a need for more training at a local level, for property owners and also for the local workforce. Courses were exactly what people wanted, developing confidence and skills to care for their property. The majority of course participants were those who wanted to work on their own land or homes; the heritage construction sector and countryside skills sectors were not well represented.

Marketing did not have the emphasis that might have made a difference. For example more outreach work in outlying areas of Carmarthenshire to raise awareness of traditional and sustainable skills, their value and how people could access the training could have brought more people onto courses. Outreach could encompass taster workshops or talks at community events. More high profile marketing such as editorials in a range of publications,

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<sup>6</sup> <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/content/pub/2013/hc-2013-england.pdf>

disseminating Case Studies, approaching television and radio, working with other projects in Carmarthenshire and South West Wales on marketing might have made more of an impact.

Training of the sort offered by the project is not the niche of the Tywi Centre, the project has highlighted this and although it has created and contributed to heritage skills it appears that other aspects of the project might be areas for development. Open days and School days were successful and show that there is the potential to develop this sort of work, which would contribute to increased awareness of heritage issues.

The demonstrator projects were scaled down and the information leaflets were produced at the end of the project. Time constraints and the focus on trying to make the course successful contributed to this aspect being less significant than anticipated.

The Tywi Centre is seen as a focal point, a one stop shop, a hub that plays a pivotal role in the furtherance of heritage building and heritage skills. People praised the centre and felt the need for a place where they could meet knowledgeable and enthusiastic people such as the staff at the centre. This is an excellent asset for Carmarthenshire; it has a strong and positive reputation and works with a range of partners and networks. Steering group members had a clear vision for the future of centre and felt it had a coordinating role. University of Wales Trinity St David's have been commissioned by WWEC to conduct a research study entitled: "Research into the current and potential value of the heritage of Carmarthenshire". The report is due this summer and will inform the future direction of the Tywi Centre.

The contradictory advice from Welsh Government caused frustration for all those involved with the project. The guidelines on who could enrol on courses meant that the project did not perform as well as it could have had it been able to run courses that included people from outside the Carmarthenshire RDP area throughout.

In relation to the aims of Axis 3, the project has supported information activities and improved the human potential of rural population to diversify their activities towards non agricultural activities, looking after and conserving natural and built heritage, for economic, aesthetic and sustainability reasons. The knowledge gained from supported training and information activities will be used in the area and have a long term impact.

## 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS

As the project is ending, these recommendations are aimed at the Tywi Centre and at this area of work generally.

- Continue with the high standard of delivery, maintaining the excellent working ethos of the Centre.
- The Tywi Centre to consider acting as a co-ordinator for training provision in Heritage building skills in Wales or in South Wales.

- Widening partnerships to include different groups in the area and nationally. This could support development to widen audiences and target groups.
- Working with specifiers and initiatives such as BEST - Built Environment Sustainability Training at Cardiff University.<sup>7</sup>
- The latest research and information should feed into plans for the future of the project.
- Marketing should be a serious consideration; this could be improved and approached differently, possibly including outreach work, taster workshops and collaborations to disseminate information and good practice.
- Open days are good for marketing; more could be made of this sort of activity
- Future collaborations with schools could be considered as an element that could help the centre fulfil its aims.
- Tywi Centre should be supported and promoted as a national and International example of good practice.
- Possible follow up research with participants on the continued use and benefits of the training.
- The West Wales European Centre to work closely with projects focusing on outcomes that will have long term impact on communities and the natural and built environments.
- The Welsh Government needs to be clear and consistent in its criteria and guidelines, working through WEEC to ensure clear communication and good working relationships so that outcomes and impacts are maximised.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.best.cf.ac.uk/>