



## Woollenline

Midsummer morning 3.30am a small but hopeful band of us climbed up to Pen Trumau. We were meeting Glyn Watkins, a Black Mountain Grazier who offered to demonstrate the use of a seed fiddle for sowing wavy hair grass harvested last year from land belonging to Danny Games, another Grazier deeply involved in the Woollenline.

Why the 3.30am start? A combination of hope for still air in the early morning coupled with the romantic image of seeing the sun rise. No such luck, it seems Pen Trumau is almost always windy and on this day the cloud was so low we could barely see each other!

The sowing was planned so that two days later, in even more windy conditions, a new line of wool was installed to spiral across on the seeded area.....

Two weeks on the seed had struck and little shoots of grass appeared in the loose and drying surface of the exposed peat. It really felt miraculous.

How could I complain of the glorious sunny weather that then filled most of July? but my thoughts were with those tiny seedlings, shoots just emerging from the seed, how would they fare under the brutal gaze of the sun in the shifting substrate that is the surface of the Pen Trumau peat scar? I guess like millennia of people who work the land patience is what is needed in the realization of how little control we really have over anything, but it feels an important reminder of the impact of weather on those who nurture life and land to give us our food.

*Photographs by Mark Fisher*





*First shoots from the midsummer sowing of wavy hair grass*

## Cotton Grass Growing Project

Severn Crossings Maintenance Project have volunteered to participate in the "Cotton Grass Growing" project in co-operation with The Green Valleys, the 'Woollen Line' and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Laing O'Rourke are taking 36 trays of cotton grass seeds and growing them on for 12 months, ready for planting out on the mountains next year. They also plan to contribute further in August 2013, volunteering to support the 'Woollen Line' by helping to install the final part of the wool spiral.

Project Leader Paul Ramshaw said this is "Inspirational and an Innovative" challenge that the team have embarked on; they are very willing to volunteer their precious time to such a worthy environmental cause."

Laing O'Rourke is member of The Considerate Constructors Scheme that is a national initiative set up by the construction industry to improve its image. Construction sites and companies can register with the Scheme and are monitored against a Code of Considerate Practice, designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements. The Scheme is concerned about any area of construction activity that may have a direct or indirect impact on the image of the industry as a whole. The main areas of concern fall into three categories: the general public, the workforce and the environment.



*Our Laing O'Rourke team members Jed Needs & Vicky Rogers being handed the 36 seed trays by Gareth Ellis - The Green Valleys & Pip Woolf - Artist creator of the Woollen line.*

## Green Valleys Gathering

Members of The Green Valleys community groups came together on April 7<sup>th</sup> at the Priory Centre Abergavenny for a networking and workshop event.



Throughout the morning there were talks by three inspiring speakers, Peter Reason on changing your life to live in more sustainable ways, Emma Williams on community growing projects and Alan Underwood on conservation development over the last 20 years.

After a hearty lunch we divided into specific interest areas to develop ideas on potential environmental projects and to discuss how The Green Valleys could best support members in the future. The outputs of the discussions can be found at <http://www.thegreenvalleys.org> under news, recent events, Green Valleys Gathering.

Thanks to all the members and speakers who gave up their time to come along and whose contributions made such an enjoyable and useful day. It was clear that having networking opportunity was very popular and therefore more social events are being planned for the future.

## Dyffryn Crawnon Green Energy CIC

The proposed community hydro scheme on the Nantywenynen in the Dyffryn Crawnon that formed a major part of The Green Valleys bid in NESTA's Big Green Challenge is finally about to become a reality.

The scheme was devised in 2008 and went for planning in June 2009. What we were expecting was a simple 8 week planning turn around. Instead it turned into a marathon. Eventually after 6 months and many meetings the project was granted permission on 22 December 2009.



*Intake position on the Nanywenyren.*

It was not until September 2010 that draft details of the conditions arrived. Sadly these conditions were totally unacceptable as they would have compromised the CIC. Also the conditions were in the form of a S106 Agreement and under such conditions our funders could not fund the project.

After many meetings it became clear that the BBNPA Planning Department were not going to withdraw their demand for this Agreement so in 2011 our application was withdrawn.

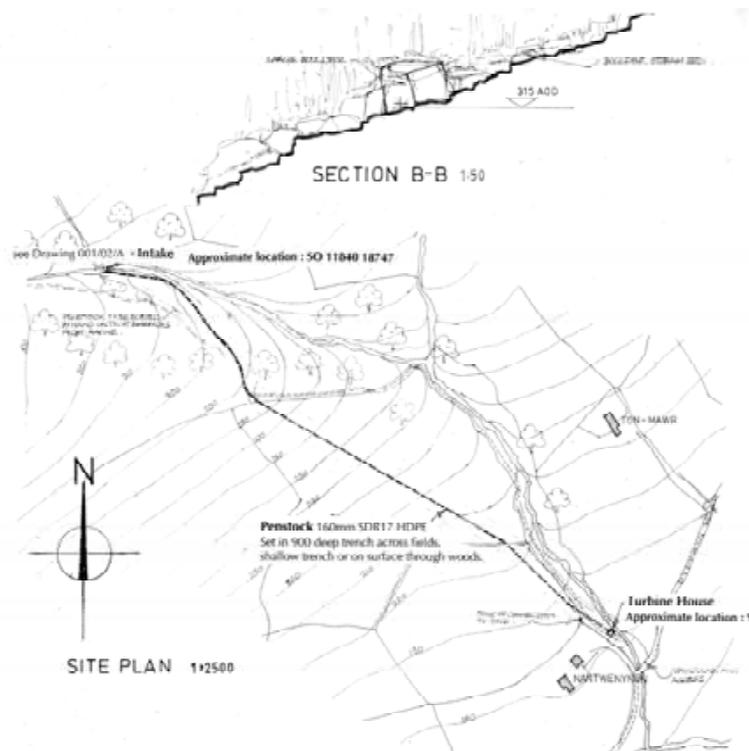
It was decided that the only way forward was to develop the scheme as a joint project with TGVHydro Ltd. A new, slightly revised application was put in with TGVHydro as the applicant. This application was granted approval with no conditions.

It has taken almost 5 years to reach this point, needless to say the cost of the project has increased. But virtually all the funding is now in place as are all the permissions, so with luck work can start on site in August this year.

## Talgarth Community Garden

The Green Valleys are in the final stages of completing the purchase of a small parcel of land to the rear of Felin Talgarth Mill. We plan to connect the new space to the existing riverside walk, create a seating area and an attractive garden and growing space that will become part of the Mill's grounds. We have been assisted in the project with funds from the Santander Social Enterprise Development Award, the Brecon Beacons Trust and the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund.

The proposal is to return the land to its original use as a vegetable garden and for the garden to be tended by volunteers under the supervision of the Mill. The intention is that the land will produce vegetables and salad greens for the volunteers and that some income can be generated to cover incidental costs by produce to The Bakers' Table Cafe at The Mill.



Look out for more on this project in the next newsletter!



## Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay

Swansea Bay's tides are an outstanding and reliable source of natural energy. The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project aims to harness this energy with the world's first, purpose-built, tidal lagoon power plant. This will consist of a manmade seawall containing a series of turbines to capture energy from the motion of the tides and generate electricity. The proposed tidal lagoon is an exciting prospect for the local area and beyond. Not only will it provide renewable energy, but also diverse economic, social and cultural benefits. It will create jobs, promote tourism and foster education, sport and art at a range of new facilities

**As part of preparing our application for development consent, we are now beginning formal consultation and hope you will contribute (many thanks if you attended our informal events in April). We see this as a valuable opportunity to understand your expectations and concerns, and for you to share your local knowledge. You can help us to ensure the project provides something positive for everyone in Swansea Bay.**

Follow the link below to view our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), which formally sets out the details of the consultation, the dates and venues as well as how you can get involved.

[www.tidallagoonswanseabay.com](http://www.tidallagoonswanseabay.com)

Many interested people and groups took the time to attend one of our consultation events, and to complete the questionnaire. Please pass the above link to any groups or individuals who might be interested in contributing or learning more – everyone is welcome. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at

[info@tidallagoonpower.com](mailto:info@tidallagoonpower.com).

Best wishes, The Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay Team

Newsletter of The Green Valleys Community Interest Company ~  
company number 6889229

Cric, Beaufort Street, Crickhowell, NP8 1NU. telephone 07969 137719 [www.thegreenvalleys.org](http://www.thegreenvalleys.org)

## Eco Travel Network

The Eco Travel Network is delighted to welcome the latest member of its Twizy fleet - Tatyana - named, I am led to believe, after a variety of tomato - entirely apt as her owners grow an entire conservatory filled with them. With a name like that, the livery possibilities are intriguing.

Tatyana is based at Cae'r Hendre holiday cottage high in the Dyffryn Crawnon valley above the village of Llangynidr. As well as hiring her to their holiday cottage guests, Pip and Gil are already using her for all their local errands as well as journeys to and from their numerous art, ecology and architecture projects around the Brecon Beacons.

Tatyana also has the distinction of being the first of our ETN Twizys purchased entirely from the accumulated income from Pip and Gil's 5 year old domestic micro hydro scheme which works through neighbourly co-operation and the mountain spring above their cottage.

