

Llyn

Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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www.ahne-llyn-aonb.cymru

Llygad Llyn

Llyn AONB Newsletter

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Welcome

Here we are with edition 19 of Llygad Llŷn – the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Newsletter. As usual the newsletter includes information about the area, projects, the grant fund and other developments relevant to Penrhyn Llŷn.

During this last year the AONB Unit has been working on the completing Sustainable Places Sustainable Landscapes projects which are funded by the Welsh Government. These projects ran for three years (2022-25) and related to the key themes of sustainable tourism, resilient communities, nature recovery and decarbonisation. Our projects here in Llŷn included refurbishing the Ganolfan in Llithfaen, improving common lands, tackling non-native species and planting indigenous trees. More information about these projects, and other projects, can be found in this edition of Llygad Llŷn.

The Sustainable Development Fund has again supported a number of interesting environmental projects in Llŷn. You can find out more about these projects, about the Fund itself and the grant application process in the newsletter.

In this issue you will also find information about the Tirlun Byw ("Living Landscape") project which is partly funded by Natural Resources Wales. The project included skills training events, talks, guided walks and work with the volunteers – Ffrindiau yr AHNE ("Friends of the AONB"). This group has made a valuable contribution to the area by improving paths, undertaking beach cleans and restoring important habitats.

We are keen to hear your opinion about Llygad Llŷn and about the work of the AONB Unit. We would also like to hear your ideas about new projects that would benefit the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or things you think need attention. Contact on all counts by email, via the website, by phone or by even by letter!

Finally – the AONB is grateful to all the support it receives from Cyngor Gwynedd, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales.

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AONB LLŷN TEAM – four members of staff work for the service:

Llŷn AONB Officer

Bleddyn Prys Jones

As the Llŷn's AONB Officer, Bleddyn leads the Council's core work within the AONB, leading on and coordinating the preparation and delivery of the statutory Management Plan for the area.

Swyddog Prosiectau AHNE Llŷn Moris Llwyd Dafydd

The Project Officer leads on AONB projects, deals with the Sustainable Development Fund, and promotes the AONB.

AONB Countryside Warden Kevin Roberts

The AONB Unit has received support from Welsh Government for the appointment of a Countryside Warden. The Warden will lead on access and nature projects within the AONB.

Tirlun Byw Project Manager Elin Wyn Hughes

Elin works on nature projects, improving access and improving historic features in the AONB. She is also responsible for organizing rural skills training and the activity programme.

Sustainable Landscapes

Sustainable Places

Under the Sustainable

Landscapes Sustainable Places scheme Wales' Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as the National Parks, have received funding from the Welsh Government towards environmental projects. The grant is aimed at sustainable tourism projects, nature restoration, community support and decarbonisation. This grant programme ran for three years, here is information about the projects we worked on in 2024-25:

Y Ganolfan, Llithfaen

Y Ganolfan in Llithfaen had to be closed during the lockdown period and a problem developed with dry rot. There were other problems with the building including the roof, windows and the Y Ganolfan as a public building in the village of Llithfaen it was chosen as one of the AONB's capital projects. Renovating and upgrading Y Ganolfan was quite a large project. Fortunately we managed to attract a significant financial contribution to the project from the UK Government's Ffyniant Bro fund to be added to the Welsh Government's funds.

D. G. Jones Ltd, Bontnewydd was appointed to do the work with Wakemans, Caernarfon supervising. It is good to report that the work has now been completed and there was a night to officially reopen Y Ganolfan at the beginning of November 2024 with Mabon ap Gwynfor and local children taking part.



Common Lands

This was a three year project focusing on improving three common lands in Llŷn – Rhos Botwnnog, Foel Gron Mynytho and Horeb/Mynytho.

In Rhos Botwnnog we collaborated with the local farmers to improve the condition of the common and reintroduce grazing. The site had grown untidy and thorns and brambles had taken over. In order to make the site suitable for grazing we worked with Gwynedd Consultancy making use of the latest machines to clear the growth. The land is now suitable for cattle grazing - and grazing is the long-term solution for the maintenance of this type of habitat.

In Foel Gron the work included restoration of a dry stone wall which formed the boundary of the common land. Parts of the historic wall had collapsed narrowing the right of way nearby. As well as creating a boundary, stone walls like this offer shelter to small creatures, and also provide a network of safe corridors for them to wander from one place to another.

On Horeb common we made improvements around Ffynnon Fyw – replacing the old fence with new rails and clearing vegetation. We also made further improvements to the public footpath nearby. This route was often extremely wet and overgrown. The path is now open and the work has received praise from the local community.



Sustainable Landscapes

Sustainable Places

Llanbedrog Quarry Car Park

This car park is located on the site of an old quarry near Mynydd Tir y Cwmwd Llanbedrog, with a fairly narrow lane leading to it. The nearby Castellmarch beach is wonderful with views towards Meirionnydd and Harlech. The site had fallen into disrepair and looked untidy mainly due to overgrowth and rubbish.

A series of improvements were made to the car park which included improving the

condition of the surface, removing large stones, cutting overgrowth, clearing rubbish and installing picnic benches.



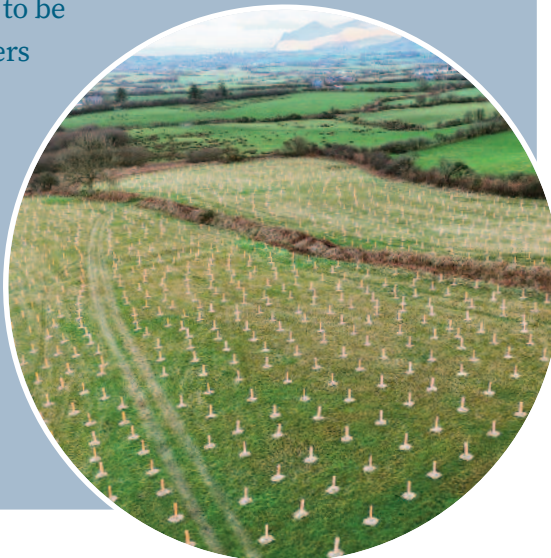
Planting native trees

One of the key capital projects by the AONB Unit during the past year was the planting of native trees. Planting trees of this type offers significant benefits to the environment including:

- ▶ Creating habitats for wildlife
- ▶ Absorbing carbon from the environment
- ▶ Air and water purification
- ▶ Trees provide a sustainable resource for the future

Research on suitable sites had previously been carried out and therefore during the Winter of 2024/5 we moved on to plant a significant amount of trees – around 5,000 in total.

The main planting sites were in Dinas, Edern, Plas yn Rhiw and Llanbedrog. In order to protect the trees, we used biodegradable tubes and mulch mats – so they will not need to be collected. Our partners on this project were the Highways Department, Ysgol Botwnnog, local landowners and the National Trust. Contact us if you are interested in creating your own woodland!



Invasive plant species

We are keen to restore nature in the AONB and invasive plants are destroying local species. This was a two-year project to try to identify locations and areas where invasive species are a problem and then proceed to treat them. As part of the project, significant work was done to eradicate Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and Rhododendron in 2024-25.

Joint Projects

Each Designated Landscape has its own projects but in addition to that there are several collaborative projects with other areas. During 2024-25 Llŷn AONB was involved in the following two projects:



Traditional Boundaries –

a joint project with other designated areas of north Wales to maintain and restore traditional boundaries – stone walls, hedges and stone faced earth banks. As well as being interesting

features on the landscape these boundaries are important wildlife habitats. During 2024-25 the work in Llŷn focused on the Llanaelhaearn area.

Tirlun Education Pack –

a project coordinated by the Pembroke National Park Authority on behalf of the landscapes in Wales to create an environmental education pack that matches the new education curriculum.

There is a specific article on the Tirlun project in the newsletter.



Ffermio Bro



Our Designated Landscapes – National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) – are amongst the most special places in Wales. They showcase the best of our scenery, nature, culture and heritage. The Designated Landscapes and Welsh Government have collaborated to develop Ffermio Bro: Farming in Designated Landscapes, a pioneering programme to help farmers in Designated Landscapes protect nature and the environment – while supporting rural businesses and communities.

Each Designated Landscape has been allocated a funding pool, and farmers can apply directly to the relevant National Park Authority or Landscape Body for grants. Ffermio Bro will fund activities that support nature and biodiversity. This could be anything from walling and hedgerows through to natural flood management and will help develop proposals and complete applications.

Ffermio Bro differs in two important ways from past schemes. Firstly, it is a special programme for Designated Landscapes. Secondly, it is focussed on collaboration. We want to fund activities that span multiple farms and have an impact on a landscape scale. This doesn't just mean formal clusters or neighbours – we are looking for projects that achieve a common goal through action across multiple farms. Our advisors will work with farmers and host facilitation workshops to create collaborative projects.

Ffermio Bro is part of the preparatory phase of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). Participation in Ffermio Bro will not affect your eligibility for the SFS in any way, and any habitat that is created or enhanced under Ffermio Bro will count towards the SFS Universal habitat requirements. Ffermio Bro payment rates will be aligned with other Welsh Government schemes for the same activities – but bespoke projects can be supported at higher rates. If you farm in the Llŷn AONB and are interested in applying or would like further information, then please contact us.

Tirlun Byw (Living landscapes)

Tirlun Byw is a project funded by Natural Resources Wales and Gwynedd Council. Here is a taste of what has been happening during the last year as part of this project led by Elin Wyn Hughes, the AONB's Events Officer.

Habitat Development

One important element of the Tirlun Byw project is to improve and develop habitats for wildlife.

Llifon Jones on our behalf has been planting hedgerows and trees at various public locations – such as Ysgol Tudweiliog, Canolfan Fenter Congol Meinciau and the car park at Neuadd Sarn. This has been vital work developing important corridors for wildlife to thrive.



Rural Skills Training Sessions

Under the supervision of Dilwyn Williams, dry-stone walling training sessions were held in the Rhiw area during 2024. The traditional dry-stone walls are significant historic features here in Llŷn. They are also an important habitat for all kinds of wildlife. We will be running sessions again this year. The sessions are free of charge, and all are welcome.



Get in touch if you would like more information and for bookings:
ahne@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Dry Stone Walling – Training Courses

Why Join?

- ▶ A great opportunity to learn new skills – completely free of charge!
- ▶ You will meet new people.
- ▶ Outside in the fresh air – you are guaranteed a fun and interesting day.
- ▶ You will help to protect the area's unique landscape.
- ▶ You will also help to preserve very important habitats for wildlife.

Here are the dates:

- ▶ **Friday, August 22nd, 2025**
- ▶ **Friday, August 29th, 2025**



For more information and to reserve your space – please get in touch:
ahne@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Capel Newydd Nanhoron

Over the years, we have undertaken many projects at Capel Newydd Nanhoron. This is a significant historic site – listed by Cadw (Grade I) and dates to the late 18th Century.

In partnership with the chapel's trustees, an Open Day was held on the site with local historian John Dilwyn Williams present. The day was a great success with many calling by to learn more about the interesting history.



Exploring Aberdaron

A guided walk was held at Aberdaron for Welsh language learners in partnership with Dysgu Cymraeg Gogledd Orllewin. Meeting at Eglwys Hywyn Sant, we continued onto Ffynnon Saint (a holy well) and heard stories about local characters Dic Aberdaron and Ann Griffiths (1734-1821). She was a renowned lady of folk medicine who used plants and water from various wells in the area.

This is an area with a rich culture and heritage and much of the walk was in the footsteps of the pilgrims in days gone by on their spiritual journey to Ynys Enlli. We continued onto the Coastal Path to the cottage named Tŷ Tan yr Allt. It is likely that this is the cottage that renowned poet Cynan mentioned in his poem 'Aberdaron'. We returned to the village along the beach.



Plas yn Rhiw Nature Walk

Under the guidance of Cynan Jones (www.madarch.cymru) we enjoyed a nature walk at Plas yn Rhiw.



Exploring these woods is a great experience any time of year and in autumn you can see all kinds of mushrooms and fungi. We saw a variety of wildlife and discussed various issues that are currently affecting the environment and climate.

Thanks to Cynan and to all who joined.



Litter Picking

A successful litter picking event was held in partnership between the Llŷn AONB, Botwnnog Community Council, Canolfan Fenter Congol Meinciau and Keep Wales Tidy. This is a great example of collaboration between community groups for the benefit of the environment.

Canolfan Fenter
Congol Meinciau
(a social

enterprise centre at Botwnnog) is one of Keep Wales Tidy's litter hubs meaning that it is a location that you can arrange to borrow litter picking equipment. All groups came together and visited the villages of Sarn, Botwnnog and Bryncroes – thus making a significant improvement.



Wales Dark Skies Week 2025

The Wales Dark Skies Week was held during February and as part of the celebrations, many events were held nationally. Here in Llŷn, we enjoyed an evening with Dani Robertson at Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw. Dani is an author and Dark Skies Officer for Project Nos – which is a partnership between Eryri National Park Authority and the National Landscapes of Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Ynys Môn and Llŷn. Dani talked about her work and raised awareness of our dark skies and the importance of preserving them.



We also held astrophotography workshops with Gareth Môn Jones in Caernarfon and Hanna Baguley at Plas Carmel, Aberdaron. The weather was great, and we saw many wonders above in the clear skies – including the Northern Lights (or Aurora Borealis). Thanks to both for sharing their experiences and expertise.

The 2026 Wales Dark Skies Week will be held between February 13th and 22nd.

Friends of the AONB



Our busy group of volunteers have been undertaking all sort of improvements over the past year. Friends of the AONB is a group that has been established for many years and meet regularly. Over recent months, they have eradicated some of the invasive species Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) at the beach in Trefor. They have also been litter picking at Porth Neigwl, clearing various public footpaths and improving the garden at Ysgol Foel Gron, Mynytho.

Thanks to the funding through the Tirlun Byw project, we were able to offer our volunteers the opportunity to attend various courses in Coleg Glynllifon to gain qualifications in conservation and countryside management.

The work of the volunteers is very valuable, and they make a significant difference in the area. We are very grateful for their hard work. If you wish to join the group – there is a warm welcome. You can meet new people in a friendly atmosphere, learn new skills and gain qualifications.

Please e-mail for more information:
ahne@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



The Llŷn AONB Sustainable Development Fund

The 5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) in Wales receive funds annually from Welsh Government to support projects of an environmental and sustainable nature. The Fund here in Llŷn is administered by the AONB Unit.

Projects are expected to address Welsh Government priorities and there is an emphasis on ventures that:

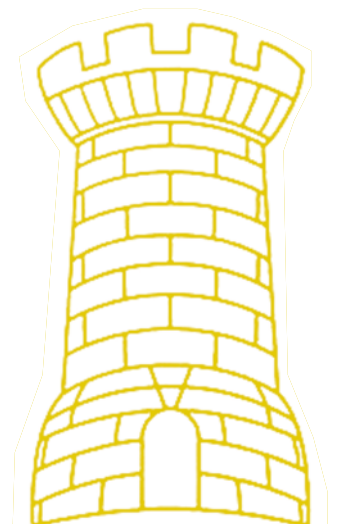
- ▶ Sustain or enhance the landscape or local features
- ▶ Sustain and aid nature recovery
- ▶ Improve key community resources
- ▶ Strengthen culture and the Welsh language

The Fund can support projects by public bodies, voluntary groups, community councils and other groups that have a constitution and bank account. Individuals and private companies are also able to apply – as long as projects can be shown to be of benefit to the area and community.

Projects are assessed against a series of environmental, economic, social and cultural criteria. For more Information regarding the Fund and the application process please see the AONB website or contact us by e-mail. Here is a taste of the projects that were supported by the Fund during 2024-25:

Menter y Tŵr

Menter Y Tŵr has embarked to repurpose the historic Tower hotel which is located right in the middle of Pwllheli High Street to be a vibrant community hub. Motivated by the desire to protect heritage, meet local needs, and stimulate economic growth, the main aim of the project is to transform the landmark building into a multi-functional space. It will offer amenities such as a community pub, hotel, cafe and restaurant, community space and business development area. Through community engagement, partnerships, and a commitment to sustainability, the hope is to empower residents and revitalize Pwllheli High Street. The SDF funding went towards the repair and redecoration of the existing sash windows. By repairing and redecorating the original windows, we improved the energy efficiency of the building, resulting in less energy use and less carbon emissions. Menter y Tŵr has now received several grants as well as financial support from local residents and businesses.



Llanbedrog Playground

Llanbedrog Playground is a key social resource for the community. It is a perfect location for children, young people and adults in the area to socialize and enjoy themselves. Unfortunately, the condition of the playing field had deteriorated terribly over the last few years and was in a seriously bad state. The park had gone to look untidy, and the play equipment was unsafe.

With the help of
Sustainable
Development
Fund, the
playing

field has now seen huge improvements. SDF funding went towards renovating the fence surrounding the playground, installing a new gate, football posts and a new basketball court. The project also included placing interpretation boards and planting various fruit trees in the nature area of the park.



Morfa Dinlle Lapwing Productivity Monitoring

Morfa Dinlle is an RSPB reserve managed for breeding lapwing. The site was purchased to help tackle and reverse the catastrophic declines in Welsh lapwing breeding numbers (96% declines since 1970). After initial success (it was briefly the biggest colony in Wales), the breeding population and its productivity have declined. The project builds on work carried out last year and aims to establish the causes of poor productivity in order to inform future management and hopefully reverse these trends. The project involved:

- ▶ Employing a field-worker for one month to undertake monitoring.
- ▶ Extended day-time predator watch to look for predation events and identify species of predators.
- ▶ Occasional nocturnal predator watch using thermal imager.
- ▶ Locating and visiting lapwing nests (under licence), deploying data-loggers and re-visiting to monitor outcomes.
- ▶ Ringing of and deployment of tags on newly hatched chicks.



Learning Resources for the Designated Landscapes of Wales



Over the past three years the 8 Welsh Designated Landscapes (3 National Parks and 5 AONBs) have been working on a collaborative project to develop bilingual, Curriculum for Wales linked learning resources under the banner of Tirlun (www.tirlun.wales). You will find specific information and activities for each area, including Llŷn AONB, on this website.

Supported by the Welsh Government's Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places fund, this unique resource provides schools with extensive learning materials and related content focussing on the 8 Designated Landscapes whilst covering a range of topics and approaches to learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Tirlun resources are available to all teachers and learners in Wales, through a dedicated website and through the Hwb, the all-Wales digital learning platform. Graham Peake, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority based, project lead said:

"Tirlun is packed with exciting activities and interactive presentations, which we hope will enrich the outdoor learning journeys of many children across Wales."

"National Parks and National Landscapes of Wales collectively cover more than 20% of Wales' land area and so we really should be giving our learners the opportunity to explore these areas. The range of activities included will also enable children to discover their outdoors, where they live, including school grounds."





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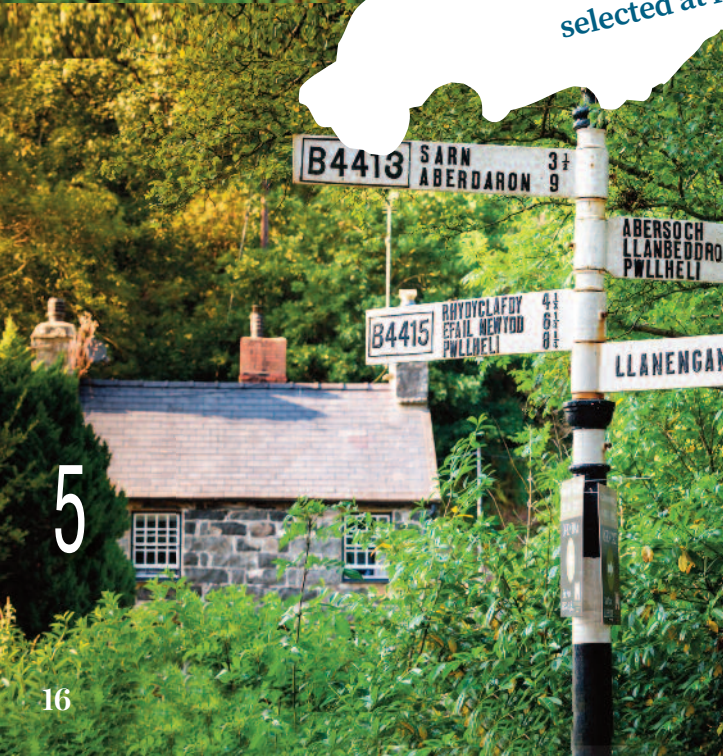
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Picture Quiz

This is a fantastic opportunity to enter our competition by recognising some of the area's locations. Can you name the six places in the photos below? Please send your answers along with your contact details: ahne@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
closing Date – August 31st
 There will be one winner – selected at random.

PRIZE

Boat trip to Ynys Enlli



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