

Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership

Nature Recovery Workshops

November – December 2023

Report - prepared by Elizabeth Mutch and Bethan Morgan



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Partneriaeth Natur Ceredigion
Ceredigion Nature Partnership

Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.

Rollo May

Introduction

Ceredigion is a county with a mosaic of landscapes and home to diverse ecosystems and biodiversity. This rich natural asset is under sustained ecological threat, and although there are areas of thriving ecosystems, change needs to happen collectively to make an impact and fast.

As a response to this the Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan (CRNAP) provides a call to action; a vision to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and drive forward nature recovery in the county. It builds on the Ceredigion Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) published in 2002 and taking the objectives from the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales and setting them in the context of local priorities.

The Plan is being developed by The Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership, a collaborative community of public bodies, private companies, non-profits, community groups, and individuals with an interest in the conservation and restoration of ecosystems across the county. But, if the actions within the Plan are going to make a difference to nature recovery in Ceredigion, the residents and workers of the county need to engage with it, to feel that this is a Plan that reflects their voice as much as the voice of professional conservationists.

Nature Recovery Workshops: *What did we hope to achieve?*

In the context of the development of the Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan (CNRAP) the Local Nature Partnership Coordinator wanted to understand what a wide range of people from across the county feel about nature recovery. Where are the positive actions, projects, and messages? What could be done better? It is a timely opportunity to listen to the voices of the community and include them within the CNRAP at the draft stages, to encourage participation and knowledge sharing and ultimately ownership.

Small group workshops provide rich qualitative data rapidly, enabling exchanges of views between participants and facilitators, as well as being a useful method for gathering thematic information. On that basis we devised a series of engagement workshops to be held across Ceredigion with these agreed objectives:

To understand what people feel about Nature Recovery across the county; major issues and barriers, positives and/or solutions.

To discover what projects and activities are happening in different geographical areas of the county and what aspirational projects could take place in future.

To discover what people think may help nature recovery, and who we should include in the conversation.

These questions provided the workshop anchors, and the responses will add a community voice to the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Ceredigion.

How we did it.

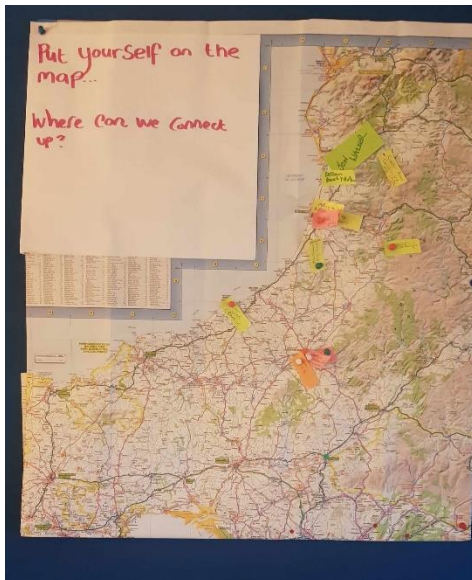
Our aim was for a maximum of 20 people to attend each in-person workshop from a diverse range of stakeholder groups including individuals representing organisations, community groups and volunteers, landowners including farmers and interested residents of Ceredigion. The workshops were facilitated with English and Welsh speakers.

The venues were spread geographically to encourage as wide a representation as possible and were well known to the local areas. One of the in-person workshops at the Welsh Wildlife Centre in Cilgerran, included a walk and talk by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales.

To include as many people as possible two online workshops were also scheduled, as well as an additional online workshop for members of the Tir Canol partnership to capture the thoughts of the specific landowner / conservation audience.

We worked with the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership coordinator and team to publicise the workshops across the membership bilingually. We also distributed invitations and promoted the workshops to environmental groups, volunteer organisations, across social media pages, at community hubs, and through personal networks to try and ensure a spread of participants.

The in-person events were two and a half hours, five hours for the all-day event whilst the online workshops were two hours in length.



Where and When?

Lampeter	9 November
Aberteifi	10 November
Aberystwyth	06 December
Online workshops	16 /17 November
Tir Canol Online workshop	28 November

What questions did we ask?

[see Appendix i, The workshop plan]

- ***Put yourself/project on the map.***
- ***Where do you get your nature fix in Ceredigion?***
- ***What are the positives about nature recovery in Ceredigion?***
- ***What are the barriers to nature recovery in Ceredigion?***
- ***Where can we improve and what do you think we can do as a community to help?***
- ***Who is not in the room that we need to know about?***

The workshop format

In-person

At the beginning of the session everyone was asked to '*put yourself on the map*' and write on a note a project if they represented one.

Once settled, a short ice breaker exercise followed where participants were asked to introduce themselves and where they get their 'nature fix' in Ceredigion.

After a brief overview of the workshop and the context, participants were divided into two small groups (depending on situation) and led through a series of questions/prompts. Responses were captured by two scribes and posted on flip chart paper then they were shared between groups.

There was time for informal conversations during registration and a refreshment break halfway through the sessions. The facilitators allowed conversations to flow on, if possible, without going over time.

During the session the Local Nature Partnership coordinator, Rachel Auckland provided a brief overview of the work in context of the Nature Partnership and next stages.

Online

The online sessions were run as close to the in-person format as possible. Though the sessions were shorter to reflect online concentration span. We used the chat function to capture location and project details and we used the whiteboard tool to enable comments. The facilitators offered scribing when necessary.

Who did we engage with?

The make-up of the workshops comprised a diverse range of people from across Ceredigion, without heavy bias on the environmental sector. The conversations were broad, probably because there was a balance of audience; although consistent themes did occur.

Over the six workshops (including Tir Canol) a total of 48 people attended. These can be segmented into the following audiences:

Organisations: 14

Landowners: 11

Academic: 1

Members of the public: 13

Businesses: 1

Public sector: 2

Tir Canol members: 6

What we learned – Key Findings*

**This section presents themes that emerged across group discussions. Unless otherwise noted, themes arose across all workshops and quotes provided as examples are drawn broadly from all events. The individual comments for each question are listed in Appendix ii.*

Major themes

From the volume of responses to the workshop questions there was no shortage of ideas or suggestions from all participants. Even those that had come along to just listen, offered commentary in private. Each workshop had a different energy, with some issues taking priority. Localised knowledge was more evident in workshops with fewer organisational participants, for example Lampeter workshop (9th November).

There were consistent themes across the workshops that can be broadly summarised as:

Management of land

From endorsements of nature friendly farming to access issues, tree planting, peatland restoration, and river pollution, land management featured heavily in all group commentary.

“Small holders can’t afford to carry out nature friendly initiatives - lack of financial support”.

“Bog restoration at RSPB and Cors Fochno using a variety of funding sources”.

“Innovative Farmers - a network of farmers and growers running on-farm trials - ‘field labs’, citizen science”.

“River Merin - improvements to flood plain and slowing of river flow”.

“Lack of knowledge about hedge laying/preservation”.

[and]

Improvements to land management practices.

Landscape scale management was prominent in the comments but so too were local scale practices, especially the No Mow May campaign on verges, which was mostly viewed positively. The popularity of this scheme does indicate how simple messages can be promoted across audiences, for the benefit of biodiversity.

“No mow May for council verges; good verge and hedgerow management”

“Better environmental management in County Council”

“Reduced verge cutting, letting the weeds grow”

“Increase in pollinator plants on council verges”

“No Mow May, Let June Bloom”

“Improved mowing regimes, frequency, type of cut etc”

In addition, Tir Canol featured prominently in discussions as a local exemplar for nature recovery, bringing together landowners and conservationists in culturally sensitive projects.

“Positive conservation happening via Tir Canol”

“Tir Canol - bringing farmers together in holistic way - including landscape, history and language”.

Show me the money!

There was a collective recognition that if nature recovery is to succeed then access to funding and a change to current processes needs to happen. Participants commented that funding for projects is hard to access, with complicated and lengthy applications. There was general agreement that many funds expect a quick turnaround for applications and community groups do not have that capacity, so the funding often goes to the larger organisations.

“Grant funding is very short term”.

“Grants based on revenue rather than capital”.

“Funding is often short term and last minute”.

“Restricted development... access to funding due to governance”

“Well thought through financial incentives”.

Communication, information and how to get involved.

How people can get involved with nature recovery actions, who they need to contact to inform authorities about environmental concerns and where they can find information about nature recovery, featured strongly across the workshops.

Keeping people informed and raising awareness is a quick win for the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) with a communications plan in development, though it was recognised that capacity and budget could be restrictive as could internal communication procedures.

“Not very good at engaging with non-conservation communities”.

“Knowing who does what”?

“Hard for groups to find opportunities and know what’s possible - lack of communication”.

“Not enough information about how to participate”.

“How to find out about meetings, events and information”?

General observations

It is worth noting other less prominent themes that arose in several but not all workshops, including access to nature sites; for volunteering and for health and wellbeing. This theme featured prominently in the online workshop 17th November, where the participants were a younger cohort and were volunteering for environmental projects or had conservation experience.

Also noted were the introduction of pine martens to the area and the swift box projects, the mention of tree planting and woodlands following a national trend for tree planting for climate benefits.

Marine and coastal observations were raised at several but not all workshops reflecting one participant’s observation that although Ceredigion is a coastal landscape, the marine is often overlooked when discussing our regional landscape.

The closing discussion at the Aberteifi workshop focussed on the community benefits of access to nature and included ideas around mapping local walks and biodiversity recording, that could be replicable across the county.



Parc Natur Penglais (Aberystwyth)

Responses to individual workshop questions.

In this section we look at sample highlights from the questions asked in the focus groups. For the full response list please refer to Appendix ii

What are the positives about nature recovery in Ceredigion?

Our negativity bias is strong, especially when it comes to consultations. We tend to be able to recount issues and problems much more easily than we do positive actions or feelings. So, we began this series of workshop questions asking participants to consider the positives – what does good look like? This way the examples of best practice, set the tone for the sessions. Ecological data tells us how challenging the state of nature is, but there are plenty of positive actions taking place across Ceredigion.

Sample of responses

“A nature curriculum going on in 10 schools over Ceredigion - Harmony project”.

“Community gardens in Penparcau, Tregaron and Lampeter”

“Tir Coed - mental health and learning new skills in woodlands”.

“ Public getting behind and supporting river health”.

“Prioritising broadleaf conservation and planting near Devil’s bridge”.

“Denmark farm orchid count 1104 from 400 2 years ago”.



Parc – y – Llyn (Aberystwyth)

What are the barriers to nature recovery in Ceredigion?

There would be no need for an emphasis on nature recovery if our environment was thriving. This question considers all issues and barriers to implementing nature recovery. Participants could comment on national and political deterrents as well as those local to them.

Sample of responses

“Monoculture and the ensuing destruction of habitat”

“Fewer water bailiffs and forestry staff than before (e.g. to enforce fines for pollution etc.)”

“Last bit of wetland at Waunfawr was drained for building”.

“Difficult bureaucratic processes to getting conservation work done”.

“Young people don’t know how to engage and can be lost in the conversation”.



Cenarth riverside (Teifi Valley)

Where can we improve and what do you think we can do as a community to help?

Thinking about the barriers to nature recovery, the next workshop question asks participants to consider possible solutions to some of these issues, and whether there are positive actions that could help. The responses were practical and inclusive with agreement that if nature recovery is indeed important for councils, the Nature Partnership and political leaders then a better conversation needs to happen between communities and those with ‘power’.

Sample of responses.

“Incentivise by demonstrating that actions can have an impact - let volunteers know how their actions help and make a difference - person power”.

“Better access to funding for ‘non-expert’ groups”

“Being mindful of all voices working in and experiencing the nature sector”.

“Nature Recovery as standard within planning applications, for example.

“Support Ceredigion Meadows Group”



Pen Dinas (Aberystwyth)

Who is not in the room that can help, and we need to know about ?

The purpose of this question was to use the local intelligence of participants to highlight the groups/individuals that are operating at a community level in each area, so that the Local Nature Partnership could extend to them an invitation to join the membership (for full list see responses in Appendix ii).

However, this provided an opportunity for many participants to identify larger stakeholders in nature recovery across the county. Although many of those suggested are already involved with the LNP, this list can provide an opportunity to interrogate the membership of the LNP and to extend an invitation to those organisations who have not joined or to re-engage with those that have not participated for a while.

Who is not in the Room ?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tourism industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ramblers Association & Walking groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MIND / Mental health groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town and Community Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant funders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Service Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public transport providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farming Connect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students Union, student societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NFU / FUW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmers / Landowners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dyfi biosphere organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local/village/agricultural shows



farmers ploughing a field

Summary

This series of engagement workshops provided a timely public mapping of opinion on nature recovery across Ceredigion prior to the publication of the Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan. They record the public and organisational support for environmental work, and protection, and reflect in the people who participated the desire for a place to live and work that is nature rich. They cover a wide range of actions and projects that can be thematically collated and referenced within the Ceredigion NRAP.

Recommendations

The LNP team *could* map the project data and use it to feed into the 30 by 30 objectives.

The ideas for projects and action *could* be the basis for small grant schemes should the budget become available, and the insight into funding can be evidenced at LNP national meetings and taken into consideration when planning funding calls at a local level.

The workshops gave people an opportunity to discuss their own projects and share aspirations for others in a collaborative and supportive space. They were not intended to be high-level, strategy-led discussion groups, although some of the outcomes *could* be included in localised strategies to help deliver Nature Recovery.

The participants volunteered information generously and were committed to providing thoughtful and interesting responses. Some of them *could* be selected for future focus groups when the Ceredigion Nature Recovery Action Plan is published, to continue the Local Nature Partnership ambition to include a wide range of voices in the creation of this Plan.

An immediate outcome of the workshops would be to continue to build on the Local Nature Partnership communication to encourage more voices into the conservation space and continue to promote inclusion in the development of the Nature Recovery Action Plan. To embrace the opportunity these workshops have given to include everybody in this living document and to reflect the feedback into action will help ensure its success and local buy in.



Denmark Farm Volunteers (Lampeter)

Ceredigion Nature Recovery workshops

Appendices

Appendix i.

Ceredigion LNP engagement workshops

Dates: 6 – 17th November

Suggested workshop questions and outline.

Introduction and format for the session. 10 mins

Put yourself on the map – pin your project or location.

Warmer: Where do you go to for a nature fix? (10 mins)

Workshop 1 25 mins with reflection

Where do you see nature recovery working well in your area?

Workshop 2 25 mins with reflection

What are the issues / barriers with nature recovery in Ceredigion?

Workshop 3 20 mins with group work and prioritising

Building on this where can we improve and what do you think we can do as a community to help?

[break] 10 minutes

Workshop 4 25 mins with reflection

[Theory of change]

Who do we need on board to make this happen?

Conclusion and feedback 10 mins – to finish

Next steps and advocacy (champions)

Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership Engagement Workshops November 2023

Recording of participant feedback

1. Positives for nature recovery - What does good look like?

Lampeter (Positives and solutions combined)

Re-introduction of pine-martens

Protection of existing squirrel population - Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership

The Cambrian Mountains remain a place of unspoilt wilderness

Low rural population means less of the negative impacts of housing development

Wildlife education centres - look at best practice elsewhere, e.g. Sywell Park, Northants

Involving children via school projects and forest school activities

A nature curriculum going on in 10 schools over Ceredigion - Harmony project

Local woodlands and structures like Denmark Farm, Eco Hub Aber, Longwood, Blue-Green

Cymru, Coed-y-Bont, Blaen Canol - many activities including forest schools, regenerative agriculture, volunteering and planned 'Nature Connection' weekends

Tir Glas - orchards and Welsh Heritage apple varieties

Ceredigion Meadows Group

Patrick Holden's farm

Cambrian Mountains initiative - link in with Green Way logo?

Community gardens in Penparcau, Tregaron and Lampeter

Government subsidies for hedge laying and creation

Some natural regeneration happening on NRW land

Save the Teifi - local citizens and anglers organising around nature recovery on the Teifi

Community supported agriculture

Local groups - transition group, XR, Working for Gardeners Association, Landworkers' Alliance

Improvement of Ceredigion coastal path

Nesting boxes schemes and bird protection

Healthy populations of bats and moths; deer seen more frequently; improved records for redstarts, pied flycatchers and marsh tits

Better environmental management in County Council

No mow May for council verges; good verge and hedgerow management

Simple, colourful, accessible communication about how to participate

Free foraging walks offered via social media

Peatland restoration at Cors Caron

Innovative Farmers - a network of farmers and growers running on-farm trials - 'field labs', citizen science

Awareness of history and archaeology

Small woods courses for well-being and mental health

Cardigan Bay Monitoring Project in Newquay- monitoring bottle nose dolphins

More incentives happening in Wales

Aberteifi - positives

Recognition of nature and well-being

Friends of Parc Natur Penglais

Tir Coed - mental health and learning new skills in woodlands

Machinery hubs, tool sharing, repair cafes

Groups sharing training - chainsaw use, first aid

Number plate analysis seems to show increase in insect population

Red squirrel population

Re-introduction of pine-martens

Tree walks for non-conservationists

Tracking walks organised by the British Ecological Society and the Vincent Wildlife Trust

Water sampling to observe changes over time

Allotments, community gardens, local food production

Outdoor sports groups (running and cycling) taking an interest in nature

Recognition of nature as a resource for well-being

Funding available for food resilience projects

Rising awarenesses of not disturbing marine mammals

Marine Wildlife Centre - very helpful!

Reduced verge cutting, letting the weeds grow

Increase in pollinator plants on council verges

More public awareness of bees, pollinators and native seeds

Improved environmental practices

No Mow May, Let June Bloom

Responsible use of pesticides

Positive conservation happening via Tir Canol

All the grass roots initiatives

Grass roots initiatives coordinating to apply for relevant grants

Public getting behind and supporting river health

Tree nursery seed training

Seed sharing (of appropriate species) is a positive way to raise awareness

The 30 x 30 report

Including and inviting a broad cross-section of Ceredigion population, not only 'interested parties'

Co-production as a positive method of engaging

Pockets of nature in the towns

Ffynnonau Resilience

Cwm Anian

Penparcau – positives

Better footpaths in Aberystwyth since Covid - golf course, Pen Dinas, Rhydyfelen, the Consti loop

Penparcau nature walks and Hwb garden

Swift box project in the pipeline

Woodland by the river in Aberaeron owned by Cardiff environmentalist

Geufron Wildlife Trust

Millennium woodland

Coetir Anian - nature connection for youth groups and work on nature recovery

Ystwyth cycle path

Tir Coed, Llanfarian - creation of community allotment

Trefenter - mixed wood land being managed by volunteers

Improved mowing regimes, frequency, type of cut...

Pwll Crwn - uni woodland - but needs management

Tir Canol - bringing farmers together in holistic way - including landscape, history and language

Hafod tree nursery/walled garden

Parc-y-Llyn nature walk

Aberystwyth university conservation volunteers

Management of Penglais woods

New Road Park

Trefechan Bridge Garden

Butterflies

Bat boxes

Pine martens

Barn owls

Roe deer - and trail cameras and webcams to raise awareness

Wildlife Trust Youth forum - wildlife recording and engagement

Small ancient woodland near Llanfarian

Ceredigion-wide biodiversity recording

Ash die back - 3:1 replanting

WW2 university vegetable garden
 Plas Crug - new growing area
 NRW Welsh raised bog project - Cors Fochno, Cors Caron
 Llanbadarn churchyard - wildflowers and trees
 Plan to cross-reference NRAP with neighbouring LNP
 River Merin - improvements to flood plain and slowing of river flow
 Myherin and Tarenig
 Prioritising broadleaf conservation and planting near Devil's Bridge
 Peatland restoration Tywi, Cwmbberwyn
 Coed-y-Bont Community group
 Ty Llwyd
 European Commission input to Forest resilience
 Atlantic Woods project with ProSilva Ireland

Online group #1 – positives

Bog restoration at RSPB and Cors Fochno using a variety of funding sources
 Greenland White-fronted Goose partnership with RSPB, BASC, NRW, WG and local wildfowlers
 Ynys-hir management plan being written – look out for plan consultation coming up
 RSPB priority landscape spanning Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Powys, looking at key species including hawfinch, willow tit, wood warbler, pied flycatcher and Lobaria lichens
 13 of Wales's bat species at Ynys-hir along with dormouse, otter, water vole and pine martin
 Partnership working between Coetir Anian, RSBP and other private landowners at Pencarreg Copps
 Better funding going forward for the Dyfi Biosphere
 Breeding Wader recovery on the Dyfi Estuary
 Celtic rainforest LIFE project including Cwm Einion
 Cardigan Bay monitoring project
 Tir Canol
 Redevelopment of infrastructure at Ynys-hir
 Dyfi tidal work involving codesign with local representatives from farming, fisheries, conservation and public sector to plan future ways of communicating in the face of coastal adaptation
 Local Places for Nature project
 Coed y Bont Community woodland
 Shallow peat project in Dynyn
 New woodland camping and nature area being used by scouts in Bwlchllan – funded by National Forest Glastir

Swift boxes

Meadow project Denmark Farm

Butterfly conservation successes – hairstreaks

Tree planting in parks in Aberaeron, on Cae Sqwâr

Mink trapping via BASC training in the Aeron Valley

Online group #2 - positives

Eco schools / food connections

ACV volunteer working

The soon to begin Ceredigion Swift project

Ysgol Llanilar just created a sensory garden for pupils

Aberystwyth University green space mapping and management

Nant Yr Arian – red kite centre, solar farm at Uni has had lots of replanting, tree planting under Glastir Woodland scheme

Aber Uni woodland

North Ceredigion Bat group, counting bats and engaging with public to change negative perceptions about bats

Denmark farm orchid count 1104 from 400 2 years ago

Flood risk tree planning and Tal-y-Bont

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is allowing me to create an orchard

Bird ringers and bird watchers

Local wildlife Trust group and volunteers; talks, walks etc.

Various volunteer groups

Denmark Farm making nature more accessible for all, ramps new paths

Martens on the move project – Vincent Wildlife Trust

Coed y Bont

Ceredigion Swift project

Cors Fochno – Borth Bog

Cors Caron peatland restoration

Pwll Crwn woodland Aberystwyth

Denmark Farm! - doing awesome and practical things to connect people with wildlife and the land

Tir Canol project

Initiatives like No Mow May do appear to be taking hold

The work at Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre to monitor Bottlenose dolphin population

Local unsung heroes and experts recording wildlife in their own time

2. What are the barriers to Nature Recovery? What are the issues?

Lampeter

'Improved' pastures destroy biodiversity

Plans for wind farms in Cambrian mountains which will impact peatlands and forests

Mountain biking for leisure destroying woodland habitat

Lack of knowledge about hedge laying/preservation

Some hedgerows destroyed; internal hedges removed to create larger fields

Over grazing, over farming

Mono-culture and the ensuing destruction of habitat

Wildlife seen as secondary to food production

Intransigent farmers

Vandalism and littering in woodlands

A lack of guidance for people about how to engage with/preserve nature

A lack of knowledge about planting trees from seed

Planting diseased trees

Straight line planting in tree plantations

Wrong tree; wrong place - planting non-native species

Grant funding is very short term

How do we find out about grants?

Grants based on revenue rather than capital

Does Ceredigion County Council have funding to address nature recovery issues?

Does Ceredigion County Council a duty to address nature recovery issues?

How much influence do Town and Community Councils have?

Invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam

High levels of consumerism among the general public, particularly meat, fuel and household energy consumption - how to reduce use/need?

Lack of information about relevant training or apprenticeships

Small holders can't afford to carry out nature friendly initiatives - lack of financial support

Light pollution and its negative impact on wildlife - bats, birds, moths...

A lack of considered approach; what's the 'grand plan'?

'Quick-fix' mentality - lack of coherent overview

Public transport - lack of routes to nature spaces

Lack of biodiversity on commercial farms

Difficulty for commercial farms to fit into existing grant schemes

Big businesses colonising land for carbon offsetting

NRA using chemical spray in woodlands

Too much jargon can make nature recovery an inaccessible subject for ordinary people

Public often not aware of what's going on

Public sometimes not educated about how to recycle

Is leadership coming from above or should we rely on grass-roots action?

Lack of ideas, policies and strategies from above

Policy is industry-led - the influence of industry lobbies guided by profit rather than nature

Access to nature/the environment - people living in deprived areas often can't afford to participate/travel

Lack of community volunteer days

Roadsides and verges still mown too short/too often

Lack of awareness of pollinator-friendly plants

Lack of wildlife corridors

Lack of community spaces and paths for children to enjoy nature

Lack of allotment space

Impact of over-foraging

Excess rubbish and food waste produced by the tourism industry

Flooding

Nitrates in freshwater

Nature Recovery seems to be a low government priority

Lack of awareness of how food production system impacts nature

Climate change

Lack of communication with land-use managers

Over-use of industrially produced soil

Ash-die back

People unwilling to volunteer

Lack of orchards

Preaching to the converted

Aberteifi

Not enough information about how to participate

How to find out about meetings, events and information?

Clarity about who does what - bureaucracy, planning, council etc.

No joined up thinking

Lack of clarity about how organisations work internally

Not enough people know about the Public Service Board

Are farmers on the same page?

Lack of understanding of community and culture

Language barrier - Welsh/English; ecological/agricultural terminology

Divisive controversy over rewilding

Building

Fewer water bailiffs and forestry staff than before (e.g. to enforce fines for pollution etc.)

Local access

Context of council policy can have stifling effect

Permission takes time to obtain - perceived inefficiencies of County Council

Lack of accountability and transparency

Lack of communication re mowing regimes etc.

Very slow pace of consultation for reintroduction of beavers

Poor feedback mechanism at County Council

Not enough young people involved in groups

Too few responses to the Well-Being Plan consultation (only 40)

Guerilla planting can have negative impact

Hywel Dda health board - risk averse

Lack of provision for nature habitats in housing developments e.g. Aberporth

Flood risks

Chicken farm applications

Waste management issues

North/South divide in Ceredigion

Penparcau

You! (i.e. we all have an impact on nature)

People are interested in nature but not fully educated and can interfere too much!

Dog poo (and its plastic bags)

Not enough bins or not emptied

Decisions taken without enough research or advice

Planning not looking at the bigger picture or into the future - prioritising properties over nature

Lack of nature awareness in council decisions - trees felled which were used by specific birds

Lack of transparency from the council

No joined up thinking across public bodies

Hard for groups to find opportunities and know what's possible lack of communication

Property developers get away with trashing habitat

Last bit of wetland at Waunfawr was drained for building planning permission before survey was able to be carried out

Soil degradation, poor grass mixes (NRW)

Too much sitka spruce and other conifers which don't benefit nature, planted individually rather than in groups

Invasive species

Pheasants from enormous commercial shoot - damaging woodland habitats, insects and invertebrates

Tan-y-Bwlch climate adaption/coastal realignment. New paths needed from Penparcau hill towards the coast. Land for sale at the moment - approach to restore salt marsh and estuary?

Funding is often short term and last minute

Clashes and ambiguity in policy and legal framework - clarification would be welcome, eg definition of peatland

NRAP will not be legally binding - lack of laws protecting nature

Farming subsidies - Sustainable Farming Scheme

Landowners chopping down trees or pulling up hedges on roadsides

Nature access/transport is another pressure on nature (cf. post covid rush to Eryri etc.)

Pollution and littering

Use of herbicides

Intensive farming

Illegal hunting (foxes/badgers)

Loss of green spaces to developments - private business and County Council

Online group #1

Good strategy but lack of good management on the ground

Making conservation relevant to the wider population

Communication between 3rd parties

Lack of expertise in key positions

Pressures that cannot be resolved by small conservation budgets – land management policy for example

Licenses for doing works and the restrictions it places on the project

Difficult bureaucratic processes to getting conservation work done

Lack of joined up thinking across multiple pressures on nature which have cumulative impacts

Lack of long-term thinking – evolutionary timescales

Difficult to partner with others as a business rather than as a charity

Trying to get something going in the community can be so time consuming

Planning permission and possible lack of understanding of the rationale – planning fee twice as much as the actual project

Knowing who does what

Resourcing of NRW and local government to meet biodiversity obligations

Rules of interpretation – level playing field between all land managers (agriculture vs farming)

Is doing the right thing penalised?

Short term budgets and political whims

Lack of natural conservation expertise in Welsh government, now run by fast-track civil servants parachuted into Wales

Continued loss of semi natural habitats

Restricted development... access to funding due to governance

Online group # 2

Lack of consistent funding

Lack of education on how to 'be' in nature e.g. countryside code

Obsession with 'tidiness'

More general -interacting with farmers so a good partnership can be reached, lack of communications between organisations and within, general lack of understanding within different communities about what conservation/sustainability is

Biodiversity crisis not seen as important enough to engage with

Hard to find out who manages land / nature sites

The contrary nature of some people – people like to moan and the loudest voice dominates

Lack of public transport to nature sites

We love nature – but we don't do the best to look after it

Some hedges still being cut too early

Our disposable / individualist culture

Communication and collaboration

Pressure from stakeholders with a lot of cultural and political influence

Young people don't know how to engage and can be lost in the conversation

Diversity in nature

Dog poo

External partners not understanding the cultural context of mid Wales

Engaging with dog walkers without alienating them

Grants pots are very restrictive and limiting

Poor communications from public bodies in the county

Not very good at engaging with non-traditional communities

Path erosion caused by dog walkers

Bureaucracy and lack of transparency with organisations

Nature sites not always promoted on Google Maps etc.

Ego

Time it takes to get everything together with other organisations

Control – nature is 'out of control/messy'. Puts people out of their comfort zone

Dogs to disturb birds – on leads in nature reserves

3. What can we do / what needs to happen to improve?

Aberteifi

Increasing community involvement

Citizen science - water samples etc

Recording toolkit could be scaled up across communities

Getting schools and young people involved - providing education and information

Youth forums

After school activities - nature clubs etc.

Inspiring speakers for community groups and schools

Identifying and organising high impact activities

Incentivise by demonstrating that actions can have an impact - let volunteers know how their actions help and make a difference - person power!

Showing how donations make a direct difference

Community hubs to bring people together

Use CAVO community connectors

Using appropriate communication and language

Build bridges and find common ground

Tir Canol

Better communication from council - positive framing of news and information e.g. mowing, recycling

Making small grants available to be used to improve communication

Connect Ceredigion - online platform

Newyddion Natur Ceredigion

Business community to invest in a change in ways of working

Well thought through financial incentives

County Sheriff - financial/moral support?

Letter writing campaigns for media impact

Mapping land in Ceredigion - what is available for improvement?

30 x 30 mapping to be published

Agroforestry to help meet 30 x 30

Natural history activities to be given the same prominence and support as sporting activities

Local nature/health walks bringing people together for social benefit - in person nature activities and outdoor learning groups

Wellness/mindfulness route for funding nature activities

Green and social prescribing - Green Health Network

Raise awareness in order to safeguard species

Mapping - open source? - private land, national forests, schools, playing fields, graveyards, roundabouts

Penparcau

Stop monetising nature

Nature Friendly property development

Empathy for nature

Build awareness of multiplicity of solutions

Continue with improvements of footpaths around Consti/student village/golf course area

Ability to share the load through a wider network

Education - there are different types of nature and appropriate solutions

Normalise respect for nature through grass roots/community action

Identify audience and find out who to contact

Do funding mechanisms and opportunities reflect need and reality?

Identify communities through which funding could be accessed - elderly, disabled...

Better access to funding for 'non-expert' groups

Funding opportunities which take into account the specific challenges of rural life

Nature recovery can include everyone who wants to be involved

Improve buses on a Sunday, sustainable transport solutions

Getting the balance right between access to nature vs impact on nature

Can we challenge big corporations?

A point of contact to coordinate and check suitability of projects

Better advertising that LNP exists - targeted outreach to schools, farmers, property developers, representatives across Ceredigion population

Ambassadors from each area to engage people not reached yet

Online group #1

Ceredigion coming up with NRAP

Being mindful of all voices working in and experiencing the nature sector

Working out how the wider community can get involved

Clear communication about what the NRAP is

Improving relationships with 3rd parties like NRW and local authorities

Creation of networking events

Asking successful project to share best practice

Will the Agricultural Act 2024 be an improvement/solution for woodlands and endangered species like red squirrels?

Resolve problems of communication between big and small players, e.g. RSPB vs small community groups - how?

Having common objectives - deciding together what can be conserved, balanced with the priorities of the local population

Online group #2

New, more regular bus routes

Under 25s go free on public bus routes – could improve access to nature

Group tickets

Can the council take more responsibility for delivering things within their remit – managing verges, reducing mowing etc – housing developments, housing stock – using existing stock to make improvements to nature, an ‘easy win’ approach rather than bringing expensive outside projects in. This could improve public engagement.

LNP could have a central website as a one-stop-shop where people can find info, volunteer opportunities etc.

Nature Recovery as standard within planning applications, for example.

Small grants scheme for projects eg swift project, not accessible as the (eg) £5000 needs to be found upfront

A lot of talk of big projects/strategies, not enough doers – all the small actions that we can all do – schools, businesses to normalise action that prioritise nature.

Council setting a good example and sharing/showing best practice.

Encourage ‘community mindedness’ – how to involve people, give them a sense of community and responsibility towards nature

4. Priorities (Lampeter only)

Clean water

Healthy food

Using the Well-being of Future Generations Act as a basis to get all school children involved with nature

Knowing who is doing what across the board

Government support for small organic growers/small scale food production - work with

Sustainable Food Trust and Ecological Land Cooperative to ensure local sources of healthy food

Education about no mow May and 'messy' gardening

Awareness about verges and pruning/felling in council and council agencies

Clear communication between council and constituents

Better housing provision for those working to improve the land

Clarity about grants/funding

Ban the use of biocides/chemicals (farming, NRA)

Need online channel for groups to share info e.g. Connect Ceredigion

Would be nice to have a database of relevant organisations, people and places

Decrease tree felling

Clarity about landownership, access and right to roam

Get rid of excessive red tape

Stop partisan lobby groups giving advice to government

Reduce road traffic and improve public transport

Support Ceredigion Meadows Group

30 x 30 is only 7 years away - what's the global plan from leadership?

Remove barriers to action

Communication and transparency from large scale landowners

Put land back into community ownership

5. Who's not in the room?

Who/what can make this happen?

Lampeter

Welsh speakers

Representatives of best practice eg Cardigan

Council/chamber of Trade

Landworkers' Alliance

Lampeter Permaculture

Local press

More local residents

Local groups eg WI, Merched y Wawr

Representatives from all levels of education

Ffermwyr Ifanc - YFC

Members of Parliament and Senedd

NFU

<p>Farming press</p> <p>Sustainable food trust</p> <p>Local/village/agricultural shows</p> <p>Community events</p> <p>Town and community councillors</p> <p>Community leaders</p> <p>Farming Connect</p>	<p>FUW</p> <p>Farmers</p> <p>Foresters</p> <p>Dwr Cymru</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>NRW</p> <p>Working people</p> <p>XR</p>
Aberteifi	
<p>LNP mailing list to schools</p> <p>LNP mailing list to Connect Ceredigoin</p> <p>Use a breadth of communication, from social media to posters on notice boards</p> <p>Train people to measure habitats and record wildlife sightings</p> <p>Train people to upload into to Connect Ceredigion (CAVO)</p> <p>Identify potential for connectivity - linking neighbours gardens etc.</p> <p>Better highlighting of link between nature and well-being</p> <p>Appropriate signposting so people find the information they're looking for</p>	<p>A 'green communication infrastructure'</p> <p>Map of wildlife sites, SINC sites, biodiversity</p> <p>Take inspiration from the Isle of Man's 'Island Environment map'</p> <p>Linking mapping and blue-green infrastructure to NRAP</p> <p>Collaboration workshops between property developers and council planning department</p> <p>Relevant funding</p> <p>Building up a culture of communication and sharing information whilst avoiding duplication</p> <p>Creation of a rationale to disseminate information</p> <p>Strategy for applying NRAP to localised projects</p> <p>2 way communication process to connect disengaged communities</p>
Penparcau	
<p>Farmers</p> <p>smallholders</p> <p>gamekeepers</p> <p>fisheries</p> <p>water companies</p> <p>sports groups</p> <p>elderly people</p>	<p>lottery players</p> <p>NRW (various depts)</p> <p>Welsh language groups</p> <p>landowners</p> <p>woodland owners</p> <p>foragers</p> <p>litter pickers</p>

<p>the Arts, Aber Arts Centre</p> <p>public transport providers</p> <p>corporate director of large companies who have influence on implementation of relevant policies - e.g. NHS managers.</p> <p>Council planning</p> <p>Representatives of children and young people - schools, groups, Urdd, uni...</p> <p>Probation/prison service</p> <p>Tir Canol</p> <p>Tourism industry</p> <p>local small business community</p>	<p>ramblers</p> <p>funders</p> <p>research funders</p> <p>mental health groups</p> <p>national trust</p> <p>RSPB</p> <p>speakers of additional languages</p> <p>Welsh Place-Name Society</p> <p>Cadw</p> <p>Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd</p> <p>Dyfi Biosphere</p> <p>supermarkets</p> <p>Environmental Science company on science park (satellite imaging)</p>
<p>Online group #1</p>	
<p>NRW – People and Places team (not the job of other depts?)</p> <p>Community / town councils – how to communicate with them / bring them in?</p> <p>Relevance – Ceredigion Nature Partnership – what is it? How does it affect ordinary people's lives? How to create a distinct identity for this grouping of large bodies, smaller groups, community groups, individuals etc? How to focus people's minds? A 'symbolic' project, like red kites were historically.</p> <p>How to know who is a member? Not easy to see what's going on.</p> <p>How do we keep in touch and share information?</p> <p>Rachel's newsletter</p> <p>Presence on Collect Ceredigion platform – run by CAVO – will be live soon</p> <p>Revamp of conservation pages on Ceredigion County Council website coming up</p> <p>E.g. Natur Dyfi facebook page – these things happen organically, organised by engaged individuals</p> <p>Twitter/X? Way of engaging with political classes?</p> <p>Make more use of website</p> <p>Facebook pages and specialist groups, Instagram, Tiktok</p> <p>Possibility of working together (Rachel – Russell) to communicate with more people – marketing etc.</p>	

Different partners/groups/individuals communicating in their own way and through their own channels – share information and no need to **duplicate**

Online group #2

Ceredigion Council planning dept

Aberystwyth University – sustainability dept? use Students Union to advertise volunteer roles

CCC as a whole – they have a big, prominent role and need to be seen to be showing best practice across the whole system – education, environment, health, transport...

Ramblers – well-being in nature – what are their thoughts?

Involve the 'big players' without questions of ego – what is best for the place/county, rather than what is best for their brand (NT, WT). Gathering round a mission statement rather than brand

Schools need to be in the room – pupils having agency and ownership, reaching into networks of family, friends, community into the future

YFC – need to be welcoming of that branch of the 'nature community' – creating connections

Students Union, student societies

Intersection between outdoor sports groups and environmental groups

Smaller local businesses often want to do good in the community – can do good actions, sponsorship etc.

6. Hold that thought! Useful thoughts, comments and information which occurred throughout the workshops and didn't quite fit into the main sections...

How to engage with home school community

S cubed, lottery funded, Area 43, youth org Ceredigion

Well-being plan

Join up the dots...

Depot coffee shop

Shadowing Public Service Boards

Link Newquay Marine Centre to wild swim groups to 'patrol' beaches

Can council impose reduction of land use?

Who would run a nature event - how would we do this?

Thinking on timescales - evolutionary and geological

Who should be reading the 30 x 30 report?

How to find main focus when there are conflicting voices?

Quantifying future benefit - today's school children putting what they've learnt into practice in the future

FRPs

LNP and their forum

AI opportunities?

Ash die back - which species relied on Ash alone?

Small shops, pubs, garages etc. in villages have closed, so people have to drive more

Show gardens don't address the scale of the nature crisis

SFS - send details

Council of All Beings

Rights of Nature Bill

Could ancient woodland have protected status?