**Deri Woods**

**Llanfair Caereinon March 2020**

**Background information / describe the area/ when & how the group started:**

Gifted to the townsfolk of Llanfair Caereinion in 1919, Deri Woods is a significant and popular asset to residents and visitors to the town; it has good pedestrian access from the town centre and its own small car park. Overlooking a picturesque section of the River Banwy, the 13-acre wood contains many large and impressive oak and beech trees as well as a number of towering conifers. The wood is criss-crossed by sloping gravel paths (some fairly steep) and rustic steps. There is step-free access from the car park to significant areas of the wood including the most impressive trees and some of the riverside paths.

In May 2016, supported by the Tesco ‘Bags of Help’ scheme, the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT.) entered into a one year partnership with Llanfair Caereinion Town Council, taking the first steps towards the restoration of Deri Woods with local volunteers and groups, raising the profile and awareness of the wood amongst the local community. This partnership ended in April 2017. However a Heritage Lottery Project for the continuation of the project was successful and in 2018 with Woodland Trust management plans in place, and a dedicated Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust project officer in post to liaise with the Town Council, neighbouring landowners, users of the wood, and with funds for direct works on the ground with contractors and a regular monthly volunteer day, the potential for this ancient woodland site. During the course of the project, the volunteer group has built itself up to becoming a self-sustaining group, gaining the relevant skills and knowledge, with regular work groups. The MWT are to support the group as a local MWT volunteer group which will continue management and maintenance into the long term.

**Group aims and how many members.**

The group aims to continue the conservation management of the habitats in the woods and maintain the access paths and tree trial.

There are twelve people registered as volunteers who are covered under the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust Local Volunteer Group insurance

**Main audience and volunteers.**

Deri Woods is a very popular woodland for local and people from outside of theLlanfair Caereinon Township. The local high school and primary school are within walking distance. As a result of HLF funding there is now a volunteer secure base full of the tools necessary to maintain the Woods and its infrastructure.

In a meeting with the Deri Volunteers a choice was given to them: to support them being an independent group or to enrol the group under the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust Local Volunteer scheme. The Deri Woods volunteers have chosen to enrol as a Local MWT volunteer group.

**What the project is achieving**

The Deri Woods volunteers work to restore and maintain this special woodland in Llanfair Caereinion for the benefit of the local community, visitors and wildlife.

Working on behalf of Llanfair Caereinion Town Council and under the guidance of the Montgomery Wildlife Trust, the volunteers repair the bridges, steps and handrails, install and maintain benches, and are gradually improving the drainage to keep the footpaths dry.

Woodland restoration work includes coppicing, removing non-native tree species, maintaining the ‘tree trail’, and creating more space for woodland regeneration.

Deri Woods has over 50 bird boxes, including three owl boxes. The volunteers monitor and record nesting activity, and assist a local expert in ringing the chicks.

**How group got permission to be on the site/ was it difficult?**

The group gained permission to operate on the site from Llanfair Caereinon Town Council (LCTC.) Their actual operation is insured under the MWTrust. Once the group has been adopted as a local volunteer group they will have to seek permission to operate in Deri Woods (This is not envisaged as a problem.) I as their CLAS advisor recommended that they invite themselves to attend the LTC on at least a quarterly basis to report on their work and ask assistance as necessary.

**A quote from the group about how they enjoy managing the site/ working with people on the site/ any support they have received, particularly if they have worked with the Community Land Advisory Service Cymru.**

Nick Burton one of the Deri Woods Volunteers says “ Now we have a secure tool store base and equipped with the tools we helped order to suit the tasks we have to carry out in the wood : the group is set up to carry on its work in the woods for a very long time.”

Adrian Bickers of the Deri Woods Volunteers says “If the group is co-opted officially as a local volunteer group for the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust: I can see it gaining more popularity amongst the volunteer community which hopefully will swell the numbers of our group.”

**What they hope to achieve in the future/ aspirations for a Green Flag Community Award**

The group wants to be a self-sustaining group of enthusiastic volunteers happy to help look after Deri Woods as a safe welcoming and well maintained haven for people and wildlife

**Insert Photo at an appropriate paragraph**