



Montgomeryshire
Maldwyn

Annual Review

2020/21

Chair's Overview

The year 2020/2021 was a challenging time for everyone. The first lockdown was already underway by 1st April 2020 and Covid-19 related restrictions would stay in place, in some form or another, until March 2021 and beyond, meaning very limited person to person contact.

Most MWT staff were initially furloughed, with the exception of a core group who worked very hard to keep the Trust running. Funds were found to pay their salaries, and for other essentials, and we're very grateful to our generous donors for this lifeline. As the year went on, we still felt the effects of the pandemic: volunteers were unable to perform their tasks; as staff worked from home our Welshpool office was seldom visited; the new Dyfi Wildlife Centre didn't open at all; and numerous planned projects could not go ahead.

Despite these hurdles, it wasn't all doom and gloom. Our members and supporters increasingly took

comfort in the wild wonders on their doorsteps. Our social media sought to provide inspiration on this subject with informative, eye-catching content – and was very well received. Similarly, MWT staff took to social media to support each other virtually.

Despite the Dyfi Wildlife Centre remaining shut, we watched the Osprey webcams eagerly for Monty's return. Sadly the days passed with no sign. His place was taken by Idris who had a very successful season with Telyn, with two chicks fledging. The breeding couple returned at the end of March 2021 to the pleasure of us all.

Even when restrictions eased, volunteering was limited by social distancing and transport issues. When his furlough ended, Reserves Officer Rob Haigh had a mammoth task surveying the state of the reserves and doing essential maintenance to make reserves safe for the public to visit.

Fortunately by March 2021 MWT had weathered the worst of the

storm with, happily, no staff redundancies and the vast majority of our members still with us. We were then in a position to resume most normal activities for the benefit of wildlife and the people of Montgomeryshire.

Tim McVey
MWT Chair



Tim at Llanmerewig Glebe

Who We Are

Since 1982, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT) has been the leading voluntary organisation promoting wildlife conservation in Montgomeryshire, managing and caring for 18 nature reserves within the county, totalling some 530ha in area.

Our Vision:

An environment rich in wildlife for everyone

Our Mission:

To rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment

Our Objectives:

- 1) To stand up for wildlife and the environment
- 2) To create and enhance wildlife havens
- 3) To inspire people about the natural world
- 4) To foster sustainable living

Membership and Volunteers

The Trust welcomed 99 new members in 2020/21, with the total number of member households at 1,012 and the number of individual members at 1,870.

With key staff furloughed from April 2020 until July 2020, no payments were processed during this time. However, on our return to work we were delighted to discover that, while some households had to cancel their memberships because of a change in financial circumstances, the vast majority of our members continued to show their support.

From April 2020 to September 2020, we were unable to accept volunteers of any description due to Covid-19 restrictions and Welsh Government guidance – despite continued support of many longstanding volunteers keen to help us. Similarly, with our lovely new MWT shop (which we had launched in October 2019) and new office premises both shut over the entire 2020/21 period, there were none of the associated volunteer opportunities. In September 2020 limited volunteering returned and our Reserves Officer was able to take out five volunteers at a time on work parties. During that autumn, volunteers were very busy tackling path and infrastructure maintenance after sites had become overgrown as a result of lockdowns, furloughed staff and a lack of volunteering.

We were hugely grateful for the unwavering loyalty of so many of our members and volunteers and would like to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to all those who stuck with us during this challenging time, perhaps finding renewed passion for the wildlife on their doorsteps while stuck at home; without them we could not fulfil our wild mission.

People and Wildlife

Wild Skills Wild Places

This innovative new scheme was devised to boost people's wellbeing and help reconnect them with nature. A partnership between Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT), Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) and Cardiff Metropolitan University, Wild Skills Wild Spaces (WSWS) was due to start in spring 2020 but was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. However coronavirus' detrimental effects on mental health did serve to both validate the importance of schemes such as WSWS and to increase public interest in them. The postponement did also allow MWT the chance for further planning and project development, such as contact with senior officials in the NHS, external training in ecotherapy and meetings (usually virtual) on green health best practice with groups in Wales, the UK and Europe. We also

consulted with other organisations, such as Lancashire Wildlife Trust, whose 'Myplace' project provided the initial inspiration for WSWS. From November 2020, the paperwork and planning process continued apace; this included presentations to some of the different referral routes potentially interested in utilising the programme. In late January 2021 we finally received the approval letter from funders, the Welsh Government. Having secured funding, we were able to start the recruitment process to take on a talented new team to deliver WSWS, and we



carried out the interviews for a Project Manager, Youth Engagement Officer, Trainee Community Officer and Community Reserves Officer in March 2021.

Community Outreach and Social Media

With the commencement of the first Covid-19 lockdown – and with most of the MWT staff furloughed, like at most organisations – we moved our community outreach work online. Everyone was seeking solace in nature and we made it our mission to provide regular inspiration. This was very well received and our average monthly social media reach increased by over 300% on the previous year! In May 2020, we introduced a new weekly feature which continues to this day. Called 'The Week in Wildlife', it showcases supporters' wildlife highlights during the



preceding seven days, from new species for the area to personal close encounters. In June, The Wildlife Trust's '30 Days Wild' campaign, in its sixth year, was bigger than ever; in Montgomeryshire alone there was a 102% increase in sign-ups and together, across the UK, participants completed more than 15 million Random Acts of Wildness (daily connections with nature)! Every day we posted ideas and videos on our YouTube channel, deliberately designed to be light-hearted and fun – sometimes even downright silly – as our staff and volunteers flexed their creative wildlife-minded muscles!

Similarly, our Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve, which has its own social media presence, viewed the pandemic as an opportunity to share some of its amazing wildlife with people stuck at home. Its Dyfi Osprey Project YouTube channel, which live streams footage from the osprey nest, more than doubled its subscriptions in 2020. Over 20 million minutes were also spent watching Telyn and Idris raise their two chicks, Tywi and Teifi – our most popular season by far at that point. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter saw a similar spike in followers as osprey-watching therapy helped some through a miserable stay-at-home lockdown.

Cors Dyfi

Dyfi Osprey Project

Spring 2020 saw our breeding female, Telyn, return for her third season. However, our resident and much-loved male, Monty, did not come back. Thankfully, a new unringed male – whom we later named Idris – soon appeared and settled in quickly. He was a good provider and the pair produced two male chicks, Tywi and Teifi. We also saw a number of ringed intruding ospreys, including a Dyfi chick from

2018, Dinas. He was the first of Telyn's offspring to be recorded as an adult and he spent the summer in Wales. Another significant milestone was achieved when Dyfi-born Tegid (2016) bred at a nest in north Wales, making him the first recorded Welsh bird to breed here. We owed a huge debt of thanks to Network Rail in March 2021, too, for transporting a 12m scaffolding tower, tools and Monty's Perch V.4 to the nest for us. They also donated fibre optic cables for live streaming osprey footage and provide all our electricity at the nest to power our cameras each year.

and Willow trees. The mother would follow to rejoin her family the following month. Cors Dyfi has a five-year licence for the project from Natural Resources Wales. The arrival of these ecosystem engineers is part of a wider project to reintroduce native beavers back into Wales, from where they've been absent since the 16th century. It's also welcome news for Cors Dyfi as the reserve's tricky terrain renders it impossible to manage with human power alone. It's hoped the beavers will bring this habitat under control, while providing a valuable education point for these persecuted mammals.



Breeding female, Telyn

Conservation

Friday 26th March 2021 was a momentous day as it saw the long-awaited arrival of our beaver family. First to arrive were father (Barti) and son (Berti), under the watchful gaze of experts Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, for NatureScot, and Alicia Leow-Dyke from the Welsh Beaver Project. The animals were released by Welsh naturalist Iolo Williams into their seven-acre enclosure, and immediately set to work, felling Birch



Beavers arriving in March 2021



Beaver in its new home at Cors Dyfi

Volunteers

Even though we were unable to have any volunteers on site for the majority of the year, they still played a key role in public engagement. As the volume of users of our YouTube chat facility increased, volunteers stepped up to fill the gap of furloughed staff and assisted with engaging with the vast audience of Nestcam viewers. Others helped keep and record osprey statistics. In addition, once restrictions lifted, a small team took on the mammoth task of painting the new Dyfi Wildlife Centre building. Then in

March 2021, volunteers helped with the preparation work to the beaver enclosure, such as checking fence lines, ensuring the perimeter was clear of vegetation and building a temporary lodge out of hay bales.

Dyfi Wildlife Centre

Despite all our efforts to build a completely new visitor centre from the ground up in just seven winter months, alas we were not able to open our new Dyfi Wildlife Centre at the start of the osprey season, in spring 2020 as planned, again due

to the pandemic and restrictions on visitor attractions in Wales. Regardless, we used the restricted time we had in 2020 to refine the new centre as well as complete a few projects planned for post-opening. While no-one was able to visit the DWC, and its new gift shop, our already-established online shop proved very successful. This was helped by the launch of the book, *Monty*, a blow-by-blow account by MWT's own Emyr Evans of our first male osprey, Monty, in November 2020, which sold 1,500 copies.



Down tools in March 2020

Living Landscapes

Nature Reserves

MWT manages 18 nature reserves around the county, all havens for wildlife, as well as inspiring places for people to visit. They include limestone grassland, ancient woodland, upland lakes, peat bogs and wildflower meadows. Each is carefully maintained by MWT staff and a team of dedicated work party volunteers. In 2020/2021, because of Covid-19 restrictions, work parties were greatly reduced. When we were able to have volunteers, numbers were restricted so we ran multiple sessions per week to make up for the shortfall. In total there were 173 volunteers in attendance across 45 sessions, along with an individual with 120 hours of community service to fulfil, maintaining paths



Volunteers enjoy a work party



Autumn Crocus Count

Photo: © Kevin Heywood

and bird hides, installing new stiles and gates, laying hedges, hay meadow maintenance, Hazel coppicing, Willow pollarding and dealing with Ash die-back. Our surveys were similarly affected, with bat and Pearl-bordered Fritillary surveys cancelled, and the dormouse 2020 survey season delayed. On a more positive note, the annual 'Crocus Count' at Llanmerewig Glebe recorded another all-time high, with 2,090 blooms of *Colchicum Autumnale* found.

Water Vole Surveys

In late summer 2020, MWT was commissioned by Natural

Resources Wales (NRW) to search for Water Voles in Montgomeryshire. Eighteen different sites were searched, but sadly signs of 'Ratty' were only found at one site. Using this information, along with data collected elsewhere in Wales, NRW are now working with The Mammal Society to plan further work for this severely threatened species.



Water Vole

Montgomeryshire Nature Recovery Network

Building on previous initiative, 'Where the Wild Things Are', this small project used existing data to begin identifying a Nature Recovery Network for Powys, including potential Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). The information gathered is being used and further developed by wildlife organisations, local government and others to inform future work. We also supported the ongoing development

of the Montgomeryshire Landowner Group, carried out habitat management for Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies and began fresh engagement with Powys County Council over road verge management.

Cefn Croes

MWT and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continued to work with Falck Renewables to restore the upland peat bogs underneath their windfarm at Cefn Croes. Local contractors made great progress in this, our second year of operation, using GPS and Google Earth to help create a mosaic of pools and raise the water table to restore the site's natural hydrology. Notable signs of success in this important peatland habitat include increased invertebrates and amphibians and thriving indicator species, such as Sphagnum mosses, Cottongrass and Bog Asphodel.



Pumlumon

Launched in 2007, Welsh Government-funded Pumlumon Project saw its 14th year in 2020/21. Focused on an extensive area around Pumlumon peak in the Cambrian Mountains, the science-led scheme radically rethinks upland management to benefit both wildlife and rural economies. Having already proven the benefits of peat bog restoration (Ecosystem Services, such as floodwater management, carbon sequestration and biodiversity) and the capability of farmers, with our help, of carrying out the work, this year we put our heads together with the Welsh Government, economists, environmental bodies and landowners to work out how peatland restoration could be funded, in order to defend people

from flooding, fight climate change and bring prosperity and thriving wildlife to our uplands.

Stand for Nature Wales

A partnership between all six Welsh Wildlife Trusts, Stand for Nature Wales aims to inspire the younger generation to protect nature and help combat climate change. Financed by the National Lottery Community Fund, the four-year campaign will work with young people, aged nine to 24, to come up with solutions to climate problems, through practical conservation, spreading the word through film, social media and a little engineering. During the 2020/21 period, MWT focused on planning, training and networking in preparation for the project's official launch in April 2021. We attended a series of online Wildlife Trust Climate Change Seminars; we made contacts and forged partnerships; we gave talks to local groups; and we attended Eco Committee Meetings to establish climate networks with schools in the area.

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

Financial Statements

For the year end 31st March 2021

The summarised accounts herewith are an extract from the Charity's statutory annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021. WR Partners reported on the accounts as independent auditors.

The annual report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 28th September 2021.

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. Copies of the full statutory annual report and accounts may be obtained from the Charity's registered office: Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Park Lane House, High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP.

Trustees who served during the year and subsequently:

Tim McVey <i>Chair</i>	Peter Powell
Clare Boyes <i>Vice Chair – from December 2020</i>	Jill Robinson
Chris Hurrell <i>Vice Chair – to December 2020</i>	Sarah Evans <i>from January 2021</i>
Ann Bitcon <i>Treasurer</i>	Tim Ward <i>from January 2021</i>
Bob Beaman
Jenny Lloyd	Chris Townsend <i>President</i>
Jane Lloyd Francis	

Thank You

We would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support during the year:

Arwain
Ceredigion County Council
Climate Action Fund
Department for Work and Pensions
Dyfi Distillery
ENRaW
Moondance Foundation
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Natural Resources Wales
Open Newtown
People's Postcode Lottery
Ricardo Energy
RSWT
Vector Renewables
Vine House Farm
Welsh Government

Furthermore, we would like to thank all the individuals and groups who made donations to Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, whether financially or through volunteering.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Income from				
Donations and legacies	33,728	145,497	179,225	233,809
Charitable activities	557,090	73,042	630,132	1,074,268
Trading activities	-	57,891	57,891	62,276
Total income	590,818	276,430	867,248	1,370,353
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	464,806	104,082	568,888	571,786
Trading activities	-	26,042	26,042	17,682
Total expenditure	464,806	130,124	594,930	589,468
	126,012	146,306	272,318	780,885
Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of investment	1,973	-	1,973	(1,648)
Net income/(expenditure)	127,985	146,306	274,291	779,237
Transfers between funds	48,719	(48,719)	-	-
Net movement in funds	176,704	97,587	274,291	779,237
Reconciliation of funds				
<i>Funds at 1 April 2020</i>	<i>1,766,472</i>	<i>644,866</i>	<i>2,411,338</i>	<i>1,632,101</i>
Funds at 31 March 2021	1,943,176	742,453	2,685,629	2,411,338

This document is an extract from the full accounts.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		2,420,668		2,152,322
Investments		21,753		19,780
		<u>2,442,421</u>		<u>2,172,102</u>
Current assets				
Stocks	16,245		8,901	
Debtors	211,974		331,547	
Cash at bank and in hand	230,220		63,398	
	<u>458,439</u>		<u>403,846</u>	
Creditors: falling due within one year	<u>215,231</u>		<u>164,610</u>	
Net current assets		243,208		239,236
Net assets		<u>2,685,629</u>		<u>2,411,338</u>
Charity funds				
Restricted funds		1,943,176		1,766,472
Unrestricted funds		742,453		644,866
Total funds		<u>2,685,629</u>		<u>2,411,338</u>

This document is an extract from the full accounts.



Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

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Charity number: 512390 | Company number: 1612249

www.montwt.co.uk

Cover Photo: This shot depicts a full rainbow against a dark, cloudy sky over Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust's Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve. Taken by Emyr Evans from the 360 Observatory, the photo is apt for a year when rainbows symbolised hope.