



# Welshpool Fairway to Haven

## Final project report – March 2025

### Summary

The 'Welshpool Fairway to Haven' project, led by Welshpool Golf Club and delivered with the support of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust was funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA. The project ran from December 2023 to March 2025 and aimed to enhance the wildlife value of Golfa Common, a 116-hectare site near Welshpool, by improving habitat management and public access, and fostering community engagement through volunteer opportunities. The site, home to the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary (PBF) butterfly, presented unique challenges due to its steep terrain and lack of suitable grazing.

By carrying out surveys and capturing high-resolution aerial imagery, as well as making use of existing data, the project was able to produce a new five-year management plan covering the whole site, to ensure all 21 priority habitats and species were considered. Making use of specialist machinery purchased by the project, as well as volunteers, 16 hectares of bracken-dominated habitats were managed.

Volunteers, many of whom joined the new site-based 'Friends of PBFs' volunteer group, contributed 551 hours to the project, playing a vital role in habitat management, surveys, and events. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with volunteers gaining knowledge, learning new skills, meeting new people and accessing new areas of countryside. The majority wish to continue.

Despite challenging weather conditions, the site surveys recorded 415 species, 194 of which were new to the site. Public awareness was raised through events and the installation of new interpretation. Access improvements included the creation of a new 1.9km permissive path and maintenance of key footpaths.

Notwithstanding challenges which impacted some delivery, the project successfully enhanced the site's wildlife value and community engagement. It serves as a pioneering model for similar initiatives, demonstrating the potential for golf clubs to contribute to wildlife conservation and community involvement.





## Introduction

Golfa Common (Y Golfa) is an 116 hectare site three miles west of Welshpool. 91 hectares of this large open hill has been the home of Welshpool Golf Club (WGC) since 1932. The remaining 25 hectares has been managed by Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT) for the benefit of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary (PBF) butterfly for over 20 years.

Rising to 341m at its highest point, Y Golfa comprises a diverse mosaic of habitats and is one of the best sites for wildlife in Montgomeryshire. Only one third of the golf course is managed for golf, but even these areas have never been ploughed up and re-seeded. With large areas unmanaged and the recent removal of sheep grazing, there is great potential to increase the value of the site for wildlife even further.



*Golfa Common from drone, captured by Dragon UAV, April 2024*



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As one of only eight remaining sites in the whole of Wales for the PBF (a rare and threatened Section 7 species) and the most important population, as there are five sites within a few miles of each other, improvements to habitat here are particularly vital. The steep terrain and lack of suitable grazing also represent significant challenges to sustainable management.

Running between December 2023 and March 2025 and funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA, *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* allowed the development of a partnership between WGC and MWT to create a site-based volunteer group, deliver events and improve access, as well as purchasing machinery needed to manage habitat for years to come.

We believe this to be one of the first, if not the first project of this scale and nature, led by a golf club. We hope the project will prove an inspiration to other golf clubs, thus becoming a blueprint for similar partnerships throughout Wales and the rest of the UK.



*Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly*



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## Project aims

- Develop a new partnership working for people and wildlife on 116ha of land
- Provide new volunteer opportunities: 'Friends of PBFs group'
- Increase understanding of the current wildlife value of the site
- Improve management of habitats on site
- Educate and inspire people about the site and its wildlife
- Improve public access

## Project delivery headlines







## Habitat

Using high resolution aerial imagery captured by a local drone contractor (Dragon UAV) in April 2024, we produced a Phase 1 habitat map for the whole site. This is shown below.



### KEY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Site boundary                                | D1.1 - Dry dwarf shrub heath - acid                  |
| A1.1.1 - Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural | D2 - Wet dwarf shrub heath                           |
| A1.1.2 - Broadleaved woodland - plantation   | E2.1 - Flush and spring - acid/neutral flush         |
| A1.2.1 - Coniferous woodland - semi-natural  | E3.1 - Fen - valley mire                             |
| A1.2.2 - Coniferous woodland - plantation    | F2.1 - Marginal and inundation - marginal vegetation |
| A1.3.2 - Mixed woodland - plantation         | G1.1 - Standing water - eutrophic                    |
| A2.1 - Scrub - dense/continuous              | G2 - Running water                                   |
| A2.2 - Scrub - scattered                     | I2.1 - Quarry  |
| A3.1 - Broadleaved Parkland/scattered trees  | J1.2 - Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland |
| B1.1 - Acid grassland - unimproved           | J1.4 - Introduced shrub                              |
| B1.2 - Acid grassland - semi-improved        | J2.2.2 - Defunct hedge - species-poor                |
| B5 - Marsh/marshy grassland                  | J3.6 - Buildings                                     |
| C1.1 - Bracken - continuous                  | J4 - Bare ground                                     |
| C1.2 - Bracken - scattered                   | J5 - Other habitat                                   |





As well as providing a good overall baseline, this map demonstrates the diversity of habitats across the site. There are large areas of unimproved acid grassland surrounded by heathland, bracken, scrub and woodland. There are also some ponds of varying sizes and wetland habitats, most notably a diverse valley mire.

Using this map, along with existing data and that gathered by the surveys carried out as part of the project, a new five-year management plan was produced for the site. Critical to the implementation of this management plan was the purchase of specialist machinery to enable the management of habitats, particularly those found on steep terrain.



*Grillo Climber and McConnell Robocut T500 with mulching head arrive at WGC, March 2024*

The other key delivery mechanism for habitat management was the recruitment of volunteers who undertook pruning, coppicing, scrub and bracken management. There is more about the 'Friends of PBFs' volunteer group below.







Whilst the principle focus of the habitat management was to benefit the priority habitats – Lowland Dry Acid Grassland, Lowland Heathland, Lowland Fens and Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland – and priority species – PBF and other fritillary butterflies, Stoat, Common Lizard and 12 bird species – many more are likely to benefit. Some management was also carried out to improve access for people.

During the project, a total of 16 hectares of habitat management was undertaken, on top of on-going work undertaken elsewhere on site by the partners. This additional management comprised:

- Cutting of bracken and scrub with the specialist machinery
- Raking or blowing of cut bracken by the volunteers
- Pruning, coppicing and pollarding by the volunteers







The map below shows where these works were undertaken; orange areas were completed in year 1 (6ha) and green areas in year 2 (10 hectares); greyed areas show work carried out for PBFs but not paid for by this project, for context. On-going golf course management is not shown.



The work areas were captured using a combination of GPS – manual and positioned on machine, as appropriate – and the high-resolution imagery captured by Dragon UAV in April 2024 and April 2025.







## No Fence Trial

Y Golfa is a large open common, with no internal fences. Like many sites of this nature, the number of commoners exercising their rights has dwindled in recent years. Until August 2023, small numbers of sheep grazed extensively, making little impact on the bracken dominated areas, whilst also causing a nuisance to the golf club. For this reason, WGC made an agreement with the commoners not to graze the site.

For many habitats, grazing is the most suitable and sustainable form of habitat management. Specifically, bracken dominated open habitats need cattle and/or equines to prevent the build-up of dense mulch and promote diversity. It is the absence of this sort of grazing which necessitates practical management.

The *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* project enabled an investigation into whether No Fence grazing technology could be used to overcome some of these issues. There are many good examples of how this virtual fence system has been used successfully elsewhere.

The project purchased six cattle collars, ancillary items and paid for a subscription. Following negotiations with the commoners, we identified that there was only one who currently kept cattle. On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 an evening in-person meeting was held at the commoner's farm which was supported by an MWT volunteer experienced with the No Fence system. Unfortunately, after a period of consideration, the commoner felt unable to take part in the trial. Two main barriers were given:



*Cattle wearing No Fence collar*

*© Liz Lewis-Reddy*

1. Bovine TB: the farm had previously suffered a TB outbreak and was currently clear. There was significant concern about the risk of putting cattle on Y Golfa as another outbreak could have a huge impact on their business and financial situation.
2. Farming system: they felt that heifers were the only option for the grazing trial but having them over the fence from the bull in summer would cause problems.

Although we were unable to progress further with the No Fence trial, the project funding allowed us to understand the current situation and remove some barriers to entry. The equipment purchased will be held by MWT in case the situation changes, and this has been communicated to the commoners.





## Surveys

Prior to this project, the bulk of biological data was limited to the area managed by MWT, and even then, largely biased around PBF surveys (April and May). To assess the baseline value of the site for wildlife, as well as inform the management plan, it was vital that surveys were conducted.

Using the knowledge of the partners, as well as existing data and an initial Phase 1 habitat survey in January 2024, a survey plan was written to plan delivery. Throughout the year, surveys were undertaken by MWT staff and the Friends of PBFs volunteers as listed below:

- April: PBF habitat survey
- April/May: PBF adult surveys
- April and June: breeding bird surveys
- June: botanical survey with Montgomeryshire Flora Group
- July: bees and wasps, and moth trapping
- August: dragonflies and damselflies
- September: bat survey using static detectors
- October: fungi

In addition to these targeted surveys, throughout the year species were also recorded on an ad hoc basis, and a sightings notebook was provided in the club house. A wildlife camera trap was also in place during August and September.



*Breeding Bird Survey, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024*



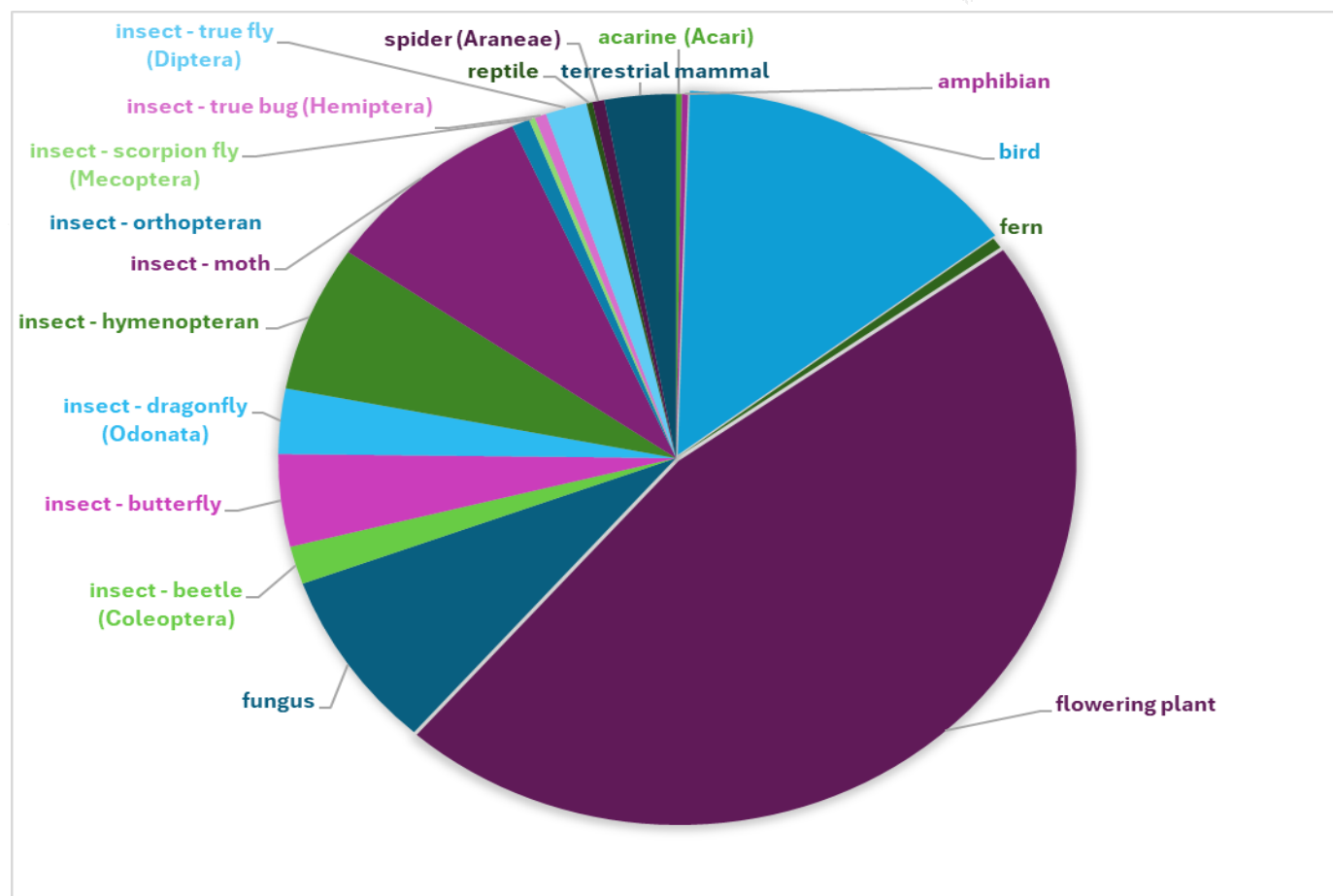
*Dragonfly and damselfly survey, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024*







Initial plans had included regular visits by the volunteers to survey butterflies throughout the spring and summer, but the poor weather made this very challenging. Summer 2024 was widely reported as the worst ever for many insect species. As a result, we believe the site to provide for many more species than the project found. However, we did manage to record 415 species, 194 of which were new to the site. A breakdown of these species by taxon group is shown below.



Along with survey equipment and a new library of field guides in the club house, the project purchased a weather station. As the data is accessible through the internet, this has also proven useful for planning surveys which require specific weather conditions. Despite being close to Welshpool, the undulating terrain and height of the hill create a unique microclimate.





## Friends of PBFs volunteer group

PBFs need all the friends they can get! MWT has been working to safeguard the future of the species for over 20 years, but they remain on a knife edge. *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* set up this group to help carry out habitat management, surveys and events,

This provided a fantastic opportunity to offer new volunteering opportunities, including where the lack of personal transport may be a limiting factor. This voluntary work could also allow people to develop new skills, which may be particularly useful for those seeking employment or a career change. In Powys, many people suffer from rural isolation, especially if they live alone. Opportunities like volunteering or attending events can help to reduce rural isolation, and improve social interactions, also having a benefit on people's mental wellbeing.

The other reason to set up a site-based volunteer group of this nature is to encourage support beyond the life of a single short-term project. This has been successfully achieved at other sites in the area.



At the project launch event participants were offered the opportunity to sign up as a Friends of PBFs volunteer. Recruitment was also targeted at golf club members and existing MWT supporters. By the end of the project, 36 people were on the Friends of PBFs email list. 21 of these have volunteered their time on the project. An additional 23 volunteers (Montgomeryshire Flora Group, Wild Skill Wild Spaces volunteers, ad-hoc volunteers) have also supported the project. The total volunteer time received by the project was 551 hours.

As well as on-the-job training in species identification and survey techniques, volunteers were offered free First Aid Training on site in March 2024, which was attended by six people.

In order to assess the value of the project to our Friends of PBFs volunteer group, a feedback form in Microsoft Forms was circulated to the mailing list. 14 responses were received; not only is a 39% response rate considered to be good, but also this represents the majority of the active volunteers, so the results are considered representative.

50% of respondents were new volunteers (i.e. they had not volunteered with MWT prior to the project). One individual was a member of WGC and five were members of MWT; one person had joined MWT as a result of the project. The overall enjoyment rating for the project was 8.86/10.



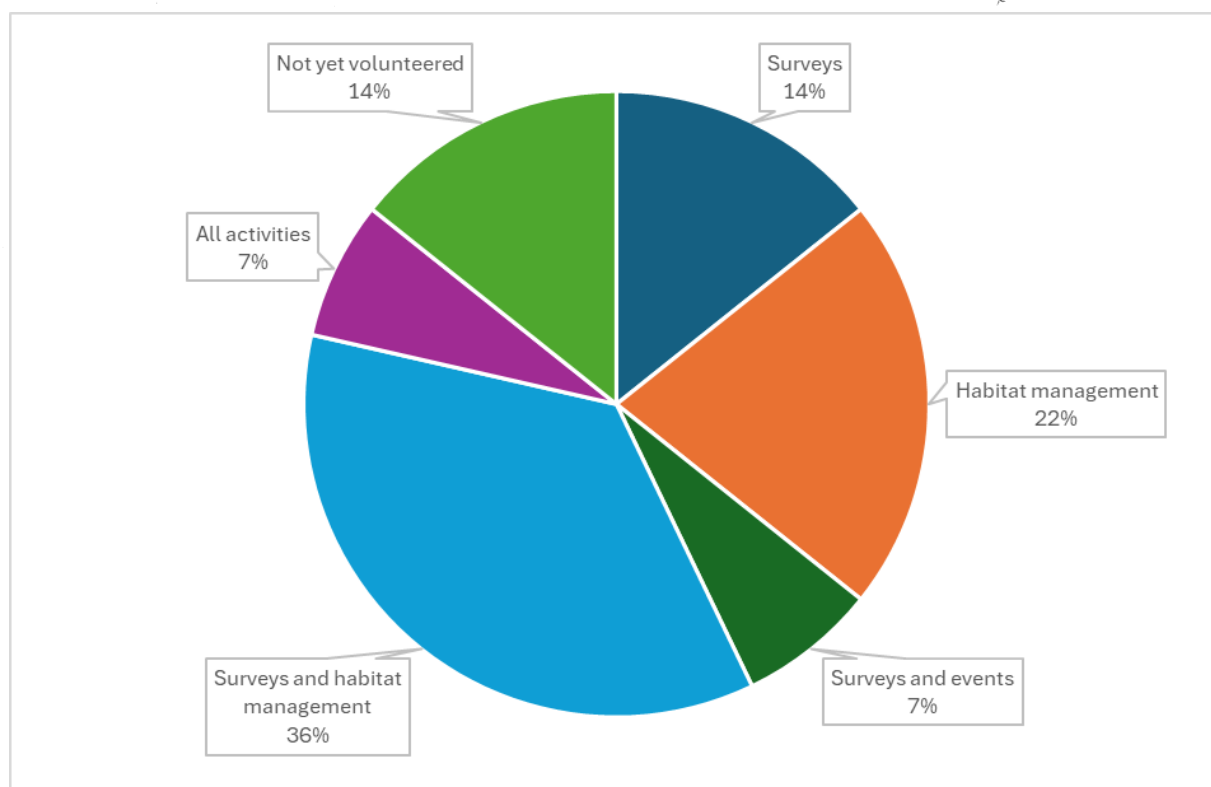




Perhaps unsurprisingly, the main reason given for wanting to join the Friends of PBFs volunteer group was to help wildlife, specifically PBFs and other butterflies. Being close to where people live was also given as a positive driver, as well as the opportunity to meet like-minded people, engage in physical activity, and gain experience and knowledge.



Volunteers were offered two main activities as part of the project: surveys and habitat management, as well as supporting the events. One keen individual engaged in all activities, and five in both surveys and habitat management.





All respondents stated that the project had met their expectations, and the majority were satisfied with how the project had been run. All stated that we couldn't have done anything better, except maybe provide more cake! Barriers to engagement were listed as availability, physical limitations and weather.

86% felt that they had learnt a lot and 71% gained new skills. The majority (93%) had seen more wildlife and 71% had benefited from greater access to the countryside. People also felt benefits to their physical health (79%) and mental wellbeing (57%). 79% enjoyed meeting new people and 86% agreed that it felt great to be able to make a difference.

● Totally disagree ● Disagree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Agree ● Totally agree ● N/A

I have learnt a lot

I have gained new skills

I have seen more wildlife

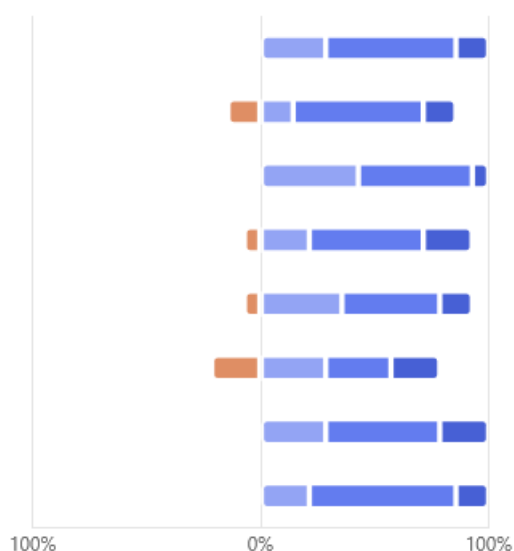
I have benefited from greater access to the countryside

I feel the physical exercise was beneficial to me

My mental health has improved

I have enjoyed meeting new people

It felt great to be able to make a difference



Most of the respondents stated that they are learnt new skills and these broadly fell into five categories:

1. Knowledge of local wildlife and habitats
2. Species identification
3. How to conduct surveys
4. Habitat management
5. First Aid

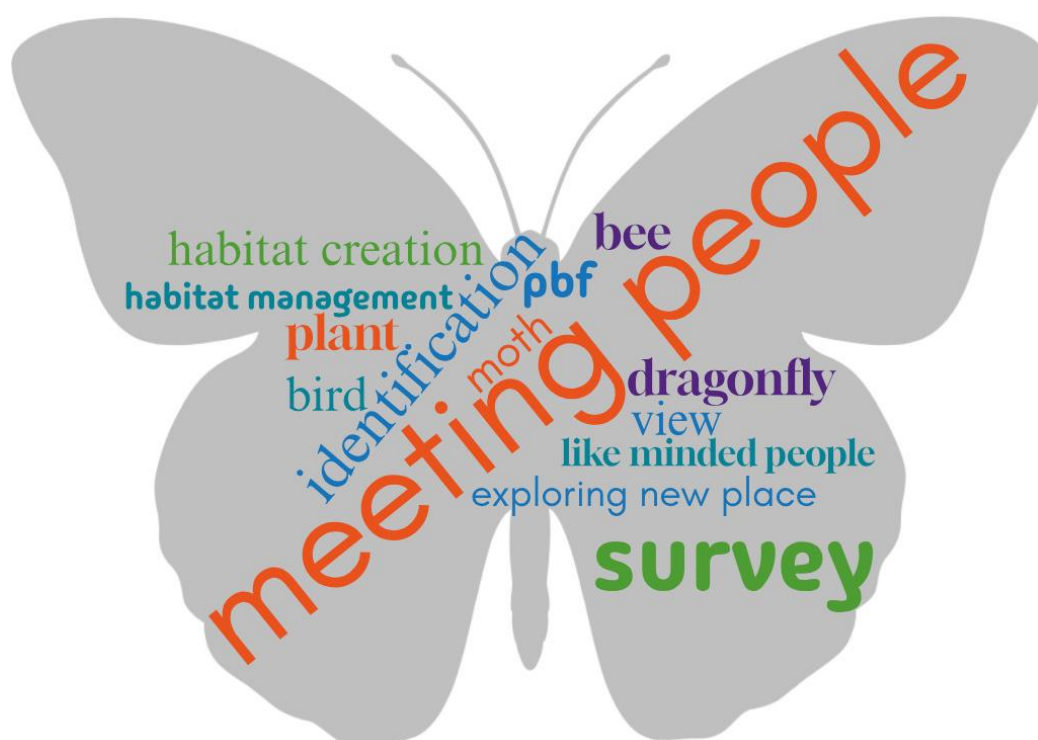
Meeting new people came out top of the things that volunteers particularly enjoyed, along with surveying and identifying a range of species.







*"I really enjoyed the plant field identification session with Montgomeryshire Flora group. I learned so much from them about the species of Golfa and it inspired me to learn more about plants - I'm currently taking a plant diversity module at uni and loving it. The dragonfly and bee sessions were also a highlight for me."*



*"Great to see the area have the attention it deserves"*

85% of respondents stated that they were extremely or very likely to continue as a Friends of PBFs volunteer.





## Awareness raising

During the project five public events were held at the golf club. All these events were well attended and the 'Tee-rific Butterflies', 'Moth Morning' and 'Fungi Walk' events were particularly well received.



'Tee-rific Butterflies' 20<sup>th</sup> May    'Moth Morning' 10<sup>th</sup> July    'Fungi Walk' 23<sup>rd</sup> October (& below)

We also hosted visits from the Montgomeryshire Habitats Management Group, Welshpool 'Stand for Nature Wales' Youth Action Group and Welshpool Scouts, and gave a presentation about the project at the Shropshire Ento Day in January 2025.

A total of 224 people participated in these activities, 25 volunteers, 185 adults and 14 children.

A local photographer and filmmaker (Hannah Zervas) was contracted to work with us, to take photographs during activities, as well as producing a film about the project. Supplementing that produced by the project team and drone footage captured by Dragon UAV, this imagery was provided inspiring footage which could be used for publicity and awareness raising.

A project page was hosted on the MWT website, where regular updates were also posted. We made good use of social media using #fairway2haven to spread the word about the project and the wildlife on site. Average reach on X was 113, Facebook: 1,400 and Instagram: 138. The post with the most reach (3,200) is shown on the next page.



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Ymddiriedolaeth Natur  
**Maldwyn**  
**Montgomeryshire**  
Wildlife Trust



Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

3 August 2024 · 🌐

It is hard to overstate just how good @Welshpool Golf Club is for wildlife. This is in no small part due to the way the site is, and has been managed, working in balance with nature, rather than fighting against it. We are delighted to be collaborating with the team there on the Welshpool Fairway to Haven project to understand this wildlife value better and do what we can to improve it even further. This resource for wildlife goes way beyond our comprehension, as this message we received this week ably demonstrates. The message came from one of the site management staff who knows the site really well.

"The other day there was so much moisture on the ground after either a heavy dew or a period of drizzle. Due to the wild bent grasses being so long at the moment, the moisture clung to the seed heads. I have never seen it cling to the grass quite like it did that morning, so I took several photos to try to record the effect. The one of the single grass plant showing the size of the droplets is an indication of just how much water was clinging to the grass, when you the look at the photo of the grass as a mass. When you the multiply that across the whole course it blew my mind as to the volume of water suspended in the grass that day!"

There is more information on the #fairway2haven project here: <https://www.montwt.co.uk/.../proj.../welshpool-fairway-haven>



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On-site interpretation is a great way to inspire and educate on an on-going basis. After obtaining planning permission, we installed five new bilingual interpretation boards at key locations, which point out specific species interest and explain how the land is managed. Four of these are A1 size and are installed by the access road, by the car park, and at either end of Glyndŵr's Way. The car park board is shown below.



**Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Maldwyn Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust**

# Croeso i'r Golfa

## Welcome to Golfa Hill





**Bras Melyn**  
Yellowhammer



**Carlwm**  
Stoat



**Capiâu cwyr**  
Waxcap fungi



**Britheg Berlog**  
Pearl-bordered Fritillary

### Golygfeydd o Gymru

Dair milltir yn unig o'r Trallwng, mae'r Golfa yn cogyd 341 metr fry uwchben lefel y môr. Ar y copa, ceir golygfeydd goddog o Fynyddoedd y Berwyn, Bryniau Breiddens, a Chadar Idris hyd yn oed ar ddiwrnod clir.

Ers 1932, mae'r safle hwn wedi bod yn gartref i Clwb Goff y Trallwng, sef cwsr 18 twll a gynlluniwyd gan James Braid, dros 223 acwr. Mae Ffordd Glyndŵr – sef fwynt cerdded cenedlaethol 135 milltir o hyd – yn rhedeg trwy'r safle.

Er bod golygfeydd Y Golfa yn ddi-os yn danu golffwyr a cherddwyr fel ei gilydd, y bywyd gwylt torthiog sy'n gwneud y safle yn hynod arbennig.

### Ar drywydd natur

Cadwch olwg am y Fritheg Berlog brin rhwng Ebrill a Mehefin – dolieth fr rhedyn, dyna un o'r ychydig leoliadau sydd ar ôl yng Nghymru lle gallwch weld y glyn byw hardd hwn.

Mae bywyd gwylt anghyffredin arogl y gallwch ei weld yma yn cynnwys Breision Melyn, Corheddyddion y Coed, Ysgyfarnogod, Carlymod, Clychau'r Gog a ffynghau capiau cwyr prin.

Yr amrywiaeth enfawr o gynefinoedd yn Y Golfa sy'n gyfrifol am y torth o fywyd gwylt a weir ar y safle. Oer yma laswelltroedd, gwylltiroedd, pylleu, rhosiroedd, coediroedd a physgwydd sydd wedi deillio o fynyddoedd lawer o reoli gofalus, a hefyd caiff rhai ardaloedd eu gadael yn wylt.

Mae'r cwsr golff hwn yn gwsr golff 'cynoch' – hynny yw, caiffdd ei gynllunio o amgylch y dirwedd naturiol. Caiff ei reoli mewn modd bach ei effaith sy'n gweithio law yn law â natur ar ymhorau, yn hytrach na brwydro yn eu herbyn. Cwsr gwaelid ydyw ac mae'r glaswelltau'n gallu gwrthsefyll clefydau a sychder, felly nid ydynt anghafaelu o'r ffaith, dŵr na chomogau.

Er bod Clwb Goff y Trallwng eisoes yn hafan i fywyd gwylt, fe wnaethom ddechrau gweithio gydag Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Maldwyn yn 2024 er mwyn gwella mwy fyth ar y safle – rhywbeth a fydd, gobellthio, o fudd i'n hymedwyr yn ogystal ag i'r bywyd gwylt, am fynyddoedd i ddod.



**Clwb Goff y Trallwng**  
Welshpool Golf Club

Tŷ Clwb  
Club House

**Ffordd Glyndŵr**  
Glyndŵr's Way

**Lwybr Caniatol**  
Permissive Path

**Cerddwyr:** dilynwch y gylch mewnol i'r ddaith i'r golfa, mae'n arwngylchi i'r golfa a'r golfa. Mae'n golygu bod y golfa yn ddaith i'r golfa.

**Wlkers:** follow the yellow-topped marker posts for Glyndŵr's Way and the blue-topped marker posts for the Permissive Path.

### Views of Wales

Just three miles outside Welshpool, **Golfa Hill** rises 341 metres above sea level, its summit boasting breathtaking views over the Berwyns, the Breiddens, and even Cadair Idris on a clear day.

Since 1932, this has been home to **Welshpool Golf Club**, an 18-hole James Braid-designed course set over 223 acres. Glyndŵr's Way – the 135-mile national walking trail – also runs through here.

While Golfa Hill's panoramas undoubtedly attract golfers and walkers alike, it's the **wealth of wildlife** that makes it particularly special.

### On course for nature

Look out for the rare **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, from April to June; thanks to its bracken habitats, this is one of the few places left in Wales where you can see this beautiful butterfly.

Other uncommon wildlife seen here includes **Yellowhammer**, **Tree Pipit**, **Brown Hare**, **Stoat**, **Kestrel**, **Grass Snake**, **bluebells** and rare **waxcap fungi**.

The abundance of wildlife at Golfa is thanks to the **huge diversity of habitats** – grassland, wetland, ponds, heath, woodland and scrub – a result of many years of careful management, as well as leaving some areas wild.

This is what's known as a 'naturalised' golf course – meaning it was designed around the natural landscape. It's cared for in a low-impact manner that works in harmony with nature and with the seasons, rather than fighting against them. A moorland course, its grasses are disease- and drought-resistant, requiring little nutrition and water, as well as minimal chemicals.

Although already a haven for wildlife, **Welshpool Golf Club** began working with **Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust** in 2024 to make the site even better – something we hope will bring benefit to the people who visit, as much as the wildlife, for years to come.

### Helpwch i gadw'r Golfa yn lle arbennig i bobl ac i fywyd gwylt:

- Yn garedig ddiogel, mae Clwb Goff y Trallwng yn caniatáu i bobl nad ydynt yn aelodau fynd ar y safle. Helpwch i gynnal y prifd ddaethau hwn i lawr trwy barchu'r safle ac i ddio'i aelodau'r clwb golff - dioschi.
- Er ddiogelwch, gofynnwch i'r mynedwyr gadw at y llywbrau a bod yn ymwybodol o'r golffwyr sy'n chwarae o'u cwmpas.
- Croeso i'r cwsr a'r dderbynydd byr. Cefnrich tanhau ar ôl eich ci bob amser: gan fynd â'ch bagiau baw cŵn a'ch dŵr i'ch ci.
- Dim ond trwy drefnu ymlaen llaw y caniatwch beicio a marchwogaeth.
- Dilynwch y Codi Cefn Gwlad – cofiwch adeil dim and allon traed a chymryd dim and atgofion.



Partnership Natur Powys  
Powys Nature Partnership



WcVA  
C&GC



Powis  
Awdurdod Llywodraethol Cymru  
Welsh Government

### Help keep Golfa Hill special for people & wildlife:

- Welshpool Golf Club kindly allows access to non-members. Please help keep this a positive experience for everyone by respecting the site and giving way to golf club members - thank you!
- For your safety, visitors are asked to stick to marked paths and be aware of where golfers are playing the course around you.
- Dogs welcome on short leads. Always clear up after your dog, taking poo bags home.
- Cycling and horse-riding are only allowed by prior arrangement.
- Please follow the Countryside Code - leave only footprints, take only memories.

A1 Interpretation board installed by the car park



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Ymddiriedolaeth Natur  
**Maldwyn**  
**Montgomeryshire**  
Wildlife Trust

An A2 board was also installed above the peatland to help walkers enjoying Glyndŵr's Way to understand how special this area is. This is shown below.

Ymddiriedolaeth Natur  
**Maldwyn**  
Montgomeryshire  
Wildlife Trust

## Gwlyb, gwyllt a gwych

### Wet, wild & wonderful

POWIS  
ESTATES

#### Oeddech chi'n gwybod?

Mae gwlyptiroedd yn arwyr yr hinsawdd! Maen nhw ymhlith y dalfeydd carbon gorau ar y Ddaear. Trwy warchod ac adfer gwlyptiroedd, gellir helpu i wrthdroi effeithiau newid hinsawdd, fel llifogydd a sychder.

#### Did you know?

Wetlands are climate superheroes! They are some of the best carbon sinks on Earth. Protecting and restoring wetlands can also help counter the effects of climate change, such as flooding & drought.

#### Pfeuen y Gors

Bogbean

#### Mignen i'w hedmygu

O'ch blaen, fe welwch gynefin bywyd gwyllt gwylaidd sy'n hynod o arbennig.

Math o wlyptir yw mignen - ac mae'r fignen hon yn gynefin rhyfedd! Yn gyntaf, ni ddylai fod ar Y Golfa o gwbl. Mae priddoedd mawng fel y rhain, lle ceir migwyn sy'n ffurfio mawn, yn brin iawn - yn enwedig ar dir isel fel y tir hwn. Hefyd, o fewn yr ardal fach hon ceir gwahanol fathau o gynefinoedd gwlyptir sy'n cynnal amrywiaeth anhygoel o fywyd gwyllt!

#### A mire to admire

In front of you is an unassuming wildlife habitat that's indescribably special.

A type of wetland, this mire is a marvel of nature! Firstly, it shouldn't really be on Golfa Hill. Peat-rich soils like these, where you find peat-forming sphagnum moss, are very rare - especially at lower altitudes like these. What's more, within this small area are numerous different wetland habitats, which support an amazing diversity of wildlife!

#### Fantastic flora & fauna

During winter, blink and you'd miss it, but from spring to autumn this wetland complex comes alive! In May and June, showstopping spotted orchids turn this wetland a sea of pink. In June, the fluffy white seed heads of Common Cotton-grass are like summer snowfall. The spikey star-shaped flowers of Bog Asphodel add a splash of yellow in June and July, before turning golden-orange by August. The purple-blue flower-heads of Devil's-bit Scabious, meanwhile, nod in the breeze from summer well into October.

These floral beauties provide vital food for bees, butterflies like the Dark Green Fritillary, caterpillars and other insects. Wetland areas like this are also prime real estate for dragonflies who lay their eggs and hunt insect prey here. In particular, keep your eyes peeled for Black Darter, Emperor Dragonfly and Keeled Skimmer!

#### Fflora a ffawna ffantastig

Yn ystod y gaeaf, mae'r rhyfeddodau'n anodd iawn eu gweld; ond rhwng y gwanwyn a'r hydref, mae'r gwlyptir hwn yn llawn bywyd! Yn ystod Mai a Mehefin, mae tegeiriau brych anhygoel yn troi'r gwlyptir yn fôr o binc. Ym mis Mehefin, mae pennau hadau gwyn manflewog Plu'r Gweunydd yn gorchuddio'r safle fel eira. Yn ystod Mehefin a Gorffennaf, mae blodau pigog siâp sêr Llafrn y Bladur yn ychwanegu fflach o felyn, cyn troi'n oren euraidd ym mis Awst. Yn y cyfamsr, mae pennau blodau piwslas Tamaid y Cythraul yn siglo yn yr awel rhwng yr haf a diwedd mis Hydref.

Mae'r blodau hardd hyn yn ffynhonnell fwyd hollbwysig i wenydd, gloynnod byw fel Brithegion Gwyrdd, lindys a phryfed eraill. Hefyd, mae gwlyptiroedd fel y rhain yn gartref gwych i weision y neidr sy'n dodwy eu hwyau ac yn hela pryfed yma. Yn arbennig, cadwch olwg am y Wâell Ddu, yr Ymerawdwr a'r Picellwr Cribog!

#### Britheg Werdd

Dark Green Fritillary

#### Picellwr Cribog

Keeled Skimmer

#### Llafrn y Bladur

Bog Asphodel

Ariannwyd y bwrdd dehongli hwn o Gronfa Lloedd Lleol ar gyfer Natur Llywodraeth Cymru.

Partnriaeth Natur Powys  
Powys Nature Partnership

WeVa  
CGGC

Adran Gyrru  
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Powys

This interpretation board has been funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Fund.

A2 Interpretation board installed by the peatland



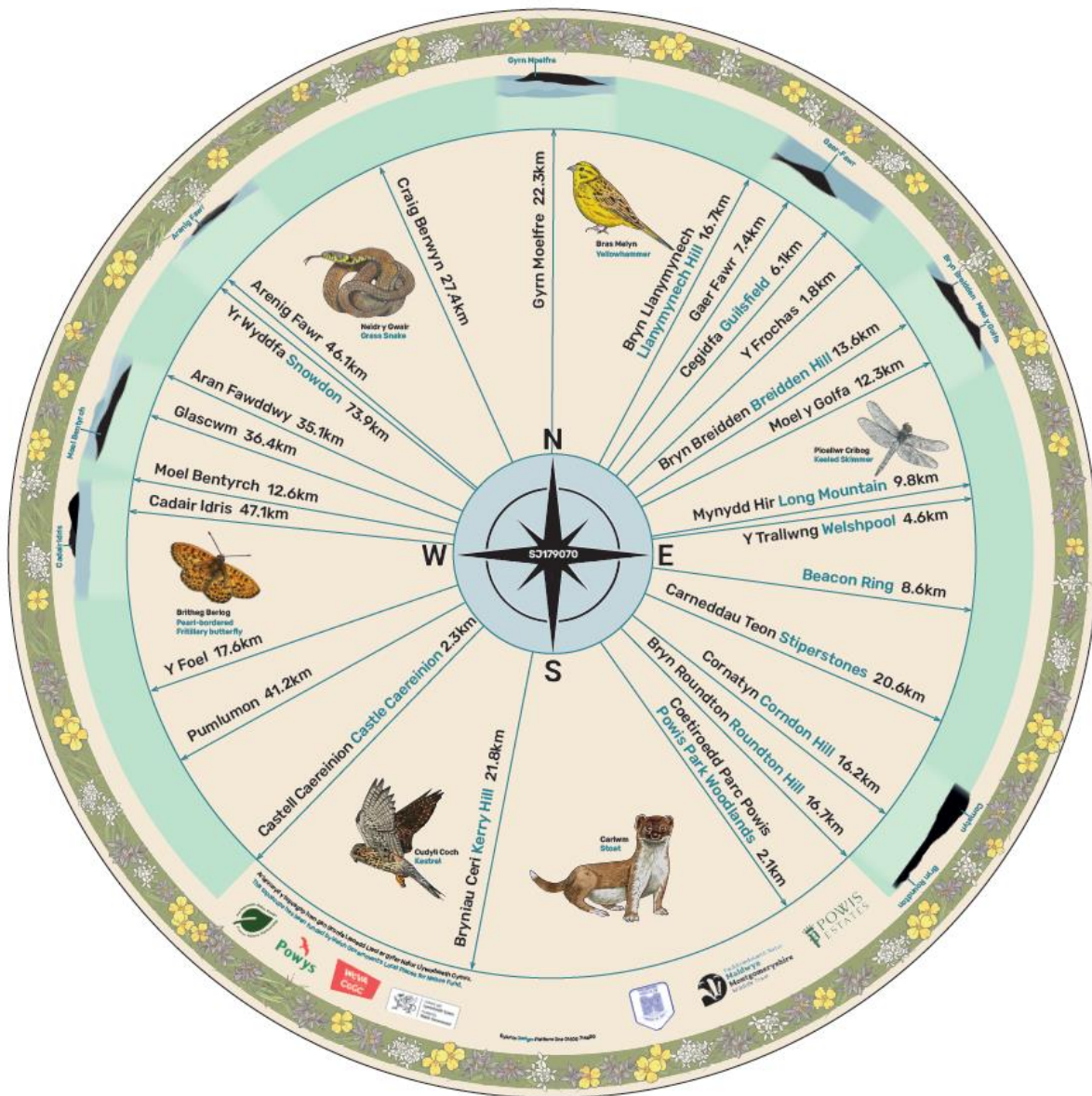
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Y Golfa is blessed with breathtaking views which extend across Wales to Cadair Idris and Snowdonia, and well into Shropshire. To interpret this landscape, we installed two toposcopes, one beside the hill-top trig point and the other at a key crossing high point on the golf course. One of these is shown below.



Toposcope installed on the golf course



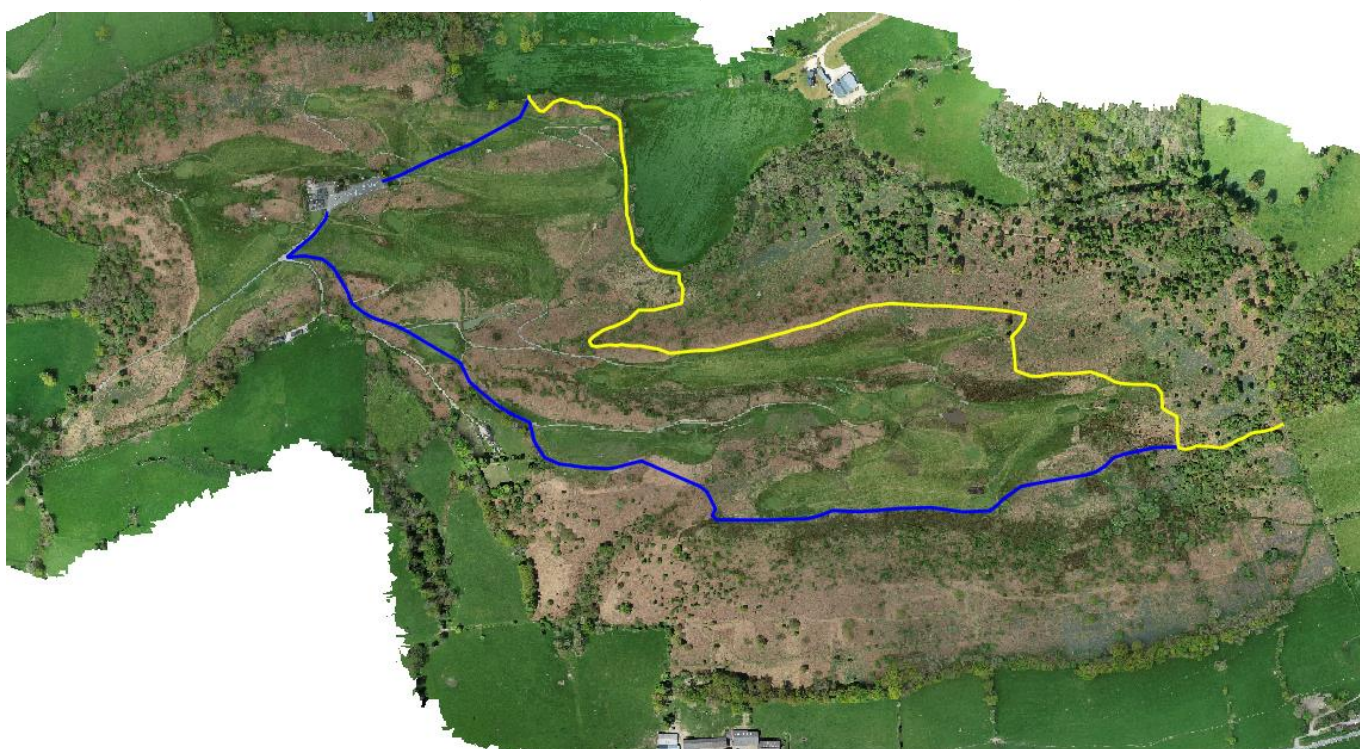




## Access improvements

Welshpool Golf Club is happy to welcome visitors, but it is important to maintain a balance; members should not be negatively impacted, and visitors need to be kept safe. There are several footpaths crossing the site, including Glyndŵr's Way National Trail which directly links the site to the town of Welshpool. These can easily become overgrown during the summer months, and for those who don't know such a large area it can be unclear where to go.

One approach for tackling this was the creation of a new permissive path, extending for 1.9km, linking the car park with Glyndŵr's Way and together creating a good circular walk. This is shown in blue on the map below, with Glyndŵr's Way shown in yellow.



A version of this map is displayed on the new interpretation boards and new marker posts with blue tops have been installed along the new path to indicate where to go.

Maintenance of these and other key footpaths has been carried out as part of the project, and will continue, thanks to the machinery purchased. We are delighted to be able to offer these improvements to the site access, enabling people to get closer to nature on their doorstep.



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*Robocut in action, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (L)  
and one of the new marker posts indicating the permissive path (R)*



*A small area of the April 2024 high-resolution drone captured aerial showing the eastern section of Glyndŵr's Way coming onto the site and joining other paths.*







## Project challenges

Whilst *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* has been a very successful project, it has not been without challenges which are listed below along with potential suggestions for mitigating or avoiding these in future projects.

- **Delayed start:** the original project start date was 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, but notification of the award of funding was approximately one month later than originally indicated. As this pushed the project start into the short month of December, it put unnecessary pressure on the project, which needed to deliver over £100k spend before the end of March. As the partners took their planned timescales from the funder, the only way it could be avoided in future is to build in slippage time to project plans. In this case, whilst the team could have done without the stress, the delay impacted minimally on overall delivery, principally reducing the amount of volunteer time and habitat management delivered in year one.
- **Complex funding mechanism:** this project was funded by Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature Challenge Fund, administered by WCVA. The funding was awarded to Powys County Council, who then awarded funding to projects through the Powys Nature Partnership. *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* was itself a partnership project; Welshpool Golf Club was the lead partner, working with Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust. Due to this complexity, a significant amount of time was spent working out the administration of the funding and formalising the partnership. Along with the delayed start detailed above, this further impeded the commencement of project delivery, with the project formally launched at an event on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Funding mechanisms vary enormously, but it is worthwhile factoring in appropriate levels of additional slippage and staff time into projects.
- **Claim process:** likely mainly as a result of the complex funding mechanism, possibly compounded by a change in staffing at Powys County Council, the claim process has not been straightforward. At times, there have been significant delays in receiving the necessary paperwork and the channels of communication were not always clear. The project did not receive a schedule of claim dates until halfway through year two and the final claim and report had to be submitted a month before the project was due to end. Had the partnership known about the final claim deadline when the project was submitted, we would have amended the planned delivery schedule accordingly. Many of these issues are unavoidable, with the onus on the funder. Future projects could perhaps plan to finish early at the outset to avoid unnecessary pressure on delivery/unrealistic timescales.





- **Weather:** as predicted, the weather has been challenging at times! It is rather unfortunate that a project with only one summer survey season should pick what has been widely reported as the worst ever for insects! This has meant that we have been unable to accurately assess the true value of the site for insects. Funding limited this, but ideally future projects which include weather critical surveys should be carried out over two survey seasons. Poor weather has also caused a few volunteer work party cancellations or shortened days, also impacting volunteer time. Events were planned to ensure flexibility around weather conditions and having access to an indoor space (the club house) also helped. More staff time to put on additional sessions, as well as more time for delivery would also help mitigate these issues.
- **Volunteer time shortfall:** the project had projected receiving a total of 630 volunteer hours, but final delivery was 551 hours. We had hoped to exceed 630 hours, but not only was the project contracted (as detailed above), but also volunteer numbers on many of the habitat management work parties was lower than expected. MWT also ran out of staff time to lead work parties. Our volunteer feedback form tried to understand whether there were any barriers to engagement, but the responses we received suggest it was simply a case of volunteer availability and ability, rather than anything more the project could have done. It is fantastic that so many new volunteers got involved with the project and the value to those who took part is high. It is always difficult to predict this sort of thing in advance, so we suggest future projects are more conservative when putting forward volunteer time.
- **Insufficient staff time:** MWT needed more staff time for the project delivery than anticipated, largely due to the issues related above, as well as additional more minor unforeseen circumstances. By the end of the project, MWT had contributed 16 additional days. With underspend in other areas of the project, it was possible to fund a few additional days, but future projects should include more staff time for administration so that adequate resources are available.



View  
looking  
northwest;  
taken from  
Spring  
2024  
drone flight







## Conclusion

Despite the challenges encountered, *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* successfully delivered against the project aims. The increased understanding of the wildlife value of the site, the new five-year management plan and the 'Friends of PBFs' volunteer group have all contributed to improved habitat management. Through events, path improvements and interpretation, public access to the site has been improved. There is an increased awareness about the site and its special wildlife.

The project demonstrates how a golf club can take the lead, balancing the needs of members and visitor access, as well as ensuring plenty of space for wild plants, animals and fungi. Although *Welshpool Fairway to Haven* has now finished, the partnership between Welshpool Golf Club and Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust will continue, working with the 'Friends of PBFs' volunteers to deliver for people and wildlife across the 116 hectare Golfa Common.



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