



Regrowth and walkers at Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm (images by Michael Hall).



Cronfa Gymunedol Fferm Wynt
PEN Y CYMOEDD
Wind Farm Community Fund CIC

Pen y Cymoedd Farm and Fund

Community Newsletter, Spring 2022

VATTENFALL 



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Five Years On

Since 2017, the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund has been supporting communities across the upper Neath, Afan, Rhondda and Cynon valleys.

Over 4,000 local individuals, organisations and community groups were involved in setting the original vision for Pen y Cymoedd. This engagement highlighted opportunities to drive local development under themes such as sport, business, environment, heritage and more.

The Fund has always been led by the community, for the community.

Five years on, we want to engage with you, our communities, to review our progress and set out a plan for the next five years. In this newsletter we

celebrate what we have achieved so far and look to where we go next.

That is why we have launched **Refresh the Vision of the Fund**. We want your views on what you believe your local community could benefit from so we know how best to support you.

We are gathering local views to set the plan for the Fund over the next five years and we're keen to hear from everyone. You can find out more and add your views here: <https://penycymoeddcic.cymru/refresh-the-vision-of-the-fund/>.

All images taken by Michael Hall. Below left: David Jones and Rhian Hall, Cynon Valley Museum. Below right: Morgan Harries at Ironworx Gym, Hirwaun.

Since 2017



300 projects supported

133 jobs created and safeguarded

£6.9 million in funding distributed



Above: Melanie Blayney at the mural painted by local volunteers at Penderyn Community centre during the covid pandemic.

£500,000 COVID-19 fund

In response to the pandemic, the Fund launched an emergency **£500,000 COVID-19 fund** - through which it supported **32 existing businesses** to help survive the crisis and **23 new COVID-19-specific projects** to get off the ground.



Image by Lee Williams.

For every £1 invested by the Fund, 47p is generated for the Welsh economy

Over **£380,000 in funding** to support new business start-ups, supporting the creation of over 50 FT jobs.

Since 2017, Pen y Cymoedd' has supported **over 300 grassroots projects** with £6.9million in funding.

The Fund has also **supported 27 green spaces**, to the sum of £283,000.

The Fund has approved grants and loans ranging from **£280 to £491,000**.

Vattenfall: Fossil Free by 2040

Vattenfall has a vision to enable fossil free living within one generation, and we're taking major steps to reduce emissions within our existing operations. At the end of September, we aligned ourselves with the wider goal of limiting global warming in this century to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

In addition to this, we're involved in a major pilot that's seen the production of the world's first 'fossil fuel free steel' - using hydrogen instead of coal - and we're exploring the development of sustainable aviation fuel in partnership with Shell, Lanzatech and SAS.



Image by Michael Hall.



Work for future generations

COP26 - how we've taken part

Pen y Cymoedd hosted a BBC live broadcast during the global climate change conference COP26. The broadcast showcased how schemes, such as Pen y Cymoedd, are making a huge difference to creating clean energy for homes, jobs and employment and benefits for local people.

First Movers Coalition

At the global climate change conference COP26 in November, we joined United States special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry and other partners as a proud founding member of a new initiative aiming to speed up the development of climate-friendly technologies - The First Movers Coalition.

This drive is across eight sectors of industry that today comprise more than 30% of global CO₂ emissions, where new technologies need to be accelerated to reduce emissions.

Education for future generations

Primary school children from the Neath, Afan, Rhondda and Cynon Valley areas have been learning about renewable energy, thanks to a collaboration between Vattenfall and Carmarthenshire based education specialist Ynni Da.

Aimed at making conversations on green issues relatable for children, the activities tied in with COP26.

Schoolchildren were shown a series of fun films to help them understand climate change, and provided with packs of classroom activities, like building miniature

wind turbines and solar panels.

They were also made aware of how real-life examples of renewables projects, like Pen y Cymoedd, are helping to tackle climate change.

Headteacher from Cwmnedd Primary School in Glynneath, Sarah Harwood, said: "This opportunity was an exciting step for our pupils. With Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm a visible example of renewable energy in their local area, our children can also link what they learn in the classroom to what they can see on their doorstep."

Jeremy Miles, MS for Neath, who supports the project said: "I am proud that here in Wales, climate change and the environment is at the heart of the Welsh Government's decision making. In a world that is being increasingly shaped by climate change, it is vital that children and young people not only learn about its impact but are also equipped with knowledge for the green jobs of the future. Community initiatives like this are a fantastic opportunity for pupils to see renewable energy and the benefits that it brings, in action, close to home."

Blade recycling

Vattenfall has committed to reach a 100% recycling rate of decommissioned wind turbine blades by 2030. As this may seem a while away, we've set ourselves an interim goal of 50% recycling by 2025. On top of this, we've initiated a total landfill ban on decommissioned blades from our wind farms, with immediate effect.

Achieving 100% recycling by 2030 is, of course, a big challenge. But we're proud of the role we're playing in creating a fossil fuel free future.

Lost Peatlands Project prepares for a busy spring and summer

Activity in all Lost Peatlands Project Programmes continues with 2022 promising to be action packed for this Heritage Lottery funded partnership project, based in the Uplands above RCT and NPT. A packed schedule of events is currently being finalised in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners - including Vattenfall, Ramblers Cymru and Welcome to Our Woods - all of who are key in the delivery of this exciting project.

A range of different activities are on offer in the local area, free of charge, to those interested in topics such as nature conservation, health and wellbeing or local heritage. With various project sites both within reach of local communities and in the vast landscape above, there's plenty on offer for all to get involved with.

Volunteering forms a big part of plans to restore, preserve and enhance the natural habitats within this unique part of the world, and training is available to those who either wish to make a start in the environmental sector or simply enjoy being outside doing their bit for nature.

If walking is your thing, the project aims to improve local walking routes and the proposed Peatland Way - stretching from Dare Valley Country Park to Afan Forest Park - is definitely a challenge for those who like all day hikes.

Local history plays an important role for all that live and visit the Upper Rhondda Fawr and Afan Valleys, and through the Lost Peatlands Story the project aims to tell the tale of a changing landscape throughout the ages. To give this justice, as well as to identify quirky little known tales that may only be known in local communities, we are reaching out to anyone with local knowledge - whether it be stories, photographs or anything you'd like to share - in efforts to preserve and celebrate the rich history of this area.

There are workshops to get involved with, or simply staff to chat to on a one to one basis, but once ready this work will inform local interpretation panels, a mobile app, full of exciting features, and materials to help educate future generations and visitors to the area.

Elsewhere in the Lost Peatlands project, peatland restoration is underway and more is planned for winter 2022/23. These sites are well worth a visit, and if you fancy surveying local bird or bat populations, or even assisting in the management of these globally significant and rare habitats, join the Project Ecologists to help collect vital data and enjoy the wilderness up on top.

To find out more about any of the above, and maybe join as a volunteer or contribute to the Lost Peatlands Story, visit the project website: www.npt.gov.uk/lostpeatlands, find us on social media [@LostPeatlands](https://www.instagram.com/LostPeatlands) or call 07791638201.



Pen y Cymoedd

Habitat Management Plan

We're just over three years into The Habitat Management Plan - a project funded by Vattenfall and delivered by Natural Resources Wales - to restore 1,500ha of bog across the wind farm's area.

The priority for the plan is hydrological restoration, or rewetting, of approximately 800ha of degraded blanket bog, wet and dry heath and native woodland.

By returning the area to a more natural state, the hope is the bog would lock more carbon in the land and become rich in wildlife.

With 25 years commitment to the project and a £3million fund available, great progress is already being made.

Early signs encouraging

In winter 2020 the rewetting of a 15ha area was completed. It has been monitored for signs of recovery and effectiveness of the rewetting procedures undertaken.

Project manager, Gareth Roberts, said: "Ground water levels have responded to the rewetting work and recent analysis shows that they are near to the surface for significant periods of time. Rewetted areas are also showing signs of recolonisation by habitat-appropriate plant species, such as bog mosses (*Sphagna*) and cotton grasses, which is encouraging news."

During autumn and winter, a further 10ha of rewetting in the western-central part of restoration area has been completed. Restoration of a further 20ha will begin in February.

Programming of the project's sites will continue over the coming years changing the character and value of the land's contribution to tackling the joint climate change and biodiversity emergencies.

Protection of wildlife

Delivery of operations are carefully planned to ensure important species of wildlife are protected. Populations of water vole, traditionally thought of as a lowland species, have been found in the plan's area, as well as reptiles and breeding birds.

Careful surveying and planning is undertaken to identify which areas they are using to make sure they are protected during the restoration works.

"These species will be monitored over the long term to see how their populations respond to the increased availability of suitable habitat," said Gareth.



We want to hear from you!

Help us direct our funding to the areas that need it most by responding to this questionnaire

1. How much do you know about the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund?

- I have heard of the Fund
- I know something that has been funded by PyC
- I am part of a group or business that has been funded by PyC
- I have never heard of the Fund

2. How would you rate your local area now in terms of the following?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from where you are.

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Neither good nor poor, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very poor

	1	2	3	4	5
Community facilities					
Local shops and the high street					
Education, training and job opportunities					
Natural environment					
Health and wellbeing facilities and services					
Culture					
Infrastructure (i.e road, transport links, broadband access)					

3. How important is investment in these things over the next 5 years for the community to thrive?

1 = Very important, 2 = Fairly important, 3 = Neither important or unimportant, 4 = Fairly unimportant, 5 = Not important at all

	1	2	3	4	5
Local community buildings such as community centres and halls					
Improving local leisure, sports and recreational spaces					
Training and helping businesses to employ more people					
Helping new businesses to start in the area					
Improving the digital infrastructure in the area					
Addressing the impact of climate change					
Increasing sustainable living (improving energy efficiency and green transport and biodiversity/woodland projects)					
Supporting local community and voluntary organisations					
Transport and connections across the area					
Encouraging and supporting tourism					
Projects to support physical and mental health and wellbeing					

4. What 5 words best describe what you want your community to be like in 5 years?

5. If you have any specific ideas for your area, please include them below.

6. Would you be happy to take part in a more in-depth survey or telephone discussion in the future?

If so, please provide an email address or telephone number.

The following demographic questions help us assess the range of respondents to the survey. They are optional and you can still submit the survey without answering these.

What gender do you identify as?

- Male Non-binary Other*
 Female Prefer not to answer
 Trans-gender

*Please specify

What is your age range?

- Below 18 25 - 44 Above 65
 18 - 24 45 - 64

Where in the Fund area do you live (or work, if you do not live in area)?

- Neath Rhondda Fawr Cynon
 Afan Rhondda Fach Other*

*Please specify

Do you consider yourself as having a disability or a long-term health condition that affects your ability to work or take part in social activities?

*Please provide your contact details if you wish to get a response. Any information provided will only be used for the purposes of Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm & CIC as stated in this newsletter and will not be disclosed to any third parties. Thank you.

“Shared decision making about future of the Fund requires a shared understanding of goals. We aspire that the Fund be community-led, place based and adaptable to community opportunities, issues, and priorities. We need your help to make sure we have all the information we need to set priorities and action plan for the next 5 years. We are now looking to the future and view this period of consultation as an opportunity to stimulate innovation and community activity not just gather information.”

Kate Breeze, Executive Director PyC Community Fund

You can provide your thoughts on our funding in the following ways:

Fill in this feedback form and post back to us: Please pop your completed survey in an envelope and send to **Freepost GRASSHOPPER CONSULT**. A stamp is not required. Thank you and we look forward to reading your responses.

Or you can give us feedback instantly by emailing enquiries@penycymoeddcic.cymru or scanning the QR code.

