Coetir Anian Cambrian Wildwood

Spring/Summer 2026

What's been happening at Bwlch Corog?

Volunteer group collaboration | Funding updates | Upcoming events at Bwlch Corog

Introduction to Coetir Anian

Restoring Habitats and Species; Connecting People with Nature

Coetir Anian (also known as Cambrian Wildwood) is a nature restoration and nature connection charity based in Mid Wales. Since 2017, we have been custodians of Bwlch Corog, 142 hectares of land at the hamlet of Glaspwll near Machynlleth, where we are restoring a rich mosaic of habitats including native woodland, peatland, heath and species-rich grassland. Our work focuses on helping natural processes recover – improving biodiversity, supporting the return of plants and animals, and building resilience to climate change through long-term, landscape-scale restoration.

Bwlch Corog is in the north of Ceredigion county, in the catchment of the Afon (river) Dyfi, and in a rural heartland of the Welsh language. We strive to integrate and respect the natural, cultural and linguistic heritage of this land and the wider landscape in every aspect of our work.

Cover image: Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary and Aberyswyth Conservation Volunteers join one of our tree planting volunteer days

As well as managing Bwlch Corog, we collaborate with neighbouring farmers, landowners and partner organisations with the aims of creating joined-up habitats across the wider landscape and supporting sustainable farming.

Connecting people with nature is at the heart of what we do. We run a wide range of activities, including nature connection programmes, volunteer workdays, training courses and educational visits – enabling people of all ages and as many backgrounds as possible to engage with and learn from the natural world. We work with local schools, local authorities and other charities to bring people to spend time in nature – often people who have difficulty accessing wild places and who have the most to gain from building a connection with nature. Through this work, we aim not only to restore nature at Bwlch Corog but also to inspire a deeper understanding of, and care for, the landscapes around us.

For information about Coetir Anian, including who we are, details about the land we care for, visiting, volunteering and events, visit cambrianwildwood.org. We can be contacted at post@coetiranian.org.

From our Project Director

It's spring again, and Bwlch Corog is once more alive with the song of migratory birds who have flown in from warmer climes to join us for their nesting season. We have - among other species - pied flycatcher, redstart and wood warbler in our temperate rainforest, as well as the iconic cuckoo. Spring here is always a few weeks behind the lower areas nearby, and bluebells in our woodlands are just starting to bloom now at the beginning of May. May and June are the loveliest months at Bwlch Corog, and we have a few events coming up, so come and join us if you can! Our annual Open Day in June will be followed by a nature ID event in July - not to mention our regular twice monthly volunteer days and our seasonal activity days for children and young people. Further details later in the newsletter!

Over the winter we were able to progress a number of woodland management tasks thanks to a new partnership project for woodlands in the Dyfi Biosphere, funded by the National Forest for Wales Landscape Scheme - more about this project later in the newsletter. One of my tasks over recent months has been to look into the potential for reopening a historic footpath from Bwlch Corog to Glaspwll, and we hope that this ambition will become a reality by the end of the summer. Still on a woodland theme, last month I and other members of staff and volunteers from Coetir Anian enjoyed taking part in the LIFE Celtic Rainforests end of project conference - a welcome chance to meet others also working to protect and expand our native woodlands, visit some beautiful woodlands in North Wales, and to share our work at Bwlch Corog.

Project Director
Katy Harris

Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION
Garfield Weston FOUNDATION
CRONFA GYMUNEDOL COMMUNITY FUND
Cronfa Treftadaeth Heritage Fund
Mewn Partneriaeth â Llywodraeth Cymru
In Partnership with Welsh Government
thewaterloofoundation

Thank you to our Contractors

Siôn

As a small charity, we're not able to cover all the work that needs doing within the very small staff team. We often employ the services of external contractors, for a wide range of work - from felling trees in our larch plantation, to controlling bracken by horse and roller or by scythe, to building the structures we use to run our nature connection programmes and various events. Since December, we've been regularly assisted in the running of our Primary Schools and Nature Ambassadors programmes by Siôn Rickard. Siôn, originally from Betws-y-Coed but now a Machynlleth local, is an experienced educator and facilitator, specialising in outdoor education and assisting children with additional learning needs. Working with Siôn has given us the capacity to run our busy winter schedule of nature connection programmes for local pupils, ensuring sessions can be run in Welsh and to a high standard. Diolch, Siôn.

Siôn

Gwilym

Gwilym Davies

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Gwilym Davies in March. Gwilym worked with us many times over the years, making vital repairs to the track that leads to Bwlch Corog, and taking on the difficult job of mowing tracks through the tussocks of purple moor grass, providing access to the most remote parts of the site. We held Gwilym in high regard as a very skilled contractor, and he is remembered as "kind, respectful and thoughtful" by the staff members who worked with him.

Restoring the land

Winter volunteering

Through the winter months, the work of our wonderful volunteers focuses mainly on planting trees. But as most supporters will know by now, we don't plant large numbers of trees like some projects do. Our method is to plant small numbers (around 300 each year) in carefully chosen locations, and to protect them well from the nibbling and browsing of rodents, hares, cattle and ponies, to give them the best chance of surviving and growing into mature trees. These trees will then become seed sources, allowing woodland to spread in the right areas, and shading out the purple moor grass and bracken that have become overly dominant in some parts of the land.

Collaboration

Alongside our individual volunteers, we've been joined by various groups on recent volunteer days. Members of Natural Resources Wales' Digital team chose to spend their annual volunteering away day with us, our friends at Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary continue to visit regularly, and numbers were bolstered on three tree-planting days by a minibus full of Aberystwyth University's Conservation Volunteers. We protected most of the trees we planted this year with 'Cactus Guards' - large, spiky steel tree guards that keep animals from destroying the vulnerable saplings. They offer excellent protection, and can be re-used once the trees are large enough to fend for themselves (though this will take quite a few years on the more exposed parts of the land). But moving them, assembling them and staking them into the ground with steel bars is labour-intensive work, for which we largely rely on our volunteers. The injection of energy and enthusiasm that these groups bring is invaluable, and we're incredibly grateful that they choose to come to Bwlch Corog again and again to spend days in the winter weather on the exposed hilltops.

Trustees

New Chair of Trustees

After completing his term of three years as Chair of Trustees on Coetir Anian's governing board, Joe Hope stepped down in March this year. Trustees and staff have expressed deep gratitude to Joe for his work as Chair - not an easy job, and one that is entirely voluntary. However, Joe isn't leaving us - he continues as a trustee, and now takes up the role of Chair of the Land Management Steering Group - one of several working groups made up of trustees and staff. He's also Bwlch Corog's grazier and closest neighbour - he very much continues to be part of Coetir Anian.

Joe (and Missy)

David

Joe is replaced as Chair by David Bavin, one of seven new trustees who joined Coetir Anian's board in 2025. David is an interdisciplinary conservation scientist with interests in human-wildlife coexistence, environmental conflicts, wildlife translocations, ecosystem restoration, and the human dimensions of nature conservation. David has worked on conservation translocations for various mammals, covering ecological, social, and cultural aspects of their recovery, conservation, and coexistence with people and other wildlife. He is a trained facilitator, and currently works to solve complex problems associated with people and biodiversity restoration on the RENEW project – a partnership between the University of Exeter and the National Trust.

Funding and Support

Coed Cadw / The Woodland Trust

As many supporters will know, Coetir Anian don't actually own Bwlch Corog. It's owned by Coed Cadw (the Woodland Trust in Wales), and leased to us on a 125 year lease - we'll be ten years into that lease in 2027. As such, we have a close relationship with Coed Cadw, and they have supported us in different ways over our time caring for this land. Over the autumn and winter, they provided us with funding for several activities.

Nature Ambassadors

The last of our Nature Ambassadors secondary school programmes of 2025 saw pupils from Machynlleth's Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, our nearest school, come to Bwlch Corog for a full school day each week for six weeks. These programmes aim to bring the benefits of time spent in nature to young people who may not have much opportunity to do so otherwise, or who are experiencing difficulties like anxiety or additional learning needs which often make it difficult for them to thrive in a classroom. Often, they do well in a more active, outdoor learning environment. This group built strong friendships over the term, and some saw profound improvements in their wellbeing, as reported to us by youth workers, teachers, and the Nature Ambassadors themselves. The group spent their days with us taking part in craft activities like weaving, candle making, campfire cooking and shelter building, and conservation work like heather seed planting, bramble clearing and ancient tree recording, along with plenty of active outdoor play.

Wild Days Out

Wild Days Out is our other programme for young people of secondary school age. We run these days on weekends and in school holidays, giving local young people opportunities to get out and spend time playing, making, volunteering, and just being in the outdoors. Many of the attendees of these sessions are very passionate about nature, and have impressive knowledge about various aspects of the natural world. We're certain some will go on to be talented ecologists, land managers or biologists.

Volunteer days

Coed Cadw have also supported us in running three of our tree-planting volunteer days this winter, covering the cost of staff time, travel expenses and the all-important biscuits that keep our hard-working volunteers fuelled.

Filming

Over the course of the year, Coed Cadw are joining us several times at Bwlch Corog to document some of our work in order to produce a short film about the work, the site, and how their support helps us to achieve all that we do. This film will be professionally produced, and we can't wait to see and share it.

We're extremely grateful to Coed Cadw for their ongoing support.

COED CADW
WOODLAND
TRUST

Funding and Support

Match funding campaigns

Once or twice a year, we take part in match funding campaigns. These are fundraising events where donations made by supporters are matched by a 'sponsor' or 'champion' - usually a philanthropic or grant making charitable trust or foundation. In effect, donations are worth twice as much during these campaigns. So, while taking part involves a lot of work for our staff, these campaigns offer us a big boost in terms of funding our work.

Christmas Challenge

In December 2025, we took part in Big Give's Christmas Challenge. Big Give is a charitable trust that hosts the match funding campaigns we're currently taking part in. During the Christmas Challenge, we ran a campaign to raise £8,000 to fund a range of camps and events in collaboration with other charities that support refugee families and people currently in the asylum system. The campaign was wonderfully well supported - we surpassed the target - and we're so grateful for the support for this aspect of our work of helping vulnerable people connect with nature.

Earth Raise

In April, we took part in Big Give's Earth Raise campaign. Previously called the Green Match Fund, this is a campaign we take part in every year, as it's specifically for charities doing environmental work. Our appeal this year was to raise £2,000 (doubled with match funding to £4,000) to continue our work of restoring the upland peat habitats at Bwlch Corog. Once again, we received brilliant support, and we reached the fundraising target a little over half way through the week-long campaign. Many, many thanks to all who donated. The match funding for this appeal was provided by the Garfield Weston Foundation, to whom we are very grateful.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

We are delighted to have been successful in obtaining funding from WCVA for a new two-year project which will help us develop our work with volunteers. Through this project we aim to run more volunteer workdays at Bwlch Corog, develop more varied volunteer placements, and work towards our Investing in Volunteers award, which will help us review and improve our systems for supporting and working with volunteers.

Funding and Support

National Forest for Wales Landscape Scheme

We have been awarded a grant from the National Forest for Wales (NFfW) Landscape Scheme, a partnership project for woodlands in the UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere reserve, led by Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership and supported by Dyfi Biosphere. We are pleased to be a part of it. As well as funding tree planting days and the purchase of enough Cactus Guards to protect all of this and next winter's saplings, this grant covers the cost of processing several tonnes of timber (a byproduct of thinning Bwlch Corog's larch plantation) into firewood by contractor Arwel Evans. Being completely off-grid, we rely on this wood for cooking, heating water and heating the roundhouse in the winter*.

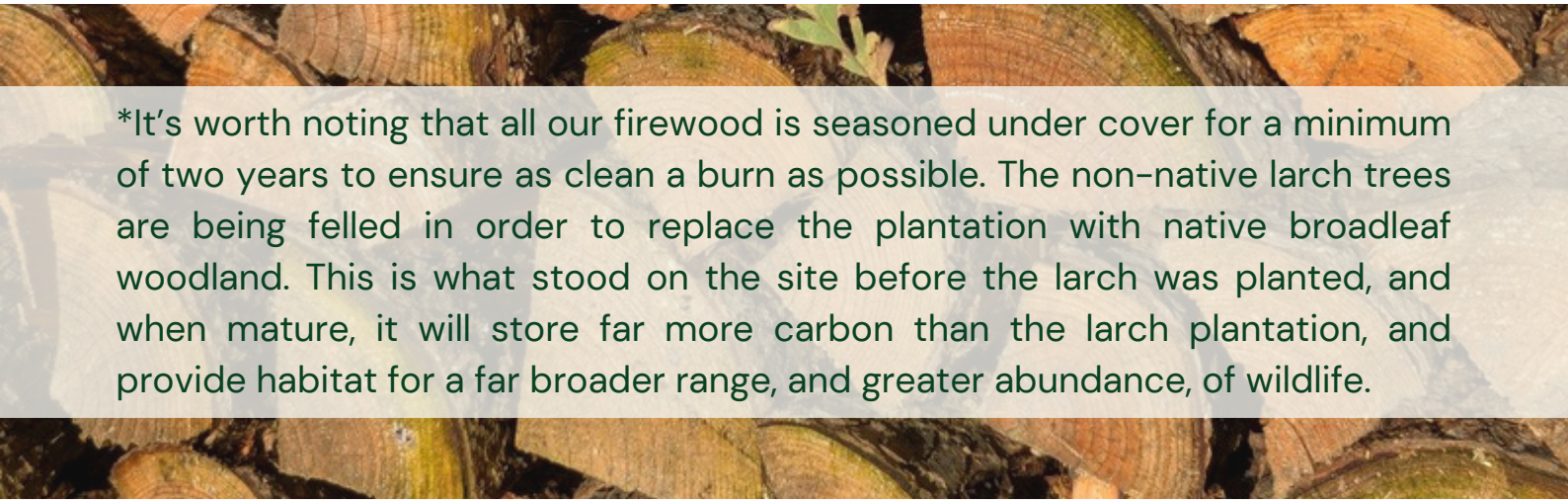
This grant will also fund much of the restoration of a historic route through this woodland, linking Bwlch Corog with the nearby hamlet of Glaspwll. Work will begin on the next stage of this project as soon as bird nesting season is over, as there are currently rare wood warblers nesting close by! Additionally it will fund a nature art project with local school children.

The NFfW scheme is funded by Welsh Government and managed and distributed by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action as the scheme manager of the Local Places for Nature – Local Nature Partnerships Scheme. It is a partnership project which includes funding for a number of woodland sites in the Dyfi valley.

WCVA CGGC

Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere
gwerth y byd - world class by nature

PARTNERIAETHAU NATUR LLEOL
LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIPS
CYMRU



*It's worth noting that all our firewood is seasoned under cover for a minimum of two years to ensure as clean a burn as possible. The non-native larch trees are being felled in order to replace the plantation with native broadleaf woodland. This is what stood on the site before the larch was planted, and when mature, it will store far more carbon than the larch plantation, and provide habitat for a far broader range, and greater abundance, of wildlife.

What else?

Wildlife camera sightings

An increased effort to monitor what animals are present at Bwlch Corog has provided us with some great sightings on our wildlife cameras, which we've been deploying around the site. Over the winter, we had numerous sightings of pine martens (including two together!), hares, foxes, badgers, fieldfares, and for the first time, polecats!

Bluesky and X (formerly Twitter)

We have made the decision to stop posting on the social media platform X, and opened an account on Bluesky. Please follow us if you're there!

Events

We have two public events coming up at Bwlch Corog. Details of both are yet to be confirmed – these will be announced to subscribers via email and on our social media channels. If you can join us, please do!

Open Day

Our annual Open Day will be on Saturday the 6th of June this year. The timetable is yet to be finalised, but there will be a woodland bird walk, a trip to meet the Carneddau ponies, plenty of opportunity to talk to Coetir Anian staff about what we're doing at Bwlch Corog and why, and a performance from the superb Cynefin, musical brainchild of local musician and cultural historian Owen Shiers, whose album Shimli was nominated for the 2025 UK Folk Album of the Year award.

Nature ID Day

On Saturday the 4th of July we invite anyone interested in nature, wildlife, ecology, or anything in between to join us at Bwlch Corog for a day of sharing knowledge. We'll visit different parts of the site, recording the wildlife we find as we go and learning from each other's specialisms and interests.

For regular updates, visit our website and sign up to receive this newsletter by email twice a year, or follow us on social media.