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Llyn Parc Mawr TWIG Project Evaluation

Final report

October 2025

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Cronfa
Treftadaeth
Heritage
Fund



Mewn Partneriaeth â
Llywodraeth Cymru
In Partnership with
Welsh Government


LLYN PARC MAWR
Grŵp Coedwig Cymunedol
Community Woodland Group



Coedwig
Genedlaethol i Gymru
National Forest
for Wales

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Project Background

This section includes the context and rationale behind the project, in addition to its aims and how it has been evaluated.

Project Background: Area Profile

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The site is located on the Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn) within Rhosyr, which covers Newborough Forest and neighbouring villages.

Deprivation

Rhosyr is in the 30 – 50% most deprived areas in Wales, and ranks significantly below average on measures including access to community services and housing

Age profile

Rhosyr has an ageing population, with a higher proportion of residents aged 50 and above compared to the national average

Economic inactivity

Rhosyr has a higher-than-average proportion of economically inactive residents

(48.9% compared to the national average of 43.5%)

Health and wellbeing

Rhosyr has a slightly lower-than-average proportion of residents in 'very good' or 'good' health

(77.4% compared to the national average of 78.6%)



Sources: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019, ONS 2021 Census

Project Background: Policy Context

National Forest for Wales

In 2020, The Welsh Government set out its commitment to create a **National Forest for Wales (NFfW)**.

The programme aims to create and enhance woodlands across Wales which:

- Are well-managed and resilient
- Are accessible to the public
- Support community involvement in woodlands
- Support learning and research

The Woodland Investment Grant (TWIG)

The TWIG grant scheme was introduced in 2022 to facilitate progress towards NFfW aims.

The scheme supports landowners through National Lottery Heritage Fund grants and guidance from to enhance woodlands for the benefit of local ecosystems, communities and economies.



Project Background: Policy Context

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Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

The **NFfW** and **TWIG** schemes contribute towards national wellbeing goals including:

- **Health:** Increasing healthy lifestyles behaviours amongst children and adults
- **Volunteering:** Increasing the percentage of people involved in volunteering
- **Education and skills:** Increasing the percentage of young people in education, employment or training
- **Biodiversity:** Reserving negative impacts on the environment and increasing biodiversity

Through the creation and enhancement of woodlands, the schemes aim to improve the wellbeing of local communities, increase access to skills and employment, facilitate civic participation and foster biodiversity.



Project Background: Llyn Parc Mawr

- The Llyn Parc Mawr Community Woodland Group (LIPM) was established in 2014 to facilitate community ownership and management of the woodland site.
- In the same year, the group took on management of 24 hectares of Newborough Forest, secured through a management agreement with Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- Its organisational aim is to manage the woodland for the **'dual benefit of wildlife and the local community'**.



Project Background: Llyn Parc Mawr

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The group provides local communities and visitors with a wide range of events and services including:



Nature-based events / activities

Including Forest School sessions for children, bushcraft sessions and woodland-based games and entertainment



Creative & Wellbeing sessions

Sessions aimed at encouraging creativity and socialisation, including woodland craft workshops and art-based activities



Educational

Site visits for local schoolchildren and students in further and higher education, which educate participants around the site, its wildlife and how the woodland is managed



Volunteering Opportunities

Monthly volunteering sessions involving woodland management, tree planting, clearing invasive species, litter-picking, path clearance and creation and general woodland maintenance

Project Background: Rationale

The rationale for Llyn Parc Mawr's TWIG project had been constituted by the following factors:



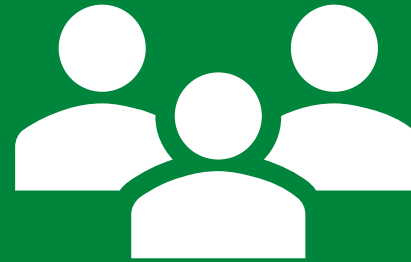
Site expansion

The area of woodland previously unmanaged by the group required work to remove fallen trees, create new paths and extend the community woodland



Site improvements

The site had been susceptible to frequent flooding, which obscured paths and negatively impacted the land's condition and ecosystem



Benefit to people

The project would enable the group to maintain and expand on its events and volunteering programme, creating benefit to local communities and visitors



Benefit to wildlife

The site required works to increase its resilience against climate change and extreme weather, as well as measures to support local wildlife including its red squirrel population

Project Background: Summary and Aims

- In March 2024, Llyn Parc Mawr received a total of £200,000 from **TWIG** to bring an additional 36 hectares of woodland into their management, and to deliver a site works and events programme.
- LIPM also received £65,900 of funding from other sources to support the project, including grants from Cymdeithas Elusennol and Awards for All.
- The aims of the project were:



The site

To make the site more publicly accessible, more resilient to ecological damage and to increase biodiversity



The users

To improve visitor experience, open access and interest across a broader range of people and create opportunities for learning and skills development



The organisation

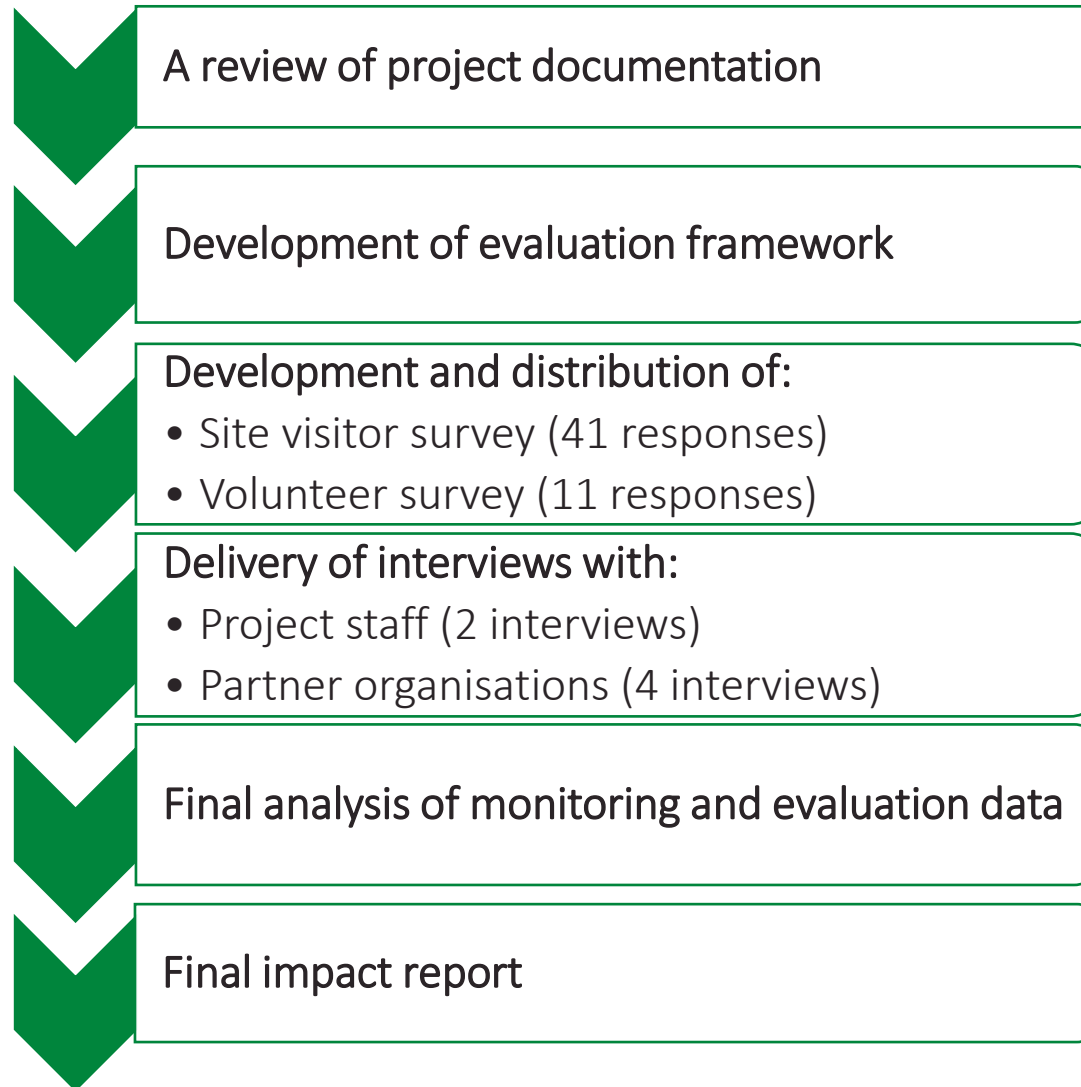
To raise the profile of Llyn Parc Mawr, increase financial sustainability and gain National Forest for Wales accreditation

Project Evaluation: Summary

Wavehill were engaged to undertake an evaluation of Llyn Parc Mawr's site works and events programme, which was funded through the TWIG scheme.

The purpose of the evaluation was to measure the impact of the delivered activities and assess the programme's success against Heritage Fund and organisational outcomes.

Project Evaluation: Activities



Project Design

This section sets out the activities that the project set out to deliver, as well as the key staff members and partner organisations pushing the project forward.

Project Design: Staff Roles

The project was delivered between March 2024 and Oct 2025 and managed by three staff members on part-time contracts.

Project Manager: Tim Peters



- Responsible for the overall management and delivery of the project
- Led on woodland management and site works
- Contributed towards coordination of site visits and ran volunteer days

Woodland Education Officer: Melissa Dhillon



- Led on educational and community-based events and activities
- Contributed towards coordination of site works and volunteer days

Admin Officer: Niamh Boddington



- Led on back-office and administrative duties
- Contributed towards project promotion and marketing

Project Activities: Capital works

The project had the following planned activities to be delivered by October 2025:

Infrastructural works

- Restoring ditch network to drain the site effectively
- Creation of new accessible paths by contractors
- Creation and maintenance of accessible footpaths

Construction & installation

- Creation and installation of log circles, benches and picnic tables
- Building of cassette compost toilet
- Construction of small tool storage facilities
- Installation of small cabin ('caban bach') area
- Installation of interpretation boards and signage

Conservation

- Thinning and clearing fallen and dangerous leaning trees
- Non-native species removal and replacement with native shrubs
- Adding wildlife and bird nesting boxes including for red squirrels

Project Activities: Non-capital works

The project had the following planned activities to be delivered by October 2025:

Educational activities

- Forest School sessions
- Training for young people in woodland skills

Volunteering and community events

- Volunteering days and opportunities
- Community tree and shrub planting days
- Engagement events

Other activities

- Public consultation to inform development of interpretation boards and signage
- Accessing support, advice and guidance from designated Woodland Liaison Officer (WLO)
- Acknowledging **Welsh Gov** and **TWIG** funding on physical works and in marketing and media outputs

Project Design: Main Partners

LIPM utilized partner relationships to support delivery and add value to the project. Below are some of the main partners involved in the project:



Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

NRW had been the previous landowner of the new 32-hectare woodland area

They supported LIPM with securing TWIG funding and facilitated planning for site works



Llais y Goedwig

Acted as a point of contact for guidance and signposting around securing site permissions and general woodland management

They also facilitated on-going discussions with NRW



Coed Lleol (Small Woods)

They co-delivered several community events alongside LIPM, in addition to sharing knowledge and resources throughout delivery



Bangor University

Provided students to attend educational site visits and volunteering days

They has also contributed funding towards skills development courses at the site

Project Management

This section shows the project's progress against targeted outputs, and explores what went well with delivery and what the challenges were.

Project Delivery: Spend and outputs

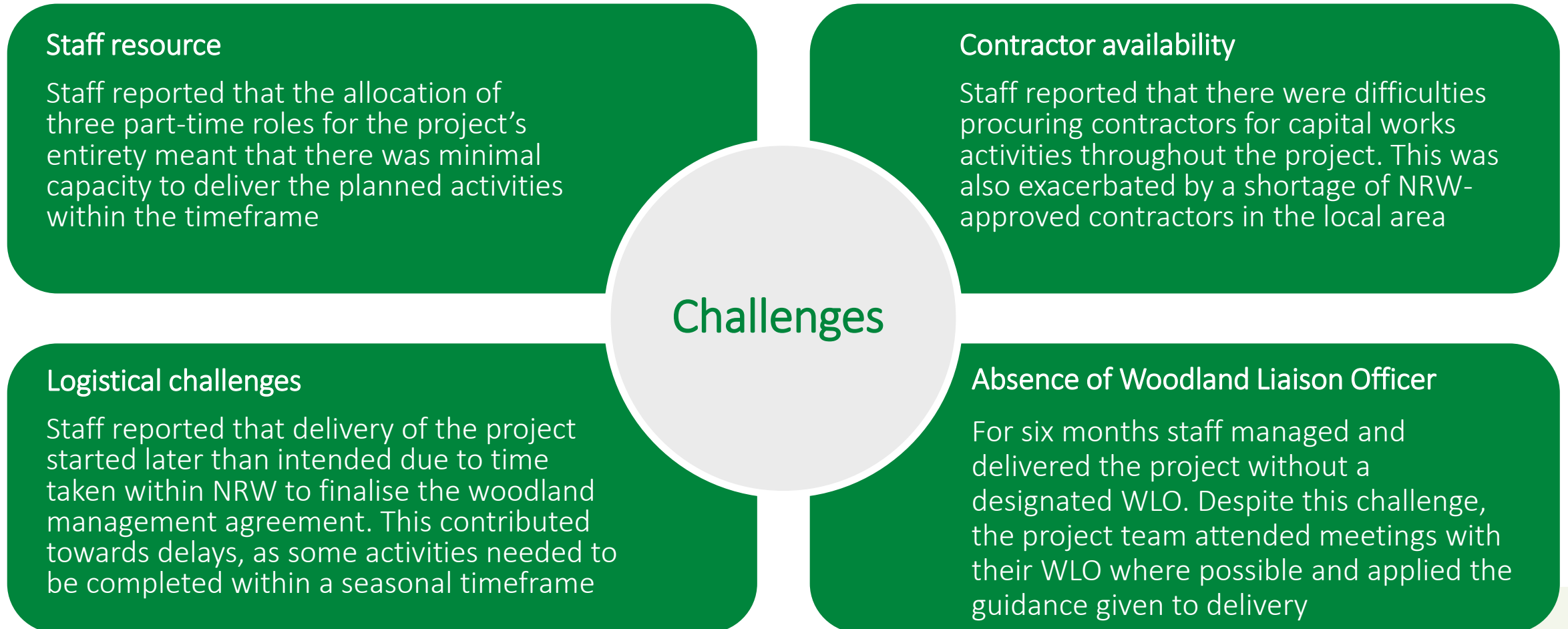
The final spend for the project was £199,943.63 of the £200,000 provided through the TWIG fund. This amounts to 99.97% of the total fund.

Of the targeted output measures that the project set out to achieve, all have been successfully met by the end of the delivery period. The targeted outputs are set out in the table below:

Indicator	Area (hectares)	Number of individuals
Existing Woodland area enhanced by the project	24	
New Woodland area created by the project	36	
Additional area of woodland with open or permissive access created by the project	36	
Woodland area with accessibility enhancements from the project so that woodland is open to all users (lineage of paths by metres)	60	
Woodland area enhanced for biodiversity reasons by the project	60	
Estimated additional visitors / volunteers annually as a result of the project		250
Number of jobs created / safeguarded by the project		3

Project Management: Challenges

Interviews with project staff members highlighted several key challenges to delivery, which are summarised below.



“All of us are working part-time, that does make it difficult. We might not be always there when deliveries turn up, or when contractors are available to start work.” **(Project staff)**

“There’s a lot of restricted timings, e.g. tree felling, breeding seasons for wildlife, and we can only do groundworks at specific times.” **(Project staff)**

Project Management: What went well

Interviews with project staff members and stakeholders detailed what went well with delivery, which is summarised below.

Staff working

Staff from partner organisations reflected that the project team worked very well together throughout management and delivery. This was supplemented by each team member's knowledge and expertise in their respective areas and roles

Partnership working

Staff from partner organisations described having productive and mutually beneficial relationships with LIPM. An example includes site visits from Bangor University students, as these enabled students to learn about woodland management whilst enabling LIPM to advertise volunteering days

Volunteering days

Project staff reported that the number of people attending volunteering days increased throughout the project, with the final day having 23 volunteers in attendance. This ensured that there was sufficient resource to carry out woodland management, conservation activities and general site improvements

NFfW and networking meetings

Project staff reported that their receipt of the TWIG grant enabled them access to useful knowledge-sharing sessions. LIPM also hosted several woodland parties throughout the project, which created opportunities to meet with other local organisations and potential partners

What went well

“It’s definitely strengthened the partnership... there’s no competition, just working together, we know we’re all passionate about the same future.” – **(Staff from partner organisation)**

“With the (project team’s) connections to organisations like Coed Lleol and Bangor University.. there’s added value everywhere you look.” – **(Staff from partner organisation)**

Project Delivery

This section sets out the activities delivered through the project and those which experienced delays to completion. It will also explore the extent of project reach, the range of activities delivered and the experiences of visitors and volunteers who engaged with the project.

Project Delivery: Capital works progress

Of the planned activities, the following have been delivered or completed:

Infrastructural works

- Restoring ditch network to drain the site effectively
- Creation and installation of log circles, benches and picnic tables
- Creation and maintenance of accessible footpaths
- Creation of new accessible paths by contractors

Construction & installation

- Building of cassette compost toilet
- Installation of small cabin ('caban bach') area
- Installation of interpretation boards and signage

Conservation

- Thinning and clearing fallen and dangerous leaning trees
- Non-native species removal and replacement with native shrubs
- Adding wildlife and bird nesting boxes including for red squirrels

Project Delivery: Capital works progress

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Above image: Creation and maintenance of accessible paths



Above image: Ditching works

Project Delivery: Capital works progress



Above image: Installation of picnic benches and tables



Above image: Installation of log circles



Above image: Installation of small cabin (caban bach)

Project Delivery: Capital works progress

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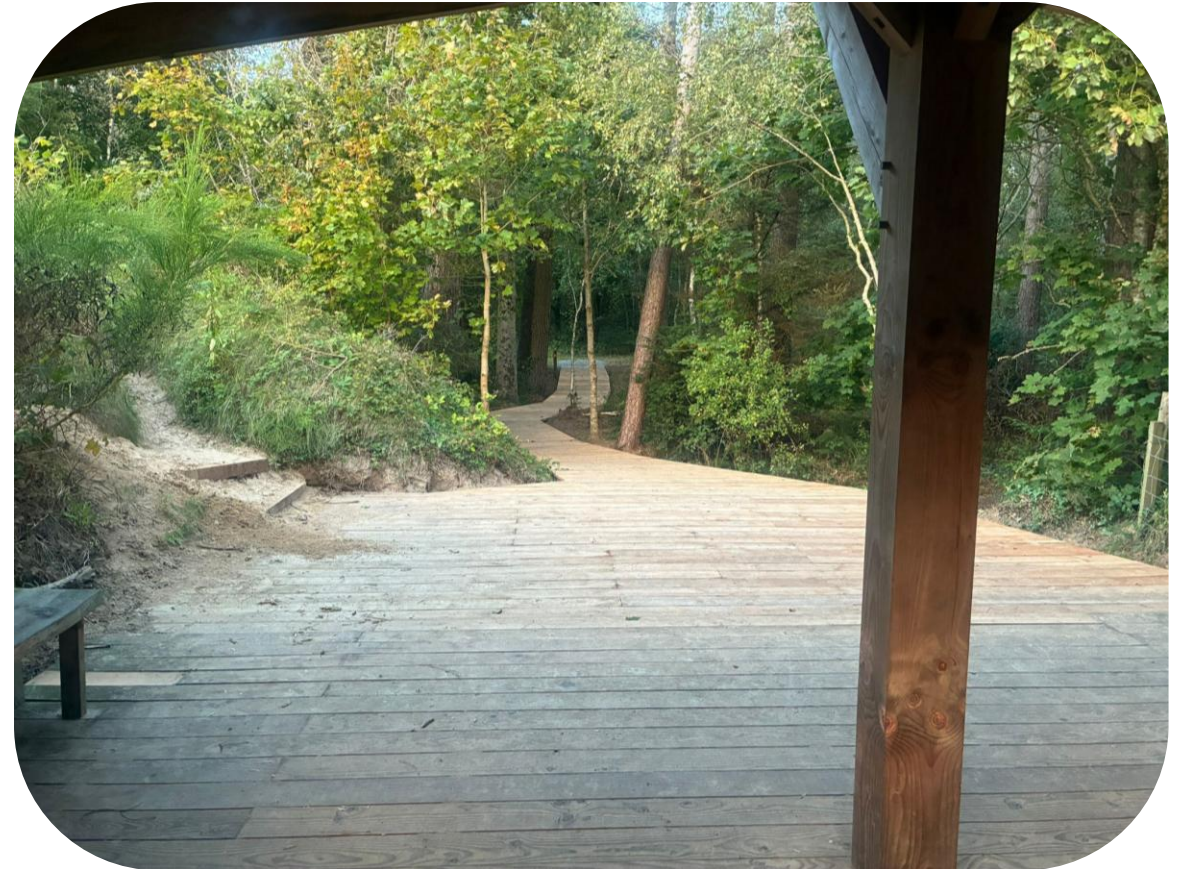
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Above image: Installation of picnic benches and tables



Above image: Installation of signage boards



Above image: Creation of new accessible paths by contractors

Project Delivery: Non-capital works progress

Of the planned activities, the following have been delivered or completed:

Educational activities

- Forest School sessions
- Training for young people in woodland skills

Volunteering and community events

- Volunteering days and opportunities
- Community tree and shrub planting days
- Engagement events

Other activities

- Public consultation to inform development of interpretation boards and signage
- Acknowledging Welsh Gov and TWIG funding on physical works and in marketing and media outputs
- Accessing support, advice and guidance from designated Woodland Liaison Officer (WLO)

Project Delivery: Non-capital works progress



Above image: Visitors from the Royal Forestry Society



Above image: Volunteers engaged in site clearing

Project Delivery: Non-capital works progress



Above image: Attendants at a willow wellbeing session



Above image: Children at a bushcraft session

Project Delivery: Incomplete Activities

All but one of the funded activities have been delivered and completed by project end.

The **construction of small tool storage facilities** has been paid for through TWIG funding and is set to take place during the first week of November 2025 (w/c Mon 2nd November).

Delays to construction were caused by difficulties around procuring a suitable product and contractor for the work within the funded period.

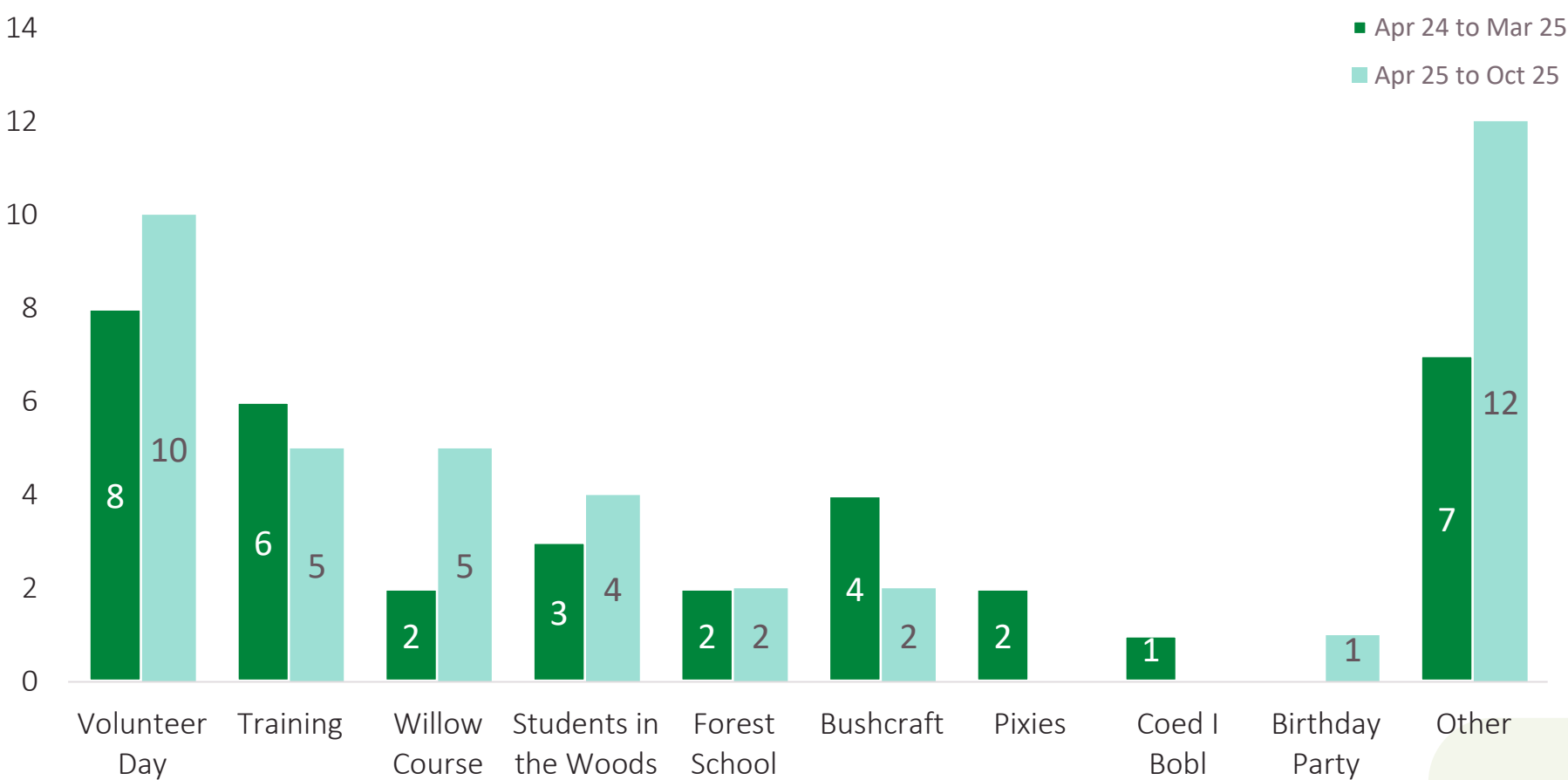
Project Delivery: Events profile

From April 2024 to Oct 2025, LIPM delivered a total of **76** events and activities to audiences including local communities, volunteers and students. The most common events delivered included volunteering and training days.

Monitoring data also shows the number of events at LIPM from visitors and volunteers attending Apr 2025 to Oct 2025.

This data shows that a total of **1,451** people attended events in this time period. 75% of participants were visitors, whilst the remaining 25% were made up of volunteers.

Events delivered (TWIG funded period)



Project Delivery: Volunteer events

The funding supported the delivery of Volunteer Days, enabling participants to get involved in a range of activities and develop skills in areas including:

- Tree and shrub planting
- Invasive species removal (e.g. Himalayan Cotoneaster)
- Path maintenance and clearing
- Creation and installation of nesting and feeder boxes for red squirrels and hedgehogs

The funding also supported the co - delivery of a Youth Rangers scheme, which enables young people to gain qualifications in conservation volunteering.



Project Delivery: Community and educational events

It also supported the delivery of events and activities intended to engage participants in nature-based activities, foster community cohesion and improve wellbeing.

This included:

- Forest School sessions, enhanced by new bilingual educational resources
- Creative arts and woodland wellbeing sessions, such as willow-weaving workshops
- Educational site visits by students from local schools such as Ysgol Santes Dwywen, Ysgol Bryngwran and Ysgol Henblas
- Bushcraft and woodland skills sessions



Project Delivery: Promotion & marketing

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Project staff have worked to ensure recognition of funding from the Heritage Fund and TWIG by:

- Installing recognition plaques around the site
- Acknowledging funding on all marketing material including newsletters posters, and the website
- Promoting the site and project through media (including an episode of Countryfile)



Project Delivery: Visitor and volunteer profile



Demographic profile

Most visitors (out of 41 respondents) and volunteers (out of 11 respondents) were from a white ethnic background, were middle-aged to elderly and from a middle-class socioeconomic background



Other groups

Younger groups (visitors up to 24 years) made up a smaller proportion of visitors (10 out of 35 respondents) and volunteers (3 out of 10 respondents). These younger volunteers also reported themselves as students



Geographical spread

Around half of visitors and most volunteers were living in nearby areas such as Rhosyr and Bodorgan. 12 out of 25 visitors were from these two areas, whilst 7 out of 10 volunteers were reported as coming from the same places.



Welsh language

Most visitors and volunteers could speak at least a 'few words' of Welsh. 6 out of 35 visitors and 1 out of 10 volunteers were reported as being fluent Welsh speakers.

Project Delivery: Visitor Engagement

Knowledge of site

Respondents most commonly found out about the site through word of mouth, and through the Royal Forestry Society

First-time visitor?

For over a third of respondents, it was their first time visiting the site (16 out of 41 respondents)

Frequency of visits

Out of the respondents who had visited the site before, around half had visited it more frequently than once a month (12 out of 25 respondents)

Motivation

The most common reasons for visiting the site included exploration, spending time in green space and attending events

Reasons for visiting the site



Source: Visitor survey, N= 41

Project Delivery: Volunteer Participation

Duration of volunteering

Most respondents reported that they had been volunteering for over three months (8 out of 11 respondents)

Frequency of volunteering

Of those who had been volunteering for over three months, most contributed once or a few times a month

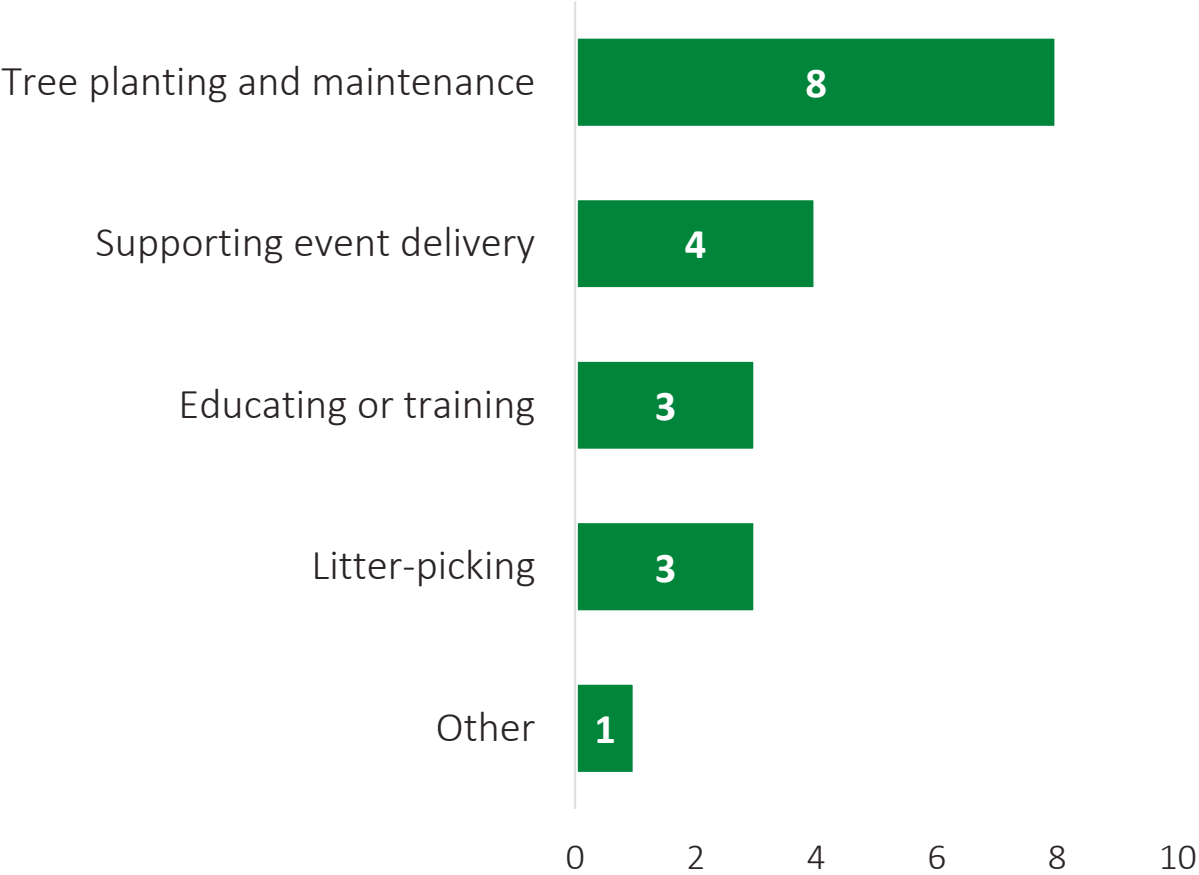
Range of roles

The most common volunteer roles include tree planting and maintenance, but also include other roles such as supporting training and events and litter picking

Scope of skills

Around half of respondents were reported to be involved in more than one role, and were therefore gaining experience in more than one area

Volunteer roles



Source: Volunteer survey, N= 11

Project Delivery: Visitor and volunteer experience

Site rating

When asked to rate the site out of 5 (where 5 is 'excellent') almost all visitors gave the site a rating of at least 4 out of 5 (36 out of 40 respondents)

Training rating

Similarly, when asked to rate the quality of the training received, all volunteers gave it a rating of at least 4 out of 5 (10 out of 10 respondents)

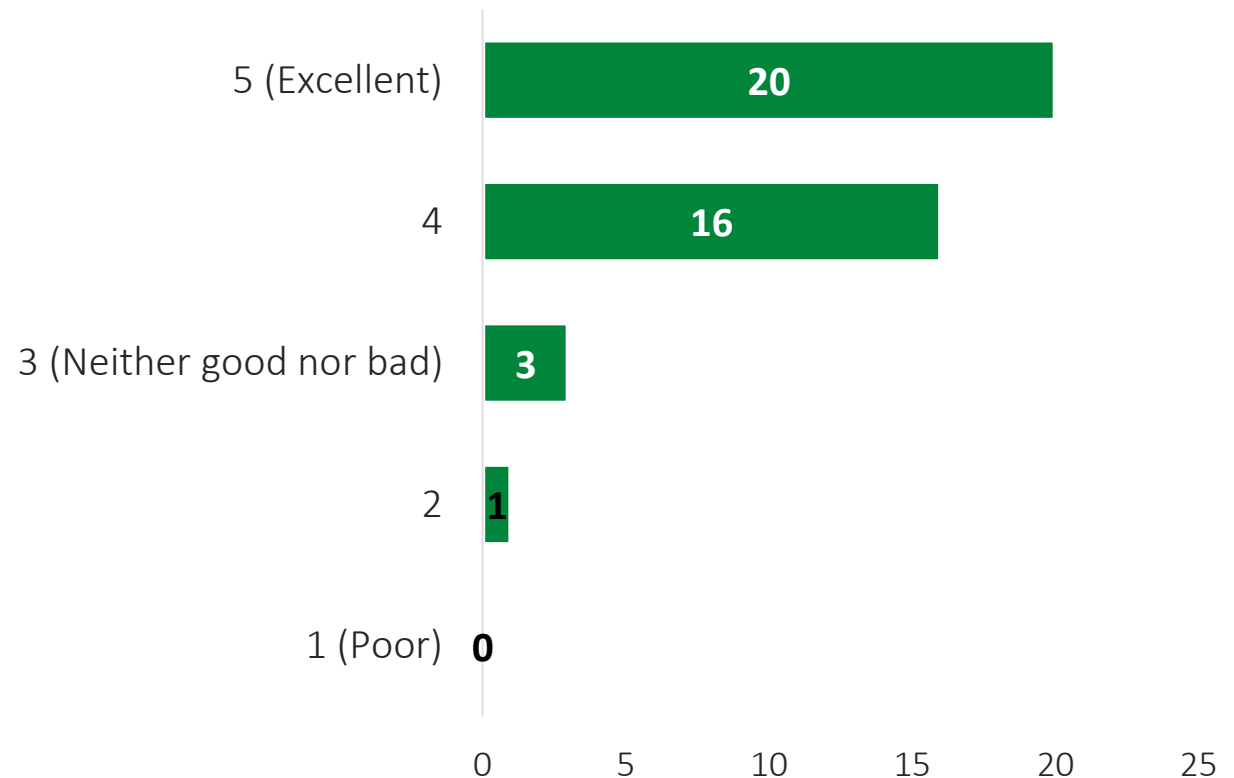
Visitor continuity

Most visitors reported that they were either 'very likely' or 'likely' to visit the site again in the future (28 out of 37 respondents)

Volunteer continuity

All volunteers reported that they were either 'very likely' or 'likely' to continue volunteering at the site (10 out of 10 respondents)

Visitors' rating of the site



Source: Visitor survey, N= 41
Volunteer survey, N= 11

Project Delivery: Visitor and volunteer experience

Staff conduct and approach

Visitors and volunteers commented that the staff are friendly, engaged and always happy to answer questions

Site accessibility

Most visitors ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the site was easy to access and navigate (28 out of 34 respondents)

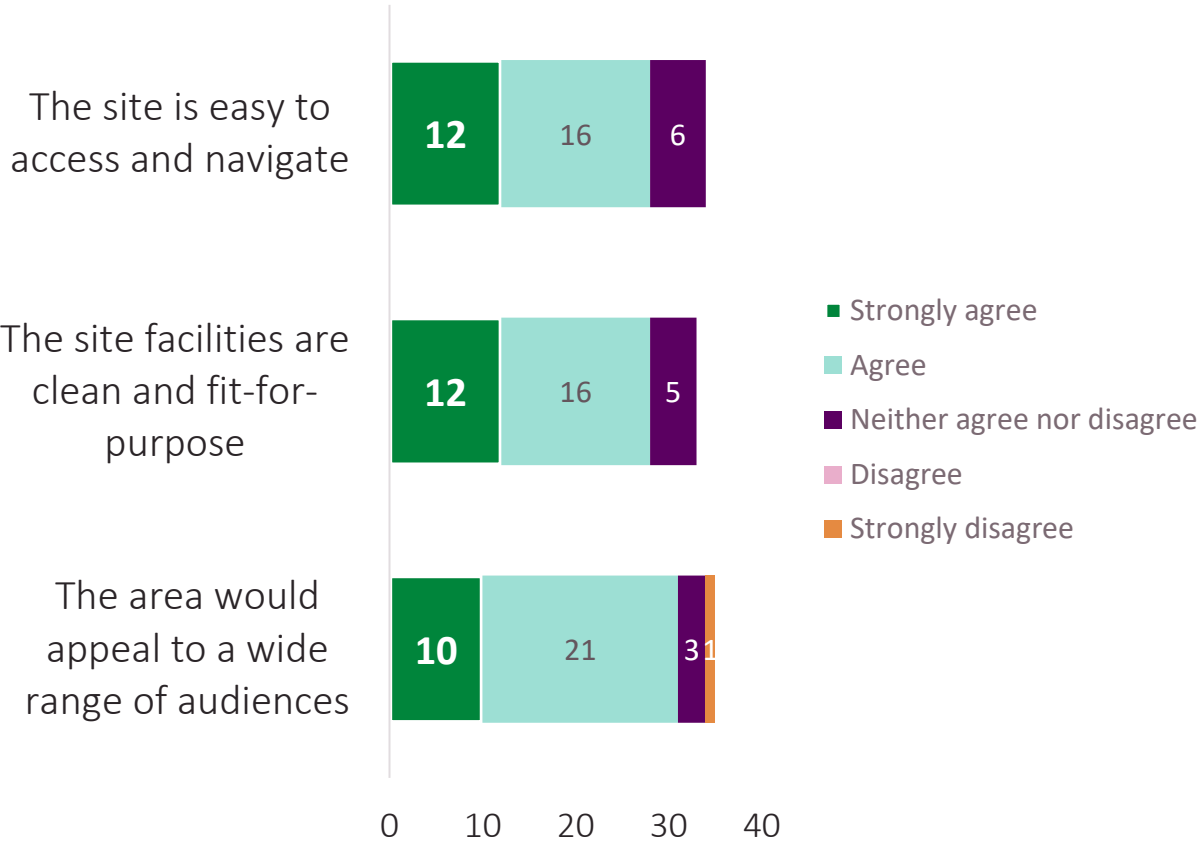
Site facilities

Most visitors ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the site facilities were clean and fit-for-purpose (28 out of 33 respondents)

Broad appeal

Most visitors ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the area would appeal to a wide range of audiences (31 out of 35 respondents)

Extent to which visitors agree with the following statements:



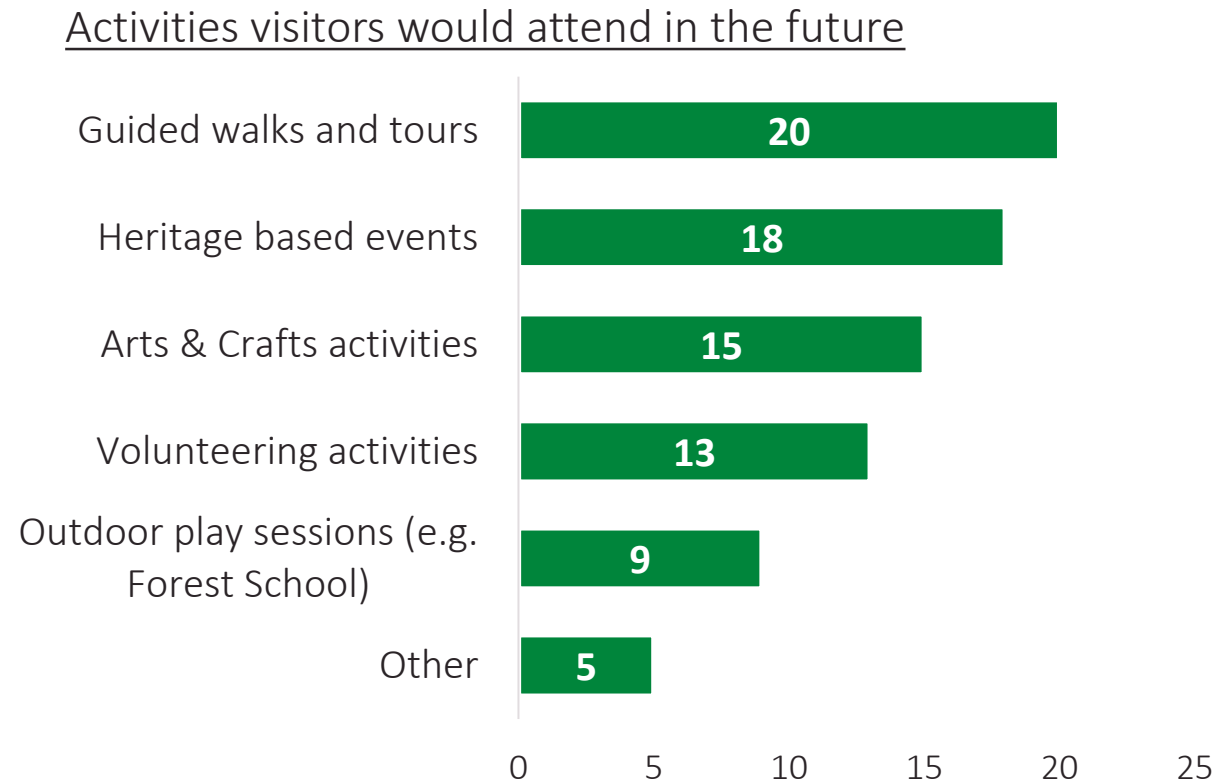
Source: Visitor survey, N= 41
Volunteer survey, N=11

“The people working there were so friendly and interesting “ - **(Visitor)**

"There's a wide range of people that visit the site, dog walkers, bird watchers, red squirrel lovers. Lots of interesting people to talk to." - **(Visitor)**

Project Delivery: Future activities

When asked which future activities they might be interested in, visitors most commonly suggested guided walks and tours, heritage-based events and arts & crafts activities.

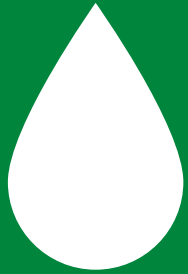


Source: Visitor survey, N= 41

Impacts for Heritage

The following sections summarise what has been achieved with regard to the project's Heritage Fund objectives around impacts for **heritage**, **people** and the **local area**, and will include an overview of project legacy.

Heritage will be in better condition



Reduced flooding

The completion of ditching works has already had a significant impact on the site's flood resilience, enabling visitor access to previously inaccessible footpaths



Ecological resilience

The ditching works have also reduced damage to local habitats, by helping to stabilise trees and preventing root rot



Wildlife conservation

The project has contributed towards the conservation of natural heritage, through supporting the red squirrel population and facilitating the growth of beneficial species

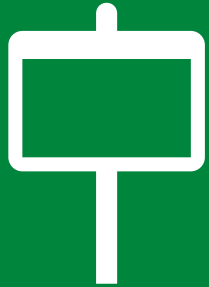


Site clearing

The project has enabled the clearing of fallen trees and invasive shrubs, improving site and path accessibility

“They’ve definitely improved the biodiversity of the site; we’re seeing evidence of an increase in the number of species especially birds.” – (Staff from partner organisation)

Heritage will be identified and better explained



Interpretation boards

The installation of boards have already helped to increase visitors' knowledge of the local ecosystem and conservation efforts



Site map

The project has supported the development of a site map, which helps visitors to navigate the site and educates them on local wildlife



Events

The delivery of Forest School, bushcraft sessions and educational visits has resulted in a better understand of natural heritage amongst both children and adults in the local community



Organisational website

The increased reach of the organisation's social media and website will contribute towards greater awareness and understanding of the site

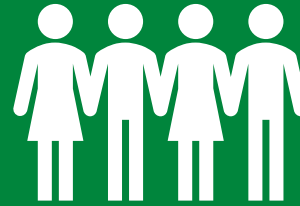
“(I) like the information boards they give a good insight as to the nature that is in the area” - (Visitor)

The funded organisation will be more resilient



Caban hire

LIPM has increased the number of caban hire enquiries, helping to strengthen the organisation's income streams. This has been facilitated through strong organisational relationships, as partners are set to hire out the caban on a regular basis in the future



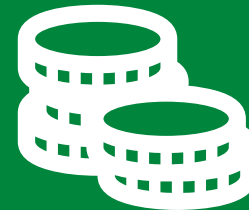
Increased volunteers

The number of registered volunteers at the site has grown over the course of the project, which provides additional capacity and reduces running expenses



NFfW accreditation

The project contributed towards LIPM's NFfW accreditation, which will help to raise brand visibility and enable access to developmental learning, leading to resilience in the longer-term



Leveraged funding

The project has supported LIPM to leverage additional funding through streams such as Awards for All and partner organisations including Bangor University

“Partnership organisations have ramped up what they're running in our woods. Caban hires have increased since last year, as we are competitively priced.” – (Project staff)

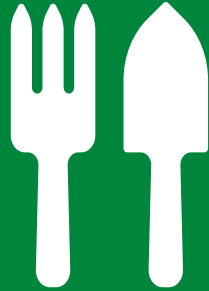
Impacts for People

People will have developed skills



Volunteer survey findings

Most volunteers 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they had developed skills and / or knowledge through their involvement (9 out of 10 respondents)



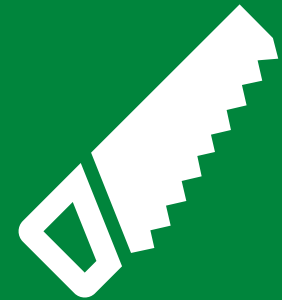
Volunteer comments

Volunteers and visiting students reported gaining valuable knowledge and practical skills including woodland management, species identification and tools maintenance



Forest School

Children and participants commented that Forest School sessions helped children to build up social skills, problem-solving and interactive play



Youth Rangers

The project supported the Youth Rangers scheme, which awarded trainees with qualifications and knowledge that may support their career development

People will have greater wellbeing

Visitor wellbeing

Most visitors 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their visit positively contributed towards their wellbeing (30 out of 37 respondents)

Volunteer wellbeing

Most volunteers reported that their involvement made them more physically active, optimistic, sociable and relaxed (out of 10 respondents)

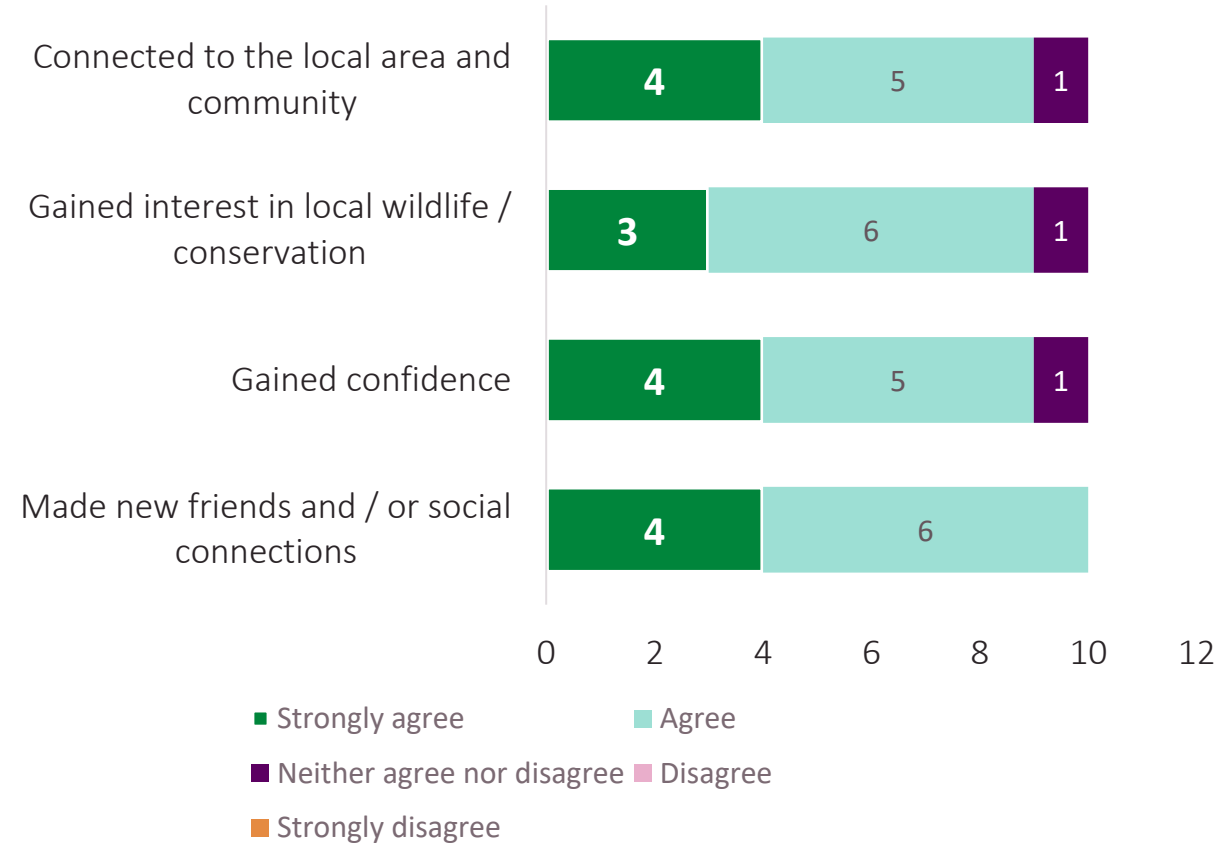
Confidence

Most volunteers 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they gained confidence through their involvement (9 out of 10 respondents)

Reduced isolation

All volunteers 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they made new friends and social connections through their involvement (10 out of 10 respondents)

Extent to which volunteers agreed with the following statements:



Source: Visitor survey, N= 41
Volunteer survey, N= 11

People will have learned about heritage, leading to a change in ideas and actions

Visitor learning

Most visitors 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that that they learnt something new about local wildlife and heritage (25 out of 33 respondents)

Visitor participation

Most visitors 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they felt encouraged to get involved with other heritage / conservation activities (17 out of 31 respondents)

Volunteer participation

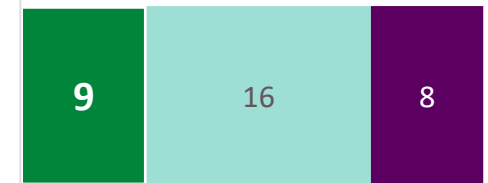
Most volunteers 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were more likely to get involved with natural / heritage events in the future (7 out of 10 respondents)

Volunteering legacy

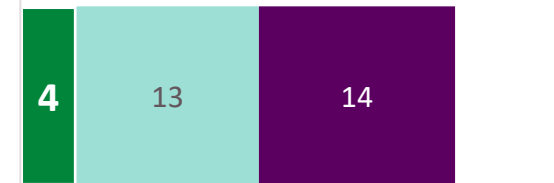
Most volunteers 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their experience volunteering encouraged them to engage with volunteer roles elsewhere (7 out of 10 respondents)

Extent to which visitors agreed with the following statements:

I learned something new about local wildlife / heritage



I feel encouraged to get involved with other heritage / conservation activities



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree
■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Source: Visitor survey, N=41
Volunteer survey, N=11

“It helps keep me sane. It's so wonderful to feel intimately connected with the forest and its community” – **(Visitor)**

“I visit almost daily sometimes and am always learning and discovering new things” – **(Visitor)**

Impacts for the local area

The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit



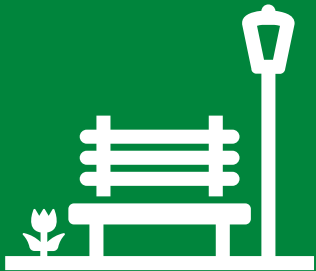
Increased capacity

The installation of another venue gives more capacity for partners to deliver events, sessions and training courses, enabling more access to training and development opportunities



Improved accessibility

The project has led to improvements to pathways and the inclusion of broadwalk. This will broaden visitor access, enabling those with disabilities or mobility issues to benefit from green space



Improved facilities

The inclusion of benches and picnic tables will encourage increased footfall and dwell times and lead to an overall improvement to visitor experience



Community cohesion

The continued delivery of wellbeing, community and arts events will contribute towards the overall mental wellbeing of the community and maintain a sense of cohesion

The local economy will be boosted



Local procurement

The project has produced work for local contractors, supporting local businesses and contributing towards local supply chains



Increased caban hire

The use of the caban by charities, training providers and partners will result in more footfall and visitor spend in the area



NFfW accreditation

The achievement of National Forest status may lead to increased visits and interests from visitors in Wales and abroad



Sustainable tourism

The project contributes to national aims around sustainable tourism, and the site will contribute towards the visitor economy whilst having a positive environmental impact

Project legacy



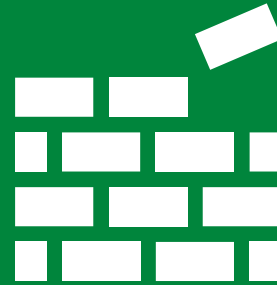
Community engagement

LIPM will build from the engagement work delivered through the project by continuing to offer Forest School sessions and expanding their educational offer to a wider range of schools



Health and wellbeing

LIPM is planning to offer more wellbeing sessions in partnership with organisations such as Digartref, furthering their contributions to social prescribing within the community



Building sustainability

The addition of the 'caban bach' and added visitor facilities will enable LIPM to cement their status as a go-to hire space for local organisations, securing both financial and organisational sustainability



Brand awareness

Following enhancements to the LIPM site, the organisation aims to market the site to a broader audience. This will involve increasing their presence on social media and distributing video content on platforms such as Youtube to attract interest

Lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations

This section outlines what are the main lessons which can be taken from the project by exploring the project's enabling factors and barriers. Based on these, a series of recommendations is provided, to be taken into consideration with regard to the design and implementation of future community heritage and nature-based projects.

Lessons learnt: Enablers

Staff knowledge and experience

The project was led by a staff team holding significant knowledge and experience in woodland management, conservation and community engagement. This facilitated the effective mobilisation of staff time and resources and added value to the project

Secure partnerships and connections

The project benefitted from LIPM's strong partner relationships with organisations such as Coed Lleol, Bangor University and North Wales Wildlife Trust. This facilitated co-delivery of events and increased the reach of events including volunteering days

Enablers

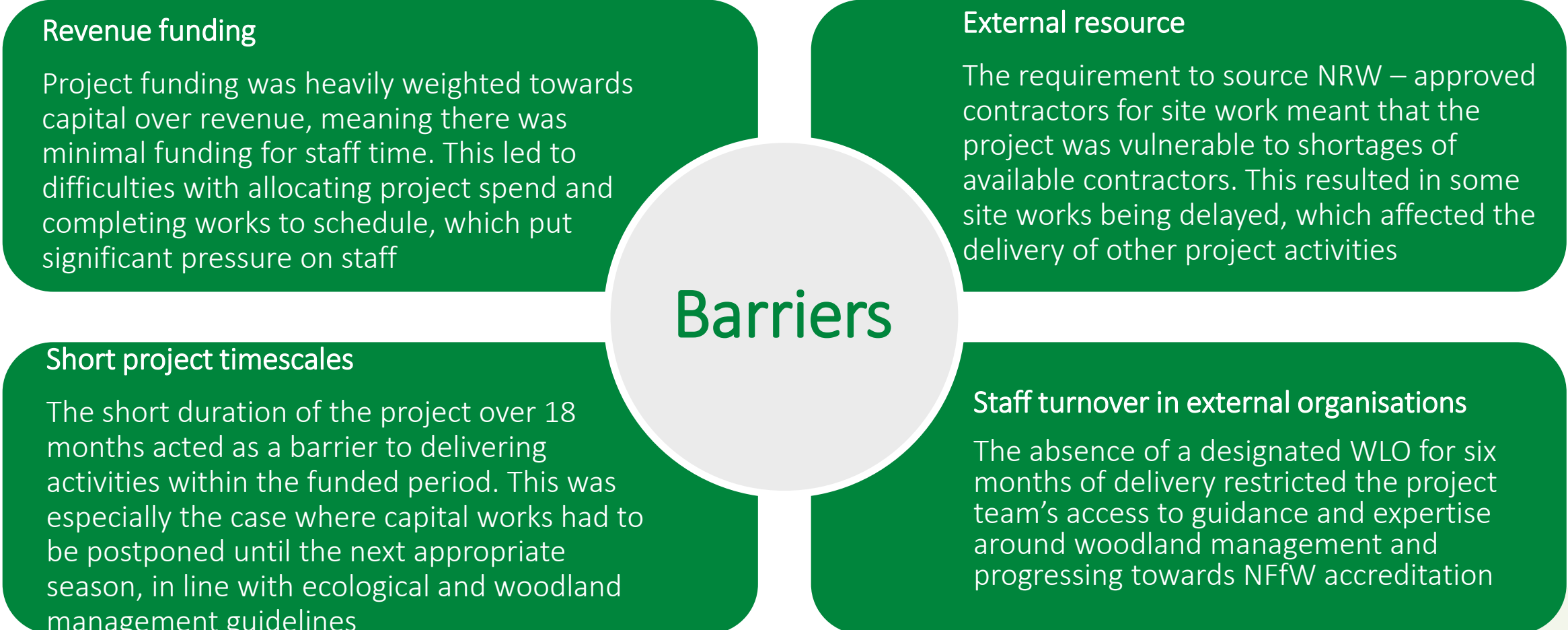
Strong volunteer base

LIPM utilised its strong volunteering base and network, which ensured that there was sufficient resource for carrying out woodland management, site clearing and planting throughout delivery

Networking and knowledge-sharing

LIPM's close relationships with partner organisations and knowledge-sharing networks through NFfW enabled access to best-practice knowledge around woodland management and project delivery

Lessons learnt: Barriers



Barriers

Revenue funding

Project funding was heavily weighted towards capital over revenue, meaning there was minimal funding for staff time. This led to difficulties with allocating project spend and completing works to schedule, which put significant pressure on staff

External resource

The requirement to source NRW – approved contractors for site work meant that the project was vulnerable to shortages of available contractors. This resulted in some site works being delayed, which affected the delivery of other project activities

Short project timescales

The short duration of the project over 18 months acted as a barrier to delivering activities within the funded period. This was especially the case where capital works had to be postponed until the next appropriate season, in line with ecological and woodland management guidelines

Staff turnover in external organisations

The absence of a designated WLO for six months of delivery restricted the project team's access to guidance and expertise around woodland management and progressing towards NFfW accreditation

Conclusions

- Overall, LIPM's TWIG project successfully delivered all funded activities within the approved timeframe, excluding the construction of small tool facilities, which is set to take place in the week following the project's official end. Project spend was also utilised effectively, with all but 0.03% of funding spent.
- The project's success was facilitated by project staff's knowledge, expertise and experience with woodland management and community engagement. It also benefitted from LIPM's strong partner relationships and networking with local partner organisations, which enabled access to knowledge and resource sharing and added value to the activities delivered.
- The project experienced challenges throughout delivery, primarily around logistical factors which were exacerbated by tight timescales, a shortage of staff time and resource and difficulties accessing contractors at the needed times.

Conclusions

- Despite these challenges, the site works and events delivered have already started to bring benefit to site users, local wildlife and for LIPM itself. Those participating in research reported that the site was more accessible, more user-friendly, more resilient to climate change and more capable of supporting biodiversity.
- Visitors and volunteers rated the site very highly, and credited their visit and / or participation with the site with improving their wellbeing, enabling them to gain new knowledge and skills and encouraging them to get involved in other heritage or green - based initiatives.
- The project is set to create lasting benefits for both LIPM and the local area, by increasing the organisation's financial sustainability and attracting more visitors and footfall into Newborough Forest and the areas surrounding it.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been informed by the evaluation findings, and include suggestions for funding bodies and partners as well as LIPM:

- **Recommendation 1:** The project team was effectively put together, with each member bringing the relevant knowledge and experience to their respective role. In designing future projects, consideration should be given to building a similar project team which holds expertise around both community engagement and woodland management.
- **Recommendation 2:** A greater emphasis on funding for revenue and staff costs would help to ensure that grantee organisations have enough staff resource to deliver works within the funded period. It would also ensure that staff have greater flexibility to coordinate works when contractors are available.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 3:** The project benefited from pre-existing mutualistic relationships with partner organisations. For future projects LIPM should try as much as possible to continue embedding partners into delivery, sharing knowledge and resources and engaging in mutual signposting.
- **Recommendation 4:** LIPM should leverage the successful project completion and NFfW accreditation by promoting these achievements as widely as possible, supporting its organisational aim to strengthen brand visibility through social media platforms.
- **Recommendation 5:** The project can be seen as an exemplar regarding its methods of utilising volunteers and partnership relationships to maximise project value. The project team and Heritage Fund should give consideration as to how the project can be disseminated as a model of best practice for community-based heritage and conservation projects.