

Newborough Forest Redesign

Public Consultation

May – September 2004

REPORT

About this report

Purpose of the report

This report has been produced by Lindsey Colbourne Associates, based on notes made on flip charts, and handed in on feedback forms, at the drop- in sessions during May, July and August and the public meetings of 20th September and 8th November. We hope to have produced an independent summary of the key issues raised through the consultation, together with answers to the key concerns and questions.

The report should NOT be seen as covering every single contribution to the consultation, although these are available (see below). It has been a difficult task to pull together so much information in one place. We hope, however, that in conjunction with the more detailed reports of the consultation, it provides a manageable summary that can be used to guide the way forward, through the work of the Liaison Partnership and associated working, task and discussion groups.

This report is being

- circulated to all participants who attended drop-ins or the public meetings who left their name/address
- made available on the website (www.forestry.gov.uk/wales)
- made available in post offices in Newborough, Dwyran, Llangaffo and Malltraeth.
- made available by post on request to Kath McNulty, Social Forestry Team, Forestry Commission Wales, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0PN, tel: 01286 871 874 or email: kath.mcnulty@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

There is also a fully transcribed report for each of the drop- ins and the public meetings. These are available to read in the post offices listed above, from the website, or by contacting Kath McNulty, Social Forestry Team, Forestry Commission Wales, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0PN, tel: 01286 871 874 or email: kath.mcnulty@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

The drop- ins and public meetings were held as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type of Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
7-8, 10 th May 2004	Initial Drop-ins	Prichard-Jones Institute
10 th May	Public Meeting (aborted)	Newborough School
12 th July	Drop-in	Llangefni Town Hall
28 th July	Drop-in	Prichard-Jones Institute
10-11 th August	Drop-in	Anglesey Show
14-15 th August	Drop-in	Beach Car Park
20 th September	Public Meeting	Llangefni School
8 th November	Public Meeting	Newborough School

Who took part?

- Approximately 300 people attended the drop ins. Some people came several times. They were able to give feedback verbally, on flip charts or on questionnaires. A total of 41 questionnaires were returned.
- Approximately 250 people attended the public meeting on 20th September in Llangefni. They were able to ask questions and make comments verbally or on comment forms.
- Approximately 60 people attended the public meeting in Newborough on 8th November, although 113 people had registered to attend. They were able to ask questions and make comments verbally or on comment forms.

How can I find out more?

Further information about the initiative is available in information folders in the Post Offices of Newborough, Dwyran, Llangaffo and Malltraeth; on our website www.forestry.gov.uk/wales or by contacting Kath McNulty, Social Forestry Team, Forestry Commission Wales, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0PN, tel: 01286 871 874 or email: kath.mcnulty@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Terms and abbreviations

A number of abbreviations have been used in this report:

ACC/IoACC	Anglesey County Council/Isle of Anglesey County Council
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AWS	Anglesey Woodland Strategy
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
CCW	The countryside Council for Wales
EEC	European Economic Community
EGNI	Biofuel consultancy
FCW	Forestry Commission, Wales
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
NNR	National Nature Reserve
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Site of Scientific Interest
WAG	Welsh Assembly government

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1. Statement of approach by CCW and FCW

1.1 The consultation process so far

The Forest Design Plan for Newborough Forest is 10 years old. We need to renew it to reflect what people want for the next 20 years, and want to understand everyone's interests and concerns as part of that process.

Last year, Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) developed a vision for the area which included restoring sand dunes, as the basis for consultation. The first public meetings were held in May 2004 in Newborough. Drop-in sessions were held at the Prichard-Jones Institute in Newborough on 7th, 8th, and 10th of May. A public meeting on Monday 10th May had to be rescheduled in order to accommodate all those who wanted to attend.

FCW and CCW staff then decided to hold more drop-in sessions over the summer at the Prichard-Jones Institute, the Anglesey Show and over a week-end in the beach car park. The Newborough Forest Preservation Support Group collected signatures for a petition and put on a good display in the beach car park with Lady Godiva on horseback presenting Chris Edwards (FCW) with a large chart.

The feedback received was that the proposals for the area should be developed in partnership with all the interested parties. So FCW/CCW decided to set up a liaison partnership with representatives from the local community, the Community Council, interest groups and government agencies. The commitment to doing so, and the decision to put the vision aside was announced at the public meeting on Monday 20th September in Llangefni. A new, broader, objective was set out: **to design and manage Newborough Forest area to maximise its environmental, economic and social value within the context of the Special Area of Conservation in south west Anglesey.**

The many questions asked at that public meeting, and the answers given at the meeting and subsequently are available in the report for the Llangefni meeting.

Rhosyr Community Council requested a public meeting for residents of Rhosyr. And in response, a meeting was held on 8th November. The format was exactly the same as for the Llangefni meeting, to ensure that local people had the opportunity to find out and question what was going on, and to give their feedback.

1.2 Some background information

Forestry Commission Wales manages the woodland to deliver the objectives set out by the Welsh Assembly Government in "[Woodlands for Wales](#)" and uses a Forest Design Plan to develop and describe the way in which it balances the needs of people, conservation, recreation, tourism, landscape and sustainable economic activity.

CCW is responsible for the management of the dunes, beach and adjacent estuaries of the National Nature Reserve (NNR) and for advising on the conservation of flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features of the site.

There is no European budget driving the forest design process or to pay for any changes that the liaison partnership group may recommend.

The Newborough Warren is part of the Abermenai to Aberffraw dunes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the [EU habitats directive](#) to conserve the range of European species and wildlife habitats.

The UK Government is required to work towards "Favourable Conservation Status". This means a combination of ensuring that the habitat or species is in good condition, that the future management of the habitat or species is secure long term.

FCW must assess the effect of its management of the SAC. If plans would adversely affect the SAC for reasons of overriding public interest, then compensatory measures could be required to ensure the integrity of the SAC.

- An Assessment cannot be made until the Design Plan has been written.
- Failure to abide by these regulations could lead to proceedings in the European Court.
- The challenge is to produce a Design that achieves Favourable Conservation Status for the SAC and all other stakeholder objectives on the site.

1.3 Objective

At the public meeting on 20th September 2004 in Llangefni, and at the public meeting in Newborough on 8th November 2004, CCW and FCW set out their objective for the Newborough forest area as:

"to design and manage Newborough Forest area to maximise its environmental, economic and social value within the context of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in South West Anglesey".

They also stated their commitment to maximising the involvement of all those interested. More information is given on this in the following sections.

1.4 Who is involved already

Chris Edwards for FCW and Tim Jones for CCW are the responsible officers for this programme. There is a joint FCW/CCW project team comprising: Kim Burnham (FCW), Gethin Clwyd (CCW), Chris Edwards (FCW), Tim Jones (CCW), Elinor Gwynn (CCW), Kath McNulty (FCW), John Ratcliffe (CCW), Wil Sandison (CCW).

Facilitator: Lindsey Colbourne, Lindsey Colbourne Associates.

1.5 Proposals for consultation and engagement

CCW/FCW would like to set up an open and accountable decision-making process in relation to the Newborough Forest Redesign programme to ensure that all voices are heard, and all ideas are genuinely considered in decisions about the area.

Their proposals about how to do this are set out below. The first step, to establish a **'liaison partnership'**, has already been consulted on at the drop-ins and public meetings and received much support.

The liaison partnership would cover the range of interests in the Forest Redesign programme, guiding the way the consultation goes from here on, and working closely with CCW and FCW, who will be responsible for the final decision. Members of the liaison partnership would either represent a particular group or interest, or particular expertise or experience, including local interests. People on the partnership would not have to be representatives of formal organisations, but must be in touch with a particular set of interests or expertise. The first meeting of any liaison partnership would be to consider the membership and whether it should change, how members will feedback to the community and other interested parties, and how they view these proposals for setting up an open and accountable process of decision-making.

While the liaison partnership will provide the overview, much of the detailed work will take place in **discussion, fact finding and working groups** on particular issues. These groups will bring together key interests around particular problems, options and questions, to inform the liaison partnership.

In addition to the liaison partnership and the groups above, FCW/CCW propose that there would be the opportunity for interested people, groups and organisations to go on an **'interested people' database**. These people would be regularly updated (via a newsletter and website) and actively consulted (at meetings, drop ins, through questionnaires).

FCW/CCW would also ensure that **information** is more widely and regularly available through the media, website and informal networks, so that everyone who wished to, could find out what was going on, and how to get involved.

1.6 A suggested consultation programme

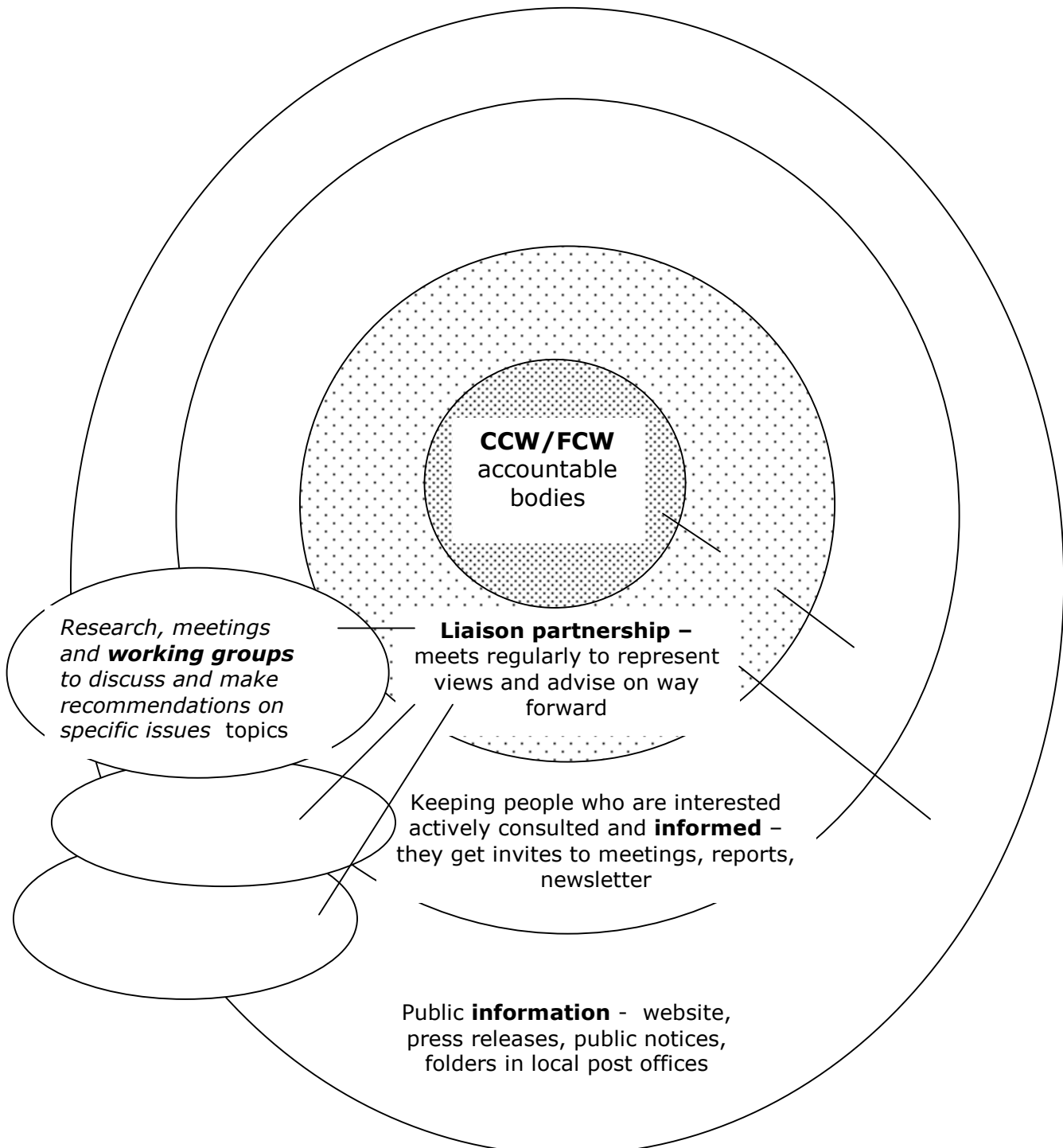
A suggested programme is set out below. It shows that it may take until 2006 before a final proposal is on the table, although if it is possible to do this faster, it will be! On the way, we hope that actions can be taken to address issues that arise, rather than waiting until 2006 for anything to happen. The timescale will depend on how long it takes to complete each stage, but it may be something like:

Approx timescale	Activities
Autumn '04 – Winter '05	<p><i>Consult on the way in which interested people and organisations can get involved in shaping proposals for the area.</i></p> <p><i>Hold public meetings. Send out consultation results. Set up the Liaison Partnership. Keep everyone interested informed of progress through, website, information folders in local communities, press releases, possibly newsletter.</i></p>
Winter '05 – Spring '06	<p><i>Liaison Partnership to decide the way forward, including setting up discussion, working or task groups.</i></p> <p><i>Identify any quick actions that can be taken. Develop options.</i></p> <p><i>Consult widely on options and proposals with public meetings, drop ins etc</i></p> <p><i>Refine proposals in light of feedback</i></p> <p><i>Keep everyone informed of progress through newsletters, website, information folders, press releases</i></p>
Spring '06 – Winter '06	<p><i>Consult on preferred proposal, in the shape of a draft Forest Design Plan. Again public meetings, drop-ins.</i></p> <p><i>Undertake any legal processes required eg impact assessments</i></p> <p><i>Keep everyone informed of progress through newsletters, website, information folders, press releases</i></p>
Winter '06 onwards	<p><i>Action and monitoring</i></p> <p><i>Involve people and organisations in action, monitoring and keeping them informed of progress through newsletters, website, information folders, press releases</i></p>

1.7 A representation of the proposals

This diagram tries to illustrate the way various methods of engaging people in developing options and proposals would work. The numbers of people that are involved increases towards the outside of this diagram. The time and responsibility that is required from those involved increases towards the centre.

The working groups would do much of the work, and would involve a wider range of interests than the Liaison Partnership.



2. Questions raised during the consultation, with replies from CCW/FCW

In this section of the report, we (Lindsey Colbourne Associates) have tried to group together key questions under some headings. As promised at the public meetings, Forestry Commission Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales have provided replies to each set of questions.

2.1 Questions about what is driving change, and what decisions have already been made

2.1.1 What (eg Europe, economics etc) is driving the interest of CCW and FCW in the Newborough Forest area?

Forestry Commission Wales manages the woodland to deliver the objectives set out by the Welsh Assembly Government in "Woodlands for Wales", and uses a Forest Design Plan to develop and describe the way in which it balances the needs of people, conservation, recreation, tourism, landscape and sustainable economic activity.

CCW is responsible for the management of the dunes, beach, and adjacent estuaries of the National Nature Reserve (NNR) and for the provision of advice on the conservation of flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features. They are advisors on the special conservation and environmental opportunities of the site.

The existing Forest Design Plan is 10 years old and this is an opportunity to better integrate our management of the dunes and woodland, to improve its ecological and social values. Our interests in the area are:

"to design and manage Newborough Forest area to maximise its environmental, economic and social value".

References

Woodlands for Wales

Habitats Directive,

UK Biodiversity Action Plan,

The Anglesey Local Biodiversity Action Plan,

The Anglesey Woodland Strategy,

The Unitary Development Plan

The EU's Århus Convention and Directive 2003/35/EC

The CCW booklet: Habitat series No. 7 Sand Dunes

2.1.2 Is it true that the availability of money from Europe is driving the deforestation plans?

No. There is no European budget driving the process.

2.1.3 What is this SAC, what does 'achieving favourable conservation status of the SAC' mean, and what will happen if it is not achieved (isn't it true that WAG will face prosecution if it is not achieved – i.e. that consultation won't have any effect on decision making)? What does the SAC status compel CCW to do? What does the Habitats Directive mean for the area?

- The Newborough Warren is part of the Abermenai to Aberffraw dunes Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated under the EU Habitats Directive to conserve the range of European species and wildlife habitats.
- The UK government is required to work towards "Favourable Conservation Status" (FCS) of these features and to avoid the deterioration of features for which the SAC is designated.
- Achieving "Favourable Conservation Status" is a combination of ensuring that the habitat or species under consideration, is in good condition, that the future management of the habitat or species is secure, and that the factors or processes that determine its long term functioning, are operational.
- FCW must carry out an Assessment of the effect of its management of the SAC. If its plans would adversely affect the integrity of the SAC, implementation can only proceed for reasons of overriding public interest. In this event, compensatory measures could be required to ensure the integrity of the SAC.
- An Assessment cannot be made until the Design Plan has been written.
- Failure to abide by these regulations could lead to proceedings in the European Court.
- The challenge is to produce a Design that achieves Favourable Conservation Status for the SAC and all other stakeholder objectives on the site.

2.1.4 What are the features on the site that need to be conserved?

The Special Area of Conservation features of the Newborough site include:

- Embryonic shifting dunes (strandline).
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with marram grass *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes').
- Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes').
- Dunes with creeping willow (*Salix repens* ssp. *argentea*).
- Humid dune slacks (the wet depressions between the dunes).
- Naturally nutrient-rich lakes, which are often dominated by pondweed.
- Petalwort *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (a liverwort).
- Shore dock *Rumex rupestris* (a vascular plant).
- In addition, Newborough Warren (including the forest) is part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under UK legislation, notified for its geology, landforms, habitats and species which underpins the Special Area of Conservation. In addition to the SAC features noted above, its special features include:

- Precambrian rocks
- Coastal dune landforms and the processes that sustain them.
- Saltmarsh
- Mudflats
- Great crested newts
- Medicinal leech
- Welsh marsh orchid
- Dune heleborine
- Golden hair lichen
- Sand dune mosses and liverworts
- Sand dune invertebrates

2.1.5 What sort of change do CCW and FCW want to see in the area and why? What does the Assembly want to do with the land? What is the status of the 'vision' and the plans and maps that we saw at the public meetings, and the current Forest Design Plan?

FCW and CCW have responsibilities to manage the land for a variety of objectives set out in law and policy, on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The Forest Design Plan expired in 2001. The "vision" was meant to be an illustration, one of the possible ways of meeting the environmental objectives. It has now been shelved.

2.1.6 What scientific evidence do you have to support your idea that things need to change? What has happened to the Environmental Impact Assessment that was commissioned earlier this year? Does this mean CCW/FCW have already made up their minds?

No, we have not made up our minds, but doing nothing is not really an option. Things will change whatever we do as the tree crop at Newborough matures, and we have to actively manage it to ensure an environment that users enjoy. The Environmental Impact Assessment has been suspended along with the vision, until the consultation process has been completed. Below are references to studies that have already been undertaken in the area. These can be considered along with other information during the consultation process from here on:

References:

- Hill M O & Wallace H L (1989) *Vegetation and environment in afforested sand dunes at Newborough, Anglesey. Forestry* 63(3) pp249 – 267.
- Rhind P M., Blackstock T H, Hardy, .H S., Jones R E., Sandison W. (2001) *The evolution of Newbrough Warren dune system with particular reference to the past four decades, in Coastal Dune Management: Shared Experience of Coastal Dune Management. Ed: Houston J A, S A Edmondson P J Rooney. Liverpool University Press*
- Houston J, 1997 *Conservation management practice on British dune systems British Wildlife* 8: 297-307
- Betson, M Connell L & Bristow C 2002 *Groundwater Modelling of Newborough Warren, Report for Countryside Council for Wales. July 2002 Bangor Wales. (Birbeck College Reports)* Bristow C (2003) *The impact of Forestry on coastal geomorphology at*

Newbrough Warren / Ynys Llanddwyn NNR, SSSI pSAC.Vol 1 Review and general conclusions. Report to Countryside Council for Wales.

- *Bristow C (2003) The impact of Forestry on coastal geomorphology at Newbrough Warren / Ynys Llanddwyn NNR, SSSI pSAC.Vol 2. Shoreline Monitoring Report to Countryside Council for Wales.*
- *Bristow C (2003) The impact of Forestry on coastal geomorphology at Newbrough Warren / Ynys Llanddwyn NNR, SSSI pSAC.Vol 3. Geophysics. Report to Countryside Council for Wales.*
- *Bristow C (2003) The impact of Forestry on coastal geomorphology at Newbrough Warren / Ynys Llanddwyn NNR, SSSI pSAC.Vol 4 Boreholes. Report to Countryside Council for Wales.*
- *Bristow C (2003) The impact of Forestry on coastal geomorphology at Newbrough Warren / Ynys Llanddwyn NNR, SSSI pSAC.Vol 5 Hydrogeology Report to Countryside Council for Wales.*
- *Ranwell, D.s. (1958) Movement of vegetated sand dunes at Newbrough Warren, Anglesey. J Ecol 46, 83-100*
- *Ranwell D.S. (1959) Newborough Warren, Anglesey I: The dune system and dune slack habitat. J Ecol 47 571-602*
- *Ranwell D.S. (1960a) Newborough Warren, Anglesey II: Plant associates and succession cycles of the sand dune and dune slack vegetation. J Ecol 48 117 – 142*
- *Ranwell D S (1960b) Newborough Warren, Anglesey III: Changes in the vegetation on parts of the dune system after the loss of rabbits by myxomatosis. J Ecol 48 385-395.*

2.1.7 What will happen to the forest while the new plan is drawn up? Why didn't this consultation process start earlier? What is the standard procedure for the changing FDP? Can we be assured that AONB(Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) rules will be applied?

The forest will continue to be managed as a commercial and recreational woodland, so thinning and maintenance will continue. There will be no major works to change the forest pattern, structure and diversity unless an agreed Plan specifying these things, has been produced. Forest Design Plans run for 10 years (but look forward 30 or more years) and are reviewed every 5 years.

CCW and FCW have been in discussion on the revision of the FDP since 2000, (the last plan was due for revision in 2001), but other priorities have intervened. Public consultation started after FCW and CCW had reached an understanding of the environmental issues that needed to be addressed. The "vision" was to form the basis for wider consultation. The Community Council has been briefed under a long-standing protocol.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places an obligation on all public authorities (including CCW & FCW) to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in performing their functions. Activities in the AONB should be guided by the AONB Management Plan. Any plan requiring Local Authority planning consent would also be subject to Planning Policies set out in the Local Plan, Unitary Development Plan and Planning Policy Wales.

2.2 Questions about what will be considered to be within the scope of the work, and how it links to other initiatives

2.2.1 How joined up will this be (with other plans, with health, social and economic interests, with wider area interests and issues)? Will these be included in the consultation on the forest?

CCW and FCW are Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and are required to deliver Assembly policies where reasonable and appropriate. The economic importance of Newborough Forest, beach and dunes as a major attraction is recognised by both agencies, as are the health benefits of outdoor recreation. CCW and FCW are involved elsewhere in the facilitation of economic, recreational and health initiatives, e.g the "Walking your Way to Health" campaign, establishment of mountain bike routes and enterprises and funding of green transport schemes.

2.2.2 How will this fit with the Anglesey Woodland Strategy e.g. can any felling be balanced against planting proposals elsewhere?

The Woodland Strategy will be taken into account in shaping options for the way forward, and their evaluation. The question of compensatory planting can be addressed, through the Anglesey Woodland Strategy.

2.2.3 What area will this cover – will it cover Penlon Dunes, Malltraeth Marsh?

The immediate need is to produce a plan for the forest area, taking into account relevant factors and areas. As part of the process, the effect of any options developed on surrounding areas will need to be considered.

2.2.4 How flexible or robust will any plans be to deal with any changes to the climate etc in the longer term?

The Forest Design Plan is a long-term plan, but must reflect changing priorities. The plan will also consider issues such as climate change (and sea level rise), where there is major uncertainty over what will happen. The process will proceed on the basis of best available information. Periodic reviews (5 yearly) will enable new information to be incorporated.

2.2.5 What will be taken into account in the planning and operation in the area? Will rare and scarce plants be considered? How will economic returns be measured (recreation, car park fees, wood)? Will the global role of the area be considered (eg as a carbon sink)? How will the public's views be balanced with things like the requirements of SAC, habitats directive etc?

The consultation process will identify all of the issues (environmental, social and economic) which impact on the forest. It will be our challenge to find a suitable balance. The public view will be safeguarded through the liaison partnership group.

2.2.6 What does 'world class forestry' mean?

Woodland industries contribute some £400 million a year to the Welsh economy. For the woodland owners, contractors, sawmills and joinery businesses to survive in what is a very competitive world timber market, they have to invest and develop in staff, equipment, the wood supply chain, product development and marketing. This requires effective business support, and more forests across the sector.

2.2.7 What are the links with the Bio-fuel project?

The Bio-fuel project is a free-standing project lead by Coed Cymru and EGNI, not dependent on the forest design plan. Though it could utilise low grade timber and waste timber from the forest (and elsewhere), this can occur with or without the implementation of the Forest Commission / Countryside Council vision. It is on hold until after the drop-ins and public meeting for the Forest Design Plan. It may hold its own specific consultation once the issues about the Forest Design Plan have been agreed.

2.2.8 How does this relate to the proposals for a visitor centre? Will it be located outside the village so the village will not gain financially?

The visitor centre is a separate partnership project supported by WDA, Isle of Anglesey County Council, CCW, FCW and is being led by Menter Môn. At this stage it is simply a feasibility study to look at options for how a visitor centre might work to maximise the economic benefits to the locality as well as adding to the visitor experience. It will look at the pros and cons of various locations and will consider the "no visitor centre" option. It is on hold until after the drop-ins and public meeting for the Forest Design Plan. It will hold its own specific consultation once the issues about the Forest Design Plan have been agreed.

2.2.9 How does it link to the need for affordable low cost housing in the area?

The Welsh Assembly Government requested Forestry Commission Wales to examine its holdings for potential housing land and Newborough was listed as possible. Nothing more has been done about this and any plans would be subject to full planning laws, including the need to address the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes.

2.3 About decision making and staffing

2.3.1 Who is in control of the project? Who is making sure that everything is done properly? Who makes the final decision? Why is the partnership at the centre so small? What will be the role of the Community Council? Why aren't WAG involved? Where are the County Council planners?

FCW's land managers will produce a draft Forest Design Plan which has to be approved by a Forestry Commission regulatory division who ensures that the plan meets legal and technical standards. CCW is closely involved in the partnership because of the sensitive nature of the site and its proximity to the nature reserve. CCW, the Environment Agency the Local Authority and the Community Council are statutory consultees in the Design Plan process.

FCW manages the forest on behalf of Welsh Assembly Government. CCW is the Assembly's advisers on conservation matters.

2.3.2 How can we trust CCW/FCW that this genuinely is a 'fresh start' when there are no staff changes?

FCW/CCW are committed to making this work and are setting up a whole new way of working that will increase the transparency and accountability of any decision making in the area. CCW and FCW staff have a job to do and will be supported and guided by a Liaison Partnership, and will do detailed work with and through working or task groups. There will also be newsletters, information on the website, public meetings etc. See section 1 for details.

2.3.3 Will there be someone independent managing things like the website/discussion forum to make sure all views are considered?

FCW and CCW manage their own websites, but Kath McNulty (FCW) and Gethin Clwyd (CCW) have particular responsibility for ensuring that views are taken on board. An independent facilitator may be used to help run meetings and ensure all voices are heard equally.

2.4 About consultation and engagement plans

2.4.1 How available will the report(s) from the consultation be?

Everyone who has given us their address – at the drop-ins, public meetings, over the phone etc - will receive a copy of the consultation results. Reports will also be made available on request. All reports will be available on the Forestry website, and copies will be placed in information folders in the post offices in Newborough, Dwyran, Malltraeth and Llangaffo.

2.4.2 Is it true that CCW didn't want any consultation on this?

No. CCW and FCW took their original view on the design plan, and the subsequent (now shelved) vision statement, to the Community Council and to the Anglesey Environment Forum (part of the County Council's Community Strategy mechanism) and to the Newborough Forest Environmental Panel (a FCW community liaison group which looks at day to day management issues to do with the forest). CCW has been closely involved in planning and organising the local community consultation and the planning of wider consultation with other stakeholders, including the drop-ins from May 2004.

2.4.3 Will there be more public and stakeholder involvement and meetings in the future? What will be the role of the liaison group? Will local views be included as well as organisations?

Yes. We are committed to full involvement. Proposals for how to go about involving the public and stakeholders were presented to the public meetings in September and November. These go beyond consultation, to the full involvement in developing options and recommendations. Full details of these are set out in Section 1 of this report. We are always open to ideas on how to improve these.

2.4.4 Why 2 year timescale – surely we can do this faster? Worried that otherwise public interest may drop off

Please see Section 1 for a full run down of why we think it might take 2 years. There are many views to take on board, issues to address and conflicts to resolve. If we can do it more quickly we will – the FDP is already overdue, but we need to get it right.

2.5 About specific issues in the area

2.5.1 Do CCW/FCW want red squirrels in the Newborough Forest? Can CCW tell us what the minimum red squirrel viable and sustainable population size would be in Newborough?

CCW/FCW are keen to have red squirrels in Newborough as part of the Anglesey Red Squirrel Project. The question of viable and sustainable population size is highly complex, depending upon assumptions about timescale, degree of human intervention, habitat connectivity, levels of predation and disease etc. CCW has funded the Anglesey Red Squirrel Project for the past 6 years and continues to do so.

2.5.2 Why do we need ponies?

Ponies are a green option. They are used on some areas within the forest as natural mowing machines to maintain open glades for specific conservation objectives – including some very rare species, such as shore dock and medicinal leech. Their dung supports many invertebrates (used by feeding birds such as chough), and rare species of fungi. They are also used widely on the open warren, where they assist in the restoration and maintenance of a species-rich short grassland sward community.

2.5.3 Is the land too acidic for anything else to grow there?

No. The soil may be more acidic under the pine needles but this does not prevent growth of other species. The sand is actually highly calcareous (lime-rich), which accounts for much of the valuable flora and fauna associated with the dunes. Minor instability (such as blow-outs and erosion scars) brings this lime-rich sand back to the surface. Some areas may develop into acidic communities, such as dune heathland or lichen-dominated communities. As both these communities are rare in Wales, they should be encouraged.

2.5.4 What would happen if we took a 100 yard swathe of forest off the front of the dunes?

Felling edge trees would expose a new line of taller trees to wind and salt, and there would be visible signs of die-back. Wind-throw is not likely, but it would be wise to develop a new “ramp” of scrub, say 100 metres back, before any felling on the front occurred, to protect the wider forest. Shifting dunes with marram grass would re-establish, helping to deflect some salt and wind in the process. Removing root-plates on the dune cliffs would allow the sand to establish gentler slopes (“strandline and foredunes”) which would colonise with natural vegetation. Some local sand movement would occur as dunes form on the forest edge, but planting of marram grass would stop key access routes being blocked.

2.5.5 What are the economics of the situation? The income and costs of Forest Plans? The purpose of the car park charge (is this to deter visitors to the SAC)?

Costs of the Forest Design Plan will be determined when the prescribed actions are determined and prioritised. If cost (minus income) exceeds existing operational budgets, then sources of additional funding will be sought – primarily from the National Assembly.

The purpose of the car park charge is to raise revenue for FCW operations, including the surfacing of the forest road, (which is not maintained by the Local Authority,) and the car park and toilet facilities. There is no strategy to deter visitors to the SAC, but notice will be taken of the environmental cost of cars. We assume that people come to visit the forest, beach and the dunes, not a car park. There is therefore a finite capacity to the car park (370 places, plus 25 at Cwningar) and the barrier charge does help in the regulation of this.

2.5.6 Will there be blowing sand?

Blowing sand was a problem at Newborough in the early post-war years when the site was disturbed by military activity, and very heavy grazing by rabbits. Since rabbit myxomatosis in the mid 1950s, the dunes have stabilised almost everywhere – including on the open Warren, and very little sand blow is now experienced. We would like some sand movement, particularly on seaward areas, since there is a shortage of bare sand for some of the rare plants and invertebrates adapted to this environment. However, dunes now tend to stabilise naturally, and the retention of the major part of the forest would ensure that there is no danger of sand moving far inland.

2.5.7 What is CCW/FCW's attitude to rabbits?

Rabbits are a long established component of the dune fauna, though severely diminished by myxomatosis, and more recently by Rabbit Haemorrhagic Viral Disease (RHVD). Their grazing helps to keep the dunes open and to conserve important and diverse habitats for rare plants and invertebrates, such as early sand grass or burrowing bees. Rabbits often prosper in conjunction with other grazing animals, utilising the short sward left by cattle or ponies, but have more difficulty spreading in dense vegetation.

2.5.8 What is CCW/FCW's attitude to ragwort?

Ragwort is a natural component of the sand dune flora. It is poisonous to grazing animals, but is normally avoided when green. It can be a problem if dead or wilted ragwort is fed to livestock. The solution is to avoid its inclusion in hay, and to reduce its occurrence by good grazing practice, and by avoiding overgrazing, which can encourage seedling establishment. Ragwort is an "injurious weed" and FCW and CCW adhere to the Code of Practice to Prevent and Control the Spread of Ragwort (2004).

2.5.9 What are CCW/FCW's attitude to access?

Access will be ensured because the FCW area is to be dedicated as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The access policy at Newborough Forest is to enable quiet recreational use on foot. Horse riding is a legitimate pursuit, which is managed along defined routes and limited by a permit system. Cycling is permitted on defined routes. We are seeking ways to enable all these activities to co-exist without conflict, in order to enable the maximum number of people to enjoy the site, without damaging the tranquility which we all value.

Although the position of the residents' car park may be dictated by coastal erosion, there is a commitment to maintain this facility at Newborough.

The question of blocked bridleways was raised at the Newborough public meeting and was investigated by FCW. There are no statutory "bridleways" at Newborough. However, there are public rights of way which must be kept open and we will ensure that this is done.

2.5.10 What happens to money from car park/barrier fees

Currently there is no linkage between the money collected from the car park and the amount spent on site. Forestry Commission Wales has managed, and continues to manage, the facilities at Newborough.

3. Concerns

A wide range of concerns were raised during the consultation, including:

- Concern that change in the area was being **driven** by Cardiff and/or **Europe** (influencing through legislation and/or funding), and that community interests will therefore have no influence on decision- making (even though they will bear the brunt of the impact of changes)
- Concerns that the **decision** has already been made – this ‘deforestation’ has been a long-term aspiration of CCW in particular. The ‘vision has been put to one side’ but will re-appear very soon. The track record of previous lack of consultation, and lack of staff changes, reinforces this concern.
- Concerns that if there are **no plans** now, there is nothing to comment on, and so consultation is a waste of time, and/or that it will be impossible to balance the wide range of interests
- Concerns about the pace of change (with people being concerned either way – that it will take too long, and that it will all happen too quickly) and **what will happen** between now and the production of the new Forest Design Plan – what will guide any changes.
- Concerns about the **relative ‘say’** of the local community, and wider interests (with people being concerned both ways), and about whether individuals will have a say, or just organisations, and whether all aspects of the community will be involved, including young people
- Concerns about the **relative weight** that will be given to different interests – economic, social, environmental, conservationist – and what geographical area will be taken into consideration, and what will be sidelined (eg biodiversity and conservation vs local economic interests; forest area vs neighbouring dunes; local vs Wales vs UK vs global concerns).
- Concerns about the **flexibility** of the plan over the long term – will it be flexible enough to respond to changes (eg in climate)
- Concerns about the Newborough Forest redesign and links to other projects, such as the **biofuel** plant and the interpretation centre
- Concerns that CCW/FC do not have the **understanding** required for making the ‘right’ or ‘best’ decisions, and that they are not considering the whole range of impacts of any change (eg on neighbouring areas, on all ecology and species, on social and health issues), that local understanding is lacking
- Concerns about **clear felling**, the look of areas that have been cleared, the disruption caused by felling.
- Concerns about changes to **access**, changes to the nature of specific paths and walks, and rights of way not being kept clear
- Concerns that potential benefits and **revenue** from the forest and car park, the visitor centre, employment etc will not be kept locally, but used by organisations

In response, the following section sets out some guidelines to help ensure that these concerns fully inform the programme as it is taken forward.

Guidelines for any change to the Newborough Forest area, that can be used for assessing any proposals or ideas.

The following guidelines have been suggested through the consultation. It is proposed that they are used to guide the way forward from here:

- Protect walking access rights, and local special privileges to all areas.
- Enhance habitat and wildlife diversity.
- Work with, listen to, inform and involve the public, and stakeholders, on their particular issues and interests, in the design and management of the forest and any prospective change.
- Do not over-restrict the issues to be considered – look at the area and the issues holistically.
- Ensure consistency of information from all staff, formally and informally.
- Where major change is unavoidable, it should be gradual, and with minimal negative impact on the local community and landscape (eg vehicle traffic and clearance).
- Ensure the Plan is flexible and allows for changes in knowledge, climate etc over time.
- Do not create large, unsightly areas.
- Do not allow sand to blow into the village/homes.
- Maximise woodland cover and mixed woodland
- Maintain the unique character of the area – peace and quiet, being able to get lost, feeling safe when alone
- Active, consistent, locally knowledgeable, local wardening
- Maximise and be clear about benefits to the local community, and any possible negative impacts
- Be clear about how this is to be funded, and any influence of EU or other legislation, clearly stated.
- Ensure any day to day management operations in the forest are publicised and understood locally.

4. Issues that people would like to be considered/covered in shaping the future of the forest

Note: see also following section which outlines the things that people particularly value about the area as it is now, as well as the things they'd like to see improved or changed.

- What do all the various interests – Europe, Assembly, CCW, FCW, Anglesey-wide, UK- wide, local residents, local visitors – want from the area?
- What are the range of conservation and ecology interests, and management options for the area?
- What are the social and economic interests in the area? Eg log cabins, biofuel, potential for local jobs, visitor centre.
- Where will any benefits and revenue generated go? Is there potential for increasing the amount that goes to the local community?
- What funding is available, from where, and what influence this will have on decisions made?
- What is the science of any change – or no change – including hydrology, effect of taking 100 yard swathe off front of dunes, likely wind blow, minimum viable and sustainable red squirrel population size, effect of any tree removal on trees in the lee, effects of different kinds of tree and tree cover, sediment transport modeling etc?
- What are the options for the area – from no change, to gradual change, to any major change. What will happen if we carry on as it is now?
- Broad – but clear - definition of economic benefits, and then consideration of these in proposals.
- Why is there a need for anything other than gradual change – thinning and replanting?
- Long term view, and ability to deal with unexpected changes, including effect of climate change.
- Global considerations eg role as carbon sink.
- Health and social impacts of any changes, not just environment and conservation.
- Rare and scarce plants.
- Effect on Malltraeth Marsh and Pen Lon, not just forestry.
- Clear links to: AONB, Anglesey's Woodland Strategy, and the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Contractors – terms.
- Access and issues such as car park charges, barrier fees, parking, blocked rights of way.
- What will happen in short term, while longer-term plans are being made?

5. Shaping the approach– what you most value as it is and what, if anything, you’d like to see improved or changed

5.1 What you value as it is now

Things that you value as they are now	Why
The beauty, peace and quiet of the forest	People just love the forest. Offers a place to “get away from rough and tumble of life and the noise of vehicles”. Provides sense of wellbeing to those (walking) in the area. An important part of the Newborough area and character. The lack of commercialism and ‘back to nature’ feel.
The wide range of wildlife	People ‘love to see’ the birds, orchids, lichens, fungi, mosses, squirrels. Also the fact that they <u>can</u> be seen – i.e. they are not restricted from going deep in the forest, and they are encouraged by the thinned areas.
Privacy and shelter	It is seen as somewhere to go when the weather is ‘bad’. People value being able to walk whilst sheltered from elements (wind, rain, sun), and those on the beach can access the forest as shelter from sun. Also that the trees mask the view of the car park.
The many walks and paths	For many, it enables an important regular activity that is essential to health and wellbeing. Most mention walking (and walking dogs, children etc), but also horse riding and cycling was mentioned. Some value the ‘natural’ paths, others the paved or more accessible paths. Many mention valuing the way-marked paths in the forest.
The proximity and contrast between the dunes, beach and the forest	People like to walk through forest to the shore. The ‘mix’ is seen as unique habitat and character that is very valued.
The access	Residents car park at Llanddwyn – especially for older residents access as they can’t walk far. People mention valuing the relative freedom to walk in the forest and dunes
The largeness of the forest	Unique on Anglesey, offering unique experience for users. It is the biggest area of woodland that is suitable habitat for red squirrels on Anglesey.
The existing approach to thinning and replanting	Much better than clear felling – goes with the natural flow of things. Don’t like the results of clear felling (stumps etc)

5.2 What you'd like to see improved or changed

Things that you'd like to see improved or changed	Why
Providing the best forest habitat for wide range of wildlife and biodiversity	Seen as unique and important for red squirrels and other species that have 'lost ground' elsewhere, such as sand lizard, Natterjack toad. Also ravens, fungi and other 'Biodiversity Action Plan' species. Almost everyone supported gradually encouraging more broadleaves and mixed woodland (seen as continuation of existing policy). Many mentioned concerns about ponies in the area. Some mentioned linking the area to others (eg to Pentraeth for squirrels).
Securing more economic benefits	Potential has not been realised – eg how to use timber locally for buildings, agriculture, gardening; maximising visitor returns; using income to improve the forest interpretation
Improving access, the paths and facilities	Some, but by no means all, wanted more and improved surfacing of paths, and more access for the less able; making forest and existing paths more interesting eg nature trail, sculpture park, setting up a motor bike and/or 4x4 'area' (on the warren), improving flatter paths for biking, providing more seating areas; more bins; seating and picnic areas; more reliable barrier; increasing access on the Warren (and allowing dogs off the lead); improving public transport and signage to Newborough.
Improving education, interpretation and signage	This is possibly the most important environmental resource on the island. Could make much more of it. Information boards explaining the ecology, forestry and other interests; sheltered information centres as on Llanddwyn; educational materials for schools, overseas visitors; tide clock at entrance; map showing types of paths, features of interest etc
More 'accessible' rangers active in Newborough	Help prevent vandalism, assist with interpretation
More dunes	To protect local residents

5.3 Differences in opinion

In addition to the broad areas of interest and concern above, some significant differences in opinion were held over the following:

- Wanting more **dunes** vs wanting to keep/enhance forest
- How much **access** there should be (open access, more paths, more accessible paths) and how to make the areas more interesting (eg sculpture park, interpretation boards) vs minimizing effect on wildlife and maintaining special character of the area)
- The role or relative weight of the 'local' **voice** vs the wider Anglesey, UK, European, world views
- How to **involve** the range of interests in shaping the way forward, and how long to take in doing so.

6. Specific interests, ideas and concerns

The questionnaires that were handed out at the drop in sessions asked specifically whether people would like more, or changed, woodland cover, and which paths they particularly valued or would like to see added or improved. This section records the responses given.

6.1 Woodland cover

- Broadleaf (locally sourced oak, ash, alder, cherry), mixed and 'native tree' planting was popular, especially whatever would support most wildlife
- Gradual change to make forest more open and mixed (but allow natural regeneration where possible rather than 'rushing in and planting things that 'ought to be there'')
- Do not want trees on Malltraeth and open Warren area
- Creating glades to diversify the forest
- Would like to see trees:
 - In more inland areas
 - West and North of Llyn Rhosddu
 - In bare areas eg area to right of hidden bat roost going down to the beach
 - Replanting on Mynydd Llydiat
 - Plantations on Llyn Alaw
 - Behind car park
 - On walk parallel with the shore towards the island
 - In Newborough area
 - Central Anglesey
 - To create corridors for red squirrels to pass from Pentraeth to Newborough
 - Almlwch
 - Rhosneigr
 - South side of forest merging into dunes
 - North west triangle of forest merging into dunes

6.2 Paths

6.2.1 Favourites

- All tracks – like them as they are!
- Like the sandy ones – slow down the bikers
- Forest track through centre of forest parallel to north beach
- Nature reserve and area South
- Coastal walks
- Pathways in 'area 2' which are full of birds (woodpeckers, ravens, chaffinch, woodcock)
- The 'square' between the first two gates on the left of main track *"I use it as a quick private walk at all times of the year. The charm of that path puts me right for the day. I've seen everything from foxes to owls on it"*

- Facing the sea and taking left track through forest
- Anti-clockwise one behind the car park – left across the road up to tree line and down over to sandy track. “the children and dogs love the fallen trees to climb and make dens”
- Viewing Malltraeth salt marsh for winter birds – value the cover of the trees down that side

6.2.2 More or improved paths

- More ways from beach to top road going to the island so can change between beach and forest more easily
- More short cuts back to car park (for use when weather turns bad)
- Better signage about the nature of the various paths – which are accessible, any special features en-route (eg views, nature)
- More circular walks
- Way marked paths leading onto the beach from left track through forest (when facing sea)
- Better marked paths in Warren
- Stabilise path from Llyn Rhos Ddu to forest, and make it easier to wander onto the warren from this path, as short outward walk from car park has to be followed by a return on the same path
- Occasional seating areas
- Better surfacing of roads for cyclists
- Better maintenance, and ensuring of access.

6.2.3 Less/changed paths

- Concern that more paths would change the nature of the area
- Concern that more paths or more open access would encourage paedophiles
- Concern that creating more paths would result in more tree chopping, and would affect wildlife so they would be less easily seen
- Less wide paths (concern about use of weed killer)
- Concerns about open access and its impact on wildlife and walkers.

6.3 Other comments

- Would like to see artistic impressions or photos of changes before giving opinions
- Set aside a corner of the warren for motor bikers
- Use felled timber as fencing board walks/mulch for gardeners/paths
- Have a guide – printed map

7. Involvement in the future

Everyone who attended the drop in session was given a feedback form on which they could note the kind of involvement they'd like to have in the future. This section lists the results.

The interest shown has been used to shape the 'future involvement' proposals that are set out in Section 1, and tested at the public meeting on 20th September 2004 in Llangefni, and at the public meeting in Newborough on 8th November 2004.

7.1 Being kept informed of progress

41 people who returned a questionnaire at the drop-ins replied that they would like to be kept informed. No-one said they would not like to be kept informed.

Of those 41 people,

- 7 said they'd like to be kept informed by email newsletter
- 17 by paper newsletter
- 9 by looking up on the website
- 18 through local press
- 4 in another way (suggestions below):
 - Using wildlife magazines/journals
 - Articles in NW Wildlife Trust journal
 - University of Wales, Bangor

7.2 Giving views and shaping proposals

41 who returned a questionnaire at the drop ins replied that they would like to give views in the future. No-one said they would not like to give views.

Of those 41 people,

- 20 people said they would like to give their views at more events like these
- 7 by writing to their AM or councillor
- 13 by writing in (mail or email)
- 2 by ringing up
- 5 via the website
- 11 by being part of a formal group (eg a liaison group), which meets regularly
- 4 by being represented by someone else on a group (such as a liaison group)
- 1 by another way:
 - Ideas from informal group