



COVID CONTINGENCY

COED LLEOL (SMALL WOODS WALES)

2020-2021 EVALUATION REPORT

ACTIF WOODS WALES



INTRODUCTION

Coed Lleol (Small Woods Wales) is part of the National Charity, Small Woods (established 1988). Small Woods is a National Organisation for Small Wood Owners and has a significant track record in Social Forestry. Coed Lleol, established in 2002, develops and delivers community and social forestry activities throughout Wales. Coed Lleol's Actif Woods Wales Programme began in 2010 to connect people with their local woodlands for their health and wellbeing, whilst also helping to maintain and promote healthy woodlands. Since then, the programme has expanded to eleven areas across Wales: Anglesey, Gwynedd, Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Ceredigion, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire.

The Actif Woods Wales programme engages adults who predominantly live in areas that have high health needs, low employment rates and often poor access to services. Additionally, Actif Woods encourage and supports social prescribing by working in partnership with health services and GPs who refer people to the Actif Woods Wales Programme. In normal times, Actif Woods Provide 4-6 week sessions, monthly or weekly drop-in sessions for adults and 4-6 week family sessions. The Actif Woods Sessions consist of a combination of woodland skills, knowledge-building, healthy eating around the campfire and woodland exercise. Activities are delivered by expert leaders and cover bushcraft and fire lighting skills to charcoal making, coppicing, green woodworking, whittling, willow-weaving, green gym and foraging, tree and wildlife identification walks and more. Participants also take responsibility for clearing rubbish and light woodland management whilst engaged in the Actif Woods Programme.



Covid Response

In March 2020 lockdown challenged Coed Lleol to rethink how they could deliver their woodland wellbeing programme differently. The staff worked together to understand the core needs of participants during this difficult time and surveyed over 100 participants to establish a way forward.

This led to a new programme that included,

- **Daily National Nature and Wellbeing Sessions on Zoom.** These covered the themes of Foraging and Nutrition, Nature Watch, Family Nature Activities, Physical Activity, Woodland Crafts and Mindfulness.
- **Weekly Local Zoom sessions on zoom** were established in all project areas that enabled existing participants to continue engagement with Coed Lleol and each other.
- **Telephone Befriending** for participants who were not online with a focus on nature and wellbeing.
- **YouTube Tutorial Videos** to support people online, at any time of the day or night, Available on Coed Lleols You Tube Channel (Coed Lleol - Small Woods Wales - YouTube)

Towards the end of 2020, staff were able to resume some in-person woodland wellbeing groups, walking groups and woodland drop-in sessions – attracting lots of new participants who were keen to reconnect with people and nature safely.

(Safety measures were put in place and a cap on the number of people attending each session was applied to comply with government recommendations and keep staff and participants safe).



Coed Lleol's Goals

Coed Lleol's Actif Woods Wales Programme aims to protect and develop woodlands for current and future generations by encouraging the use of woodland resources for the long-term health and wellbeing of people and the environment.

The key objectives for participants are:

- Increase the mental wellbeing of participants
- Increase the amount of physical activity participants undertake
- Increase the time spent outdoors and with others (social wellbeing – reducing social isolation)
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of woodland skills and heritage crafts that utilise the natural resources of UK woodlands
- Increase knowledge of healthy food choices (with a focus on outdoor nutrition)
- Encourage progression to volunteering or drop-in woodland groups (supporting longer-term health and wellbeing) leading to community involvement in the maintenance of woodland sites



Goals continued...

The Actif Woods Wales programme also aims to increase its referral routes and strengthen its social prescribing pathway by:

- Increasing active referral routes from health services, GPs and family support services
- Develop strong training pathways for woodland leaders for career professional development (developing a clear set of minimum standards for woodland health activities)
- Promote stronger networks between outdoor activity provision and health services



Evaluation method

Pre-activity and Post-activity online questionnaires were used to measure overall impact and change over time in the participants' mental wellbeing, physical activity, knowledge and understanding and whether they showed increased use of greenspaces or woodlands over time (nature connection). Post-activity questionnaires also established the participants' views about the programme and gathered participant ideas on what improvements could be made.

Participant wellbeing was measured using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). This utilises a two-week recall, self-report, wellbeing indication using a 5-point scale on fourteen set wellbeing indicators. Physical health was measured using the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) short version . This is a self-report, 7-day recall, of the amount and duration of vigorous, moderate and walking exercise that a participant recalls from the previous week. The scores are converted into an overall MET score that provides an indicator of weekly physical activity.

Overall, 467 participants completed the pre form and 142 completed the post evaluation form*

*this number is expected to rise as participants complete in-person session in year 3 of the programme



Case studies

Case studies were collected from 10 participants who had taken part in Coed Lleol Activities in 2019-2021. These are available in a separate case study report. 4 case studies are presented at the end of this report.

Semi-structured telephone calls were used to collect data by a trained evaluator. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and reported in the participants own words as much as possible*

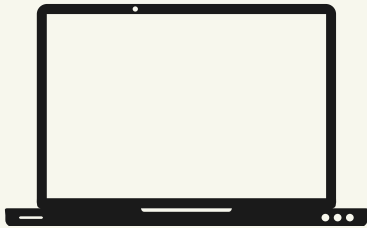
*some editing was undertaken to ensure the participant's story was sequential. All edited case studies were sent back to participants to ensure accuracy and agreement to be used



COED LLEOL SESSION DELIVERY

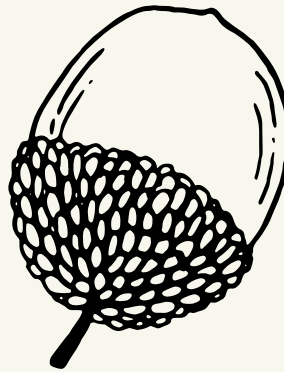
Between April 2020 - April 2021 Coed Lleol delivered...

493
SESSIONS
DELIVERED!*



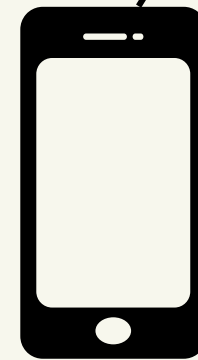
383

**NATIONAL & LOCAL
ZOOM SESSIONS+ 11
TASTER SESSIONS**



46

**WALKING GROUPS &
53 WOODLAND
SESSIONS**



1318

**TELEPHONE NATURE
BEFRIENDING CALLS
MADE**

Coed Lleol changed their delivery in response to covid-19. They designed and delivered weekly online zoom sessions for local and national groups and started up a telephone befriending service. In-person woodland and walking groups sessions were held when it was safe to do so (September-December 2020)

*This is double the number of sessions that Coed Lleol delivers in a 'normal' year.



COED LLEOL ALSO PUBLISHED 30 YOUTUBE VIDEO TUTORIALS

OVER
10,000
VIEWS IN ONE
YEAR!

Themes covered: nutrition and foraging, woodland skill and crafts, nature and woodland knowledge, mindfulness and keep fit outdoors and more...

The background of the infographic is a blurred photograph of a natural setting, featuring a laptop on a wooden table, some potted plants, and a person's arm in the upper left. Overlaid on this are three circles: two light green circles at the top and one dark green circle at the bottom center. The top-left circle contains the text '501 PARTICIPANTS' and a paragraph about online, face-to-face, and telephone activities. The top-right circle contains the text '143 PARTICIPANTS' and a paragraph about one-off online sessions. The bottom circle contains the text '10,685 PEOPLE' and a paragraph about engagement in Coed Lleol activities and the YouTube channel.

501 PARTICIPANTS

took part in one of more of our activities online, face-to-face or by telephone as part of our befriending service from April 2020-April 2021. (36 children and 465 adults took part in activities)

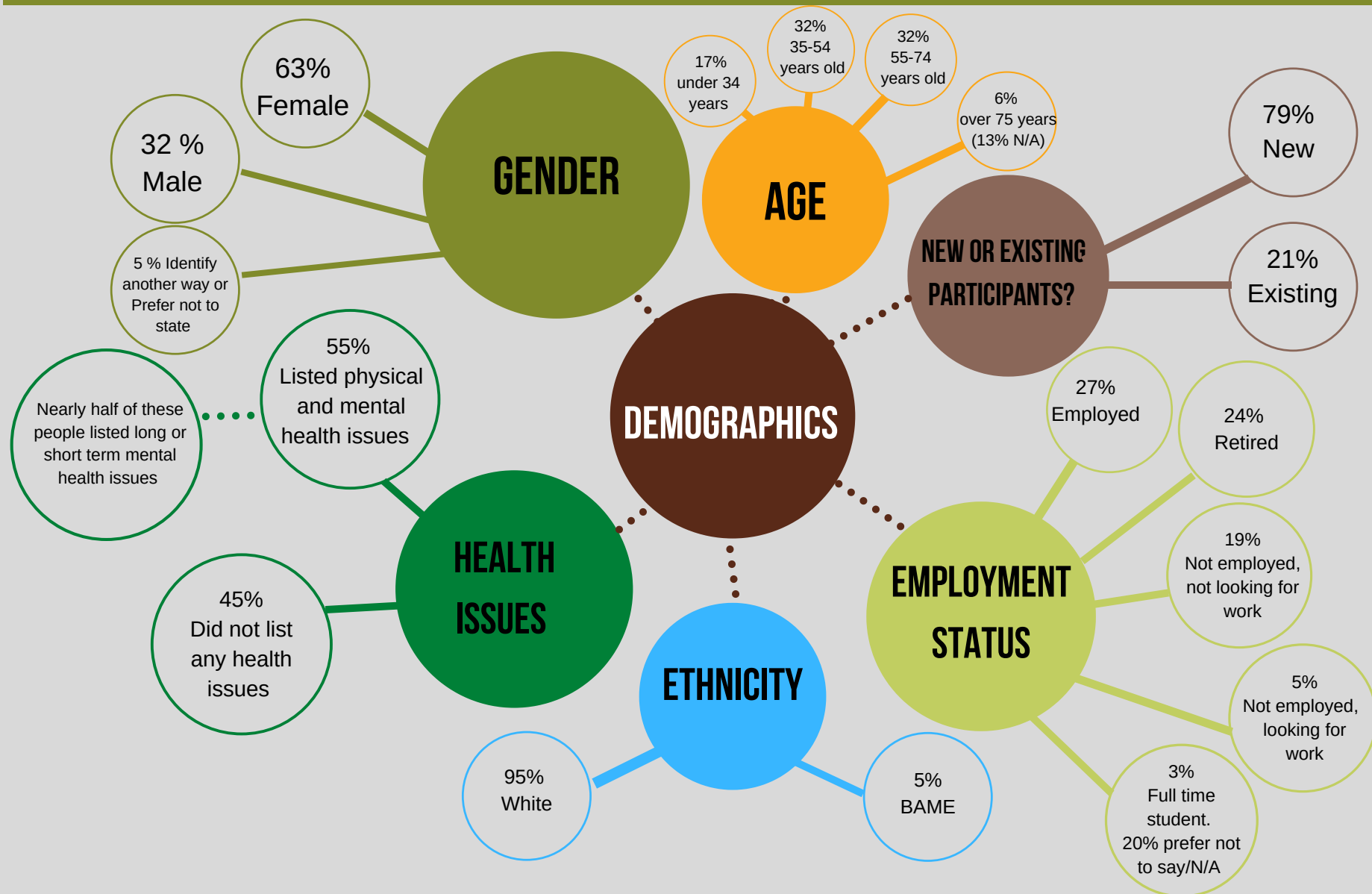
143 PARTICIPANTS

took part in one-off online sessions or promotional sessions

10,685 PEOPLE

were engaged in Coed Lleol Activities from April 2020 – April 2021 or through the Coed Lleol YouTube channel

Coed Lleol's adult participants April 2020- April 2021



WORKING WITH THE HEALTH SECTOR

Coed Lleol are open to all, but work closely with Link Workers, Social Prescribers, GPs and Health services to ensure they reach people most in need. This year, Coed Lleol was able to support 225 adults who listed health issues. The team was able to support people with a wide range of mental and physical health issues. The listed health issues were grouped into 6 main areas (dark green), some examples of the health issues are listed in the lighter green circles.



Welsh Index of multiple deprivation

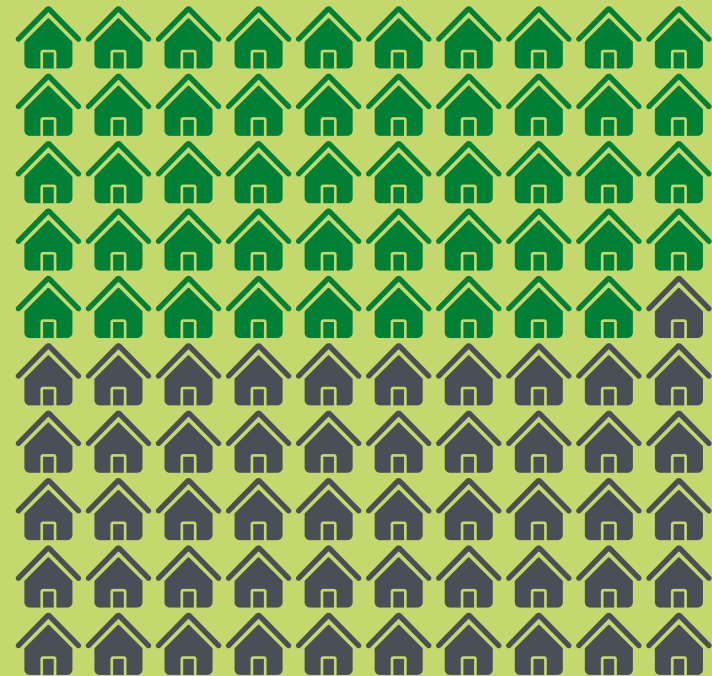
46% of participants live in areas 1-5 WIMD (most deprived)



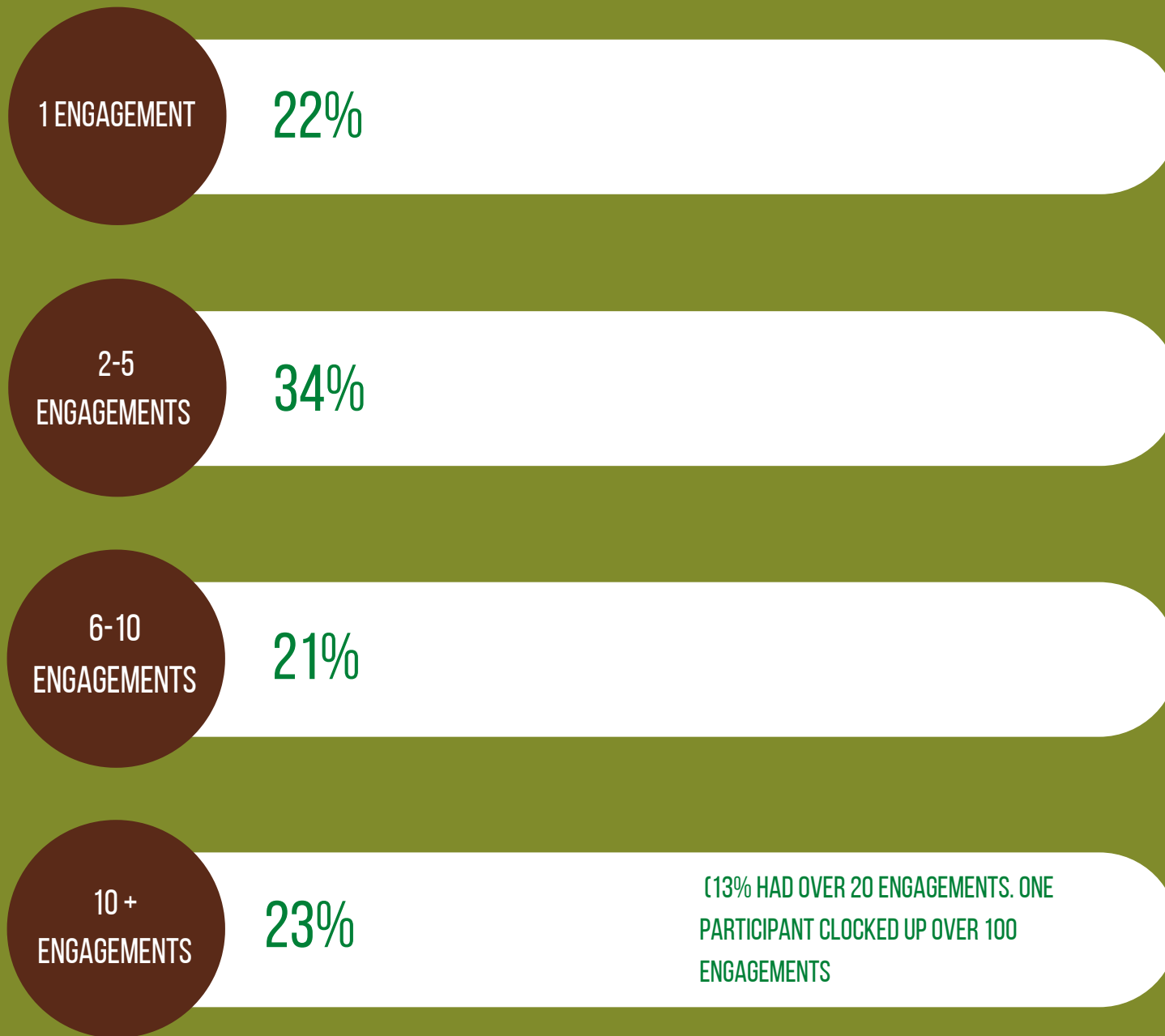
54% of participants live in areas 6-10 WIMD (least deprived)

URBAN OR RURAL?

49% of participants live in rural areas



51% of participants live in urban areas



Number of Engagements April 2020-2021

Engagements

Between April 2020 and April 2021 Coed Lleol engaged over 500 people with online national and local sessions (which focused on Nature, Foraging, Skills & Craft, Family Fun, Keep fit and Mindfulness), telephone befriending and when possible outdoor in-person walking groups and woodland sessions.

78% of participants became repeat attendees and enjoyed 2 or more sessions. 13% attended over 20 sessions, with some participants attended over 60 sessions! In a 'normal year' Coed Lleol could not have offered as many sessions for participants.

Offering 'online' sessions and befriending resulted in a longer and more sustained engagement with participants.



WELLBEING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

Wellbeing

70%

OF PARTICIPANTS EVIDENCED INCREASED WELLBEING

The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) was used to calculate wellbeing. Figures are based on 79 participants completing Pre- and post-WEMWBS)

91%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT BEING PART OF COED LLEOL RESULTED FEELING HAPPIER (N=142)

Physical Health

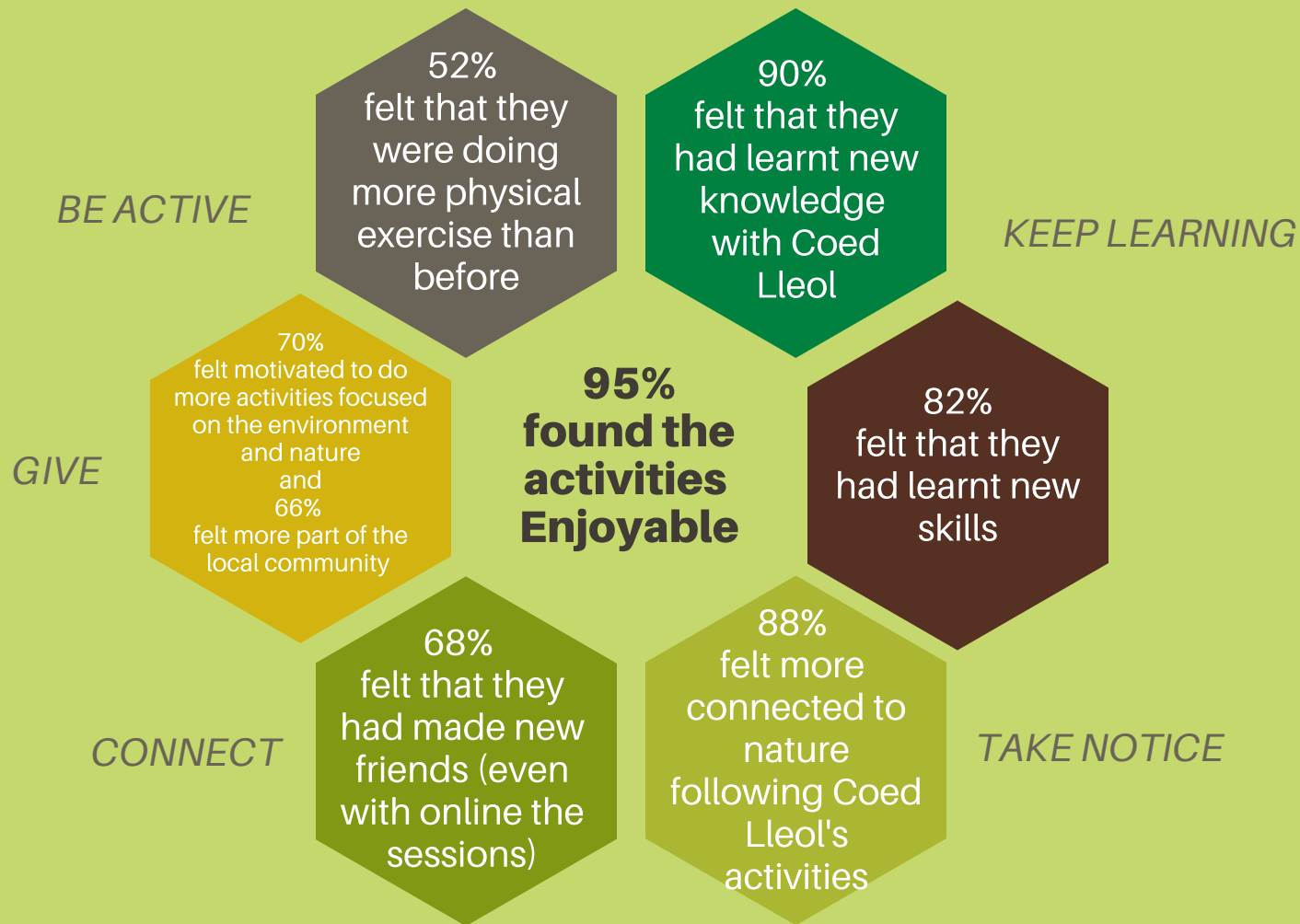
35%

OF PARTICIPANTS EVIDENCED INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

(The international physical activity questionnaire was used to measure physical wellbeing once in-person sessions resumed. Figures are based on 20 participants completing Pre- and post-forms)

52%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT BEING PART OF COED LLEOL HAD LED TO DOING MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAN THEY DID BEFORE (N=142)



5-ways to wellbeing

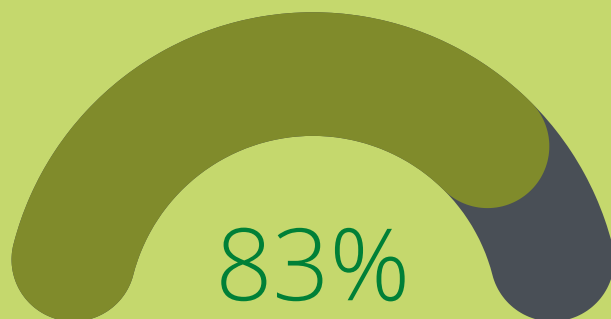
The NHS' 5-ways to wellbeing was used to model questions relating to the impact of Coed Lleol's programmes. Percentage results are shown for all 'agree' and 'strongly agree' ratings ($n=142$).

NATURE CONNECTIONS

VISITS TO WOODLANDS

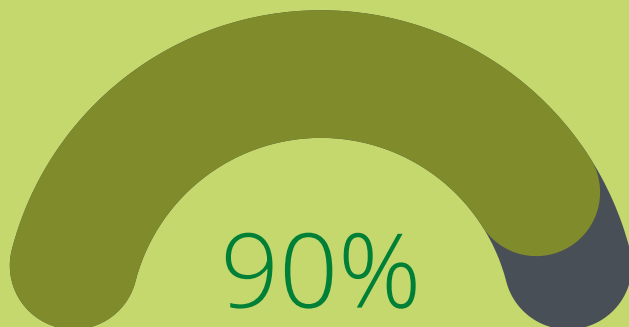
Before joining Coed Lleol 83% of participants were moderate to frequent visitors to woodlands or greenspace (visit once a month or more)

BEFORE



83%

AFTER



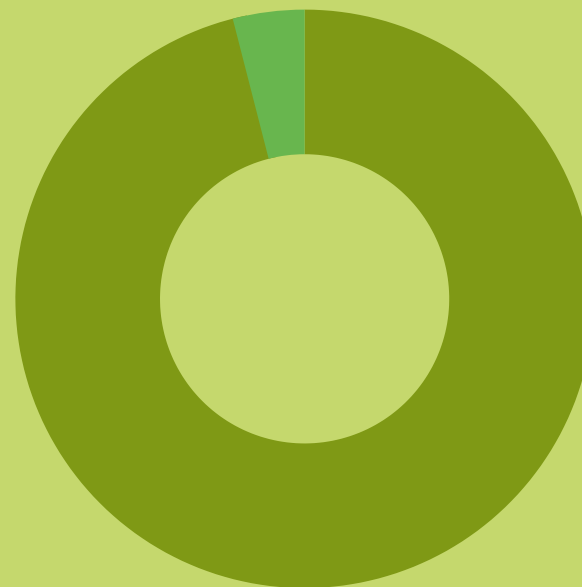
90%

this rose to 90%, an increase of 7%, after contact with Coed Lleol

CONTINUED USE OF WOODLANDS...

Maybe

4%



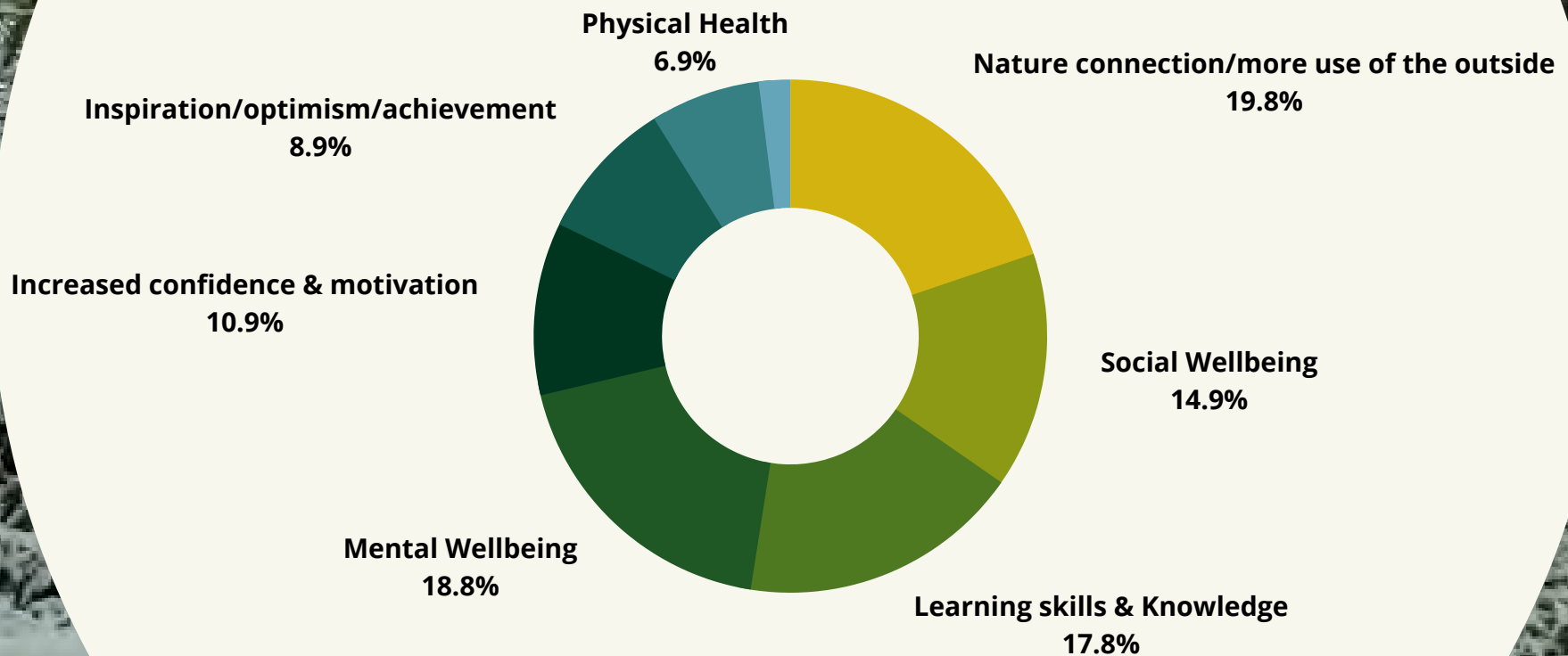
Yes

96%

96% of participants will continue to use woodlands/greenspace for health and wellbeing longer-term

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND IMPACTS ON PARTICIPANTS

The participants were asked an open-ended question about how or if the Actif Woods Programme inspired any changes in themselves (physical or mental wellbeing or environmental change). 127 out of the 142 responses gave positive comments regarding impact of the programme this year. Most people gave more than one response - all have been coded to show the following impacts on participants



Impact of Befriending

In the participant's words...

"It raised my spirits to receive friendly, supportive calls enquiring about my wellbeing. It was nice to know that someone cared. The telephone befriending has had a positive effect on my mental state. It has shown me how important it is to stay connected with nature and being part of Actif woods gave me the confidence to continue walking during this time"

(Female Participant, Wrexham, Telephone befriending and Walking Group)

"Telephone befriending: A regular weekly chat - talking generally about gardens, wildlife and the weather. It is good to speak to someone - I don't get to speak to many people. It has inspired me to grow veg in my garden"
(Male participants, Gwynedd, Telephone befriending) .

"Befriending has allowed me to keep a relationship with someone in this very isolated and mentally depressing time. It's very difficult for me to go out to meet anybody new. Now the lockdown is so strict speaking with someone, even once a week, is really helpful. Especially when that person is extremely funny, smart and I can have a meaningful conversation with"
(female participant, Swansea, National and Local Zoom and telephone befriending)

"Befriending I started at the beginning of the lockdown and it gave me the confidence to join the zoom sessions. The zoom sessions have made a massive difference to my life during the lockdown"
(Female participant, Ceredigion, Online local and national zoom and telephone befriending)

".My befriender was a good person to talk to and I looked forward to her calls. My mental health was fragile. Telephone befriending kept me alive and positive during the early months. Talking to my befriender felt easy and she is kind. I feel more positive and engaged with life again"

Female participant, Ceredigion, Telephone befriending)

"Through befriending and joining the woodland group I have gained a new sense of confidence outdoors and I am doing outdoors activities" *(Female participant, Neath Port Talbot, telephone befriending and 4-6 week activities)*



Impact of online sessions

In the participant's words...

"I have learnt so much during this time from the online sessions. I love being part of Actif Woods and wish the zoom sessions could carry on. I'm much more aware of my surroundings when I'm out now and excited to see things I now know what they are. Keen to ask about volunteering when the covid madness is over. Lost my mom in April and this has helped keep me sane"
(Female participant, Gwynedd, Telephone befriending, local and national zoom sessions).

"My community patient thoroughly enjoyed the online zoom groups. It provided a sense of calm and wellbeing during this difficult time through lockdown. He has a keen interest in wildlife and gardening which provided positive engagement and social interaction" (Community support worker on behalf of Male participant, SE Wales/Newport, Online zoom sessions).

"I loved the online zoom sessions when I was on furlough. It helped me look forward to the day. I enjoyed learning and putting it into practice (foraging). It has inspired me to expand my basic foraging knowledge- next year I shall be making more than just my usual wild garlic pesto! If it wasn't for lockdown/ Coed Lleol zoom sessions I would have just stuck to what I know. I am inspired to research more and try more new things. (Female participant, Swansea, National Zoom sessions, Foraging and Nutrition)

"At the beginning of lockdown and felt quite miserable which is unusual for me. Once I joined the zoom sessions, and I do about five a week, things changed dramatically. I now never feel low and feel cheerful most of the time. They have been a lifeline and the teachers are wonderful.
(Female participant, Ceredigion, Online local and national zoom and telephone befriending)

I have struggled with poor mental health for a long time. Part of that resulted in my losing touch with nature. Actif Woods has helped me break this cycle. I'm please to be enjoying walking around local green spaces more frequently. (Male Participant, Bridgend, Online National sessions)

"I think the Actif Woods online programme is amazing - I don't know how I would have coped without it during this extremely difficult pandemic year. I have had to give up my work to keep my husband safe. We have been shielding - he is extremely clinically vulnerable. The programme has been a lifesaver. It has opened my eyes to nature that I didn't even realise was there. I am fascinated in observing to see what lives and grows in my local environment. The knowledge I have gained about plants and animals, birds and insects has given me the confidence to want to go and appreciate them outside. The topics are brought to life in a warm, relaxed style"
(Female participant, outside of Wales, National Zoom Sessions)



Impact of Woodland Sessions

In the participant's words...

"I came to support my daughter-in-law, but actually got huge benefit by just playing in the woods and allowing my granddaughter to see her mummy being so relaxed and happy in the Actif Woods group.

(Female participant, Neath Port Talbot, woodland groups)

"Rekindled and inspired me to enjoy the pleasure outdoors activities and nature"

(Male participant, Anglesey, In-person woodland group)

Pushed myself and my physical fitness very good for the mental health side of me. Enjoyed getting there by bus and coming back again, in the woods and meeting new people, enjoyed doing the work.

Sense of community I really enjoyed.

(male participant, Ceredigion, woodland sessions)

Made me happier, being out of the house, meeting new friends, more confident to attend other groups now

(Female participant, Merthyr Tydfil, Woodland sessions)



It has been great just being outside, having a routine every week, something to look forward to. Learning new skills. Talking to new people, who have an idea how I could be feeling and know it's ok. We can help each feel better. Seeing at the end of the session what we all did just in the small period of time it's rewarding.

(Female participant, Ceredigion, woodland sessions)

It's given me more insight into woodlands and associated skills, which in turn will help with my mental health. Even though sometimes it was cold and miserable, I was still enthusiastic about the afternoons spent with Actif woods and would look forward to them

(Male participant, RCT, Woodland session)

Impact of walking groups

In the participant's words...

Walking with the group has helped me keep going at the age of 88 and has inspired me to enter a walk for charity. Our group leaders are very knowledgeable and make the walks interesting
(Female participant, Wrexham, Walking group & telephone befriending)

"Personally, the walking group has regenerated my interest in nature and local history and the desire to share that knowledge with others"
(Male participant, Swansea, Walking group and Drop-in woodland group)



"I've enjoyed my walk mostly because the talks led by our walk leader about the nature of the Woodlands. The meditation sessions and for me particularly my anxiety was manageable with the project officers support. I feel that my walks could only have been done with the project officers encouragement"
(Female participant, Swansea, Walking group).

"I am much happier and healthier since walking with this group. They have supported me through hip replacements and the awful accident my husband had nine months ago. They have called for me, pushed me in the wheelchair when I can't walk and generally kept me going. I will never forget the wonderful feeling when I was taken to the woods the first time after my big operation a year ago" (Female participant, Ceredigion, Walking Group)

The walking group is a very nice group. We can walk about five miles and split into a couple of groups often, the groups of walkers always enjoy their jaunts through beautiful countryside, through forests (tree bathing!) and on river banks. We see and connect with the beauty of nature and we can relate to the natural world.

(Female Participant, Wrexham, Walking Group)

Case Study 1 - Margaret, Walking Group and Local Zoom

"We got started with Actif Woods Walking Group when my late husband was diagnosed with cancer in 2012, we saw the poster in the hospital and thought that we would give it a try. We also took another lady from the village with us who had also been diagnosed with cancer. We kept going mostly every week the only time we missed out was the times my husband was going through chemotherapy or recovering from an operation. We really enjoyed it, my husband used to look forward to it – and we enjoyed all the chats – with all the other members of the group. Although they always used to tease him and say that he only came for the tea and biscuits! But it really was, for both of us, a lovely social afternoon. When my husband was diagnosed with cancer, we both fully retired and we wanted to take the opportunity to do new and different things. My late husband's hobbies were woodcarving and woodturning and he was quite knowledgeable on trees. The walks are great because the group takes the time to point out plants or tree or give a bit of local history about the places that we visit

It is nice that the walks are also graded easy, moderate or hard – so the participants can decide on which walk they can manage. It was nice, especially for my husband in the latter years, that on the longer walks we could turn back halfway and wait until the others are gone the full round. The walk leader is always very careful that whoever is struggling is looked after, he's very aware of people's personal needs. Over time the group has really bonded and has given me a lot of support when my husband passed away recently.

The walking group has definitely been something that has that's helped me through this time in my life. I actually belong to lots of groups, but the Actif woods walking group was one of the groups – how can I put this – that I wasn't apprehensive about going back to after he had died. I was looking forward to going back because the people were just so understanding, they knew what had happened and how ill he had been. And the fact that they knew him as well was important – lots of people had known him through the latter years of his illness and in a way it was nice not to have had to explain to anybody what had happened. So, it was a nice group to come back to. I am quite an active person, I am a keen gardener and have a new puppy that keeps me active but the walking groups are an additional part of my weekly exercise – that keeps me fit and connected with other people. It is great to all sit down at the end of the walk and have a general chat and catch up with everyone. I have just found it so helpful this last year while I've been on my own.

During the lockdown period, I have found that out of all the groups that I go to, Actif Woods has been the biggest support of all really. It is so nice to put the laptop on in the morning and see their daily posts – quizzes and that sort of thing – and I've learned a lot and I've realised what I don't know as well! Actif woods have telephoned me regularly and have really worked hard to keep the group together during this time. I have got two friends in the group who are not online at all. I know that Actif woods are ringing them too and I also keep them updated over the phone. We are just really pleased with their phone calls – it just kept us all together. I have taken part in a few of their online Zoom sessions too – it is just so nice to see all the familiar faces, it has been such a good support. I really can't praise them enough".

Case Study 2 - Vikram, Actif Woods Monthly Groups and Zoom sessions

I moved the UK in 1963 from the Punjab. I lived for a long time in the Midlands, but I visited Wales in the early 80s and I loved it, so in 1982 my family and I moved to Wales and we had a business here. Unfortunately, I lost my wife a few years ago, and as I had retired, I had nothing to do and I was on my own. I was struggling a bit and finding it hard to sleep. My doctor referred me to a wellbeing group and from there I heard about the Actif Woods Programme. I was interested in learning more about woodwork and woodland crafts, so I joined as I am interested in anything new. I am also interested in the natural remedies which are very helpful to me for different health problems, especially with my back.

I really liked the sessions as it is important to get fresh air. You learn something as well – and you have friends there; there is always somebody you can talk to. So that's what I like particularly. There was a session about flowers in the woods – at first I didn't know any – but after a while I got quite good! At an Actif Woods session there is always something new and different to do and I like that. I also have done meditation in the past as I had a sleeping problem before – and now I don't have that anymore when I go to bed I'm asleep within 5 to 10 minutes. Previously my mind is wandering everywhere – so we learned that from the mindfulness and meditation.

I have been kept busy during the lockdown period as I live with my grandchildren and great grandchildren. I keep active, going on walks or dancing to Punjabi music with my great grandson who is one year old. I am normally quite an active person and do lots of things in the community, so it has been great that Actif Woods have continued on the Zoom sessions – I am not great with technology – but I try! So I have been attending the Zoom sessions, we did weaving last week and we are making paper beads to make dragon fly hanging decorations next week. This is just what I need now that I am at home all of the time. It is really something to look forward too.

When I was born, I lived in a village in the Punjab – but we moved to the city when I was about five years old. I am glad that I am back in the countryside now, I like the quite life. I am looking forward to getting back to the Actif Woods group when lockdown is over, as there is so much more I want to learn.

Case Study 3 - Carolyn, Actif Woods Group and National Online sessions

I moved to Wales and bought a smallholding in June 2019. I moved in around September, but my partner was working away in England, so I was mainly on my own although I had my Staffordshire Bull Terrier Buster for company. It was a bit weird being here on my own and I needed to get myself out and meeting people from the local area. I have always had an interest in animals and nature, and I had done a few course before in woodland activities. I followed a few people on Facebook who I had met doing different courses and one of them lived in Wales near where we had moved – so I contacted him, and he told me about volunteering with Working with Nature. The volunteering work was great as we were clearing non-native species and keeping the place tidy, but we'd also learn little bits here and there – like mushroom and species identification. From there I heard about the Actif Woods Group and I thought that it looked interesting and something I'd enjoy. I went along to every session. We learnt about different things. The charcoal making was brilliant – I loved that. The fire lighting was good too. The whittling was challenging as I was a bit worried about the sharp tools at first, but I made a lovely walking stick. We are pretty much surrounded by nature all the time now in our new place, but I think that I do seek out – wherever I am – I think from childhood I sought solace in escaping to the woods if times got hard. I could see the benefit of it on other people in the group too. In fact, I introduced a friend to it and he started coming along. It is good to see other people taking advantage of the benefits of being in nature as well. The social thing was really important for me at that point, as I didn't really know anyone. I took Buster, my dog, to every session too, he loves the social side of being out in the woods too!

I think that doing both the volunteering and the Actif Woods Sessions has built my confidence and it has been helpful to learn about what I have, or what I can do, on my smallholding. Meeting other people has also been great. It has introduced me to local areas that I didn't know about and helped to orientate me.

Since lockdown, my partner has been working from home, so I have company all the time now and someone to help out with the land, the bees and the animals on our smallholding. Early on in lockdown, I took part in some of the Mindfulness Wellbeing sessions that Actif Woods delivered online, and they were really nice. I've also been doing the Flora and Fauna Agored Training online with Connecting People and Nature (Coed Lleol partnership programme). That has been good and is exactly what I like, because you learn, fill in a workbook but it is not loads and loads of work. We have also had the same people coming every week, so it has kept them coming back too. Next, I'd like to do some more structured courses online that are accredited perhaps with Actif Woods.

There is so much more I want to do with the volunteering – there are loads of places that I haven't been to yet that I want to discover once lockdown is over. I have really missed that social contact during lockdown, I can't wait to get back to it all.

Case Study 4 - Brendan, Online Local & National Sessions

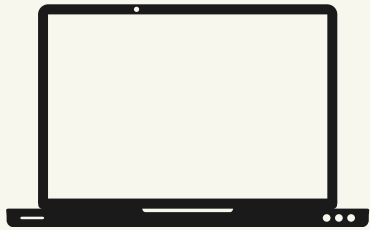
I love nature and grew up near a forest, but over the years with work, I'd lost touch with that side of things. I heard about the Actif Woods and CPaNI programmes through a local community group that I am involved with. The first contact I had with the group was a bat and moth walk with my son, these were brilliant activities as they offered us something different and novel. During Lockdown, I have had more time to focus on my interests and also a desire to find more things to do with my family. The local Zoom sessions were a great way for me to keep learning and keep active in the area. I have had the time to explore my local area more with my family and the Zoom sessions have provided the learning that goes alongside this. I had no idea about Himalayan Balsam before these sessions and suddenly, now when I go out, I am seeing it everywhere! I would never have known about it, or the issues with it, if it weren't for that session. I am the kind of person who just loves learning. I've been fascinated to be able to have a discourse with some of the experts that have been brought in because there is time built in for conversations to develop as well as a presentation. We have had some interesting sessions on fungi, how to make plantain balm, we have learnt about dandelions, hawthorn, woodlice, and we had a session on marshland and meadows. I just wish that more people had engaged in some of the sessions. But whoever was there, the presenters were excellent, enthusiastic and positive.

I think for me, the draw to take part in the Zoom sessions was to connect with local people and to learn about nature. What is nice about the Zoom sessions is that you are sharing the experience with people from all walks of life and with people with different expertise themselves. We had a session where we all talked about our gardens and what was growing in our garden. That was good because it was a shared learning experience where everyone in the group was chipping in and learning from each other. I've also been sharing these things with my son because the Zoom sessions did a lot of practical crafts as well, and of course, I was doing homeschooling during the full lockdown – so it helped keep him engaged. We have had more time as a family during lockdown to get out and about and discover the local area more, it is something that I did more when I was younger but ordinarily, we just didn't have time to do that as a family. I think what the Zoom sessions did is make us pay more attention to what is out there in nature. Rather than just going for a walk to get fit and healthy, we would go to look at what is around us and take samples to look at under our microscope. It has opened up more conversations with the family while we are on our walks and at home.

Now I have met some of the people virtually I feel a bit more networked and I am more enthused to go and do the practical stuff when that starts up again in real life if I can. I think in the future the blended delivery online will become the 'next normal' and it would be great to see that continue for Actif Woods.

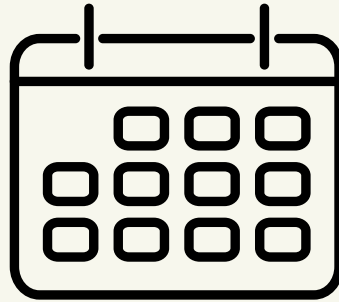
IMPROVEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS - ONLINE

51 participants provided new ideas or suggestions on how Coed Lleol could improve. The main suggestions are presented below. Many of these ideas were incorporated during the year. A three-week timetable, participant newsletter and new sessions were all added during 2020-2021.



MORE ONLINE SESSIONS

(SESSIONS AT DIFFERENT TIMES INCLUDING EVENINGS, SESSIONS COVERING DIFFERENT TOPICS AND FOR DIFFERENT ABILITIES IN WELSH & ENGLISH)



TIMETABLE & STREAMLINE

(DEVELOP SEASONAL OR ANNUAL TIMETABLE, UPDATE WEBSITE REGULARLY WITH NEW TIMETABLE/ZOOM SESSIONS, STREAMLINE ALL THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF COED LLEOL PROGRAMMES)



ONLINE ZOOM ETIQUETTE

(ALLOW TIME FOR INTRODUCTIONS, MUTE PARTICIPANTS WHEN NEEDED, RECORD SESSIONS AND POST FOR THOSE WHO MISSED)

IMPROVEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS - IN PERSON SESSIONS



MORE & ACCESSIBLE WOODLAND & WALKING SESSIONS

(SESSIONS AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND
LOCATIONS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE)



MORE SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER SIMILAR ACTIVITIES & VOLUNTEERING

(TO CONTINUE ENGAGEMENT)



WEATHER-PROOF SHELTERS IN WOODLANDS

(TO ESCAPE THE WELSH WEATHER!)

Conclusion

This year, Coed Lleol was able to successfully retain over 20% of participants and attract around 80% new participants. The changes in delivery, due to COVID-19, evidenced some differences in the demographics of participants as compared to the previous year. Coed Lleol's activities attracted more women and a greater number of people who already visited greenspaces/woodlands regularly or moderately than in the previous year. The difference is explained by the type of delivery (online) that may have attracted more women together with the pandemic causing a decline in direct referrals from health and wellbeing organisations and GPs.

