

## **Cwmbach Community Wetlands and Woodlands Vision Statement**

Cwmbach Community Wetlands and Woodlands lies on the floodplain of the beautiful Queen of the Valleys, our Cynon Valley (Cwm Cynon), seated alongside the River Cynon. The town of Aberdare is the heart of the valley surrounded by the villages of Penderyn, Hirwaun and Penywaun to the north, Cwmdare, Aberaman, Abercwmboi, Fernhill, Godreaman and Cwmaman to the west side of the valley, Llwydcoed, Abernant and Cwmbach to the east and Mountain Ash situated to the south.

Shaped by glaciation, once an area of agriculture and ancient oak woodland, then blighted by the scars of coal mining and the Industrial Revolution, Cwm Cynon grew from being a small hamlet to a major coal and iron producer. Due to the decline of these industries, the area has suffered from economic hardship and deprivation. However, Welsh culture and the resilience of local people and their enduring spirit are building forces to regenerate the valley and preserve its rich and natural heritage.

Covering 27 acres of broadleaf woodland and wetland, Cwmbach Community Wetlands and Woodlands is wonderfully diverse with an abundance of wildlife. Our vision is to protect wildlife habitats, help wildlife recover and flourish, address biodiversity loss and tackle the ecological and climate crisis, while supporting the education, safety, health and well-being of the local community and providing people with new opportunities and experiences to connect with nature and to enjoy our tranquil haven.

We aim through best practice to:-

- Provide a safe and inspiring natural environment for all to enjoy.
- Provide an area that will be noted for biodiversity, that is enhanced, enriched and conserved to protect the landscape, wildlife corridor along the River Cynon and the heritage of Cwmbach Community Wetlands and Woodlands through sensitive, sustainable and appropriate management practices.
- Enhance awareness and appreciation of the natural environment through education, life-long learning, training, research and innovation and volunteering and employment opportunities.
- Promote a sense of ownership within the local community and visitors to the site.
- Increase accessibility, use and participation and make the area part of the National Forest of Wales.

- Adopt the objectives of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

We will achieve this in partnership with Down to Zero, Cynon Taf Community Housing Group and Pen Y Cymoedd Wind Farm, by:-

- Providing a safe, inspiring and stimulating environment.
- Using recognised sustainable environmental principles in our management of the site's biodiversity, landscape and heritage.
- Providing a hub for well-being, engagement, learning, education, research and innovation.
- Increasing the use of the site for local schools and groups and individuals of all abilities with improved tracks, seating, viewing platform and bird hides.
- Providing a welcoming and supportive environment for volunteers.
- Holding regular events such as nature walks, butterfly trails (fairy trails), bat walks, workshops, open days and litter picks.
- Showing a commitment to equality of opportunity and social inclusion.
- Seeking appropriate funding to enable the feasibility of future enhancement of the site to be fully investigated, including it being part of the National Forest for Wales.