

Saving Gower For All It's Worth

Creative Report



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Introduction

This Creative Report was commissioned by the GLP and outlines some key facts and figures relating to their project 'Saving Gower for All it's Worth'

The Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP) was established to bid for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) monies to conserve, protect and inform a wider range of audiences about the landscape and culture of Gower, the first area to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The GLP hoped to achieve the following outcomes:

- The unique landscape, heritage and culture of Gower is conserved, protected and valued, while a wide range of audiences are informed and engaged
- The Partnership and its constituent organisations are more aware, enabled and empowered to work together to protect and promote Gower
- These impacts are a legacy of the project and are sustained into the future

To achieve this, the project 'Saving Gower for All it's Worth' was developed which aimed to:

- Conserve and record information about the Industrial Heritage
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Safeguard the natural history heritage and traditional management of the south Gower coast; re-establish coastal walls to enable grazing; help people understand landscape and climate change and how it will affect Gower
- Re-establish customs and skills, and build the capacity of people to protect, conserve, manage, understand and inform on Gower's special qualities
- Re-establish and reinforce links to the land through celebration, participation and interpretation
- Enable participation in a range of heritage activities

Timeline of GLP

Click the dates for more information

[**2011** – GLP AWARDED FUNDING TO DEVELOP PROJECT](#)

[**2016** – REVISION TO DELIVERY PLAN](#)

[**2013** – GLP AWARDED FUNDING TO BEGIN DELIVERING THEIR PROJECT 'SAVING GOWER FOR ALL IT'S WORTH](#)

[**2014** – PROJECTS BEGIN](#)

[**2015** – EUROPEAN EXTERNAL FUNDING TEAM JOINS THE PROJECT](#)

BEGINNING OF INTENSIVE DELIVERY

[**2017-2018** – MAJORITY OF PROJECTS DELIVERED](#)

[**2018** – PROJECT COMES TO A CLOSE](#)

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2011 – GLP Awarded Funding to Develop Project

In July 2011, the GLP was awarded funding of £194,051 to develop a Landscape Conservation Action Plan called '**Saving Gower for All its Worth**'.

2013 – GLP Awarded Funding to Deliver the Project

In June 2013, the Partnership was awarded funding to deliver the project, including funding provided by Gower Society. The project was also awarded funding from HLF, the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013, Natural Resources Wales and the City & County of Swansea among other organisations.

2015 – European External Funding Team Joins the Project

A change of delivery structure and resulted in the European External Funding Team joining the project, bringing with them financial and process expertise that was available to the GLP management.

2017 -2018 – Majority of Projects Delivered

More projects were delivered from January 2017 to May 2018 (178) than in the 28 months prior to this (September 2014 to December 2016 – 107 projects). High numbers of activities were delivered in the months August to November 2017 (84) and January to March 2018 (47).

2014 – Projects Begin

The GLP begins delivering activities across Gower and the surrounding area such as planting arable bird crop at the Vile to help protect local wildlife.

2016 – Revision to Delivery Plan

Throughout 2016 the project team reviewed the original project delivery plan and targets to ensure the GLP achieved its aims

Activities also continued to promote Gower. Public awareness of the history of Gower was raised by a conference in November 2016 attended by more than 100 people.

2018 – Project comes to a close

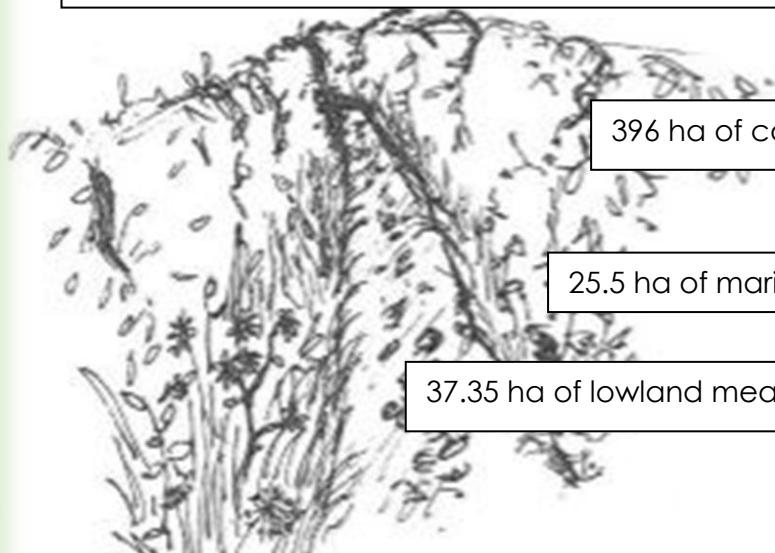
The project stops delivering activities but has left a legacy relating to the environment, the heritage of and access to Gower

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Conserving or Restoring Natural and Built Heritage

Conservation

50 ha of lowland calcereous grassland has been maintained



396 ha of coastal sand dunes have been maintained

25.5 ha of maritime cliff and slope has been restored

37.35 ha of lowland meadow has been restored

61.7 ha of loaland calcereous grassland has been improved through activities such as installing fencing to allowing grazing and treating sites for bracken

The legacy of these works will be maintained by a number of bodies, most notably the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, the GLP and Swansea Council.

As part of the project, Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) have also been identified, assessed and reported on to improve future protection and conservation. This information will be shared publicly via the GLP website.

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Case Study: Hay Meadows

In Rhossili the National Trust owns a medieval field system, and over the past few years have been looking at changing the way they farm from tenanting out the fields to managing the area through high nature value farming. As part of this change towards high nature value farming, they needed to transform their existing grass fields into flower rich hay meadows.

Modern agricultural methods mean that farmers have added a lot of nutrients and artificial chemicals to the soil, which results in lush grass, but decreases the variety of species of flowers that grow. The pollen yielded from these flowers is vital for sustaining insects such as bees, which are crucial to biodiversity and the wildlife network.

In the UK, hay meadows have declined by 97%, however thanks to an investment of c. £12,000 from the Gower Landscape Partnership, the National Trust were able to invest in high quality grass and wildflower seed to create 20ha of hay meadows which are expected to be fully in bloom by May 2018.

"We're right next to a national nature reserve that has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation, this means we had to be very careful about what seed we sow. Without the GLP investment we just wouldn't have been able to do this project."

As part of this project, the National Trust has done a lot of groundworks including using topsoil to put back hedge banks that had been removed over the years as farming machinery has got bigger. As the fields were a medieval strip system, returning the land to smaller fields was seen as being key to the culture and the importance of the landscape from a historical perspective.

During the early months of 2018, the project has also looked at replanting hedges on these banks which are also beneficial to wildlife. The GLP has provided funding to purchase the hedgerow trees and paid for two-thirds of the fencing to ensure the trees were protected. At the time of interview, the National Trust was keen to get a couple of groups out from the YMCA to assist with the tree planting process. The National Trust also has a large existing team of volunteers who have taken part in all aspects of this project from hedge laying to seed sowing and, thanks to a capital investment from both the GLP and Sustainable Development Fund, will be able to take part in the haymaking process as opposed to this being done by agricultural contractors.

The investment from the GLP has helped to raise the profile of the National Trust, which they believe has brought in additional volunteers and also ensured that the work available is much more interesting. Although many of these volunteers may visit Gower it was felt that working with the National Trust allowed them to access "*the other 90% of Gower - they are able to see parts of Gower you wouldn't be able to see easily or wouldn't think to get to.*"

The National Trust intend that the work done as part of this project will become 'the norm' in terms of how they operate; "*it's not a project, it's our way forward.*" Once the meadows are in bloom the Trust intend to open some new footpaths through the field to allow as many people as possible to experience them. The venture is seen as a "*tremendous investment in the biodiversity of the region.*"

Built Heritage

15 Undesignated
Historic Feature
restored/repaired



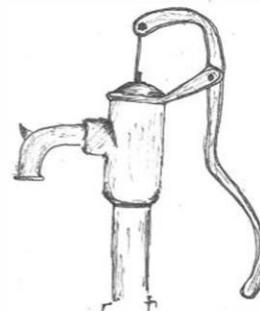
2 Undesignated Historic
Feature interpreted

By providing interpretation panels across Gower, the project has helped to both enhance the visitor experience and strengthen the relationship between the site and those who live around it.

2 Undesignated Historic
Feature recorded

Restorations and repair work have helped to maintain features that are seen as key elements of local communities to ensure their sustainability for the future.

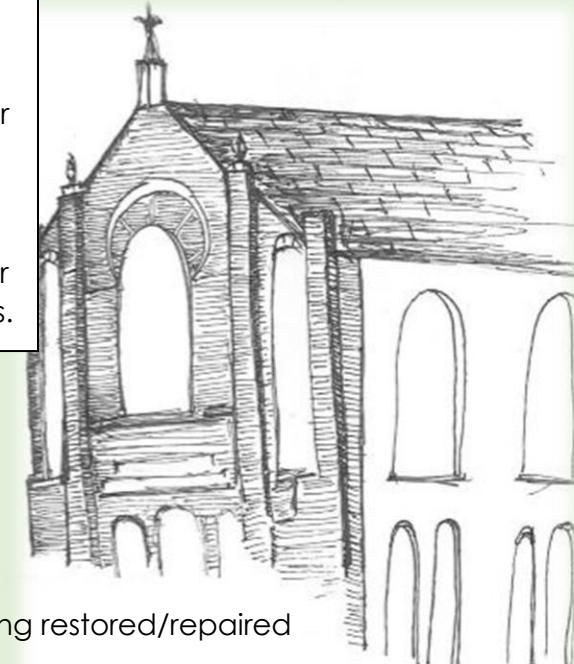
Generating records of heritage sites / features helps to assess their significance and lays the groundwork for potential future schemes.



1 Scheduled Monument
interpreted



2 Listed Buildings recorded



3 Listed Building restored/repaired

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Case Study: Hermon Chapel

As part of the Saving Gower for All its Worth, the Gower Landscape Partnership were keen to look at engaging people who lived outside of the AONB in areas such as Penclawdd which nonetheless have close ties with more rural areas of Gower.

Initially there was some delay in identifying a suitable project to take forward but in spring 2017 the local community council selected restoring Hermon Chapel as a project they wished to take forward and work got underway.

Hermon Chapel is an important structure to the local community and is a significant feature of the landscape that has long ceased to be an active chapel and has fallen into decay. The community council has responsibility for a graveyard up there and wanted to take on responsibility for maintaining the chapel as it is part of the history of the community. However, the chapel needed to be put into a safe and stable position before the community council could take it on. It was felt that this project fitted in nicely with the aims of the Gower Landscape Partnership.

Once work began and contractors were able to examine the structure, they discovered a number of additional issues with the chapel that also needed to be rectified to ensure the building was safe. These works would put the project over budget, and as the decision to commit funding to the stabilisation of Hermon Chapel was taken relatively late on in the project, there were not additional funds available from the GLP to cover the costs.



The GLP liaised with the community council and the Baptist Church (who currently own Hermon Chapel) in order to assist them with securing additional funding. The work has enabled the community council to take over responsibility for the chapel from the Baptists, safeguarding it for the future. However, the need for the GLP's support highlighted an important issue, namely that smaller organisations do not always possess the capacity to take on such work.

In hindsight, it was felt that it would have been better to go out to the community at an earlier stage in the overall project, and that the extent to which communities would need support and guidance to develop projects in their community was underestimated.

For projects of a larger scale, such as this one, it is important to have organisations with resources to carry out the consultation process and project manage but the GLP was not in a position to do that. Although concentrating on delivering projects in this manner may have resulted in a streamlined project, it is important to remember that one of the attractions of the project for HLF was the scope of Saving Gower for all its Worth, and the opportunity to have a significant impact on communities in Gower.

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Participation in Activities

Looking at the feedback forms completed by participants who took part in a range of activities as part of the project, they contain a record of 6, 795 participants who took part in 340 activities with an average of 20 participants per activity.

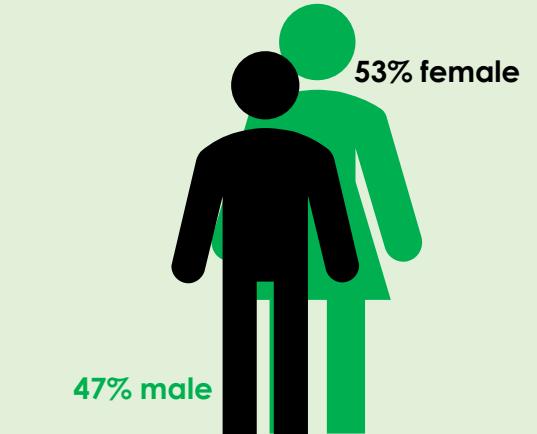
The project also worked with 192 groups including local schools, Communities First and the YMCA, and activities ran from September 2014 to May 2018.

Unemployed
Student
NEET Retired / Other
Employed

35% of participants were students



41% of
participants
were under 16



12% identified as BME, over four times higher than the BME populations of the wards of Gower and Gowerton.



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Activities

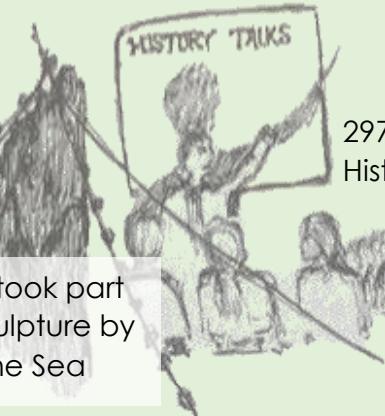
"I know the walks have worked well in bringing people in from hard to reach areas. The Taste of Gower has 60-80 attending walks who wouldn't have come otherwise. Confidence and encouragement to do this, know where to go and have experienced it - that's been another important factor."



617 participants visited the Gower Heritage centre

Activities with the highest number of participants

505 took part in Sculpture by the Sea



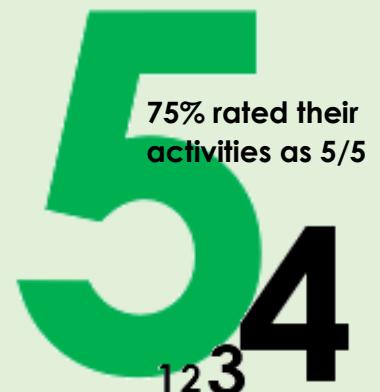
297 took part in History Talks

170 took part in Taste of Gower

150 took part in Christmas Event

132 took part in Arts Workshops

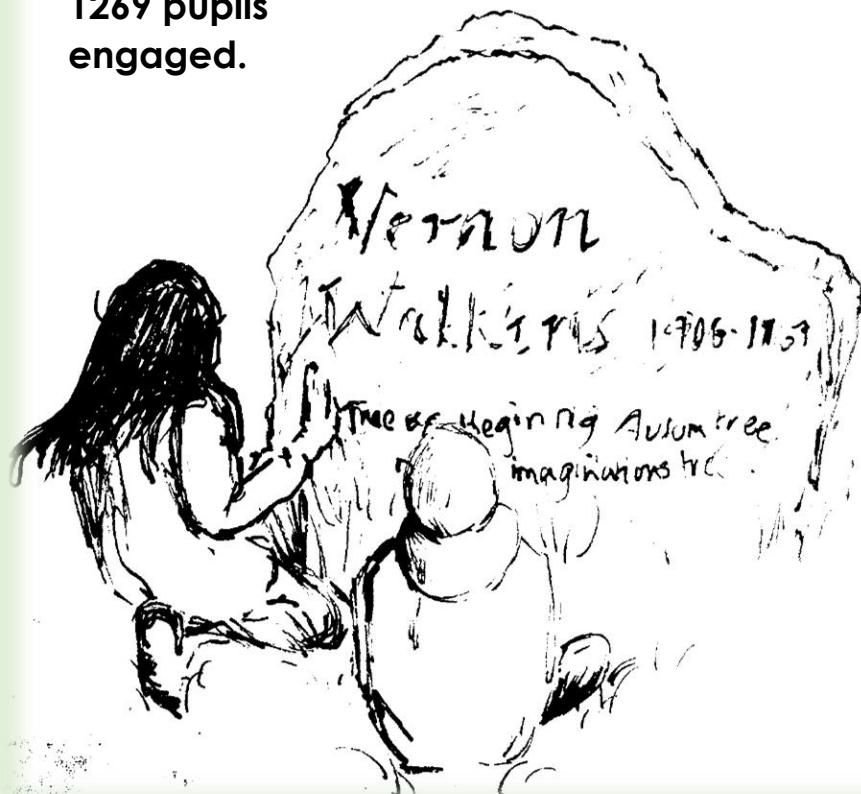
132 took part in Down to Earth



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Participation and learning

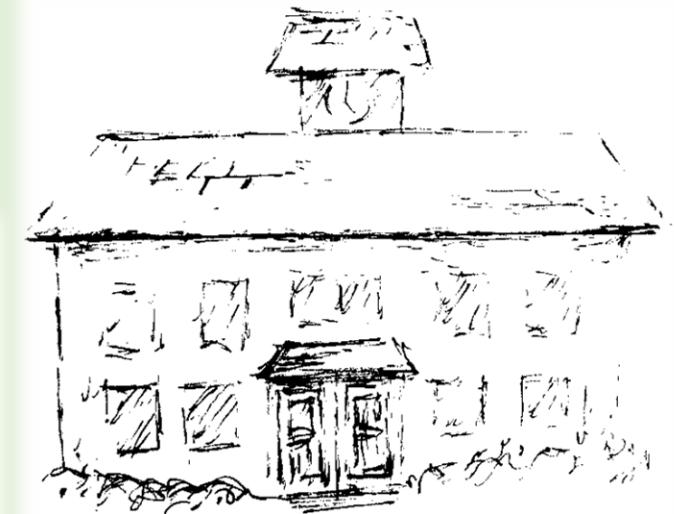
27 primary schools and
1269 pupils
engaged.



51 community groups worked with and
2111 people engaged.



63 family learning activities and 1614 people benefiting.



12 secondary schools and 882
pupils engaged.



As part of the legacy for ensuring future participation, there are plans in place to continue a number of activities.

For example, activities undertaken relating to the legend of Mari Lwyd included an annual parade which, as a final activity under GLP, has been moved to a new home at the Gower Heritage Centre where it is planned to continue to include Mari Lwyd as part of the Wassail festival.

Swansea Council is also preparing a further schools education programme through National Resources Wales grant-aid. The range of activities and organised programmes celebrating the unique qualities of Gower, in which a “huge range of groups and communities engaged,” have resulted in a YMCA Active Inclusion project which will be taken forward.

Skills and Training

- 51 farmers and landowners were engaged and provided with advice and support including training courses in skills such as hedgerow maintenance.
- 568 people trained in a range of skills relating to conservation, maintenance and cultural traditions.

As part of the project, the GLP has managed to engage with 51 farmers (31 more than their original target) and landowners to provide advice and support including training courses in skills such as hedgerow maintenance. This work has meant that this cohort are in a position to actively play a role in ensuring the legacy of this project.



As a result of GLP training...

"It's been very good for getting perspectives on farming and rural issues. Also understanding the problems facing the commons. I work with landowners and grazers. The legislation, regulations and problems that have been highlighted today will really help me to understand what problems are affecting them. The benefits are that I have people I can turn to for help and advice or put my farmers in touch with. Diolch yn Fawr" (Feedback data, 2018).



Conclusion

Looking to the future, the GLP has secured a clear legacy.

A number of key outputs will be maintained by partners. These are both physical and human outputs, from the walls built, hedges maintained, and culture preserved.

The Partnership itself, while having to address membership issues and ensure responsibility for its administration, is likely to continue into the future. As a body of like-minded organisations, committed to the preservation and sustainability of Gower's environment, culture and heritage, the Partnership is well situated to deliver a range of activities and services to support Gower into the future.

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