Pontbren

Lessons learned 10 years on

...“and how it’s shaping the role of woodlands in Wales”

Mike Richards, Coed Cymru

23rd November 2017
CIWEM talk outline

• Pontbren project
• Significance of Pontbren
• How Pontbren has informed Coed Cymru’s vision going forward
  • Pilot studies
  • Current research
• Your input on how we can build scale
Pontbren - farmer led

…”The project did NOT set out to change hydrological processes, but improve farm management by reducing costs and farming the land in a more sustainable way”
Pontbren – What did they achieve?

... “an ambitious capital works program aimed at restructuring their farms”

- 120K trees planted
- 16ha shelter belts
- 21km hedgerows
- 10ha regenerating woodland
- 1.7ha new water bodies
- Employed local contractors

...“ this was a bold attempt to take hold of their own destinies”
Pontbren Virtual tour 2016

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“erosion risk modelling carried out after the work was completed supports the farmers decision making on where trees are best planted”
How landowners value the changes

...“The farm is more productive and a nicer place to work than it was 20 years ago.

It is easier to manage and a kinder environment for stock. We are working with nature not against it”

Roger Jukes
Pontbren outcomes

“Achieved more than just better farm management”....

Research and development

- High level research (FRMRC)- flooding, hydrology, soils and water, new studies on shelter and productivity
- Had a direct influence on government policy on environmental sustainability and flood mitigation

Enhanced production

Branded co-operative marketing
What have we learned from Pontbren?

- Demonstrated self reliance and validity of a ‘bottom up’ approach
- Strong leadership
- Farming businesses can become more resilient to change
- Knowledge sharing promotes best practice
- Wider environmental benefits gained without compromising productivity
- Raised awareness on flood mitigation
- Helps sustain local communities
- Informed our approach to catchment scale management
Building scale

Coed Cymru has a unique vision of how to integrate woodland into the farming landscape and culture. Working directly with landowners for economic, social and environmental benefits.

- Environment Wales Act 2016 landscape-scale resilience.
  - Co-ordinated action across multiple land management units
  - Natural resource management

How do we scale up and replicate?
Coed Cymru strategy

Research + Pilot Projects

- Woodland management and creation
- Support for woodlands of all sizes by working with groups of landowners
- AIM
- Managing ecosystem services at a landscape scale

Coed Cymru is now focussing on...

- Bringing landowners together
- Accessing new markets as a group
- Developing better methods of certification
- Pilot projects across Wales focussing on woodland management and creation
Ongoing R & D..

• **KESS PhD Student** –
  • Consequential life cycle assessment of management strategies for land potentially “spared” from agriculture in Wales

• **KESS PhD Student**-
  • Beyond single purpose land use – maximising ecosystem service provision in the Welsh uplands

• **Multiland project partner, Bangor University**
  • Enhancing Agricultural Productivity and Ecosystem Service Resilience in Multifunctional Landscapes

• **Lancaster University, NERC project partner.**
  • The Lancaster project specifically seeks to quantify the likely magnitude of nature-based flood mitigation effects across large catchments.
Your input on Building scale?

• Any comments?
• Or questions?
• What tools are you using to inform land management decisions?

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