

Heart of Wales Increasing the links between community land based projects and railway lines

Working railways serve as arteries in the landscape allowing sharing both experiences and goods between the connected communities. In the past, passenger trains used to have goods vans to transport bikes, mail etc. Dan Morris, from the Cymdeithas Y Dallar allotment project in Llandeilo and others of the older generation, can remember the railways being used for delivery of other goods and items like day old chicks, rhubarb and fruit trees.

Along the Heart of Wales railway line there are increasing numbers of community garden and allotment projects. Some of these are already showing signals of networking and meeting for events, for example Cymdeithas y Dalar, Llandeilo and Knucklas Castle Community Land Project came together with other projects at a recent gathering, coordinated by the Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens in Llandeilo. But there are also other members of FCFCG, which are on or close to the Heart of Wales line like Swansea City Farm or the RENEW walled garden project near Rhayader, Ashfield Community Enterprise near Llandrindod Wells and other allotment projects including the in negotiations Llanwrtyd Wells allotments.

There are similar projects on parts of the Cambrian Coast line that may support these networking links.

Community farms, gardens and allotments have been receiving increasing interest and popularity. They provide a wide range of benefits to the community, such as provision of training and skills, reconnecting people with where their food comes from, the seasons and with nature. Increasing the amount of food grown locally and provide a range of social benefits by providing a space that brings the community together. These projects are at the forefront of sustainability e.g. growing their own, composting and the promotion of sustainable and healthier lifestyles and would find the railway an essential service to be maintained and supported for the future.

FCFCG and its members, particularly 'Cymdeithas Y Dalar' are interested in what links can be made with the Heart of Wales line and other similar lines in Wales, to encourage networking and exchange visits between projects, promoting community farming and gardening and its benefits and promoting the use of sustainable travel within Wales.

For further information on community farms, gardens and allotments visit www.farmgarden.org.uk