

Annual Report 1999 - 2000



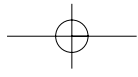
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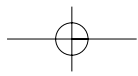


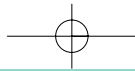
1999 - 2000 SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

- *A living environment* for Wales report published as a benchmark of the condition of the Welsh coast and countryside.
- 44 new Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified.
- Additional 3,000 hectares of land notified as SSSI brought under positive management to improve its condition.
- Natterjack toads breed at Talacre for the first time since the 1950s.
- Increasing sand lizard population at Morfa Harlech .
- Peatland restoration continued at Cors Fochno National Nature Reserve and Fenns, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve.
- Hectarage of land committed to environmentally sensitive farming increased by 28%, an increase of 60,000 hectares, through the Tir Gofal scheme.
- 1,200 km of Public Rights of Way improved with CCW grant aid.
- The LANDMAP system for assessing the impact of proposed development adopted by 13 Welsh local authorities.

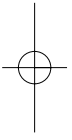
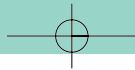
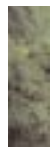


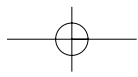
ANNUAL REPORT 1999-2000





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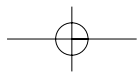
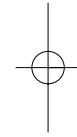




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Llangrannog, Cardigan Bay SAC

Chairman's foreword

I begin the introduction to my first Annual Report as Chair of CCW with a heartfelt tribute to my predecessor, Michael Griffith. His commitment to public service is legendary, but the part he played as the "Charter" Chairman in establishing CCW over the first nine years of its life is historic.

Of his many achievements, I suspect the one in which he takes greatest pride is the development of the pilot Tir Cymen agri-environment scheme as a European exemplar and its translation under the guiding hands of CCW into the current all-Wales Tir Gofal scheme. This work above all other sums up his passionate belief that nature conservation can go hand in hand with environmentally friendly farming and that Welsh agriculture can produce quality food for the consumer in a way which will help ensure the viability of our rural communities.



He has also championed the need for greater access to the countryside and his sensitive chairmanship over many years of the Wales Access Forum contributed immeasurably to the development of constructive and cordial relationships between landowning interests and those seeking more access opportunities.

In the daunting task of following Michael, I am greatly encouraged by the commitment and expertise of my fellow Council members and of its officers. I intend to develop and harness that expertise across the wide range of CCW's responsibilities, highlighting in particular that they extend to our coastal waters as much as they apply to our countryside.

In my first 6 months here I am struck by the range and volume of work that is expected of CCW. It is not limited to narrow definitions of nature conservation, protection of the landscape and promotion of enjoyment in the countryside. We are called upon to play a broader role in supporting sustainable development in partnerships operating within a European, if not wider, context. This report demonstrates how, within available resources, we are responding to that challenge.

In July we published a draft Vision Statement of how we would like to see Wales in 10 years' time. In the light of our partners' comments and those of the general public, we will then chart the course of our work over the next 10 years. We will undoubtedly have some difficult issues to face, but I am personally delighted to be part of a team so committed to serving the interests of Wales.

John Lloyd Jones

John Lloyd Jones
Chairman



Hafod Elwy

Overview



Reedbed, Llyn Crafnant

1999 saw when the Countryside Council for Wales take stock of its position and role and set about charting its course for the next 10 years. This was done within the policy framework being developed by the new National Assembly, and the need to ensure compliance with the European Union's nature conservation legislation and to help in the preparation of new legislation for England and Wales on access and nature conservation. We were also heavily involved in advising on how the European Structural Funds programme for Wales might be applied in a way which would generate sustainable development, avoiding damage to and enhancing our natural environment. In a practical sense, our contribution to sustainable development continued; of the 1200 planning applications on which we were formally asked to advise during the year, we were able, by working with the developers, to ensure that the developments proceeded in a sustainable way without unacceptable harm to the environment or the landscape on 99% of the proposals.

In June CCW and the Forestry Commission presented a joint State of the Living Environment report to the National Assembly, giving a snapshot of the state of the Welsh natural environment. A draft Vision Statement was subsequently prepared of how CCW would seek to improve the Welsh environment over the next 10 years and the ability of residents and visitors to enjoy it. The draft was published for consultation at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show.

The Tir Gofal all-Wales agri-environment scheme announced by the then Secretary of State for Wales, Mr Alun Michael, in March 1999 will be one of the cornerstones of a more environmentally sensitive approach to land management in Wales in the years to come. The workload involved in introducing the scheme proved to be even more demanding than anticipated, because of the unexpectedly large number of the farms applying and the complexity of the scheme. We had to re-schedule the work programme in the autumn and draft in additional staff from elsewhere in the organisation to visit farms prior to making formal offers of agreements. This was against an

anticipated European Union requirement that such offers had to be made before 31 December.

In the second half of the year we also faced another unanticipated increase in work when the European Commission ruled that Wales, in common with the other three countries of the UK, would be obliged to submit additional candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) to the European Union for consideration for inclusion in the Natura 2000 series of European conservation areas. With a standstill budget in 1999 on 1998 and a National Assembly decision that the increase in our mainstream budget for 2000 would be only 0.8%, it was unclear for some time how we would be able to proceed with the work. However, in February 2000 the Finance Secretary, Edwina Hart, and the Environment Secretary, Sue Essex, were able to announce additional funds to be made available over the ensuing two years to enable the work of notifying additional cSACs to be put in hand.

Having responded to various consultation papers issued on the Government's access proposals and to improve nature conservation legislation, CCW welcomed the publication of the Government's Countryside and Rights of Way Bill in February. We earmarked resources to take forward preparatory work in our financial planning for 2000. In March the Finance Secretary announced an additional £0.8m for CCW for the year 2000 to help prepare for the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill and restoration of the grant aid budget which would otherwise have had to have been reduced.

Whilst inevitably some of CCW's planned work programme was disrupted by the pressures of the Tir Gofal and cSAC programmes, progress was achieved across the range of CCW's performance targets previously published in CCW's Corporate Plan for the year. This is shown in Annex 1. These targets are only some of those set within CCW to monitor progress.

- 472 farmers were offered Tir Gofal agreements.
- 44 SSSIs were notified.
- 500 hectares of habitats specified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan were brought under protection.
- 1200 km of Public Rights of Way were improved.

In addition our grant aid supported the complementary work of local authority and voluntary sector partners. Nearly 1,100 farms, encompassing more than 80,000 hectares of agricultural land, continued to receive grant aid and advice under CCW's Tir Cymen agri-environment scheme. A further 45 agreements involving 3,000 hectares of land were made with landowners for the positive and beneficial management of SSSIs, bringing the total to 562 agreements and 45,981 hectares.

A comprehensive programme to develop monitoring techniques for use in marine cSACs was undertaken and progress made on the development of management plans for both marine and terrestrial SACs. We were not however able to make progress on about 50% of the Biodiversity Action Plans on which we were



Rainbow over Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau cSAC



Marshy field corner, South Glamorgan



Pink waxcaps

expected to contribute to the UK Biodiversity Action Plans because of resource constraints. It was particularly pleasing that during the course of the year 13 of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales were using or developing LANDMAP, a method of landscape assessment decision-making which has been developed by CCW. The application of LANDMAP by the Vale of Glamorgan County Council won a Landscape Institute award.

Improving Our Services

The numbers of staff employed increased from 350 to 387 as a result of taking on the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme and of the growing demands of our marine work. We have been active in the Government initiative to get long term unemployed people back to work through the New Deal scheme, taking on 12 New Deal employees, 4 of whom we were able to offer permanent jobs.

Within the organisation, the drive to increase efficiency and effectiveness continued. Although our total running costs increased last year by £848,000 (+7%), reflecting in the main the start-up costs and staffing required for the Tir Gofal scheme, we were still able to reduce our unit overhead cost per person employed by 2.5% on the previous year.

We set up a new group within the organisation to give greater focus on the achievement of best value and also to seek opportunities for securing sources of funding other than that provided by the National Assembly. In an ongoing programme of efficiency studies we reviewed the administration of our grants programme. The implementation of its recommendations will lead to improvements in the way that we process grant aid to partner organisations. The Council welcomes the National Assembly's decision to undertake a Quinquennial Review of the organisation in 2000-01 and looks forward to this serving to reinforce its philosophy of continuous improvement in its efficiency and effectiveness.

Staff involvement in the management of CCW continued to be given a high priority through the Whitley Council process and regular discussion

with the 2 representative Trade Unions. An unresolved issue of concern was the increasing impact of pension payments made out of our salary budget and it is imperative that this is settled in the next few years.

CCW continued to place great importance on the use of the Welsh language and its development amongst the staff was encouraged with around 80 people taking part in language training.

State of the Environment Report



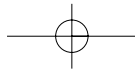
Snowdon

With the publication in June 1999 of *A Living Environment for Wales*, we have been able to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the state of the Welsh natural environment. Written jointly with the Forestry Commission, the document - which complements a sister document, *A Working Environment for Wales* written by the Environment Agency - is a unique appraisal of the species, habitat and landscapes of Wales which will act as a baseline for much of our future work and our advice to the National Assembly and others.

A Living Environment for Wales documents a substantial depletion of wildlife habitats - from flower rich hay meadows to upland moors - particularly in the decades after World War II. Declines in many once familiar species, like lapwings and water voles, dependent on these habitats are also recorded. As a result, the many cherished landscapes of Wales, and their seasonal colours, have been depleted too.

But the report also leaves room for optimism. Much rich habitat remains, especially in the uplands. More of it is protected better than ever before by designations, some of them international requirements, that we have applied and, more importantly, by the land management agreements we are securing with their landowners. Tir Gofal, and its forerunner Tir Cymen, are pioneering a new, positive approach to conserving existing habitats, landscapes and historic features on farms while paying for new habitats to be created.

Our report also draws particular attention to the amazing riches of habitats, plants and animals in the seas around the Welsh coast. Their European significance is recognised by nearly half of our coastal waters having been recommended to Government for Special Area of Conservation (SAC) status under the EU Habitats Directive, a far greater proportion than that on land.



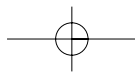
Our vision for Wales

Our report, however, is not a static document. It will be reviewed periodically and - more importantly - it is now the baseline from which we have drawn, our vision for the natural heritage of Wales ten years hence. Our Vision Statement, currently out in draft for wide public consultation, has been written with three overall aims:

- to improve our natural environment;
- to encourage its sustainable use; and
- to promote greater enjoyment of it.

Our vision is for a Wales with greater character in its appearance. We want its countryside and surrounding seas to:

- support more wildlife and the habitats that species depend on;
- be managed to provide sustainable employment; and
- improve the well-being and give more enjoyment to residents and visitors alike.



The situation facing Welsh agriculture



In recent years the Welsh farming industry has faced considerable difficulties. Simple economics is only one factor. Fewer young people than ever step forward to fill the shoes of the ageing farm population and without a well balanced and viable farming industry to play its part in managing the land in an environmentally sensitive way, we will not be able to achieve our objectives of improving our natural environment.

Thus, besides operating Tir Gofal and Tir Cymen, CCW has a deep and concerned interest in the future of all Welsh farmland. For this reason we played a full part in the many consultations and discussions under the European Unions Agenda 2000 reforms of the Common Agriculture policy, including ongoing discussions of the future of Less Favoured Area supports - the Tir Mynydd scheme - the Rural Development Plan, and many other aspects of farm support, including the Farm Development Group established to take forward aspects of the Welsh Food Strategy.

We maintain close working relationships with all the farming and landowning representative groups on all these and other matters. Our work on agriculture and forestry issues also involves universities, and our sister agencies in England and Scotland, as well as partners from other parts of Europe who share our vision of a new agriculture with environmental management at its heart.

Tir Gofal - The First 12 Months

At the heart of our agriculture work is Tir Gofal. It is a new whole farm scheme which has been available throughout Wales since March 1999. The Scheme aims to encourage agricultural practices which will protect and enhance the landscapes of Wales, their cultural features and associated wildlife. Tir Gofal is also intended to improve public access to the working countryside and provide new opportunities for on-farm environmental education and training. Entry into an agreement is voluntary and the costs are partly met by the EU under the provisions of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The new scheme has been designed to incorporate the best features of its predecessors, in particular whole farm schemes such as Tir Cymen and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) as well as part farm programmes such as Habitat Scheme. CCW administers the delivery of the Tir Gofal programme on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales as part of a partnership arrangement with both the Farm and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) and the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA). At the same time we also work closely with a wide range of other organisations including Forestry Commission, CADW (Welsh Historic Monuments), Environment Agency, the three farming unions, and the voluntary sector .

All Tir Gofal agreements incorporate a basic 'Whole Farm Section' comprising minimum environmental requirements for the entire holding. In addition, any existing wildlife habitats on the farm must be managed according to the published guidelines. Furthermore, since all applications to join the scheme must meet a qualifying environmental standard, many applicants also put forward proposals for the creation of new habitats such as woodland as well as the restoration of landscape features such as hedges and stone walls. Proposals may also include the provision of new public access, the creation of streamside corridors, and the management of arable land without the use of pesticides.

The delivery of Tir Gofal will contribute substantially to CCW's longer term objectives for the conservation of biodiversity and treasured landscapes, as well as the provision of new public access alongside an improved understanding of the countryside. In particular, the scheme will assist with meeting the delivery of UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets as well as providing a practical demonstration of the principles of sustainable development.

Tir Gofal attracted just over 1380 applications by the time the first round of submissions was concluded on 21 May. All applications were scored according to a standard system and the best 700 were selected for a project officer visit. CCW was very conscious that this process involved the rejection of a large number of high

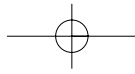
quality applications and has subsequently advised the National Assembly to alter the selection process to reduce this problem. As a result of these discussions, a new system based on a published minimum standard or 'threshold' will apply from the second round onwards.

It became apparent that the average cost of each Tir Gofal agreement would exceed that of the Tir Cymen average, on which the estimate that the budget would enable 600 farms to be admitted in the first year had been based. Average farm sizes were larger and many volunteered management options which would offer considerably improved habitats. It seemed likely that only 300 farms could be admitted within the planned budget. The National Assembly responded by announcing in November a doubling of the budget for Tir Gofal payments in 2000-01 to a figure of £5.48 m, thus enabling offers to be made to 600 farms.

It is already clear that the Scheme will bring enormous environmental benefits, potentially far above those which might have been anticipated. Roughly speaking, for every 100 Tir Gofal farm agreements, the following benefits accrue:

10,600 ha of land in scheme
 550 ha of broadleaved woodland
 2750 ha of unenclosed upland heathland (1983) and grassland (766)
 2766 ha of unimproved/semi-improved enclosed grassland
 200 ha of coastal land
 233 ha of arable land
 46 km of streamside corridor and buffer land
 32 km of new public access
 18 scheduled ancient monuments

A particular achievement has been that the area of land entering the scheme in year 1 - around 60,000 hectares - far exceeds the original estimate (c 40,000). This represents a 28% increase in the area of land under agri-environment schemes. Much of it is of remarkably high value to biodiversity and the landscape.



We hope that more and more Welsh farms will have the opportunity to enter the scheme, helping them cope with the transition the industry has to make, at the same time as bringing much-needed improvement to some of our most precious yet threatened habitats, species and landscapes, and opening more of Wales' beautiful countryside for the public to enjoy.

Tir Cymen

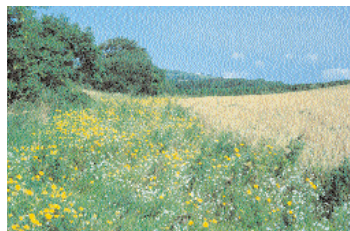
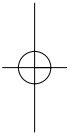
We continue to operate Tir Cymen with nearly 1100 Welsh farmers: a significant workload and one which we do not intend to ignore in the excitement of the new scheme, Tir Gofal. Alongside ESAs and the Habitats Scheme, Tir Cymen is one of a 'generation' of Agri-environment schemes dating mainly from the early 1990s which have made a tremendous contribution to the Welsh environmental and farming scene.

Over 3000 farms in total are involved in such schemes and as the new decade progresses most of those agreements will come to their end or to so-called 'break points'. Many will wish to join Tir Gofal, and few will be content to see environmental improvements made under those schemes lost. Many ESA agreements are reaching break clauses in the year ahead. The first Tir Cymen agreements to end will do so in 2002-03. CCW hopes that the funds committed to the ESA and Tir Cymen schemes can be redeployed into Tir Gofal and that it will be possible for those ESA and Tir Cymen farmers who wish to join the scheme to do so.

Forestry

1999 saw the beginnings of a significant development in forestry when the National Assembly asked the Forestry Commission to develop a Welsh Woodland Strategy. CCW is closely involved, believing as we do that a new approach is needed which, while recognising the economic importance of timber supplies in Wales, puts far greater stress on the environmental, amenity and social value of much of our woodland.

We continued to support Coed Cymru, in bringing neglected woods into management and finding outlets for their products, and Tir Coed, a more recent initiative to look for new ways and opportunities to expand forests and woodlands. Both initiatives have been innovative, and have a great deal to offer to the new Strategy. The close liaison and support of the Woodland Trust is also much valued. Hedgerow issues have continue to receive attention as the regulations governing their management are developed. In Wales, 593 km of hedgerow have received assistance from CCW's former Hedgerow Renovation Scheme, many participants in which were completing work in the year.



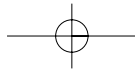
Flowers in field margin



Local contractors working on Tir Cymen farm



Maentwrog woodlands



Protected areas



Pumlumon

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

The designation of SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the legal means of protecting our important wildlife and geological features. The process is also used to give protection to the cSACs designated under EU law. During the year CCW notified 40 new SSSI, bringing the total number of SSSIs in Wales to 999. The boundaries of a further 4 SSSIs were modified and a further 4 amalgamated. CCW has an ongoing programme to identify potential SSSI for notification. Priority is being given to sites supporting UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species, sites underpinning the Natura 2000 series, Geological Conservation Review sites (the most important earth science sites in the UK), and any threatened or vulnerable sites requiring urgent protection.

Nine new and two existing SSSI were notified or amended to reflect their geological importance. These sites incorporated 13 separate Geological Conservation Review localities which include nationally important fossil localities, sites for fluvial geomorphology, and sites demonstrating classic Ice Age sediments and landforms. For example, the GCR localities at Horton and Eastern and Western Slade display some of the finest raised beach and periglacial deposits anywhere in Britain. These locations have provided crucial evidence for charting patterns of climate change over the last 250,000 years.

During the course of the year CCW produced advice to Government on ways to strengthen existing nature conservation legislation. This has been reflected in the proposals in Part III of the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill currently before Parliament.

Management of SSSI

Many of the SSSI require positive management to maintain their scientific interest. Over the years CCW has entered into 562 agreements with landowners to protect the SSSIs including payments for positive management such as

reductions in stocking levels, heather burning and water table management, and capital works such as fencing. Expenditure on this during the course of the year was £1.9m. Forty-five new agreements were completed and have increased the land held under agreement by over 3000 ha. The budget for managing SSSIs came under very great pressure during the course of the year and in the light of the limited overall increase for CCW announced in November, the Council took the unenviable decision that our grant programme to partners would have to be reduced to bolster our ability to protect SSSIs. Fortunately subsequent decisions by the Assembly enabled our overall grant in aid provision to partners to be restored.

increasingly apparent that the EU was attaching considerable importance to the effective delivery by Member States of their Natura 2000 obligations, and in particular that there was a clear interrelationship between the European Structural Funds and Rural Development Programme and Member States' obligations under Natura 2000.

Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

The Habitats Directive of the EU requires the UK Government to submit a list of sites for consideration as Special Areas of Conservation to be included in a European-wide series of protected areas to be known as Natura 2000. The UK list of sites submitted to the European Union includes 44 candidate Special Areas of Conservation located in Wales.

Following EU meetings in September and November, the UK cSAC list was judged to provide insufficient coverage for some habitats and species and the UK was requested to submit further candidates under threat of infraction proceedings. The Conservation Agencies in all four countries were, therefore, invited by the Government as a matter of urgency to put forward additional candidates. CCW reviewed all available research and survey information in order to make further recommendations to Government to help enhance the UK list of sites. The work involved is considerable and is being enabled by additional funds provided by the National Assembly for a 2-year period. Additional cSACs in Wales have been identified and consultation commenced in July 2000. The notification of the Areas as SSSIs will be involved with its own consultation process. The Areas will then have to be monitored and managed to ensure they fill EU requirements. Additional resources will be required for this purpose. During the course of the year it became



Dolphin - Cardigan Bay cSAC
 Butterfish, Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau cSAC
 Geological detail - Friog GCR

National Nature Reserves

At the end of the year Wales had 64 designated National Nature Reserves and the Skomer Marine Nature Reserve. Most are managed directly by CCW's Wardens and Estate Workers with the valuable assistance of our Voluntary Wardens, but some are managed in partnership with National Trust, RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust. Many of the NNRs are also important in the European context because of designations as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for Birds and as cSACs.

Each NNR has a detailed site management plan and is subject to regular environmental audit. In 1999, 23 such audits were carried out.

Examples of the type of management work carried out on NNRs are:

- scrub control at Rhos Goch NNR in Powys which is already resulting in new growth in Sphagnum moss;
- similarly at Cors Caron NNR in Ceredigion, 100 acres of dense rush was cut, baled and used as litter by local farmers to increase the water level on the site. This has already resulted in increased numbers of snipe and teal when the area is flooded;
- at Stackpole NNR, working with the National Trust studies were put in hand accompanied by a programme of cutting and removing submerged plants to assure the future of the Boshaston Lakes as shallow, freshwater habitats.

On 24 June 1999 HRH The Prince of Wales officially opened Carmel National Nature Reserve at Pentregwenlais, Carmarthenshire. The landowners, Tarmac, are heavily involved in managing the reserve and have provided an extensive permissive footpath network. The Reserve is 50ha but is also part of the larger Cernydd Carmel pSAC. It is important for its ash woodland, heaths, raised bogs and unimproved grasslands. It also has the only ephemeral lake (turlough) found on mainland Britain. CCW is working with the Forestry Commission and Coed Cymru to bring the woodland back into active, sustainable management. The grassland areas

are being managed to increase the number and diversity of plants. The Environment Agency have contributed by providing expensive monitoring facilities for the hydrological regime of the underground aquifer. As well as helping to protect the wildlife, declaration as a reserve has opened up the area for many local people who are now able to access this important part of the Gwenlais Valley.

Additional land was added to the Berwyn NNR, including the Efyrynwy Estate owned by Severn Trent Water PLC and managed by the RSPB, and Hafod Elwy Moor, part of the Denbigh Moors, declared an NNR.

As our contribution to the Wales Tourist Board's "Homecoming 2000" Campaign, arrangements were made to enhance in 2000 the regular programme of walks on NNRs arranged by CCW's Wardens. The promotion "Nature at its Best" was launched in March 2000 and offered over 170 guided walks up to mid November. Training sessions were arranged for Tourist Information Centre staff so that they could advise on the walks, and links made with Regional Tourism Companies who could provide accommodation backing facilities for visitors.

Preparations were also put in hand to improve interpretation facilities at a number of NNRs. A bid for EU Structural Funds will be made to support these improvements which it is hoped will develop the visitor potential of these NNRs in a sustainable way in conjunction with the local tourism industry.

P

Silver-studded blue

Progress on Biodiversity Action Plans



Silver-studded blue

In response to the Biodiversity Convention at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), a major initiative of the UK Government has been to sponsor the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) for our natural heritage of habitats and species. In Wales, a National Assembly chaired Group oversees the general thrust and achievement of plans. CCW provides the administrative support for the Group.

By the end of 1999, 37 Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and 185 Species Action Plans (SAPs) had been produced for habitats and species occurring in Wales. These include targets for the conservation, restoration and expansion of habitats and individual species, together with a series of actions required to meet the aims of the plans. Actions are assigned to various organisations including statutory Agencies, central and local government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Partnerships to develop and implement the individual plans are being encouraged.

Inevitably, much of the UKBAP work in Wales has fallen to CCW, but resources so far have been insufficient to meet the wide range of specified actions. CCW has identified the top 50% of plans it is required to contribute to and is delaying action on the rest until more resources become available. This area of work can be expected to have a much higher profile as we approach the 10th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit in 2002.

We have, however, attached priority to the preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) by groupings of local authorities and NGOs. CCW announced during the year that it would be prepared to make £30,000 available to each local authority over the next 2 years to facilitate the preparation with partners of LBAPs. CCW is also providing habitat and species information to the local groups.

CCW has a series of plans for its own implementation of HAPs and SAPs, covering research, habitat and species protection and management, and our SSSI and Tir Gofal programmes will also help achieve BAP targets.

Improving our knowledge of the natural environment



Horse mussel bed

Our expenditure on scientific research and support was down 14% on the previous year, reflecting pressures on budgets elsewhere. We maximised the impact of available resources by engaging in joint research with partners wherever possible. Within the overall budget a conscious decision was taken to increase the amount of research and support work involving the marine and coastal environment.

The growing importance of CCW's coastal and marine work

CCW has recognised for some years that more resources needed to be found to discharge its responsibilities for our coastline and offshore waters. At the end of the Natura 2000 process no less than 60% of our coastline and offshore waters could be designated as Special Areas of Conservation. Within available resources, we have therefore sought to build up our staff complement and expertise and to devote a higher proportion of research funding to this area. Impressive results are now beginning to emerge but in the years ahead we will have to increase our efforts even more if we are to effectively meet our national and international obligations.

The Intertidal Survey

By the end of the year the Marine Intertidal Survey Team had completed surveying and mapping 48% of the Welsh coastline. The work on the cSACs of Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau, Cardigan Bay and the Pembrokeshire Islands had all been completed, as well as a large part of the Burry Inlet Saltmarsh and Estuaries cSAC. Work has also started on sites in the Menai Strait and around Anglesey. The maps and survey data collected from the survey work have provided vital information for Marine SAC management schemes. They have also been used in the production of notification papers for SSSIs. One intertidal SSSI, Tonfanau i Friog, was notified in 1999 and there are several others due for notification in 2000.

Monitoring and management of marine cSACs

A major programme of monitoring trials in Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC was carried out and designed to test methods for monitoring the diversity and range of species in reefs and estuaries. The techniques tested included underwater video, visual observation by divers and acoustic surveys. The recommendations from the report will form part of the guidelines for monitoring marine SACs throughout the UK, to be produced by the UK Marine SACs LIFE Project. Other studies undertaken which will help in the process of managing our marine cSACs include compilation of a database on bottlenose dolphins in the Cardigan Bay, a study of the coastal processes within Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau and a study of the impact of aggregate extraction within marine cSACs.

Management schemes for candidate SACs are being developed in partnership with relevant authorities, user groups and interest groups on sites. For the Cardigan Bay cSAC, the consultation draft of the management scheme has been published and public workshops have been held. Guidelines on the management of extraction in marine cSACs were produced, and in the Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau cSAC agreement was reached with the North West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee to close an area to scallop fishing for conservation reasons.

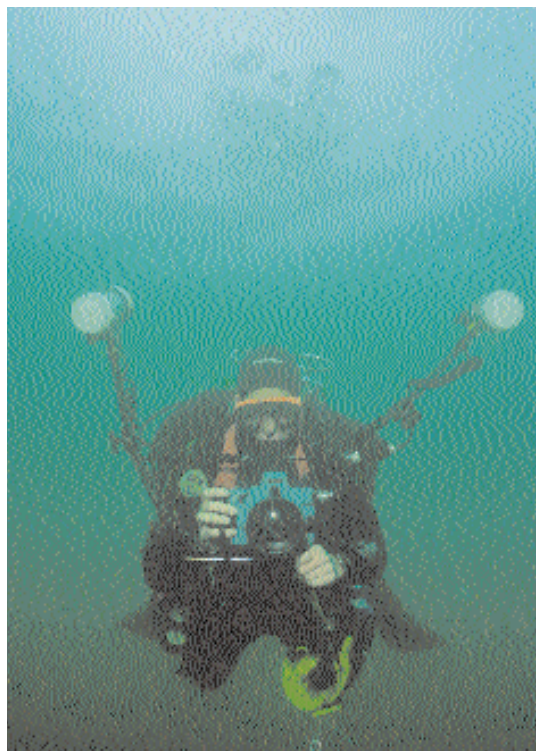
A two year study of saline lagoons was completed with 14 sites surveyed and recommendations made to improve their management. A saltmarsh survey of the Severn estuary was also completed which showed a widespread occurrence of nationally scarce species.

Work on the aftermath of the Sea Empress disaster continued with the second year of a 3-year study of common scoter and their food in Carmarthen Bay. Results of ground counts and aerial surveys of birds as well as interim analyses of benthic invertebrates for mapping and population study have been produced in an interim report. We have also continued our programme of marine species recording, including marine and estuarine fishes, cetacean

sightings and marine mammal and turtle strandings. Research on harbour porpoise supports the existence of a calving area in Pembrokeshire. A survey of the rare alga *Anotrichium barbatum* (an Action Plan species) has been carried out in Tremadog Bay, while surveys of marine algae were also undertaken on Skomer MNR to test targets and monitoring methods for algal communities.

The Seascapes Project

As part of a proactive approach to find the most suitable location for alternative energy generation, particularly wind power, CCW launched the Seascapes project to develop and test a method for describing and assessing seascapes and the impact of developments upon them. The work is part-funded under an INTERREG scheme. Maps are being produced showing the areas of Wales from which the sea is visible and the areas of sea which are most visible from the land, plus analysis of which parts of the coast have the most extensive sea views. CCW hopes that the work will be used to guide developers towards those offshore areas where developments will have least impact on seascape.



Video monitoring

Terrestrial and freshwater habitats

Much of our research work in 1999 was closely linked to needs identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan initiative. A number of habitat studies involved the requirement for modern vegetation-cover data across Welsh landscapes, and to store and process the information in customised databases; other projects focused on ecosystem function and process to inform conservation management. For a range of selected species projects were designed in the main to obtain population census data, and often to gain insights to habitat requirements so that the findings can feed directly into practical conservation programmes; a genetic component was included in some cases.

Habitat studies

Terrestrial habitat survey projects covered lowland heathlands, hedgerows, woodlands, uplands and saltmarshes. In general, vegetation data on the floristic composition and structural condition of the component plant communities were recorded, as well as the environmental context. The results are used for site evaluation, (especially SSSIs and cSACs), for developing habitat restoration programmes. Databases for lowland grasslands, woodlands and heathlands were further developed, and we contributed to the development of UK databases for uplands and freshwaters.

Good progress was made with a study of blanket bog degradation and the rise in *Molinia* at sites in mid and south Wales; this work is being extended into north Wales where more near-natural bogs are still found. Preliminary phases of two projects were undertaken to develop peatland restoration on the periphery of Cors Fochno NNR and, more widely, for fen sites across Wales. Hydrological investigations took

place at Coed y Cerrig NNR and Cwm Cadlan NNR; the latter work is related to dewatering proposals at a nearby limestone quarry.

Habitat restoration projects also included continuation of a study to reclaim *Molinia-Juncus* vegetation from improved grassland at Rhos Llawr-cwrt NNR and a JNCC co-funded project to develop a manual of methods to restore both dry and wet grasslands.

Species studies

A broad range of taxonomic groups was covered in population census, genetics and species-environment studies.

There were three mammal projects on bat ecology to provide data on numbers of lesser horseshoe bats and to assess the importance of hedgerows and riparian habitats for bats. A modelling study of red squirrel, involving Population Viability Analysis, was undertaken and the annual count of grey seal pups on Skomer MNR.

Bird studies involved compilation of long-term demographic data for guillemots and razorbills on Skomer, a radio-tracking study of black grouse (following up an earlier observation that chick survival was relatively high on an unkept Welsh moor) and the population genetics of chough in Wales. We also co-funded a wide-scale survey of ring ouzel which is showing a continuing decline.

A detailed study of the reproductive ecology of lampreys was undertaken on the River Usk. Herpetological projects covered two high-profile introductions: natterjack toad at Talacre where it bred successfully for the first time since the 1950s, and sand lizard at Morfa Harlech NNR where the introduced population has continued to produce young.



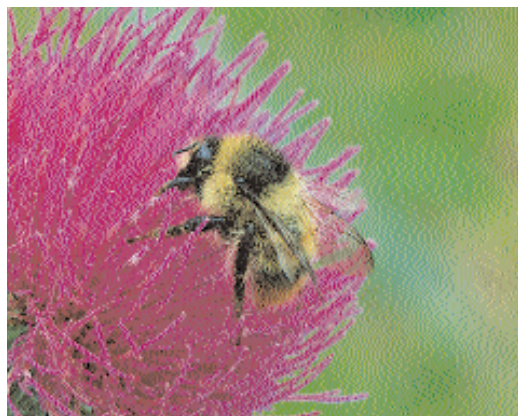
Broadleaved woodland



Razorbills



Lamprey



Shrill carder bee

Whorl snail - *V. moulinsiana*

Invertebrate studies were almost exclusively on high priority BAP taxa; for the most part local population studies were closely linked to observations on habitat associations so that management recommendations could be put forward. Among the species covered were the rare whorl snails *Vertigo angustior* (Whiteford Burrows NNR), *V. geyeri* (Anglesey fens) and *V. moulinsiana* (Cors Geirch NNR), the rare ground beetle *Panagaeus cruxmajor* (Pembrey), the black bog ant (Cors Goch Llanllwch NNR) and the three butterflies, high brown fritillary (Mynydd y Gaer, Glamorgan), marsh fritillary (Cynon Valley) and silver studded blue (Castlemartin Ranges). A habitat study closely allied to specialist and rare invertebrate interest was undertaken on exposed river sediment in 13 Welsh rivers; serious habitat losses were recorded and urgent conservation action is required.

Plant taxa studied include several high priority BAP vascular plant species, e.g. the Great Orme Cotoneaster (taxonomic genetics) and the dune gentian (grazing experiment). We also contributed to the upkeep of a database of the UK's rarest flowering plants and ferns. Several lower plant BAP projects were undertaken, including a survey of the moss *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* which has contributed to the assessment of additional SACs in Wales.

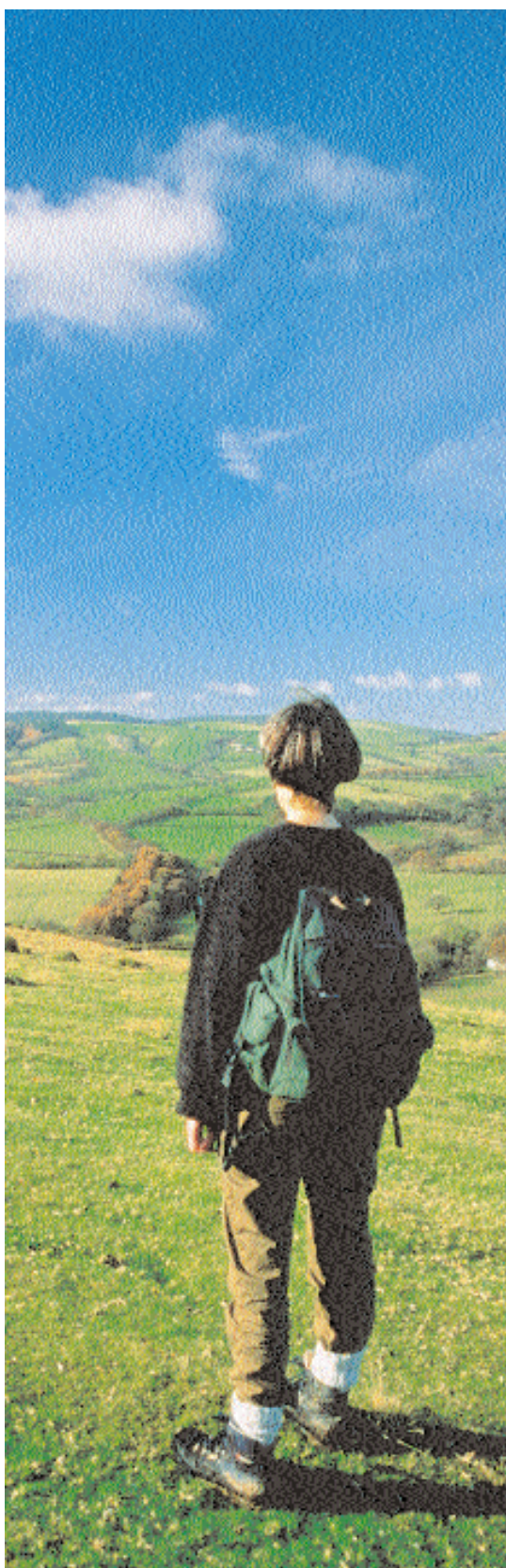
Three co-funded projects to look at the impact of pollution took place. A medium-term study of Nitrogen inputs to moorland has revealed that management (grazing) effects are of overriding importance, except at the highest level of Nitrogen treatment. Preliminary field investigations of sheep dip impacts were undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency, which it is hoped will lead to improved guidance on the safe disposal of dip. The first stage of a project involving a consortium of governmental and non-governmental agencies to model the impact of climate change on selected habitats and species (at 2020, 2050 and 2080) was undertaken.

Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review

In July 1998 the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State for Wales established an independent group to review policy and legislation applying or relevant to salmon and freshwater fisheries, and to make recommendations. Council Member Professor Lynda Warren chaired the Group. CCW, in collaboration with English Nature, submitted a total of eight memoranda to the Group. They covered a diverse range of fishery issues including fish introductions and stocking, habitat management, predation, recreation, institutional arrangements and funding. In addition, CCW staff gave oral evidence at three public evidence sessions.

The Review Group report containing 195 recommendations was published by MAFF and the National Assembly in February 2000. The recommendations have potentially wide-ranging ecological and management implications. The Group demonstrated that the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act is in need of substantial revision in the light of recent government commitments to protect and enhance our characteristic natural biodiversity and promote sustainable development. CCW welcomed the wider conservation remit recommended for the Environment Agency, although with some reservations, and we regretted that few recommendations were made to support or define the role of the conservation agencies in relation to fish conservation.

Proposals to improve access to the countryside



The Government's proposals for access to open countryside in the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill reflected advice we had given in response to its consultation on *Access to the Open Countryside in England and Wales* published in 1998. Relative to its size and population, Wales will have a disproportionate amount of access land (estimated at up to 450,000 ha) compared to England. We have advocated the need to be as objective as possible in describing those areas of 'open countryside' to which the Government wishes to grant the public a right of access. We have favoured mapping these areas basing our methodology for doing so on the comprehensive surveys of semi-natural vegetation completed in the mid-1990s. We tested our methodology in 4 pilot areas in Wales during the summer of 1999, as a result of which we were able to advise DETR and the National Assembly of the scale of provisions which needed to be made for preparing draft and provisional maps and for the consultation process.

We have placed a great deal of emphasis on consulting with those who own and manage land which will be subject to public access and those who will be given rights to use these areas. We consider that the experience of managing our own National Nature Reserves - including some of the most sensitive upland areas in Wales - places us in an excellent position to appreciate and advise on how to manage the problems and opportunities associated with the new access rights.

We were also asked to advise Government on the case for extending public rights of access to woods, watersides and the coast. We concluded that at this point in time we considered that more could be done to encourage and improve access to these areas through voluntary means rather than granting a statutory right of public access. We published our conclusions independently but also collaborated - with the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency and English Nature - in a joint report to Government on the options for change published in October 1999.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Bill proposes several new statutory duties for CCW in respect of access to open country. We have estimated that approximately £2 m will be required for the work of producing draft maps of open countryside and to consult those with an interest in these areas. This work is the most time consuming and expensive part of implementing the Government's access proposals. We believe it will take 2 years to complete. Additional funding for 2000 to enable a start on this work was announced by the National Assembly in March.

Ongoing responsibilities include the monitoring of access impacts on the environment and putting arrangements in place to advise and monitor closures and restrictions to access. Advice will also have to be prepared for landowners, managers and users of access land to help raise public awareness of the new rights and the responsibilities linked to them.

In September CCW organised a national seminar in Gregynog to obtain views on the Government's consultation *Improving Rights of*

Way in England and Wales. The Council subsequently published its advice to government and the National Assembly in October after first taking on board the views of the National Access Forum. The Council is pleased that several of its recommendations to strengthen and develop the rights of way system were incorporated in the Countryside and Rights of Way Bill.

We are pleased to have been able to move swiftly to take forward several of the tasks with which we were charged by Government to implement improvements in access to the countryside. We have been aided greatly in this by the support and cooperation of land-owning, access user interests and the Local and National Park Authorities for which we are grateful. We look forward to working closely with them in coming years to maximise and sustain the benefits which we believe can flow from improved access to the countryside managed in a responsible way.



Disabled access on Tir Cymen farm

Wales Access Forum

In publishing its "Framework for Action for Improving Access to the Countryside in England and Wales" in March 1999, the Government acknowledged the important contribution that had been played by the Wales Access Forum in recent years in developing a dialogue and partnership between organisations in Wales with an interest in access to the countryside. As requested we have developed the work of this Forum - now called the National Access Forum for Wales - to embrace the objectives set out in the Framework document. The first meeting of the newly constituted Forum was held in March this year.

Grant aid to partners to improve access

Following on from a seminar held earlier in the year, CCW invited views in June on a consultation paper into improving links between public transport and public rights of way. The outcome was positive with broad support for policies to improve accessibility to the countryside and coast in Wales. As a result the Council decided it would allocate grant aid averaging over £600k per annum over the next 3 years in support of these efforts.

CCW and the British Heart Foundation joined forces to develop a scheme aimed to get more people walking in local communities throughout Wales. With an estimated 70% of the population not physically active enough to benefit their health, the *Walking Your Way to Health* project has been designed to help thousands of these people to take more exercise whilst enjoying the Welsh countryside. Attractive and popular routes will be provided close to homes to encourage people to make walking a part of their daily lifestyles. This initiative - launched in 2000 and supported with grant aid from CCW - will provide for promotional activities and training for volunteers who wish to become health walk leaders. It should contribute to the National Assembly's own strategy for promoting health and well being "Better Health Better Wales" - a consultation which was launched in late March 2000.

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Ramblers' Association

CCW provided continued support for the very popular "Lonc a Chlonc/Walk and Talk" initiative which provides opportunities for people to join in on walks carefully chosen to encourage those who might otherwise lack the confidence to go alone. These walks provide social and health benefits as well as developing a better understanding and appreciation of our magnificent countryside. Approximately 4,300 people participated in 257 walks organised during the year.

We also provided grant aid support to the Ramblers' Association in Wales to help publish a leaflet "Llwybrau i'r Werin/Paths for People" - targeted at town and community councillors - outlining the law relating to public rights of way and listing 10 action points to help protect these paths and promote their use.

S

Sustainable development



Wildlife and industry, Gwent Levels

We made a contribution to sustainable development in a number of ways. At a practical level the advice and comments given by our Area Offices to Planning Authorities and developers on planning applications helps to ensure that developments are taken forward in a way which does not damage our natural heritage, both wildlife and landscape. In giving advice CCW looks for ways in which developments might provide actual benefit to nature conservation and the landscape.

Although our role is firstly protecting wildlife and landscape, this does not automatically put us at odds with development or progress. CCW is committed to helping Wales develop sustainably. In 1999/00 we were formally consulted, and gave advice on over 1200 planning applications, but by working with developers and partners it was only necessary to object to 15, which is just over 1%. It must be stressed that in respect of these our role is simply to offer advice based on our statutory responsibilities for nature conservation and the landscape. It is for the Planning Authorities (Local Authorities and the National Assembly) to weigh that advice with the other considerations they must take into account before giving a decision on the applications. The total number of consultations to which our local staff responded was nearly 5000.

To give a specific example, Newport fronts the Severn Estuary SSSI, Ramsar, SPA, pSAC and is divided by the River Usk cSAC. This generates considerable liaison, especially casework consultation with European law implications, on many proposed developments. A good example of this was the scheme to lay an 18 km long pipeline by Hyder (Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water) to take waste water between Chepstow and Newport. The pipeline crosses the River Wye cSAC twice, four of the Gwent Levels SSSIs and is adjacent to the Severn Estuary SSSI, Ramsar, SPA, pSAC. The pipeline has been specifically routed through the CCW managed Gwent Levels Wetland Reserve, with our full co-operation, to reduce its impact on the villages of Nash and Goldcliff. This case has involved much liaison between Environment Agency, CCW and Hyder, to minimise various potential adverse environmental impacts, while allowing for future coastal protection works. Hyder has also agreed to

make a significant contribution to the implementation of a very important third water supply for the wetland reserve.

In some cases we are regularly involved in liaison meetings or site visits, on others we may ask for an on-site ecologist to be employed to watch over specific species, for example BAP species such as water voles with the dualling of the A5 across Ynys Môn. In other cases we will work on long-running, complicated cases to ensure that rare or important species, or the habitat which supports them, are protected, often as part of a liaison or project group.

We see the most effective way to ensure that the environment is protected, and that government can fulfill its role to keep Habitat Directive sites in favourable condition, is by working with developers, land managers or partners as early as possible, looking for ways that development can actually benefit nature conservation or the landscape. This was demonstrated at Morfa Bychan where planning permission was granted in 1963 for an 800 chalet holiday complex. After working with Bourne Leisure, Gwynedd County Council and the North Wales Wildlife Trust consent was given for a much reduced chalet complex. Conditions were attached that most of the dune system would be managed as a nature reserve by the North Wales Wildlife Trust.

The development of renewable sources of energy

CCW supports the development of renewable sources of energy which contribute to sustainable development giving proper weight to all the environmental, economic and social dimensions. Our view is that it must be to the benefit of all concerned to focus the attention of developers on sites where there will not be conflict with the existing value or sensitivity of the site. Proposals for terrestrial wind turbine developments have frequently given rise to difficulties for CCW because of their adverse impact on wildlife and landscape. In February 1999 we organised a conference in Llandrindod Wells to explore ways in which terrestrial wind turbines could be better accommodated into the

Welsh landscape, and followed it up in October with a conference in Llandudno to explore the potential for developing renewable energy from the Irish Sea, including the possibility of marine wind turbine farms. Jointly hosted with the Irish Sea Forum of Liverpool University, it was attended by over 160 people representing most of the organisations with relevant interests. Much interest was expressed in the development of offshore windfarms and it also became apparent that there might be potential for the early development of wave energy.

The conclusions of the seminar were for advisors and the industry to work together to ensure that the process that the Government is developing for dealing with proposals for offshore energy generation is transparent, that the consultations were effectively handled, that sensitive sites were avoided so that environmental considerations are fully respected and that efforts are made to build up an industry which will bring social and economic benefits at a local and national scale to all the countries around the Irish Sea. There was a strong body of opinion that Government should take the lead by developing a strategic approach to the siting of such turbine farms. The proceedings are now published.

Landmap

LANDMAP is a practical tool to help ensure sustainable development. An acronym for 'landscape assessment and decision-making process', it has been developed by CCW in partnership with the local and National Park Authorities, the WDA and other organisations with interests in the landscape in Wales. The methodology is GIS-based and has been devised to enable a wide range of information about landscape to be integrated into a single database capable of informing and supporting the needs of a variety of end users and decision makers concerned with landscape management. By the end of the year, 13 local authorities had committed themselves to the use of the system, and once all-Wales cover is available LANDMAP will become a powerful strategic tool to inform the sustainable use of landscape in Wales.

The National Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme

CCW worked closely with the National Assembly's Sustainable Development Unit to help frame consultation proposals for the Scheme for Sustainable Development and quality of life indicators. We made presentations at 4 NAW regional committee 'roadshows' that were considering the importance of the NAW's duty to produce a scheme for sustainable development. We responded in detail to the NAW consultation on its scheme for sustainable development. We also supported the WDA in the development of its policy on sustainable development.

Education and Training

Debates in the National Assembly on the Sustainable Development Scheme have emphasised the importance of education and training. The Environmental Education Council for Wales (EECW), with financial support from CCW, undertook the preparation of a strategy for environmental education which would play an important part in education for sustainability. With the completion of this seminal work in sight the EECW began to review its future role.

We sponsored a wide range of training opportunities. Our partnership with LANTRA provided hundreds of days of training in countryside management skills, for example to maintain hedges, walls and woodlands. Our Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Awards provided recognition for farmers and young farmers who deployed these skills. CCW also provided financial support for relevant courses at the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre at Plas Tan y Bwlch and at other study centres.



Grant aid project - rebuilt village well (Bryngwyn Women's Institute, Powys-Radnor)

The dissemination of the importance of sustainable development was not restricted to formal education and training opportunities. Our Area Offices supported local community groups through our grant aid programme and we also supported on-going initiatives with the Women's Institute and Young Farmers' Clubs.

European Union Structural Funds

CCW has continued to be involved in the administration of the structural fund programmes for the Objective 5b (Rural Wales) and Objective 2 (Industrial South Wales) areas, and for the Wales-Ireland INTERREG programme, to help ensure that these programmes contribute to sustainable development.

But as the 1994-99 programmes tailed off, CCW has become heavily involved in providing advice on the new Objective 1, 2 and 3 programmes which could contribute to sustainable development and the National Assembly's National Economic Development Strategy. In particular, we have been heavily involved with work to develop the new Objective 1 programme for West Wales and the Valleys. CCW was represented on the European Task Force and on the National Assembly's Structural Funds Working Group. With the Environment Agency Wales, we drafted the 'environmental profile' for the

Objective 1 programme, based on the CCW/FC and the EAW State of the Environment reports. From this we produced a strategy for promoting environmental sustainability as a cross cutting theme of the Objective 1 programme.

Together with WDA and EAW, we jointly ran a seminar in September on Promoting Sustainable Development in the West Wales and the Valleys Objective 1 Programme, at which we issued guidance, produced by consultants, on how Objective 1 could be used to promote sustainable development. We have since issued around 200 copies of this guidance. CCW has also continued to work with the East Wales Partnership to develop the new Objective 2 programme for east Wales. CCW was also represented on a National Assembly working group that assessed the strengths and weaknesses from an environmental view point of the 1994-99 Wales-Ireland INTERREG programme, as preparatory work for the new programme.

CCW's work on the Structural Fund programme has greatly benefited from its membership of the Wales European Centre (WEC) in Brussels and the advice and services it provides. Working in partnership with WEC, CCW organised a seminar to promote the EU's LIFE Environment programme in January, which was attended by 130 people from a variety of organisations. Arrangements were made during the year for a CCW officer, Rob Owen, to be seconded to WEC for a 2-year period commencing in April 2000.

CCW'S Grant aid programme

We spent £3.042 m in 1999 in grant aid to partners, without whose support and activity CCW could not fulfil its objectives. Over 270 schemes received funding directly from CCW and others benefitted indirectly from some of these grants. The work undertaken was complementary to CCW's objectives covering nature conservation, landscape enhancement, improvement of access to the countryside and interpretation and education projects. Major recipients of grant aid at national level included the National Trust, RSPB, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, the WI and the YFC. We also grant aided the work of local authorities and the Wildlife Trusts and that of LINK which plays an important role in coordinating the

interests of voluntary sector organisations. Many of the schemes we support are for work at community level where organisations like Groundwork Trusts, Keep Wales Tidy, Black Environment Network, Swansea Environment Group and Sustrans act as the catalyst.

Examples of grant aided work undertaken at local level include:

- In South Wales 95 woodland schemes and improvements in 12 Local Nature Reserves and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and along Heritage Coasts, along with 350 km of paths and access routes.
- The development of a 'Walking for Health Scheme' with Newport County Borough Council.
- In Anglesey and Gwynedd implementation of the Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
- Promotional material by Conwy County Borough Council to promote the use of the Conwy Valley and Lledr Valley Railway service and access to the countryside from it.
- Landscape improvements by Denbighshire County Council in the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a new summer bus service to promote access to it by public transport.
- Completion of the 23 mile long Ceiriog Valley circular horseriding trail.
- Declaration of Pwllcrochan Woods, Nant y Coed, Moel Findeg and Llwyni Ponds as Local Nature Reserves.
- Nature conservation sites in the Llanelli Millennium Coastal Park.
- The extension of the Wye Valley walk by Powys County Council.
- The Pembrokeshire County Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Support for LEADER Groups in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire to open walking routes.
- Support to the West Wales Wildlife Trust for the employment of a Warden for Skomer.

Annex 1 PERFORMANCE AGAINST 1999-2000 CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS

Biodiversity	1999-00 Target	Performance	Comment
Tir Gofal be made in	600* agreements	472 offers made	The balance of the 600 offers will be made during 2000-01. Initial payments will respect of all 600 farms in 2000-01 as planned.
Notification/renotification of (sites)	55	44	Due to having to divert additional staff onto Tir Gofal and the SAC SSSI moderation process the target was not met. This has also resulted in some under achievement of the targets for Biodiversity Action Plans
* This target was dependent on the average cost per farm and the size of the overall budget. The original TG budget would have permitted offers to only circa 300 farms but the decision by the Assembly in November to double the budget for TG payments has meant that payments to 600 farms can be made in 2000/01. The hectareage covered by the agreements will be about 60,000 ha compared with a planned 43,000 ha.			
Access			
Assist in implementation of Government's access to open countryside proposals	1999-00 Target ✓	Performance ✓	Following receipt of supplementary GIA CCW has given advice on the definition and mapping of open countryside and on the extent of other areas of open countryside. Terms of Reference for establishing National Access Forum have been agreed by Council. Four pilot mapping exercises undertaken and follow up meetings held.
New length of PROW to be defined, improved and publicised using CCW grant aid	1500 km	1200 km	The shortfall reflects the fact that costs per km of rights of way improvements are increasing as local authorities begin to tackle sections requiring engineering works etc.
PROW networks serving communities and linked to public transport	3 pilot studies through Transport Advisory Service	Studies completed	
Landscape			
Local Authorities undertaking LANDMAP assessment (cumulative)	1999-00 Target 13	Performance 13	
Develop method for Seascape assessment ✓			Historical/cultural study commissioned and methods drawn up for testing in case studies in 2000-01

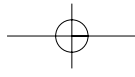
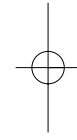
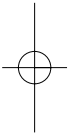
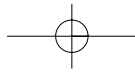
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN TARGETS (Adopted in June 1998) - Selected Exemplar Targets for Wales derived from UK Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

The Corporate Plan SSSI notification programme is linked very closely to the five BAP broad habitats identified in the table below. There are another sixteen broad habitat groupings which will need to be taken into account in planning the SSSI notification programme. The aim is to notify a specified area of BAP habitats, concentrating on the five target habitats, whilst also ensuring the other 16 habitats are not neglected.

HABITATS	PRIORITY HABITAT COMPONENTS	1999/00 - 2001/02 Target Average	Performance	Comment
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland	Upland Oak Woodland Lowland Beech Upland Mixed Ash Woodland Wet Woodlands Lowland Wood Pasture and parkland	Notify additional 220 ha per year as SSS	173.5	
Fens, marsh and swamp	Purple Moor Grass and rush pastures Fens Reedbeds	Notify additional 230 ha per year as SSSI	121.6	
Dwarf Shrub Heath	Lowland Heathland Upland Heathland	Notify additional 750 ha per year as SSSI	30.7	Large upland blocks in future years will enable average over 3 years to be met
Neutral Grassland	Lowland Hay Meadow	Notify additional 100 ha per year as SSSI	80.5	
Upland Hay Meadow				
Bogs	Lowland Raised Bog Blanket Bog	Notify additional 20 ha per year as SSSI	39.7	
Other BAP habitats Saline lagoons a. Establish an inventory of all Welsh saline lagoons	-	600 ha	355	Management report complete
SPECIES Greater Horseshoe Bat: a. Notify roost site Dormouse: a. Complete survey range and habitat use Hornet Robber Fly: a. Institute management of existing SSSI populations b. Notify non-SSSI sites with largest populations Red alga <i>Anotrichium barbatum</i> a. Establish size of the population in Tremadog Bay Harbour porpoise a. Continue research on areas frequented by harbour porpoise		1999/00 Target	Performance	Comment
		✓	✓	
		✓	✓	In place at Crymlyn Bog NNR, Brockwell's Meadows and Old Cigwyn
		1	1	1 Site approved by Council, March 2000
		✓	✓	Survey carried out during summer. Draft final report completed. Population highly variable in extent depending on weather conditions.
				Final reports of 3 studies completed and disseminated to Government Departments and other partners

Annex 2 LIST OF ACRONYMS

cSAC	-	candidate Special Area of Conservation
DETR	-	
EAW	-	Environment Agency, Wales
EECW	-	Environmental Education Council for Wales
ESA	-	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FC	-	Forestry Commission
FRCA	-	Farming and Rural Conservation Agency
GCR	-	Geological Conservation Review
HAP	-	Habitat Action Plan
JNCC	-	Joint Nature Conservancy Council
LBAP	-	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
MAFF	-	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
MNR	-	Marine Nature Reserve
NAW	-	National Assembly for Wales
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	-	National Nature Reserve
pSAC	-	proposed Special Area of Conservation?
RSPB	-	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAP	-	Species Action Plan
SNPA	-	Snowdonia National Park Authority
SSSI	-	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UKBAP	-	United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan
WDA	-	Welsh Development Agency
WEC	-	
WI	-	Women's Institute
YFC	-	Young Farmer's Clubs



STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNT PREPARED PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 21 OF SCHEDULE 6 TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990

FOREWORD

1. History of the Body and Statutory Background

The Countryside Council for Wales was established on 5 November 1990 in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, to carry out statutory responsibilities for promoting the conservation of the natural world and the enhancement of natural beauty together with encouraging recreation and enjoyment of the countryside of Wales, and advising Government on all matters relating to countryside and nature conservation issues, as set out in Part VII Section 130 of the Act. It is financed by annual grant-in-aid from the National Assembly for Wales. Under Part VII Section 132(2) (a) of the Act the Council is empowered to accept gifts and contributions for the purposes of its functions which are defined in Section 132(2). The Accounts are prepared under paragraph 21(1), schedule 6, of the Act in a form directed by the National Assembly for Wales with the approval of the Treasury. A copy of the Accounts Direction can be obtained from the Council.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee was established on 5 November 1990 by Section 128(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to carry out such functions previously discharged by the Nature Conservancy Council listed in section 133 therein. The expenses of the Joint Conservation Committee Support Unit are met in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Act and defrayed in proportion to the funding agreed by the Nature Conservancy Council for England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales. Assets and liabilities are jointly owned by the Nature Conservancy Council for England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales, apportioned on the agreed funding percentage for that year.

2. Funding

The Council's grant-in-aid from the National Assembly for Wales finances the excess of its capital and revenue expenditure (excluding depreciation) over its income. From 1 July 1999 the Council became accountable to the National Assembly for Wales.

3. Results and Appropriations

The 1999-00 Income and Expenditure account records a deficit on operating activities of £0.450 million on total income of £26.439 million over total expenditure of £26.889 million.

The income included £24.731 million of government grant towards revenue expenditure. In addition the Council received £0.858 million in grants towards capital expenditure and £0.010 million in respect of the share of Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit capital expenditure.

Non-retainable income of £1.560 million of European Union funds for Tir Cymen was remitted to the National Assembly for Wales.

A surplus of £0.648 million was taken to the general reserve. A retained surplus of £0.827 million was brought forward from the previous financial year giving a retained surplus carried forward of £1.475 million.

4. Fixed Assets

In 1999-00, the Council purchased £0.858 million of capital assets as detailed in Note 12.

The majority of land is held as nature reserves and a market value is not appropriate.

5. Payment of Creditors Policy

The timing of payments is stipulated in all the Countryside Council for Wales' contracts and goods and service orders, the norm being payment within 30 days of receipt of goods or services or a valid invoice, whichever is the later.

The Countryside Council for Wales adheres to the Government Accounting principle by aiming to settle all bills within the terms specified. During 1999-00, the Council paid 97% of invoices within the 30 day terms.

6. Council Members for 1999-2000

E M W Griffith, CBE, DL* (Chairman) 1
 J Lloyd Jones, OBE † (Chairman) 2
 Professor D Q Bowen (Deputy Chairman) 3
 Dr E M N Andrews 4
 Professor R A Dodgshon
 Dr W A Evans
 Mr T Jones, OBE 5
 Mr R Lovegrove, OBE
 Mr R Pratt
 Mr B Riddleston 6
 Mr D Tomos
 Professor L Warren 7

* Term of office ended 14 January 2000
 † Term of office commenced 1 March 2000

Membership of other Public Bodies

- 1 Chair, Glan Clwyd Hospital Trust;
Chair, Council of University of Wales College of Medicine
- 2 Chair, Welsh Advisory Committee to the Forestry Commission;
Member, UK Round Table on Sustainable Development
- 3 Chair, Millenium Coastal Park Forum
- 4 Member, Environment Agency Advisory Committee
- 5 Member, Institute of Welsh Affairs,
Chair (Wales) National Lottery Charities Board;
Member, Royal Welsh Agriculture Society
- 6 Member, Environment Agency Advisory Committee
- 7 Chair, Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Review Group

7. Year 2000 Computer Issues

The Council experienced no disruption as a result of the Year 2000 or the leap day 29 February 2000.

The Council carried out a full review of its key operational and support systems and implemented an action plan of upgrading and replacement to ensure Year 2000 compliance. A contingency plan was put in place to deal with any unexpected computer failure or wider infrastructure failure (e.g. power cuts). The project was managed by a senior fulltime Year 2000 Compliance Officer. A year 2000 compliant release of the Council's Finance system was installed and tested and was in full live operation from January 1999. The library system was replaced by a compliant version in July 1998. All other business critical systems were completed by October 1999.

8. Disabled Persons

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) brings in new legislation to counteract the discrimination that people with disabilities face. It gives new rights to people who have or have had a disability which makes it difficult for them to carry out normal day to day activities. The disability may be physical, sensory or mental but must be substantial and must last or be expected to last for at least 12 months.

The Council have been awarded the 2 tick 'Positive about Disability' symbol, a status granted by the Employment Service to employers following best practice guidelines in dealing with people with disabilities. The use of the symbol demonstrates to the Council staff and external applicants that the Council is committed to providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities, and will judge them solely upon their abilities.

9. Employee Involvement

The Countryside Council for Wales involves employees through the Countryside Council for Wales Whitley Council which brings together representatives of the management and trade unions in a working environment. There have been 6 General Purposes Committee Meetings during the year and the discussions have been wide ranging and productive.

10. Auditors

Under paragraph 21 of schedule 6 to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Auditor General for Wales shall examine and certify the statements of account and lay copies of them, together with his report, before the National Assembly of Wales.

STATEMENT OF COUNCIL'S AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Under paragraph 21 of schedule 6 to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the Countryside Council for Wales is required to prepare a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis determined by the National Assembly for Wales, with the consent of the Treasury. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Council's state of affairs at the year end and of its income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Council is required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the National Assembly for Wales, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Council will continue in operation.

The Accounting Officer for the National Assembly for Wales has designated the Chief Executive of the Countryside Council for Wales as the Accounting Officer for the Council. His relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including his responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the National Assembly for Wales Accounting Officers' Memorandum, issued by the Treasury.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ON THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL

- 1 As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Countryside Council for Wales.
- 2 The system can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.
- 3 The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:
- comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Management Board and Council;
 - regular reviews by the Management Board and Council of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts;
 - setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
 - clearly defined capital investment control guidelines; and
 - as appropriate, formal project management disciplines.
- 4 The Council has an internal audit unit, which operates to standards defined in the Government Internal Audit Manual. The work of the internal audit unit is informed by an analysis of the risk to which the Council is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risk and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Council's Audit Committee and approved by me. At least annually, the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides me with a report on internal audit activity in the Council. The report includes the HIA's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's system of internal financial control.
- 5 My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the internal auditors, the Audit Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor, the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintainance of the financial control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports.
6. **Implementation of the Turnbull Report**
As Accounting Officer, I am aware of the recommendations of the Turnbull Committee and I am taking reasonable steps to comply with the Treasury's requirement for a statement of internal control to be prepared for the year ended 31 March 2002, in accordance with guidance to be issued by them.

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

I certify that I have audited the financial statements on pages 37 to 50 under paragraph 21 of schedule 6 to the Environmental Protection Act 1990. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets, and the accounting policies set out on pages 41 and 42.

Respective responsibilities of the Council, the Chief Executive and Auditor.

As described on page 34 the Council and Chief Executive are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. The Council and Chief Executive are also responsible for the preparation of the other contents of the Annual Report. My responsibilities, as independent auditor, are established by statute and guided by the Auditing Practices Board and the auditing profession's ethical guidance.

I report my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and with the directions made thereunder by the National Assembly for Wales, and whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the National Assembly for Wales and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. I also report if, in my opinion, the Foreword is not consistent with the financial statements, if the Council has not kept proper accounting records, or I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my certificate if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements.

I review whether the statement on page 35 reflects the Council's compliance with Treasury's guidance 'Corporate governance: statement on the system of internal financial control'. I report if it does not meet the requirements specified by Treasury, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit of the financial statements.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Council and Chief Executive in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Council's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material mis-statement, whether caused by error, or by fraud or other irregularity and that, in all material respects, the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the National Assembly for Wales and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I have also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Countryside Council for Wales at 31 March 2000 and of the surplus, total recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and directions made thereunder by the National Assembly for Wales; and
- in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the National Assembly for Wales and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

John Bourn
Auditor General for Wales

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

13th July 2000

COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES
CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRUSCHEDULE 1
STATEMENT 1

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2000

	NOTES	£000s	£000s	Prior Year £000s
GROSS INCOME				
Grant in Aid	19	24,179		23,183
Grant in Aid applied to the JNCC Support Unit	5 & 19	552		524
Share of JNCC other income	5	101		129
Release of Deferred Government Grant	17	931		759
Income from Activities	2a	76		81
Transfer from Provisions	18	-		894
Retainable European Income	2b	<u>600</u>		<u>791</u>
			26,439	<u>26,361</u>
EXPENDITURE				
National Nature Reserves, and Site Protection	3	3,104		3,159
Scientific and Technical Support	4	1,139		1,336
Annual Cost of the JNCC Support Unit	5	642		645
Grants Payable	6	3,042		3,232
Tir Cymen Grants Payable	7	5,747		5,498
Staff Costs and Council Members' Remuneration	9	8,492		7,835
Notional Charges - Cost of Capital		190		185
Other Operating Charges	10	3,494		3,436
Purchase of Nil Valued Heritage Assets	12	99		60
Depreciation	12	<u>940</u>		<u>808</u>
			26,889	<u>26,194</u>
(Deficit) / Surplus on Operating Activities			(450)	167
(Defecit) / Surplus on Diposal of Fixed Assets			(4)	6
Interest Receivable			<u>118</u>	<u>134</u>
(Defecit) / surplus on Ordinary Activities			(336)	307
Non- retainable European Income	7		1,560	1,494
Adjustment for Notional Charges			981	926
Amount Surrendered to National Assembly for Wales	11		(1,560)	(1,543)
Transfer from Reserves:	17		14	49
Surplus on activities for the financial year			<u>659</u>	<u>1,233</u>
Surplus for the financial year			659	1,233
Adjustment for JNCC Support Unit surplus			(11)	(8)
Amount transferred to retained surplus for the year			<u>648</u>	<u>1,225</u>
Retained (deficit)/surplus at 1 April			827	(398)
Retained surplus at 31 March			<u>1,475</u>	<u>827</u>

All activities are regarded as continuing.

The notes on pages 41 to 50 form part of these accounts.

STATEMENT 2

COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES
CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2000

	NOTES	£000s	Prior Year £000s	£000s
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets	12		2,218	2,250
Share of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit	5		88	86
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	14	7		7
Debtors	15	1,018		1,006
Cash at Bank and in Hand		<u>751</u>		<u>238</u>
		1,776		1,251
CREDITORS				
Amount falling due within one year	16	<u>(301)</u>		<u>(424)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			1,475	827
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>3,781</u>	<u>3,163</u>
FINANCED BY:				
ACCRUALS AND DEFERRED INCOME				
Deferred Government Grant	17	1,758		1,831
CAPITAL AND REVENUE RESERVES				
Donated Assets Reserve	17	44		46
Revaluation Reserve	17	416		373
Share of Provisions and Reserves of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit	5	88		86
Income and Expenditure Reserve		1,475		827
Government and Private Funds			3,781	3,163
			<u>3,781</u>	<u>3,163</u>

The notes on pages 41 to 50 form part of these accounts.

P. Loveluck 11th July 2000
Accounting Officer

COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES
CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU STATEMENT 3
CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2000

Reconciliation of Operating Surplus to net cash inflow from operating activities

		1999/00	1998/99
		£000	£000
(Deficit) / Surplus on ordinary activities		(450)	167
Transfer from Deferred Government Grant Account	17	(931)	(759)
Depreciation	12	940	808
Decrease in stock	14	-	45
Increase in debtors	15	(12)	(284)
Decrease in creditors	16	(123)	(3,052)
Provision for Liabilities & Charges	18	-	(1,100)
Net Annual Contribution to JNCC		(11)	(8)
Notional Costs		981	926
Net cash inflow from ordinary activities		<u>394</u>	<u>(3,257)</u>

CASHFLOW STATEMENT

		1999/00	1998/99
		£000	£000
Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) from Operating Activities			
Ordinary activities		394	(3,257)
Non Retainable European Income	7	1,560	1,494
Amount surrendered to National Assembly for Wales	11	<u>(1,560)</u>	<u>(1,543)</u>
		394	(3,306)
Return on Investments and Servicing of Finance	20	118	134
Capital Expenditure	20	<u>(857)</u>	<u>(805)</u>
		(345)	(3,977)
Financing	20	858	811
Increase/(decrease) in cash		<u>513</u>	<u>(3,166)</u>

Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds

	1999/00	1998/99
	£000	£000
Increase (decrease) in cash in period	513	(3,166)
Net funds at 1 April 1999	238	3,404
Net funds at 31 March 2000	<u>751</u>	<u>238</u>

The notes on pages 41 to 50 form part of these accounts.

COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES
CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU

STATEMENT 4

STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES

	Notes	1999/00 £000	1998/99 £000
Surplus for the financial year		648	1,225
Surplus (Defecit) on revaluation of fixed assets	12/17	41	(19)
Movement in Share of JNCC Provisions and Reserves	5	2	2
Total recognised gains & losses for the year		<u>691</u>	<u>1,208</u>

The notes on pages 41 to 50 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

NOTE 1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of Accounting

The Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets. Without limiting the information given, the Accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 1985 and accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board so far as those requirements are appropriate. The Accounts Direction exempts the Council from the requirement to produce a statement of historical cost profits and losses.

1.2 Fixed Assets and Depreciation

1.2a Valuation Policy

Land, non-operational buildings and works services on designated conservation areas have been assigned a nil valuation. Other freehold land and buildings are valued at open market valuation for existing use or depreciated replacement cost in the case of specialised buildings. Full valuations are obtained every 5 years and are uprated by appropriate indices in the intervening years.

Equipment, computers and vehicles are shown at cost less depreciation and are not revalued as in the opinion of the Council such adjustments would not be material.

Adjustments arising from revaluations are taken to the revaluation reserve. Any permanent diminutions in value are charged to the Income and Expenditure Account.

1.2b Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of each asset to its residual value evenly over its expected useful life as follows:

Freehold Buildings	50 years or professionally estimated life
Freehold Buildings [short term structures]	20 years [or less if appropriate]
Computer Equipment	3 years [or up to 10 years on specific items]
Other Equipment	5 -10 years
Vehicles	5 years

An amount representing the difference between the depreciation charged on the revalued assets and that which would have been charged if the assets were shown at cost is deducted from the revaluation reserve and credited to the Income and Expenditure Account.

1.2c Sale of Fixed Assets

The proceeds of sale of Fixed Assets are surrendered to the National Assembly for Wales in their entirety, except where the proceeds are used for like-for-like replacement.

1.2d Donated Assets

The value of donated assets, or donations used for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to the Donated Assets Reserve. An amount representing the depreciation on these assets is deducted from the Donated Assets Reserve and credited to the Income & Expenditure Account.

1.3 Joint Nature Conservation Committee

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit [JNCCSU] is funded jointly by the Nature Conservancy Council for England, the Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage, who own its assets on the basis of an agreed proportion.

JNCCSU is considered by the above bodies to be a 'Joint Arrangement that is not an Entity' as defined by FRS9. It produces a separate account, audited by National Audit Office, and the proportionate share of JNCCSU income, expenditure, assets, provisions, and reserves is incorporated into the Countryside Council for Wales financial statements on an agreed abbreviated form of the equity method.

1.4 Stock Valuation

Stocks of publications are valued on a first in first out basis at the lower of direct production cost and net realisable value.

1.5 Taxation

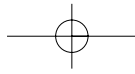
The Council is not liable to Corporation Tax or Capital Transfer Tax on gifts and bequests received. Income is shown net of VAT. Expenditure and fixed asset purchases are shown inclusive of VAT, which is not generally recoverable.

1.6 Grant in Aid

Government grants received of a revenue nature or applied to the purchase of nil value assets [see 1.2a] are credited to income in the year to which they relate. Grants for capital expenditure are credited to the deferred government grant account, and released to revenue over the expected useful life of the relevant assets by equal amounts.

1.7 Grants, Research Contracts and Management Agreements.

Research Expenditure, Grants awarded and Management Agreements payments are charged to the Income and Expenditure Account when incurred.



1.8 Notional Costs

Cost of Capital - A notional capital charge reflecting the cost of capital employed is included in operating costs and calculated at 6% of capital employed.

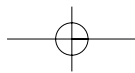
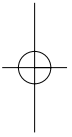
See also 1.9 - Pension Values.

1.9 Pension Values

Staff are members of the Council's superannuation scheme which is operated on a 'pay as you go' basis. The scheme is unfunded. On the advice of the Treasury, the cost of pensions for current members of staff is calculated by reference to a percentage of basic pensionable pay. For 1999-00 the percentages were:

Salary Band	Percentage
£14,000 and under	12%
£14,001-£29,000	13.5%
£29,001-£50,000	16.5%
£50,001 and over	18.5%

The pension charge to the income and expenditure account includes a notional element, being the difference between the cost of pensions calculated as above and the amount paid to pensioners in the year. This notional element is written back in determining the surplus or deficit taken to/from reserves.



NOTE 2 - INCOME

	£000	Prior Year £000
a) Income from Activities		
Income from National Nature Reserves	53	40
Interpretation	10	8
Research	2	6
Miscellaneous	11	27
	<u>76</u>	<u>81</u>
b) Retainable Grants from the European Community		
Grants from the Objective 5B Structural programme	433	421
LIFE Programme Grants	127	268
Interreg Grants	40	72
Other EU Grants	-	32
Repayment	-	(2)
	<u>600</u>	<u>791</u>

NOTE 3 - MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES AND SITE PROTECTION

[The cost of leasing, managing and maintaining National Nature Reserves and the cost of payments to Landowners of Sites of Special Scientific Interest for the environmentally beneficial management of their land]

	£000	Prior Year £000
National Nature Reserves		
Reserve Maintenance	887	744
Reserve Leases	41	35
Reserve Section 16 Management Agreements	264	297
Section 15 Management Agreement Costs		
Annual payments including Arrears to owners and occupiers	1,672	1,629
Annual & Works Costs	118	126
Associated Legal Costs		
Public Enquiries	2	3
Legal Costs Relating to Management Agreements	73	193
Other Costs		
Other Activities [Wayleaves, Licences etc]	49	51
Land Agency Consultancies	111	97
Reimbursements	(113)	(16)
	<u>3,104</u>	<u>3,159</u>

Forward Commitments on Management Agreements

As a result of management agreements concluded by 31 March 2000, commitments to continuing annual payments are as follows:

	£000	£000
In the next financial year	1271	1128
In years 2-5 (annually)	827	610
5 years and over.	490	407

NOTE 4 - SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

[The cost of contracts to support CCW's scientific and technical programmes and the development of environmental policies for Wales.]

	Prior Year	
	£000	£000
Natural Science Resource Base	426	494
Cultural Resource Base	242	223
Environmental Monitoring	169	266
Science / Policy Impact Studies	29	33
Experiments in Sustainability	12	27
Research to Develop Policy	122	142
Science Data Systems Collation	148	163
Special Initiatives	-	3
Conference Costs	33	40
International Subscriptions	13	12
Reimbursements on Joint Projects	(55)	(67)
	<u>1,139</u>	<u>1,336</u>

NOTE 5 - INVESTMENT IN JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE SUPPORT UNIT

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit is funded jointly by the Nature Conservancy Council for England, the Countryside Council for Wales, and Scottish Natural Heritage on the basis of agreed proportional contributions. Assets and Liabilities are jointly owned by the 3 bodies, apportioned on the basis of their agreed funding percentage for that year. The Countryside Council for Wales agreed proportion for 1999-00 was 13.8% [Prior Year 14%].

The attributed share of the income and expenditure of the JNCC Support Unit was:

	Prior Year	
	£000	£000
Ring fenced Grant in Aid to JNCC	552	524
Share of JNCC Expenditure	(642)	(645)
Share of JNCC other income	<u>101</u>	<u>129</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	11	8

Movements in the Council's investment in the JNCC Support Unit were:

Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	11	8
Adjustment for change in funding percentage	0	0
Other changes to asset value	<u>(9)</u>	<u>(6)</u>
Increase in investment for the year	2	2
Value of investment at 1 April	<u>86</u>	<u>84</u>
Value of investment at 31 March	<u>88</u>	<u>86</u>
financed by:		
Income and Expenditure account	34	19
Other Provisions and Reserves	<u>54</u>	<u>67</u>
	<u>88</u>	<u>86</u>

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee Accounts are audited by the National Audit Office and laid before Parliament as an attachment to the English Nature Accounts.

NOTE 6 - GRANTS PAYABLE

	Public Sector £000	Private Sector £000	Total £000	Prior Year £000
Management of Designated Areas	29	32	61	85
Management of non Designated areas	1,159	111	1,270	1,287
Woodland Conservation	13	34	47	23
Land Purchase	4	73	77	100
Development of Voluntary Sector	-	308	308	280
Landscape / Nature Conservation	48	188	236	281
Rights of Way	43	34	77	62
National Trails	343	8	351	278
Special Initiatives	-	363	363	385
Hedgerows Scheme	-	252	252	460
Reclaimed Grants	-	-	-	(9)
	<u>1,639</u>	<u>1,403</u>	<u>3,042</u>	<u>3,232</u>

NOTE 7 - TIR CYMEN GRANTS

	£000	Prior Year £000
Annual Payments	3,976	3,818
Lump Sum Payments	<u>1,771</u>	<u>1,680</u>
	<u>5,747</u>	<u>5,498</u>

1. The Countryside Council for Wales operates Tir Cymen within the framework of the European Union Agri-environment scheme (EC Reg 2078/92) and is entitled to claim for reimbursement 50% of eligible costs [approximately 45% of the cost of annual agreements]. This income is not retainable and is surrendered to the National Assembly for Wales. It amounts to £1.560 million [Prior Year 1.494 million].

2. Forward Commitments on Tir Cymen Agreements

As a result of Tir Cymen agreements concluded by 31 March 2000, commitments to continuing annual and works payments are as follows:

	£000	£000
In the next financial year	5,763	5,763
In years 2-5 (annually)	4,533	5,763
5 years and over.	2,400	3,000

NOTE 8 - TIR GOFAL

1. Forward Commitments on Tir Gofal Agreements

As a result of Tir Gofal agreements concluded by 31 Mar 2000, commitments to annual and works payments are as follows:

	£000	£000
In the next financial year	496	-
In years 2-5 (annually)	379	-
5 years and over	306	-
Land Agency Consultancies	111	97
	-	-

NOTE 9 - STAFF COSTS & COUNCIL MEMBERS REMUNERATION

This note meets the disclosure requirements of HM Treasury instructions in DAO 3/95 and DAO 4/97. HM Treasury and the Assembly have confirmed that the new disclosure instructions on release of personal information in DAO 3/2000 - which the Council have not adopted are not enforceable due to possible conflicts with other legislation.

Total Costs	£000	Prior Year £000
Salaries	6,987	6,338
National Insurance	471	429
Superannuation*	1,018	984
Net Superannuation Transfer Values	(119)	(49)
Early Retirement Costs	135	133
	<u>8,492</u>	<u>7,835</u>
Average Numbers	<u>387</u>	<u>350</u>

*The figure includes £791,000 of notional cost [£741,000 prior year] - see Note 1.9'

Staff are employed within the council as follows:

	1999-2000	Prior Year
Chief Executive and Central Office	8	7
Conservation Directorate	164	143
Countryside Policy Directorate	55	55
Science Directorate	35	35
Finance and Personnel Group	85	73
Information Management Group	30	26
Joint Nature Conservation Committee Support Unit.	10	11

	£000	Prior Year £000
Council Members		
Council members' Remuneration including National Insurance	91	93
Chairman's Remuneration including National Insurance (EMW Griffith)	30	36
Chairman's Remuneration including National Insurance (J Lloyd Jones)	3	-

EMW Griffiths retired as Chairman at the end of his appointment on 14 January 2000. On 1 March 2000, J Lloyd Jones was appointed Chairman by the First Secretary to the National Assembly for Wales

This is a part-time pensionable appointment of 130 days a year.

Council members were appointed by the Secretary of State (the National Assembly for Wales from 1 July 1999) on a part-time basis [Vice Chairman 48 days a year and other members 30 days a year]. Their appointments are non-pensionable, with the exception of the Chairman.'

The following numbers of Council members received emoluments on the following ranges:

		Prior Year
'£10,001 - £15,000'	2	2
'£ 5,001 - £10,000'	8	9
'£ 0 - £ 5,000'	-	-

Chief Executive

The Chief Executives total remuneration is:

Salary:	62	59
Bonus:	4	4
Notional Employees Superannuation Contribution:	12	12
	<u>78</u>	<u>75</u>

The Chief Executive is an ordinary member of the Council's pension scheme. His salary is determined by the Council and approved by the National Assembly for Wales. He is eligible for a performance bonus based on targets set by the Council and approved by the National Assembly for Wales.

Senior Employees

The Countryside Council for Wales employs the following number of senior staff (including the Chief Executive) falling within the following remuneration ranges

		Prior Year
£60,000 - £69,999'	1	1
'£50,000 - £59,999'	-	-
'£40,000 - £49,999'	1	1

Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Countryside Council for Wales's Superannuation Scheme to whom the conditions of the Superannuation Acts 1965 and 1972 and subsequent amendments apply. This is a statutory scheme which provides benefits on a 'final salary' basis at a normal retirement age of 60. Benefits accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3 years pension is payable on retirement. Members pay contributions of 1.5% of pensionable earnings. Pensions increase in payments in line with the Retail Price Index. On death, pensions are payable to the surviving spouse at the rate of half the member's pension. On death in service the scheme pays a lump sum benefit of twice pensionable pay. Medical retirement is possible in the event of serious ill-health. In this case, pensions are brought into payment immediately.

NOTE 10 - OTHER OPERATING CHARGES

	£000	Prior Year £000
Accommodation Costs	836	647
Transport Costs	114	117
General Office Costs	548	619
Purchase, Hire & Maintenance of Equipment	298	248
Training	230	227
Travel and Subsistence	440	388
Hospitality	-	-
Information Systems Development	427	343
Corporate Services General	140	222
Miscellaneous legal costs	21	50
Audit Fee	21	23
Change in Stock Level	-	45
Publicity/Information/Education	334	398
Prizes	-	1
Cartography	61	91
Library	78	80
Reimbursements relating to the above Services	(54)	(63)
	<u>3,494</u>	<u>3,436</u>

NOTE 11 - APPROPRIATIONS TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Non-retainable income payable to the National Assembly for Wales.

	£000	Prior Year £000
European Union grants in support of Tir Cymen [see Note 7]	1,560	1,494
Net Pension Transfer Values*	-	49
	<u>1,560</u>	<u>1,543</u>

*With effect from 1 April 1999 The National Assembly for Wales have agreed that CCW can retain any net pension transfer values to be used against annual pension costs

NOTE 12 - FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold Buildings/Land £000	Equipment £000	Computers £000	Vehicles £000	TOTAL £000
COST OR VALUATION					
As at 1 April 1999	1,371	1,108	3,008	818	6,305
Additions	-	108	610	140	858
Disposals	-	(11)	(81)	(4)	(96)
Revaluation	55	-	-	-	55
As at 31 March 2000	<u>1,426</u>	<u>1,205</u>	<u>3,537</u>	<u>954</u>	<u>7,122</u>
DEPRECIATION					
As at 1 April 1999	206	960	2,271	618	4,055
Charge for the year	41	76	719	104	940
Disposals	-	(5)	(82)	(4)	(91)
As at 31 March 2000	<u>247</u>	<u>1,031</u>	<u>2,908</u>	<u>718</u>	<u>4,904</u>
NET BOOK VALUE					
At 1 April 1999	1,165	148	737	200	2,250
As at 31 March 2000	<u>1,179</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>629</u>	<u>236</u>	<u>2,218</u>

1. In accordance with Accounting Policy 1.2a, Heritage land and buildings are assigned a nil valuation. In 1999-00 the Countryside Council for Wales purchased heritage land and buildings at a cost of £99,000 which has been charged to the Income and Expenditure Account (prior year £60,000).

2. There are contractual commitments of £215,000 for future years (Prior Year £109,500)

NOTE 13 - ANALYSIS OF ANNUAL COMMITMENTS UNDER OPERATING LEASES

	Land/Buildings £000	Equipment £000	Vehicles £000	Total £000
Leases which expire within 1 year	23 at 87	-	3 at 12	99
Leases which expire within 1-5 years	10 at 20	1 at 3	3 at 10	33
Leases which expire over 5 years	49 at 249	-	-	249
	<u>356</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>381</u>

NOTE 14 - STOCK

	£000	Prior Year £000
Publications	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>

NOTE 15 - DEBTORS

	£000	Prior Year £000
Trade Debtors	483	430
Other Prepayments	343	287
Other Debtors	6	20
Other Accrued Income	156	229
	<u>988</u>	<u>966</u>
Amounts falling due after more than one year	30	40
	<u>1,018</u>	<u>1,006</u>

NOTE 16 - CREDITORS

	£000	Prior Year £000
Payable within 1 year:		
Trade Creditors	263	369
Other Creditors & Accruals	38	55
	<u>301</u>	<u>424</u>

NOTE 17 - MOVEMENT OF FUNDS

	Deferred Government Grant £000s	Donated Assets Reserve £000s	Revaluation Reserve £000s	JNCC Provisions & Reserves £000s	Income & Expenditure Account £000s	Total £000s
Balance at 1 April	1,831	46	373	86	827	3,163
Retained (deficit)/surplus for the year	-	-	-	-	648	648
Capital grants & donations	858	-	-	-	-	858
Revaluation of tangible fixed assets	-	-	55	-	-	55
Transfers to Income & Expenditure account	(931)	(2)	(12)	-	-	(945)
Movement in JNCC Provisions & Reserves	-	-	-	2	-	2
Balance at 31 March	<u>1,758</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>416</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>1,475</u>	<u>3,781</u>

NOTE 18 - LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

There are no liabilities and charges

NOTE 19 - GOVERNMENT GRANT IN AID

	£000	Prior Year £000
Grant in Aid per Income & Expenditure Account	24,179	23,183
Grant aid applied to JNCC Support Unit	552	524
Adjustment to cover Share of JNCC Capital Account	10	18
Deferred Government Grant Account	858	811
Total Grant in Aid received in year	<u>25,599</u>	<u>24,536</u>

NOTE 20 - NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	£000's	Prior Year £000's
Returns on Investment and servicing of finance		
Interest received	<u>118</u>	<u>134</u>
Capital Expenditure		
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	(858)	(811)
Receipts from sale of tangible fixed assets	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>(857)</u>	<u>(805)</u>
Financing		
Deferred Government Grant received	<u>858</u>	<u>811</u>

21. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

Following the winding-up of the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation on 31 March 2000, the Council have inherited liabilities estimated at around £1 million, relating to the construction of the Gwent levels Wetland Reserve. These liabilities are presently the subject of a contractual dispute. The National Assembly for Wales will fund the eventual cost to the Council of the agreed liabilities inherited.

The European Commission has questioned the regularity of management agreement payments as hitherto they have not been notified to the Commission for approval as State Aid. The issues involved are common to such payments made by all UK's statutory conservation agencies. The Commission was notified in December 1999 that new management agreements after 1 January 2000 would be compliant with agri-environment measures in the Rural Development Regulation and with the Community Guidelines for State Aid in the Agriculture Sector. Measures to ensure this compliance are in place. The Commission sought further information on our notification in March and May and, following a meeting attended by the Chief Surveyor in June, agreement in principle has been reached on the Commission's approval. It is anticipated that written confirmation from DG Agriculture will be forthcoming in the next two months. Although the issue of non-notification has not yet been settled, it is thought unlikely that any financial penalties will be levied.

22. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Countryside Council for Wales is a Public Body sponsored by the National Assembly for Wales.

The National Assembly for Wales is regarded as a related party. During the year the Countryside Council for Wales has had various material transactions with the National Assembly for Wales and with other entities for which the National Assembly for Wales is regarded as the parent department viz Welsh Development Agency, Development Board for Rural Wales, Wales Tourist Board, National Museum of Wales and Sports Council for Wales.

In addition, the Countryside Council for Wales has had a small number of material transactions with other Government Departments and other central Government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage.

None of the board members, key managerial staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with the Countryside Council for Wales during the year.