

Our Environmental & Management Plans

Traditional Field Boundaries

Penlanlas is restoring 2160 metres of hedgerow as part of the Tir Gofal scheme. Hedgerows are important habitats in their own right. They are especially important for butterflies and moths, farmland birds, bats and dormice and are essential refuge for a great many woodland and farmland plants and animals. Hedgerows may also act as wildlife corridors for many species, including reptiles and amphibians, allowing dispersal and movement between other habitats and providing valuable foraging areas. Since 1945 there has been a drastic loss of hedgerows through removal and neglect throughout the UK. The net loss of hedgerows in Wales between 1984 and 1993 was estimated to be 25%. Although the rate of direct removal has slowed down, the loss of hedges due to general neglect is accelerating. The length of surviving hedges in Wales is estimated to be not more than 49,000 kms.

Loss Of Hedgerows

The main reasons for the loss of hedgerows are: Neglect (no cutting or laying) leading to hedgerows changing into lines of trees and the development of gaps. This reflects modern high labour costs and loss of traditional skills. Too frequent and badly timed cutting leading to poor habitat conditions, the development of gaps and probable species changes. Loss of hedgerow trees through senescence and felling, without encouraging replacements. Use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers right up to the bases of hedgerows leading to nutrient enrichment and a decline in species diversity. Increased stocking rates, particularly of sheep, leading to hedgerow damage and the need to fence fields. The presence of fences reduces the agricultural necessity for hedge maintenance and so hastens their decline. The modern practice of “ranching” (placing netting around several fields to form a grazing block) also contributes to the deterioration of internal hedges). Removal for agricultural and development purposes.

Grasslands

Unimproved flower rich grasslands are now very rare. Over the past 50 years it is estimated that 98% of hay meadow habitats have been destroyed, mainly through agricultural intensification in the form of ploughing, high level fertiliser input and unsustainable heavy levels of grazing.

Water Resource Protection

Water sources for the Golf course, other than rainfall, are from a natural spring located on the Estate, above the course. The spring flows in to a lake created artificially on the former farm, under the FWAG scheme 1989. This scheme was an environmental scheme designed to create wetland habitat, with a secondary objective of making water available for irrigation. A video exists of the construction of this lake; and has been shown in the past on the TV program “Country File”. This lake overflows to existing watercourses. Water from the lake is fed by gravity to a pump, filtered through a sand filter, and then applied as needed to the greens. Fairways are not irrigated. Because of the mechanism, we do not have a way of recording water use. However, all water is natural and after application finds its way back to the aquifer. Water sources to the club house are from a borehole. All water utilised within the club house goes to a septic tank, and then to a soak away.

Turf Grass Management

The objective is to maintain a healthy sward on the greens through applying preventive measures, to

avoid the need for curative responses. This is achieved by routine aeration and scarifying. This minimises any turf disease to eliminate any chemical control required. Aeration is produced by use of a mechanical solid tine attachment to the compact tractor, and scarifying by a unit fitted to a greens mower. For the greens only, careful measurement and application of fertiliser in slow release form, minimises any flush of grass growth therefore reducing the risk of fungal disease. There are two applications of slow release fertiliser – first: Spring and Summer made in April; second: Autumn/Winter made in September. The fertiliser is applied when natural rainfall is imminent rather than use of irrigation. Irrigation is only used in periods of drought, with water sourced from the Estates' natural spring. The application rate is 3grams per square meter. This is measured out in to exact quantities for the size of each green, labelled, then applied carefully across each green. Grass clippings are only taken off greens and are used as mulch around established trees. All other areas, including fairways, trees and rough, are subject to regular cutting and the grass is left to mulch in situ.

Waste Management

Penlanlas applies a strict recycling programme. The plan is applicable to the course, club house, restaurant and farm. Litter bins are available and all contents are sorted out into – plastic, tins, glass and paper for re-cycling. We take all these separations to the municipal re-cycling facilities. Water cooking oil is stored and collected for recycling for bio-fuel.

Grass cutting machines are cleaned down with air lines. Twice yearly they are washed down on porous area and any grass collected and stored in traditional muck heap (compost) area for use on the farm. Items are stored separately and securely, away from any public access. Records of usage and amounts recorded. Materials for use on the course are only purchased in the quantities required.

Communication

Environmental issues are communicated to staff and public by the promotional “Penlanlas Handbook” and through educational leaflets. Information on the site is made available by personal introduction and/or mail from the Proprietor and aides, to a wide range of organisations such as Schools, Colleges, County Council, and Environmental groups.

All institutional and other users are encouraged to provide feedback on their visits. Attached are copies of the Penlanlas handbook, which includes invitation letters, and booking and feedback forms. Also attached are the Penlanlas leaflet and promotional flier.

Educational Access

Educational access to environmental areas is open to golfers and non-golfers as well as catering for the disabled. Signage is in place along access routes and is continually being improved.

Educational groups can be guided or on their own. The proprietor, Mark Lloyd, often accompanies these groups. In 2008, Penlanlas had visits from Coleg Ceredigion College, The Ramblers, Parkinson's Group, Women's Institute, Merched Y Wawr. We have regular open days held at Penlanlas. Most recently we have hosted the following:

- Ceredigion County Council
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Welsh Wildlife Trust
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- CALU – Centre for Alternative Land Use.
- Coed Cymru

There are speakers from each organisation. In addition, we host charity events on the Golf.

Already in 2009 we hosted the local Golf Society. 150 persons raised £1,500 for special needs (local school) and deserved causes within the community. Several other events for example the Parkinson's Group, the County Eisteddfod are already arranged for 2009

In order to comply with the requirements of Tir Gofal, the estate, which includes the Golf course, has to have a minimum of six educational visits a year; providing an opportunity to show the public wildlife, and the benefits and mechanisms of farming for wildlife through agri-environment schemes.

Consultation and Cooperation

Penlanlas engages with the following organisations:

- ADAS – Consultancy in progress – predominantly soft fruit but incorporating elements of the Tir Gofal environmental scheme.
- TIR GOFAL – Agri-environment Scheme for Wales. This is delivered by National Assembly for Wales (NAW) through the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) in partnership with Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA).
- SYNGENTA – Assist with advice on biological products used on soft fruit.