

Sarita Marshall
Deputy Committee Clerk
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

15th September 2011

**Re: Background information relating to the petition P-03-343
PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION OF AMENITIES ON COMMON LAND – ANGLESEY.**

Dear Sarita

Please find enclosed, various documents which I hope will provide the background information you seek, if you have any questions regarding this please let me know via letter, e-mail or telephone.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pollock', written in a cursive style.

Tom Pollock

Background information relating to the petition P-03-343

PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION OF AMENITIES ON COMMON LAND – ANGLESEY

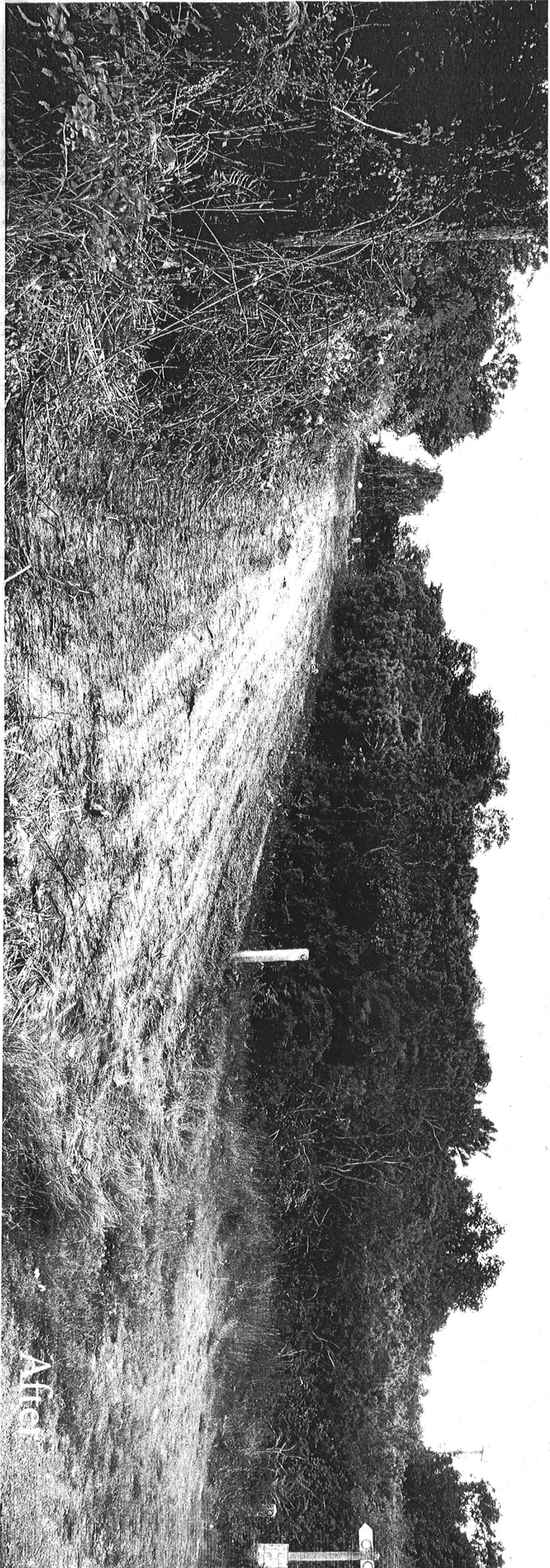
1. In June 2011 large areas of common land were bulldozed in order to create large-scale vehicular access. The topography of the land was changed to accommodate 'tracks' 6.5m – 7m wide – on areas of Marian Common where previously only footpaths existed. Please see attached before and after photographs of the land.
2. This action was undertaken without the knowledge or permission of the registered custodians of the land or without the knowledge or permission of the owners of the grazing rights to the land.
3. This action was extremely distressing to the local community and visitors to Anglesey alike, who regularly walk the common and enjoy the amenities, particularly as it took place in the nesting season. The chance to see such a wide variety of bird, animal and plant life is not something that can be enjoyed everywhere (lists compiled by wildlife experts on the flora and fauna are enclosed). The area has also recently been officially recognised as a red squirrel habitat by The Red Squirrels Trust Wales.
4. The areas that were denuded of flora adjoin the coastal path.
5. Common land in the area is gradually being eroded.
6. A paper petition containing 350 names was presented to Llangoed Community Council and the National Assembly for Wales.
7. The actions of the individuals concerned were reported to the Llangoed Community Council, Anglesey County Council, The Countryside Council for Wales and North Wales Police. All of these bodies were sympathetic but not able to take decisive action (legally or financially) to ensure the future protection of this land.

As well as adding their support to the petitions, many local people and visitors to the area have written to official bodies and politicians regarding this matter and have received support from the local councillor Lewis Wyn Davies, Ieuan Wyn Jones AM and Albert Owen MP. John Griffiths.

The Welsh Assembly Minister for the Environment has commented in a letter that "it seems to me that there is a wide range of controls over the use of common land and the carrying out of works on common land already in existence to protect the amenity of common land" (John Griffiths to William Powell AM, chair of the Petitions Committee, 20/11/2011).

Whilst there may be a wide range of controls in existence, if none of the official bodies find themselves able to enforce the legislation and, instead, pass it on to the community stating it is a 'civil matter', the law has no teeth whatsoever. If the local community is unable to fund any legal action against trespass and destruction of common land because no support is offered from local or national government, then the law is as good as useless.

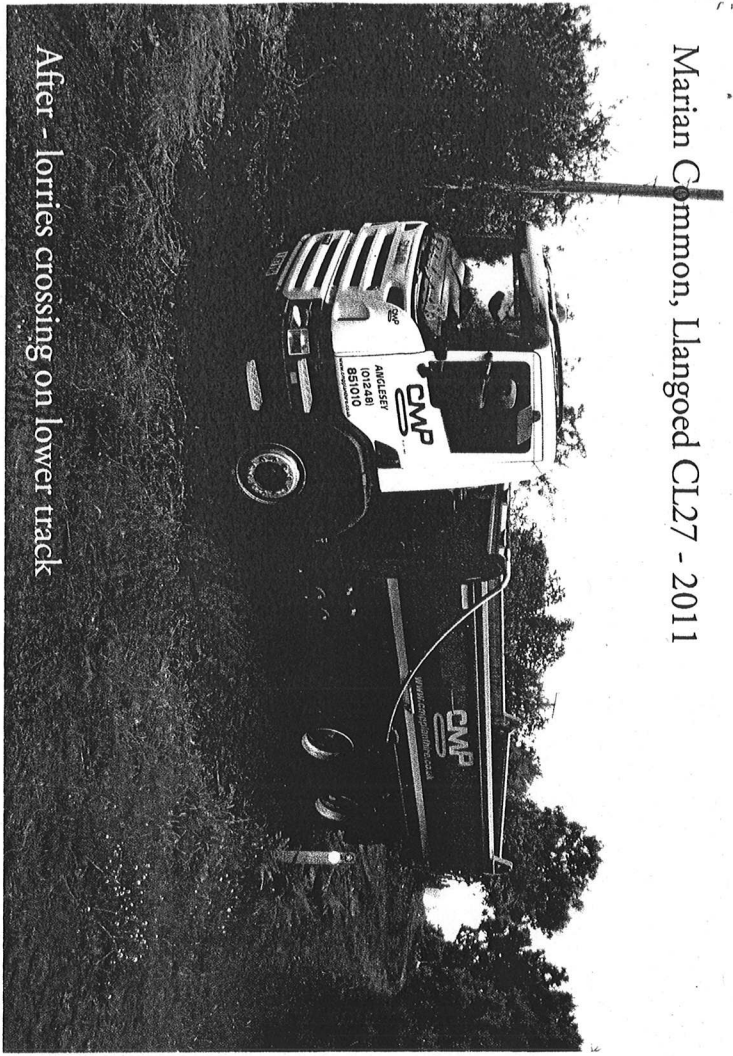
The community feel that what is needed is a firm, enforceable law so that everyone knows where they stand. Such a law would prevent common land from being acquisitioned for permanent vehicular use and/or property development and preserve and protect it for the enjoyment of present and future generations.



After



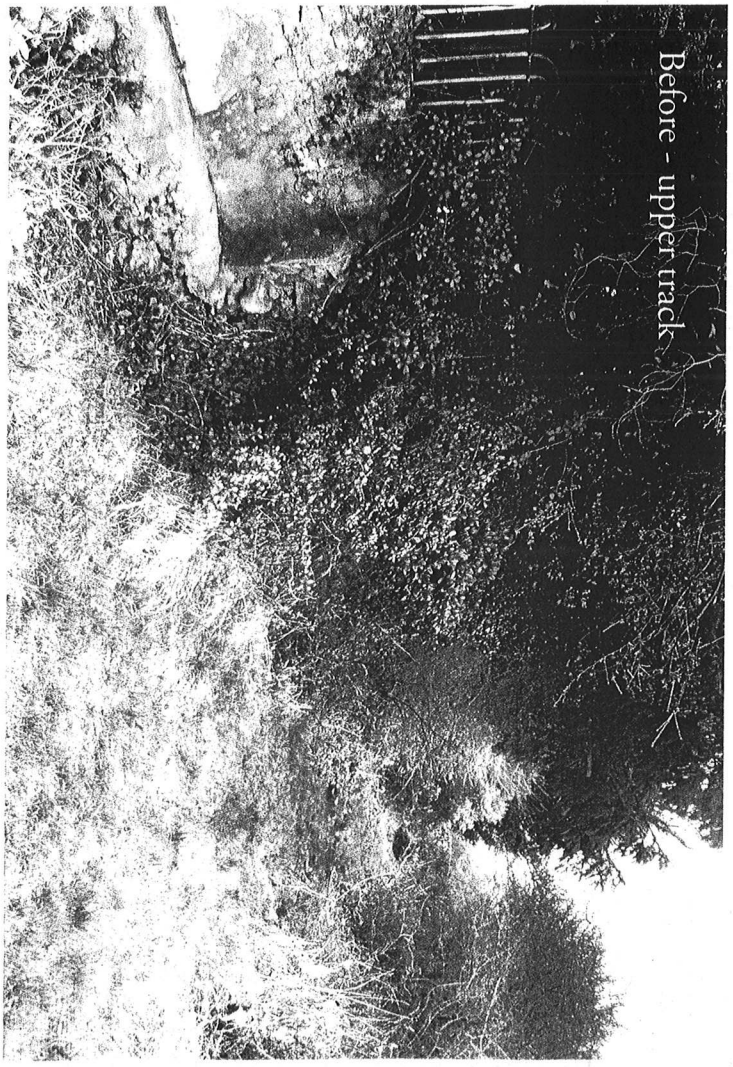
Before



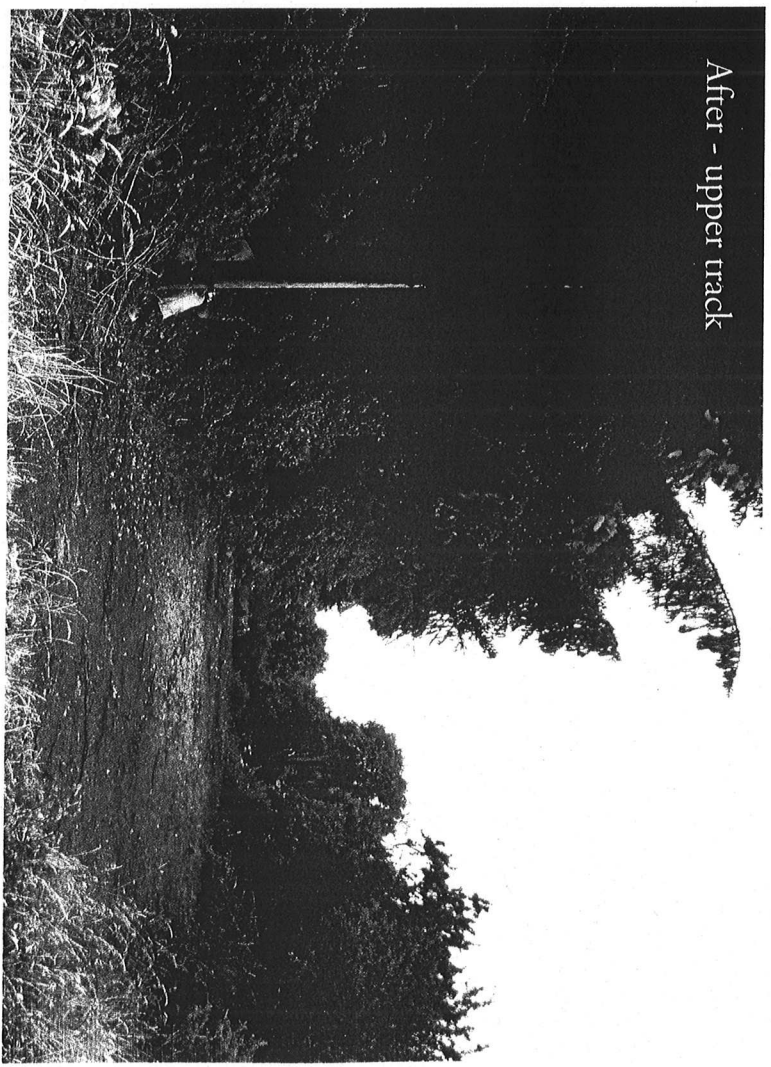
After - lorries crossing on lower track



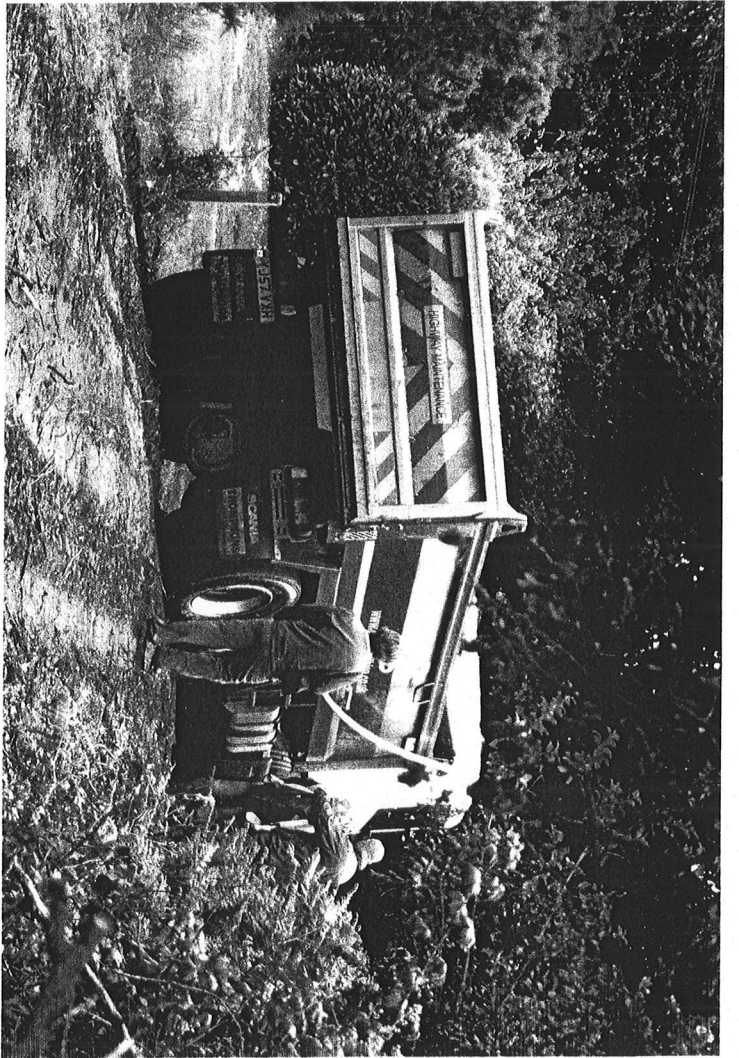
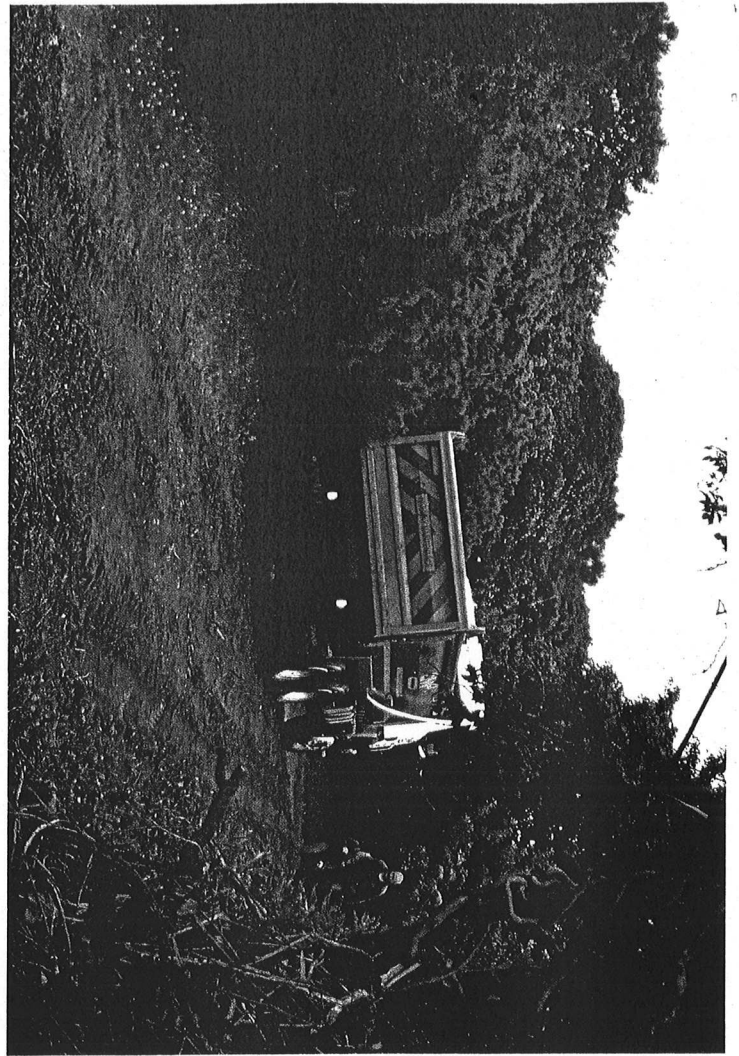
Before - upper track



Before - upper track



After - upper track



This was a proposal handed to the Community Council in July - to date, we have not received a reply.

Proposal to Llangoed Community Council for a community project to conserve and reinstate flora and fauna on Marian Common (CL27).

We would like to thank the Llangoed Community Council for making the time to consider the views of those concerned about recent developments on Marian Common. We would especially like to thank Councillor Lewis for his support and his tireless work on the community's behalf. This proposal is borne out of the concern that Marian Common, one of only a few areas of common land remaining in the area (please see attached map), is being eroded and acquisitioned for permanent, large-scale vehicular use. We wish to make it clear that, contrary to some reports, we do not wish to prevent genuine farmers, with the agreement of the Community Council, going 'off road' on the common land to carry out their business (the point of 'off road' vehicles is that they leave the landscape intact). We do, however, wish to stop the destruction of the natural environment by permanent access roads being constructed on areas of the common where previously only footpaths existed (borne out by careful examination of OS maps from 1889). Whilst it may be the case that Marian Common was periodically burnt in the past as a form of land management, this has not happened for the last twenty years, allowing for a diverse range of flora and fauna to become established (please see attached lists). Many local people, who enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Marian Common, want to see the common remain a habitat for wildlife for the enjoyment of the whole community and for future generations. The discovery that Marian Common is within the territory of a small red squirrel colony makes this proposal all the more urgent. We propose that the community, under the directions of the Community Council, and of official environmental specialists, re-seed and plant the areas that have been denuded of wildlife. To facilitate this, we propose that a working committee of community members be set up to work with the Community Council to prepare and implement a long-term conservation management plan for Marian Common. Many people have offered their support and also their professional and practical skills to help ensure that such a project would be a success. In terms of funding such a project, seeds and saplings are fairly inexpensive, these funds could easily be raised within the community, and many people in the community have offered their physical help in carrying out the re-planting. We have a genuine opportunity as a community, to preserve and further enhance a local area of natural beauty before it becomes developed and lost for good.

We ask that the Community Council give this proposal their due and early consideration so that those willing to help with such a project can work towards preparing a detailed plan of action.

Members of the community who are in favour of this proposal, please register your support with Llangoed Community Council.

Tom & Karen Pollock
tom@excellent-design.co.uk
01248 490792

Attachments:
recently recorded fauna and flora on Marian Common.
map of remaining commons in the local area.

Tom

Following from our recent conversations about possible tree planting at Penmarien, I've put some thoughts down which I hope might be useful. I must point out that as I do have a personal connection to the site any opinions expressed should be taken as my own, based on 17 years experience working as a woodland ecologist, and not necessarily those of CCW.

There are many benefits for wildlife from developing new woodland. Britain was once predominantly covered in forest, but millennia of clearance have left an extremely reduced and fragmented resource. Many woodland species need a certain minimum size of habitat, and so have become restricted to the larger woodland blocks or have become extinct; many more have been affected by fragmentation and general intensification of the landscape, which means they can no longer move naturally between woodland patches, for feeding, dispersal, migration etc. This loss of 'ecological connectivity' is especially serious in the context of climate change, because it means that species are less able to adjust their ranges to keep pace with their required climate space, and so risk extinction.

This need to increase woodland cover and connectivity is central to nature conservation policy.

For example the UK Government's Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) www.ukbap.org.uk/ sets out targets for restoration and expansion for a wide range of habitats and species, including all native woodland types (i.e. 'semi-natural' woodlands, those comprising native species). The plans are often implemented through Local Biodiversity Action Plans; for example have a look at the following link about the Anglesey LBAP which includes sections for 'woodland' and red squirrel: http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/plans/lbap_plans.asp?LBAP=%7B42A89BF7%2D2E26%2D4C14%2D8253%2D40937ACA129D%7D&CO=

In addition to biodiversity, there are strong political drivers to expand woodland cover to deliver 'ecosystem services', e.g. carbon storage, air quality, water management, and flood defence. The Welsh Government has a target to establish 100,000 ha of new woodland over 20 years as a key action to improve Wales' carbon balance and so help mitigate climate change.

Much of the common land at Penmarien has developed over the last few decades as mixed blackthorn/hawthorn scrub. This is a successional phase in woodland development, and self-sown trees (mainly ash and sycamore) are already well established. Over time, these would be expected to mature, shade out the scrub, and full woodland conditions to develop. Tree planting, however, would help accelerate the process, and could also allow a greater diversity of species to be included that may be less able to colonise naturally within our modern landscape.

Interestingly, the ground flora within the scrub already contains a number of species of typical woodland species, e.g. dog's mercury, bluebell, hart's tongue fern, herb robert, wood avens, so there is reasonable precursor vegetation for woodland here. Trees could be established on the recently disturbed areas, but I'd avoid planting the few remaining open grassland areas which have their own biodiversity value.

Given the location (western Britain, limestone bedrock), the natural type of woodland that would be expected to develop is 'upland mixed ashwood', a UK BAP priority habitat <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110303145213/http://ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=3>. I suggest the most suitable species to plant would be mainly ash and oak, perhaps with some cherry, birch, rowan and elm (all of local provenance, as far as possible.) Hazel doesn't seem to be present at the moment, but would be a very useful addition for its wildlife value. The presence of red squirrel is interesting, and there might be a case for including some conifers, e.g. Scots pine in the mix, but you'd need to ask the squirrel experts about that.

So overall, I think promotion of woodland at Penmarien would be a positive action for wildlife, making a small but worthwhile contribution to local and national targets.

~~Tom~~

~~Tom~~

Plant records from 'The Marion', 26 June 2011; 2 hours on site.

This list was compiled on a quick look around the site. It is NOT to be considered a comprehensive list and ONLY includes plants recorded within the scrub and woodland on The Marion - many more species occur on the open grassy areas and along the verges of the permanent tracks. Recording was concentrated in two areas 1) 'Gorwel block', which is the area of c. 0.2 ha of scrub immediately to the north of Gorwel, bounded by the track to Marion Farm, the Anglesey Coast Path, and Mr Wood's newly created tracks; and 2) 'The Bottom Corner', which is on the NW boundary of The Marion, and of interest as the most mature area woodland on the site. Much of the Gorwel block is dense and very spiny scrub - I visited what I believed to be a representative sample (often crawling on hands and knees!), but inevitably did not see it all. A few additional species were recorded informally from elsewhere on The Marion, but no attempt was made to sample these areas comprehensively. A few bryophytes were recorded, but no attempt was made to search out and identify all species and doubtless many more occur. Abundances are recorded on the 'Domin' scale to give a rough indication of relative abundance; values 1 - 3 have been scaled-up from their usual definitions of numbers of individuals at a quadrat level.

In due course I can provide maps to make the location of these records here and provide more notes and interpretation, but for now this is provided as a record of the raw data.
 JL 26/6/11

Species	English name	Type	'Gorwel block'		'Bottom corner' Domin	Additional species from other areas	Notes
			Domin	Domin			
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	Small tree	8	7			
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Small tree	4	4			
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	Tree	4	4			
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elderberry	Small tree	4				
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	Tree	4	8			
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	Climber	9	9			
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black bryony	Climber	4	2			
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad buckler fern	Fern	2				
<i>Polystichum</i> spp.	Shield fern	Fern	2	3			Needs checking to confirm whether <i>P. setiferum</i> or <i>P. aculeatum</i> (or both) are present.
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Hart's tongue fern	Fern	3	4			
<i>Eurhynchium praelongum</i>	A moss	Moss	7	4			
<i>Plagiomnium undulatum</i>	A moss	Moss	3				
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	Herb	3	2			
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Blackberry	Shrub	4	5			
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	Fern	5	2			Patchily distributed, most abundant adjacent to Coast Path.
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion	Herb	3	2			
<i>Viola</i> spp.	Violet	Herb	3	1			Hard to determine species post flowering, but probably <i>V. riviniana</i> .
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Cuckoo pint	Herb	3	3			
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	Herb	1				
<i>Fissidens taxifolius</i>	A moss	Moss	2				
<i>Thamnobryum alopecurum</i>	A moss	Moss	2				
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	Wood false-brome	Grass	2	2			
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	Herb	2	2			

Species	English name	Type	'Gorwel block' Domain	'Bottom corner' Domain	Additional species from other areas	Notes
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood avens	Herb	2	2		
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp agrimony	Herb	1			
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Orse	Shrub	4			Patchily dominant, increases in abundance downslope.
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren strawberry	Herb	1			
<i>Rosa canina</i> agg.	Dog rose	Shrub	2	1		A large patch of hops formerly occurred on the path of the new track and only few strands could be found.
<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Hop	Climber	1			
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging nettle	Herb	2	1		
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved willow herb	Herb	1			
<i>Dropteris felix-mas</i>	Male fern	Fern	1	3		
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Tutsan	Herb	2	1		Possibly a garden escape, but notable if not.
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Old man's beard	Climber	3			
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's mercury	Herb	3			Concentrated in a strip adjacent to the track to Marion Farm.
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	Herb	2	1		
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	Tree	1			Two seedlings noted.
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog	Grass	1			
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Bindweed	Climber	1			
<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	Gooseberry	Shrub	1	1		
<i>Ribes rubrum</i>	Red currant	Shrub	1			
<i>Endymion non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	Herb	1	3		
<i>Hellebore foetidus</i>	Stinking hellebore	Herb	1			Probably a garden escape, but if not, an interesting record.
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup	Herb	1			
<i>Fuschia magellanica</i>	Fuschia	Shrub	1			Garden escape
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine	Herb	1			
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay willowherb	Herb			2	
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey oak	Tree			2	Oddly a common oak in this corner of Anglesey.
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Small tree		1		Seeding in bottom corner, a few young and maturing trees elsewhere.
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	Sessile oak	Tree		1		A single unidentified damson-like tree.
<i>Prunus</i> sp.	A fruit tree	Tree			1	
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge woundwort	Herb		1		
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion	Herb		1		
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypody	Fern		2		Common as an epiphyte on trees on lower boundary of Marion.
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	Herb		1		
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley	Herb		1		
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	Climber		1		
<i>Ribes nigrum</i>	Black currant	Shrub		1		

BIRDS OF THE MARIAN

The birds on this list use the Marian for nesting, feeding or shelter. Most of them are present during the breeding season, but a few are winter visitors. In accordance with the system of red, amber and green lists used by the RSPB and other conservation bodies, **R** = Red List (species of serious conservation concern) and **A** = Amber List (species of moderate conservation concern).

Pheasant	Pied Wagtail	Coal Tit
Sparrowhawk	Wren	Nuthatch
Buzzard	Duncock A	Treecreeper
Kestrel A	Robin	Jay
Peregrine	Stonechat	Magpie
Black-headed Gull A	Blackbird	Jackdaw
Herring Gull R	Fieldfare R	Rook
Feral Pigeon	Song Thrush R	Carrion Crow
Stockdove A	Redwing R	Raven
Woodpigeon	Mistle Thrush A	Starling R
Collared Dove	Grasshopper Warbler A	House Sparrow R
Cuckoo R	Blackcap	Chaffinch
Barn Owl A	Lesser Whitethroat	Greenfinch
Tawny Owl	Common Whitethroat A	Goldfinch
Swift A	Chiffchaff	Siskin
Green Woodpecker A	Willow Warbler A	Linnet R
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Goldcrest	Lesser Redpoll R
Swallow A	Long-tailed Tit	Bullfinch A
House Martin A	Blue Tit	Yellowhammer R
Meadow Pipit A	Great Tit	Reed Bunting
Grey Wagtail A		

Community 'appalled'

By **RHODRI BARKER**

THE clearing of an "ancient" area of common land has sparked a row between a community and local businessman.

Residents of Liangoed say they were "shocked" to find gorse at Marian Common had been cut to create an access route.

However, John Wood, whose company carried out the work and whose paddocks are served by the new access route, said he was reinstating a historic right of way which had become overgrown.

A special meeting of the community council was called to discuss the issue, in which county councillor Lewis Davies said locals had been "appalled" by what had happened.

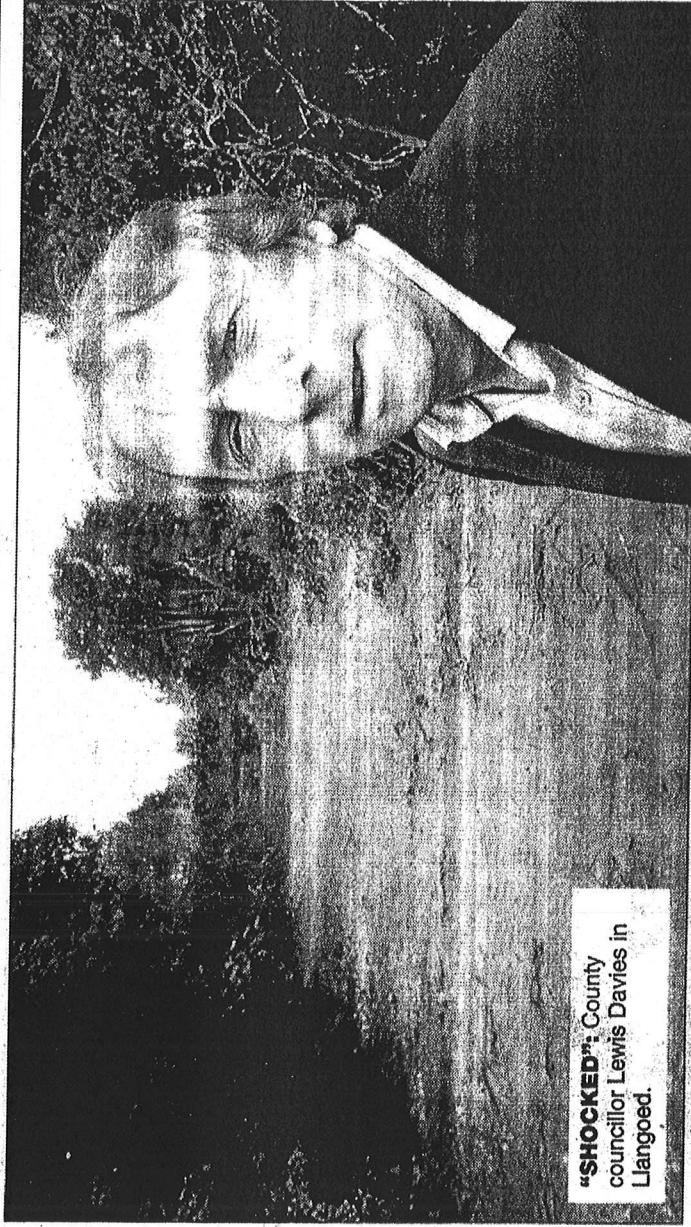
The work had encroached onto common land and disturbed what had been a "very important" habitat for wildlife, said Cllr Davies.

Locals discussed the possibility of taking legal action to prevent any further work going ahead.

Clerk Geraint Parry said he believed the land was owned by the community council, but that it would now clarify its position and investigate possible action.

He said the clearing of the land had been "a shock to everyone in the area".

Pamela Walton, who alerted Cllr Davies when she saw the area being cleared, said: "I was taking my dogs



"SHOCKED": County councillor Lewis Davies in Liangoed.

Clearing of common land sparks town row

for a walk when, to my great amazement, I could see a great swath of land had been denuded.

"I was absolutely amazed; a few days before, it had been covered in flowers and singing birds.

"It's incredible that one person can do that much damage when so many other people appreciate it so much."

Mr Wood said the work was needed to clear what had been a historic access route.

"Even two years ago, we were able to drive a tractor through there, but the gorse had grown too thick," he said.

"We are farmers and we need access for our vehicles.

"I could hardly walk the coastal path because the gorse had grown so thick.

"The gorse used to be burnt off every year."

Mr Wood said a county council enforcement officer and a member of the

community council had been informed of his intentions before work was carried out.

He said he had been informed that "no wildlife whatsoever" would have lived in the gorse.

He said criticism of the work was "mischief-making of the first order" and that other work had been carried out in the area without attracting complaints.

Communities angered by comments

WE the community of Llangoed take offence at being labelled "mischief-makers of the first order" (*Holyhead & Anglesey Mail*, June 22).

As a community, we are extremely concerned that large (6.5 - 7m wide) roads are being constructed across common land where previously only footpaths existed (this is borne out by careful examination of OS maps from 1889 onwards).

The "historic access route" that Mr Wood refers to is a footpath and not, as he has created, enough room for a two-lane highway.

In addition, contrary to Mr Wood's assertion, Anglesey County Council confirm that no enforcement officer was informed of his intentions to carry out this work.

His actions have destroyed large swathes of common land, which provided habitat for a variety of flora and fauna - for example, toads, hedgehogs, a range of songbirds, orchids, bluebells and much more; even a red squirrel has recently been reported less than 100 metres away.

It is not just gorse that has been destroyed but a variety of shrubs and trees (for which we have pre-demolition photographic evidence).

Furthermore, to suggest that "no wildlife whatsoever would live in the gorse" is not an environmentally informed statement.

It is also not the case that the coastal path

Community 'appalled'

By RHODRI BARBER

THE clearing of an "ancient" area of common land has sparked a row between a community and local businessmen.

It is said that the work was carried out without any notice being given to the community and that the work was carried out in a way which had no regard for the environment.

A special meeting of the community was called to discuss the issue in which it was decided to write to the council and to the local press.

The work had been carried out since the late 1980s and had been carried out in a way which had no regard for the environment.

It is said that the work was carried out without any notice being given to the community and that the work was carried out in a way which had no regard for the environment.

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"SHOCKED" Councillor Lewis Davies is appalled by the clearing of common land.

Clearing of common land sparks town row

It is said that the work was carried out without any notice being given to the community and that the work was carried out in a way which had no regard for the environment.

CONTROVERSIAL: How we reported the story surrounding the path in last week's paper

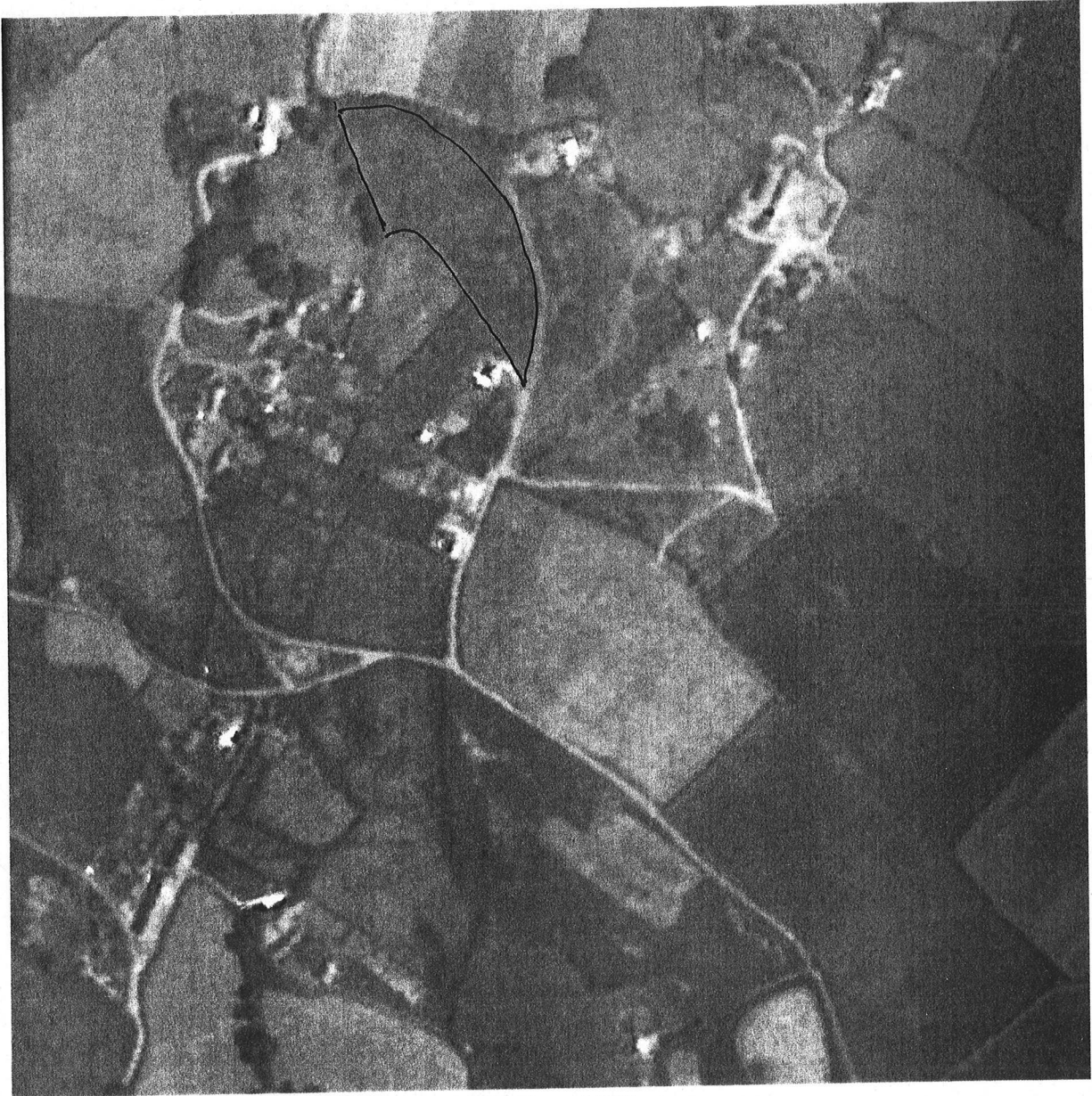
was unmanaged and impassable (unless, of course, one wishes to drive large vehicles along it!).

We call upon the local council, all those in the local community and those further afield who enjoy the peace and solitude of the area whilst on holiday, to help us protect our historic rights to this piece of land before any more destruction can be planned or carried out.

Forty-one people, members of the local community and friends of Marian Common, have put their names to this letter.

**CONCERNED COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF LLANGOED, PEV-
MON AND GLANRAFON**

No tracks have previously existed over
this land, except for footpaths.



14th June 1957

adlaethol Cymru

AR GADW

FCI 11/11/11

T RESERVED

ants Record of Wales

0237

F22 58/RAF/2196 14 JUN 57 - 10-00Z 20-15.650' AESTO



10th April 1971

