

## **Key Findings and summary of ‘Developing collaborative land management’ actions in Montgomeryshire**

### **1. Background**

Following on from a previously commissioned feasibility study, ‘Exploring Collaborative Habitat Land Management in Powys’. Gwenan Ellis was commissioned to build on the results of this study and provide one-to-one facilitation for small landowners and land management contractors within Montgomeryshire, with the aim of creating sustainable relationships between services and service providers to bring about better habitat management.

The project was undertaken over a very short period of time and engagement was only possible with very few people, the findings are therefore a quick snapshot and not necessary a full picture of the overall situation.

### **2. Key Findings**

**2.1 Gaps in knowledge and uncertainty about grazing management** A recurring topic of conversation with landowners was their lack of basic knowledge on land management practices and basic livestock husbandry.

**Recommendation:** Fund a facilitator to continue the work of engaging with landowners that are interested in managing their land for conservation. Develop the ‘flow chart’ produced by this project and possibly have pages on the Wildlife Trust’s website with further guidance.

**2.2 Signposting to grants and Government funding** A recurring topic of conversation with landowners was the lack of awareness of Government regulations and support

**Recommendation:** Signpost landowners to the Farm Liaison Service to get landowners up to speed with book keeping regulations and government support. The service is especially useful for new landowners that don’t know where to start and for setting up holding numbers and registering their land to be eligible for payments.

**2.3 Difficulties in sourcing livestock** A common theme was that it was easy enough to source sheep from a neighbour or friend but finding cattle or ponies to graze was more problematic.

**Recommendation:** Use the Montgomeryshire Habitat Group website to share information on livestock availability through their forum page. It might also be possible

to use the Wildlife Trust's website to develop a directory of 'livestock wanted' and 'livestock available to borrow'.

2.4 **Sharing information** The facilitation work has demonstrated how important word of mouth is in finding a grazer, hedge layer, hay contractor etc.

**Recommendation:** Use the Montgomeryshire Habitat Group as a hub for shared information and knowledge.

2.5 **Sharing a 'land manager' that could overlook activities on multiple holdings.** Most of the landowners spoken to were of retirement age and did not want to be actively involved in too much work.

**Recommendation:** A 'land manager' could be appointed by the Wildlife Trusts to coordinate activities, provide land management advice and manage external contracting work for multiple holdings interested in managing their land for conservation