

Teifi Fyw: Pobl a Natur Gyda'i Gilydd

Living Teifi: People and Nature Together

Teifi Fyw is a National Lottery Heritage Fund proposal which aims to restore and revitalise this landscape by combining scientific evidence with local knowledge, lived experience and cultural connection. It will complement other targeted projects and initiatives focused on regulation and statutory responsibilities, which will tackle the underlying issues driving environmental failures.

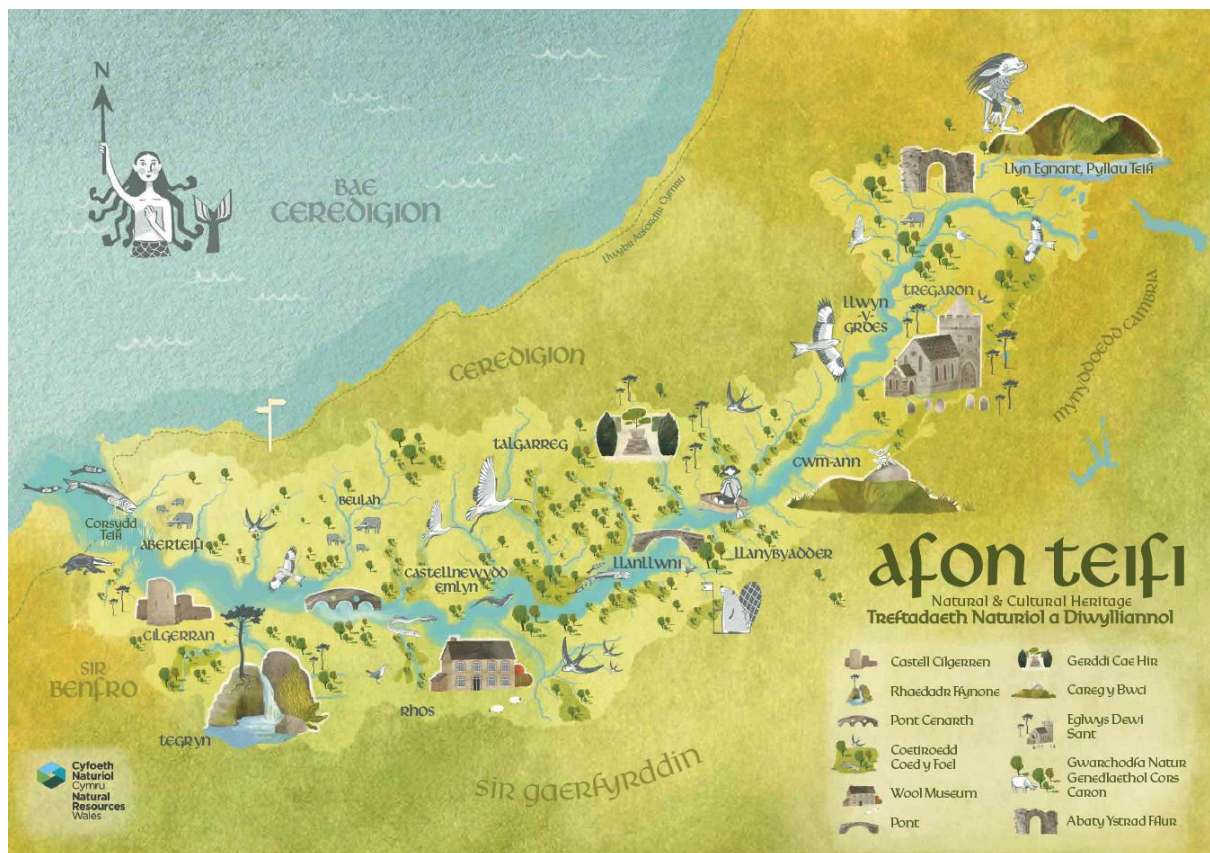
The Teifi catchment is a place where nature, heritage, and community are deeply connected, shaping Welsh culture for generations. The Teifi Fyw project, through storytelling, farm gate conversations, and collaborative design, will ensure that nature and heritage are at the heart of decision making and empower communities to take meaningful action. At its core is a commitment to co-production, ensuring those who know the catchment to help shape its future. Teifi Fyw celebrates the river's life, land, and lore, building a resilient and thriving Teifi for future generations.

Why Teifi, Why Now: A River Rooted in Wales' Living Heritage

The River Teifi is more than water winding through a landscape; it is a living thread of Welsh identity and resilience. For many it has hiraeth, it is a special centre and homeland of Welsh culture, language and land. Flowing from Mynyddoedd Cambria to the sea at Cardigan Bay, or locally known as Aberteifi, the Afon Teifi carries centuries of stories, traditions, and ecological richness. It is a river that has shaped communities, sustained agricultural livelihoods, and inspired generations through its beauty and biodiversity.

The Afon Teifi isn't the longest or most well-known river in Wales, other rivers in Wales like the Dee or Wye often overshadow the natural beauty to be found in the Teifi. The Teifi catchment, whilst an important rural and agricultural landscape is not as productive or impacted by farming as other rivers in West Wales. However, the Afon Teifi is the most synonymous river with Welsh culture and traditions that are lost to the past in many places, but still present in the Afon Teifi, like coracle fishing. Though there are challenges from within the landscape and from outside the Teifi, which is putting pressure on both the land and the strong sense of culture and

heritage connected to the Teifi landscape, there has been call from the communities to “Think Teifi Act Teifi”. This is why we have chosen to work in the Teifi catchment and to develop the Teifi Fyw project now because the moment demands it.



Land and water-based traditions, rooted in farming, fishing, and landscape guardianship, are intrinsic to the national Welsh identity and deeply interwoven with the Teifi’s landscape. Along the Afon Teifi, traditional practices; from hill farming to coracle fishing, have shaped both livelihoods and landscapes. These ways of life, once central to the rhythm of the region, are still remembered, though on the verge of being forgotten. They linger in the stories, in the language, and in the quiet expertise of those who still carry the knowledge, waiting to be revived and reimagined in response to the pressures of today. This is a unique opportunity to bring together guardians of the land, environment and culture to weave together a brighter future, grounded in tradition and hiraeth borne from the river and the landscape it has shaped.

Among the rivers of the UK, the Teifi stands out not only for its ecological significance but for its cultural depth and living heritage. It is a river of sewin and saints, of poets and participation, of community and connection. To invest in the Teifi is to invest in a vision of Wales where nature and culture thrive together.

Vision

We see a future for the Teifi catchment where...

... voices of the Teifi River, of communities, of scientific data and of environmental practitioners come together to guide river management.

... people feel connected to a Teifi River and landscape which has intrinsic value, celebrates natural processes, rich in wildlife and ecologically resilient.

... those living and working in the catchment have a key role in protecting the health of the Teifi River and feel empowered to continue placing the Teifi at the heart of what they do.

... communities are equipped with the tools to harness the power of the Teifi River's nature, resulting in a strong rural economy.



Partners

Development phase delivery partners include:

- UNESCO, based at the University of Wales Trinity St Davids
- West Wales Rivers Trust
- Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
- Mentera

- Mining Remediation Authority
- Agriculture Research Centre, based at Coleg Sir Gar's Gelli Aur Campus
- Strata Florida Trust
- Ceredigion County Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water

The core partnership is likely to extend as we work through the development phase, identifying and exploring actions for the delivery phase.

Aims

During the development and delivery of Teifi Fyw we will:

- Listen to the **Voices of the Teifi** and rely on this balanced chorus of those who live and work in the catchment, scientific data, a wide network of informed practitioners and the voices of the river itself, to drive the project forward.
- Facilitate **Connecting Nature Teifi** to people, by restoring physical connections across the Teifi landscape that support natural river processes and enable species movement, strengthening ecological resilience.
- Support local people to become **Guardians of the Teifi**, by recognising their footprint on the river, and to place nature and heritage at the heart of everyday choices and long-term planning.
- Empower communities by creating an **Investment Ready Teifi** which is equipped with the understanding, vision and tools necessary to support economic prosperity for the catchment.

Voices of the Teifi

Evidence of all kinds forms the foundation of the Teifi Fyw project. This approach is designed to be accessible to all communities while ensuring integration.

Engagement mechanisms will be designed and delivered appropriate to different audiences. At its heart lies the commitment to work across issues, challenges and opportunities, creating a network for people to collaborate, learn from one another, and reflect on their progress. The project aims not only to deliver tangible outcomes but also to build capacity through training, mentoring, and cross-sector exchange, encouraging the cross-pollination of ideas and strengthening organisational resilience.

The voice of the river, its species, and ecosystems across the landscape will be captured through formal monitoring and data collection. When these ecological insights are combined with the lived experiences and perspectives of those who live and work in the Teifi catchment, we will create powerful, integrated evidence. We will use this combined evidence to better guide decision-making and prioritise action to restore nature, heritage, and the vital processes upon which life in the catchment depends.

Voices of the Teifi will:

1. Inform all work streams, enriching decision making and prioritisation, based on a combined evidence informed approach.
2. Work with differing audiences and apply varying engagement mechanisms appropriate to the audience to identify a delivery focus, and subsequent action in the delivery phase (including what, where and why).
3. Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme to support all work streams.

Connecting Nature Teifi

Historically we were better connected with the balance and rhythm of nature, understanding our place in the ecosystem. This has broken, leaving fragmented habitats, disconnected from nature and our role in protecting its balance. Reconnecting with our natural heritage, with the landscapes which inspired poetry and mythology deeply rooted in Welsh culture is needed to readdress the balance with nature and better understand how we are reliant for water, recreation, food and wellbeing.

Our landscape and its ecosystems have become fragmented and disconnected, whether from intensive agriculture, remnants of our mining history or the urban environment, there are breaks in our landscape which need to be restored for nature, but also for the land upon which we live and work in. Here we aim to restore and connect healthier ecosystems, increased biodiversity, and stronger public stewardship.

Connecting Nature Teifi will:

4. Develop Terrestrial Nature Networks across the catchment, supporting the water cycle, nature and landscape restoration and resilience.
5. Create a healthier, better connected and diverse river by restoring in-channel habitats, riparian corridors and water pathways.
6. Ensure people living and working in the Teifi understand the importance and our reliance of our natural heritage and put nature at the heart of decision making.

Guardians of the Teifi

Nature needs a helping hand, and we need to restore the natural processes and functions that once protected and made living on the land sustainable. The Teifi has been a source of natural resources for thousands of years, creating a strong culture associated with the river. Those who live and work in the Teifi catchment should be empowered to lead this approach with nature, heritage, and sustainability at heart.

Guardians of the Teifi is a cornerstone initiative within the Teifi Fyw project, designed to support and mobilise local land managers, residents, and businesses as stewards of the catchment. It recognises the vital role these individuals play in shaping the landscape and aims to equip them with the tools, knowledge, and support to make decisions that benefit both the rural economy, the environment and to give those living and working there, greater resilience in a changing climate.

Guardians of the Teifi will:

7. Identify and plan interventions across the rural landscape which support farm businesses and productivity, whilst minimising environmental impact, through climate adaptation, regenerative farming, and improvement in river health.
8. Understand community links to urban diffuse pollution, people and business's interaction and impact on the water environment. Creating ownership.
9. Tackle the lasting residual impact of abandoned mines through nature-based solutions and engagement.

Investment Ready Teifi

Investment Ready Teifi will lay the groundwork for a resilient, future-facing catchment, where strategic planning, measurable outcomes, and local capacity come together to attract and sustain meaningful investment. The aim is to build the foundations for long-term, sustainable investment in the Teifi catchment that will be a transferable model for other places in Wales.

This strategic initiative is designed to position the catchment as a model for targeted, impactful investment in nature-based solutions, sustainable land management, and community resilience. Through the integrated voices of the Teifi approach, by aligning ecological priorities and natural capital along with economic opportunity, this strand of the project will ensure that future funding; public, private, or blended, is directed where it delivers the greatest benefit for people, nature, and heritage.

Investment Ready Teifi will:

10. Develop a strategic map and approach, assessed for where and what is the best place to spend money for multiple benefits and build on natural capital deficits.
11. Develop a monitoring linked framework for delivery and confidence for credit systems.
12. Help us better understand the green skills, jobs and efficiency opportunities and gaps in the Teifi to deliver the long-term preventative and adaptive nature-based model required for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.

Outputs for Teifi Fyw Project

A more Connected and Resilient Teifi River - A healthier, more biodiverse Teifi catchment with a river that is healthier and more resilient to pressures from across the catchment and climate change.

Tangible outputs:

- Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) through Strategic delivery of interventions which both enhance habitat connectivity, natural capital and environmental resilience.
- Riparian Corridor Resilience through restoration of natural process and physical habitats riparian planting, reconnecting floodplains, improving in-channel habitats.
- Catchment Water Health Interventions restoration of natural processes in the water cycle throughout the catchment from soil health to increase infiltration, through buffer strips, contour planting, hedgerow management.
- Ecological Monitoring; Baseline and repeat surveys, citizen science (e.g. Riverfly, Outfall Safari).
- Farm-Based Trials; 5 regenerative agriculture trials to test climate-adaptive practices.

People feel they are the Guardians of the Teifi, through Community Empowerment - Deepened community connection to place, with inclusive governance and active participation in restoration and nature and community first decision-making.

Tangible outputs:

- Community Engagement Events; Pluralistic engagement and coproduction through a series of River festivals, storytelling walks, cultural events, oral history projects.
- Education and Outreach; School programmes, River Champions, community river workshops.
- Participatory Governance; Community Knowledge Forums, co-designed restoration priorities, “Voice of the Teifi” representative body.
- Creative Outputs; Commissioned poems, songs, installations, participatory maps and archives to be shared at River Festivals.
- Training and Capacity Building; Upskilling partners and stakeholders on engagement and facilitation, bilingual communication, ethical listening.

There is a strategic plan that the Teifi is Investment Ready - A regenerative, investment-ready rural economy that aligns ecological restoration and building natural capital with long-term prosperity and green job creation.

Tangible outputs:

- Investment Framework Development; Strategic roadmap, bilingual investment prospectus, governance charter.
- Trial Investment Round; initial transactions to demonstrate legacy potential and attract future funding.
- Decision-Support Tool; Spatial platform to guide nature-based investments and funding alignment.
- Green Skills Training; Programmes for trades, facilitators, and finance professionals in nature-based sectors.
- Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV);- Community Benefit Society to manage investments and ensure transparency.
- Building resilient farms; 50 Teifi Fyw farm plans integrating ecological, climate and economic resilience.

Legacy Vision

Teifi Fyw seeks funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, together with match funding from Welsh Government for a 2-year development phase followed by a 5-year delivery phase. This project will deliver above and beyond the collective partners core remits and statutory duties, collaboratively and progressively creating new ways of working which better listens to and acts upon combined evidence.



Key to the project is embedding the voices of the Teifi into every layer of action; from data to dialogue. Teifi Fyw will shape a catchment that is ecologically vibrant, culturally celebrated, and resilient across social, economic, and climate dimensions. It will stand as a living example of how heritage and nature can be harnessed in a future defined by hope, connection and transformative change.



Teifi Fyw is more than a project, it is a catalyst for long-term, place-based change. By investing in heritage, nature, and community, the project aims to leave a legacy of empowered local voices, resilient ecosystems, and strengthened partnerships. The foundations laid through inclusive planning, shared learning, and adaptive delivery will support a thriving Teifi catchment for generations to come. This legacy will be reflected in how communities, practitioners, and decision-makers come together to guide river management; in how people feel connected to a landscape of intrinsic value and ecological richness; and in how the river's natural power continues to support a vibrant rural economy. Teifi Fyw's impact will endure in the relationships it nurtures and the capacity it builds, placing the Teifi river at the heart of life for the catchment.