

Waterfall Country

Update Winter 2019

Christmas Fair 1st Dec



Proactive Pontneddfechan will be spreading Christmas cheer on Sunday 1st December at the Village Hall. From 3pm there will be craft stalls, refreshments, a choir and carols, culminating in the switching on of the Christmas tree lights at 6pm. There will then be a procession to the Sgwd Gwladys Coffee House for the switching on of their Christmas lights and those on the bauble arch.

Proactive Pontneddfechan was formed with the intention of bringing together the community and providing events, activities and opportunities to improve health, well-being and the local environment.

“Our initial focus is a Christmas celebration and we will follow this up with a village-wide planting project in 2020 to improve the streets and green spaces, along with other community engagement activities.” said Llian Cornish, Chair

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Waterfall Country Partnership Project

The Waterfall Country Partnership Project has been set up to work co-operatively with councils, authorities and other parties, to seek ways of dealing with the impacts of tourism on the communities and environment in the area known as ‘Waterfall Country’. The most pressing issues include parking and improving facilities for visitors, but to do this everyone needs to come together to find and implement solutions. This situation is now critical and must be acted upon, not only for visitors, but more importantly for those communities affected.

The Partnership includes members from Natural Resources Wales, Powys County Council, Neath Port Talbot and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Councils, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Community Councils of Pontneddfechan, Ystradfellte, Penderwyn and Hirwaun. Recently the National Trust has joined and Tawe Uchaf Community Council are interested in finding out how their community could be included.

The next few months will involve meeting groups and individuals from across the area to gather ideas and views about what is needed and feasible and how the local communities can benefit. These will then be reviewed before submitting an application to the National Lottery Heritage fund in June 2020 for funding to deliver the project ideas. It is not going to be a quick process as there are many challenges, but working together we can ensure the best outcomes for the area.



Community Consultation Drop In 16th Dec

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, in partnership with Pontneddfechan & Ystradfellte Community Council, Powys County Council, Natural Resources Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Councils are hosting a community meeting and drop in sessions on Monday 16th December at the Village Hall in Pontneddfechan. Drop in sessions will run from 10am till 12pm and 2pm to 4pm, followed by a public meeting starting at 7pm (doors open 6pm).

This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the Gunpowder Works interpretation and the Waterfalls Partnership Project. There will be an opportunity for you to share your ideas and to meet community groups and see how you can get involved.

Refreshments provided. For further information please contact Eleanor Flaherty on 07854 997505 or eleanor.flaherty@beacons-mpa.gov.uk.

Waterfall Country Update

A Tree for Christmas

The final phase of the Gunpowder Works restoration has been the removal of some of the non-native trees to prevent future damage to the buildings. One of those trees is destined to be Pontneddfechan's Christmas tree. The chosen conifer will be felled in time to be decorated and displayed outside the Village Hall in readiness for the Christmas Fayre on the 1st December. A big thanks to the contractors who will be giving their time to make this happen.

As you may well have seen, consolidation works to the historic structures most at risk have all now been carried out.

Working with the community has been a big priority for the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). Over the last year we've managed to carry out activities with over 490 young people from local schools as well as over 200 members of local community groups.

Explaining the site and its significance is now a priority for us and details of when interpretation will be installed will be announced soon. The community drop-in sessions on the 16th Dec at Pontneddfechan Village Hall will provide opportunities to find out more.

Ruth Coulthard, Gunpowder Works Project Manager, BBNPA



Conserved historic remains of the Gunpowder Works, Afon Mellte

What is Happening to the Ash Trees?



There are many ash trees in Waterfall Country that are not looking well. They have been affected with Ash Dieback (Chalara) which causes leaf loss, crown dieback, bark lesions and over many years proves fatal to most affected trees.

Almost all of Wales has Ash Dieback with areas in the South West Wales and parts of South Powys some of the hardest hit.

In Waterfall Country, on land managed by Natural Resources Wales, we have been surveying ash trees near to busy paths, roads and car parks to look at the condition of the trees we manage. Over 2200 trees have been tagged in total and the data from the survey suggest that

already 17% of the trees are either severely affected or dead.

Over the coming months, for safety reasons, we intend to carry out work to the trees which are the most severely infected or dead around the popular walks around Pont Melin Fach, Gwaun Hespte and Dinas rock. Some of the trees will have their deadwood removed and others felled, depending on their size and the level of impact Ash Dieback has had. Most of the felled timber will be left as a deadwood resource as access with machines is very difficult.

Paul Dann, Local Area Manager, Natural Resources Wales

Neighbourhood Police Team

Police will be attending the next community surgery with Cllr David Thomas on Saturday 1st February 2020 at 11.15 at Pontneddfechan Village Hall.

We continue to work closely with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and South Wales Police to alleviate parking concerns in the Ystradfellte and Pontneddfechan areas.

Please contact the Neighbourhood team with any concerns.

PC 828 Sara Richards – sara.richards@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 8065 Nicole Watkins – Nicole.watkins@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 8185 Rachel Williams – Rachel.williams@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 8091 Rahimi Mahmood – rahimi.mahmood@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 8093 Sarah Nash – sarah.nash@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

PC Sara Richards

Waterfall Country Update

Wildlife Walks



Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Local resident Anna Atkins shares the seasonal plants and wildlife that she discovers on her regular walks in the area.

She writes, "The hedgerows in and around Pontneddfechan are old and contain many species of wildflowers and layered trees, which in turn feed and hide wildlife.

Autumn has brought out bright colours on Ivy leaves, (*Hedera helix*) and it is also when ivy flowers, feeding insects when other sources of food are scarce. The greenish flowers are followed by black berries which feed birds and at the same time holly blue butterfly caterpillars eat the leaves.

The hedge is also dotted with wild rose hips (*Rosa canina*) which have long been used as a medicinal plant. In summer it is a mass of pale pink single blooms that scramble through the hedge, the heat of the sun filling the air with their delicate scent. In the autumn the bright red rose hips can be seen. Generations of children were brought up on rose hip syrup which is rich in vitamin C.

These are just a few of the things I found on my short walk. Why don't you take a little walk and see what you can find."

Anna Atkins, Pontneddfechan

Parking in Waterfall Country



Following on from the 2018 Visitor Traffic Study, that many of you will have participated in, we decided to act on several of the recommendations made by that report. The Welsh Government provided funding for work which was delivered in partnership between the Brecon Beacons National

Park Authority (BBNPA), Dyfed-Powys Police and local land owners. This work included:

- A 'suggested route' for visitors which directed them to Cwm Porth via Ystradfellte. This helps to keep traffic flowing in a clockwise direction and reduces the incidents of vehicles meeting on narrow lanes without sufficient passing places.
- Overflow car parks were identified on private land at Cwm Porth, Ystradfellte Show Ground and Pontneddfechan for peak times. This has prevented hundreds of visitors parking in unsuitable places and has helped keep the roads clear. We would like to thank the landowners involved for their co-operation and support.
- A 1km stretch of temporary barrier fencing on the road verges at Comin-y-Rhos, installed by the National Park Warden Service, which put a stop to people parking down either side of the road. The use of traffic cones in particular problem hotspots has also been successful.

The BBNPA now has additional staff available on busy days to help direct visitors to car parks and keep the roads clear.

Following on from this, funding was secured to make some of these more permanent and has paid for Powys Highway engineers to:

- Draw up plans for more permanent controls at Comin-y-Rhos - due to go to public consultation this winter, with works completed by summer 2020.
- Create official road signage for the advisory route to Cwm Porth.
- Put Traffic Orders in place in certain areas making it an offence to park within that area and in passing places.

We understand that these measures do not resolve the long standing parking problems, but we aim to alleviate some of the pressures whilst we develop a permanent solution.

Richard Farquhar,
Assistant Area Warden BBNPA



Waterfall Country Update

Village Hall Bakes

Chocolate Dream Cake

Ingredients

400g Self Raising Flour

400g Caster Sugar

400g Margarine/butter

6 Eggs

3 x heaped tablespoon cocoa powder

For the Ganache

1 bar of cooking chocolate

75ml double cream.

Mix eggs and marg/butter until light and fluffy, then add sugar and sieve in flour and cocoa powder. Grease and line 2 x 8" cake tins. Pour in mix. Bake at 160°C/ gas mark 4 for 30-40 mins. Turn out cake and leave to cool. Once cool fill with buttercream or your choice of filling.

Ganache

Heat cream in pan until just simmering.

Break up chocolate and stir into cream until glossy. Pour over the cake. Enjoy!

Sian and Jannie sell their cakes and other tasty treats 10am-2pm every Friday & Saturday at the Pontneddfechan Village Hall. Join them for a slice and a cuppa!

Sian and Jannie 07975 684892



Chocolate Dream Cake
by Sian and Jannie.



Residents' Activity Day - SWOAPG

On the 5th May 2019 the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG) ran another residents' day after the success of last year's event. Local providers including Parkwood Outdoors and Call of the Wild, along with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority offered their services and ran climbing, gorge walking and a local guided tour of the Gunpowder Works.

A number of families from the Glynneath and Pontneddfechan communities attended the day in which both children and adults had a taste of the activities we offer. Reviews from those taking part were excellent, with most expressing their interest in having another go.

Working with the local community as well as with tourism is key to SWOAPG maintaining strong relationships between activity providers and the community. It also helps us to work with Natural Resources Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority to protect the habitat and special environment within the gorge and surrounding areas for future generations.

Thanks also goes to Cardiff White Water who provided families with vouchers for activities at their Cardiff centre.

Steve Rayner,
South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group Coordinator

Community Development Officer

We are pleased to welcome Eleanor Flaherty as the new Community Development Officer for the Waterfall Country Partnership Project. The BBNPA were awarded funding for this role as it was considered essential to have someone to liaise between community groups, local authorities and other parties in supporting community initiatives. Eleanor is also producing this quarterly newsletter so would welcome articles and stories for future publications. **Contact: Eleanor Flaherty 07854 997505 or eleanor.flaherty@beacons-npa.gov.uk**

