

NATIONAL PARK

Community Update Spring 2020



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Hello and welcome

to the Spring 2020 edition of the *Community Update* from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

In this issue you will read about a range of projects and initiatives that we are undertaking with our local communities, partners and stakeholders, to meet our statutory purposes and duty and to benefit those who live, work and visit the National Park. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our wonderful volunteers who give their time, energy and experience to work with our dedicated staff. The hard work of our staff and volunteers is so important to the success of these projects in improving this protected and special area.

If you would like to be placed on our mailing list or contribute to future editions, please be sure to contact the Communities Team via the A-Z of services at the end of this newsletter. This newsletter is also available online at **www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/communities/community-newsletter**

Cllr. Gareth Ratcliffe, Chair of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Brecon Community Derived Action Plan – Consultation Now Open

The Brecon 20:20 Group have been working to develop a place plan for Brecon over the past three years.

The draft action plan and supplementary planning guidance resulting from the residents' survey was approved by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority on 11th February 2020 and is now out to consultation. The Brecon 20:20 group would like to hear your views on the action plan which can be found at **www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/planning/draftstrategy-and-policy/consultations/**. The plan covers a range of issues in the town including streat score parking mtail community.

including street scene, parking, retail, community facilities, services, housing, arts, culture, greenspaces, sport, energy and climate change.

Please respond to the consultation on the National Park Authority website, or email the Brecon 20:20 group directly at Brecontownplan@gmail.com



For further information contact the Place Plans team placeplans@beacons-npa.gov.uk or phone Helen Roderick, Sustainable Development Officer on 01874 620417. The consultation closes on 23rd April.



Christmas trees with a difference!

Staff and volunteers at Craig-y-nos Country Park in the Upper Tawe Valley, celebrated Christmas with the local community and visitors in an innovative way. Firstly, a conifer tree from the Country Park was cut and placed on the patio by the café. As well as the usual lights and baubles, the tree was also decorated with hanging circles of wood, 'wood cookies', on which visitors had written their wishes for the future of the planet. Donations for the wood cookies have gone towards planting more trees at Craig-y-nos. It is hoped to repeat the popular Tree of Wishes next Christmas.

Secondly, a Christmas tree gate was created for the Christmas Tree Festival at St Cynogs Church, Ystradgynlais. It was amongst 40 other trees from local schools, organisations and businesses. The gate included logos from all the organisations and businesses that use Craig-y-nos Country Park.



Craig-y-nos staff with their unusual Christmas tree gate



Kevin Booker, IT Systems and Fleet Officer, (centre) receiving the 'Financial Superstar' award

National recognition for the Park Authority's green actions

The National Park Authority has been nominated for several awards in recognition of the work it has been doing to go greener, replacing fuelled cars in its fleet with electric vehicles.

Almost 50% of the Authority's fleet is now electric. Last week Kevin Booker, IT Systems and Fleet Officer, attended Fleet World's Great British Fleet Awards 2020, where the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority came away with the award for 'Financial Superstar – the financial wizard or team who has developed the cleverest and most innovative strategy for running a cost-efficient fleet.'The awards were judged by Fleet World's expert panel of editors and honour excellence in fleet management and also the products and services which support operators running safer, greener, more cost-effective fleets.

Before winning this award, the Authority were commended at the Green Fleet Award ceremony, in the Public Sector Fleet of the Year (small to medium category) and also highly commended at the Energy Saving Trust Fleet Hero Awards for 'Electric Vehicle Hero'.

In addition, following the installation of a hydro electric scheme, solar panels have been installed on several National Park Authority buildings. In its first year of operation the Warden's Depot solar array has generated 8.75MWh of electricity, enough to take one of the Authority's electric vehicles 35,000miles. This has resulted in saving 2237kg of CO2.

New online Explorer map makes reporting rights of way issues easier



Have you encountered a problem on a public right of way in the National Park?

There are 1175 miles of public rights of way within the National Park to explore, comprising public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs). The Authority's Rights of Way Team have developed an online Explorer Map which shows all public rights of way within the National Park and allows users to report issues by accurately pinpointing the location on the map and provide a brief description of the issue along with up to four photographs.

Once the problem has been logged on the map, it will be forwarded to the Rights of Way and Warden Teams who will investigate and prioritise the issue.

The mobile phone and tablet friendly Explorer Map can be found on the Report It page of the National Park Authority website or using the following link www.rightsofway.beacons-npa.gov.uk



Volunteers placing the cameras traps

Wildlife caught on film by Upland Volunteers

As part of the Uplands Volunteers Pine Marten Project, volunteers have deployed 30 camera traps with the intention of deploying 10 more in the near future. Although they have yet to capture any images of pine martens, they have captured some fantastic day and night time images of the wonderful, varied wildlife within the National Park, including deer (Red, Roe and Muntjac), also brown hares, foxes, badgers and woodpeckers.





Bringing Welsh myths and legends to life!

The National Park Authority's Education Team have been busy delivering fun, educational days which support the curriculum to local primary schools. Last autumn, every pupil from Years 2- 6 at Ysgol Gymraeg Dyffryn Y Glowyr learned about the Welsh legend of Twrch Trwyth (a wild boar who was captured by a young prince) through the medium of Welsh.

Education Officers helped pupils write story boards and make story sticks using the school's outdoor grounds to find natural materials to put onto their story sticks. Every pupil now understands why the village in which their school is situated is called Cwmtwrch!

In January at the National Park Visitor Centre, Crickhowell Primary School pupils also enjoyed the legend of the Twrch Trwyth through storytelling, music, writing, puppet making and a breezy walk on Mynydd Illtud. Assistant Headteacher, Rob Francis said, "The children have benefited hugely from the highly skilled teaching which has enabled them to understand more about their local legends and experience a thoroughly interactive day out in the Brecon Beacons."

Invaders of the National Park Project – Rhododendrons

Over the winter the Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Team have turned their attention to another invasive plant species that occurs in the National Park.



The invasive rhododendron

Joining forces with the Western Area Warden Team, they have begun controlling the evergreen shrub Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) on the hillside of Cribarth, an area of old limestone quarries

and tram-roads situated high above Craig-y-nos Country Park in the upper Tawe Valley. Why is Cribarth special? According to Alan Bowring, the National Park Authority's Geopark Officer, it is the most interesting geo-diverse area within the National Park'' The site is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, hence the need to eradicate this invasive non-native species from an important geological and historical area.

Rhododendron is native to south-west Asia and south-west Europe. Introduced to Britain from Spain/Portugal in 1763, Victorian estates used it for cover for game birds and in ornamental gardens. The invasive non-native plant was first recorded in the wild in Lincolnshire in 1894. A large evergreen shrub with attractive pink/ purple flowers and leathery leaves, it spreads by suckers and the small seeds can be carried by the wind over long distances. Today it can be found growing in a variety of habitats: woodland, rocky hillsides, heathland, along river banks and in parks and gardens. Apart from its attractive flowers, the aggressive shrub has a negative impact on any site it invades. It reduces the biodiversity of any habitat with mature shrubs shading out native flora and is able to physically reduce access to a site by the sheer size and density of bushes present. Mature rhododendron specimens also act as a significant source of seed for invasion of new areas.

How you can help? By reporting sightings, please use the contact details below or send them directly to the Biodiversity Information service (BIS) at www.bis.org.uk or tel: 01874 610881.You can also submit your INNS sightings to BIS using WiReD or use the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) App to record any INNS sightings on your mobile phone whilst out and about.

If you would like any further information on the project, please contact Bev Lewis, Project Coordinator. Tel: 07854 997 508 or email: Beverley.Lewis@beacons-npa.gov.uk



Getting 'hands on' with geological interpretation

A new tactile 3D map showing the dramatic landscape of the Fforest Fawr UNESCO Global Geopark has been installed on the terrace at Craig-y-nos Country Park.

The model, created by local artist Rubin Eynon working with Suzanna Jones, Clarissa Price and Alan Bowring from the National Park Authority is based on Lidar data and has been cast in bronze with a fascinating geological cross section around its perimeter. It will be a valuable teaching aid for the Education Team when explaining the special landscape of the Brecon Beacons National Park to the many school groups who visit.

The bronze map is part of the development of a new Geopark Discovery Point and is accompanied by three monoliths which welcome visitors to the Geopark and inspire them to explore the surrounding landscapes. Interpretative table tops for the picnic tables are being planned.

The new Geopark Discovery Point will be launched during the annual Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival which takes place between Saturday 23rd May and Sunday 7th June. Geofest 2020 includes a programme of walks and talks about the Geopark and the popular family day at Craig-y-nos Country Park.

For further information go to: www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk or contact Alan Bowring, Geopark Development Officer on 01874 620415 or email: alan.bowring@beacons-npa.gov.uk



Small Steps participants walking along the canal at Govilon

Small Steps project brings benefits to people with long term mental health conditions

Small Steps is a two year action research partnership project delivered by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Powys Teaching Health Board and funded by the Welsh Government. It aims to improve the health and well-being of residents of the National Park with long term mental health conditions, who have been invited to take part in a range of walks and activities within the Park's boundaries.

The initial research phase of the project has now been completed, with some very encouraging results. At mid-term the impact on service use was measured and concluded:

- There was a reduction in using home help
- There was a 71% decrease in NHS service use from the participants
- Of those who had contact with a GP, their time spent with a GP decreased by 50%
- 80% of participants had decreased contact with a psychiatrist

In a survey, over 80% of the participants agreed, or strongly agreed that their mental and physical well-being had improved; they felt less socially isolated; they had learned new skills and had increased their knowledge of the local area and services. And importantly, they had enjoyed participating in the walks and activities

In November 2019, the results of the project were shared at a presentation at the Rural Health and Care Conference Wales, which was received with great interest. The project continues in 2020, supporting participants to get out and about in the National Park more independently.

For more information on the Small Steps project, please contact Francesca Bell, Community Development Officer on 01874 624437 or email: francesca.bell@beacons-npa.gov.uk

A new bridge for Pentrefelin

The Western Warden Team have replaced an old rotten wooden bridge with a brand new one on the outskirts of the village of Pentrefelin near Sennybridge. The bridge was fabricated locally and designed by a National Park volunteer, Derek Whitear, a retired engineer. The river can now be crossed safely. This is one of the many rights of way improvements carried out by the warden teams with the help of volunteers.





Waterfall Country Futures project

It is estimated that visitors to Waterfall Country bring with them £10million of potential spend, but much of this money leaves with them and so has little benefit for residents.

Ystradfellte and Pontneddfechan Community Council have secured funding from Pen-y-Cymoedd and the BBNPA Sustainable Development Fund to investigate the feasibility of a communityled economic regeneration organisation to capture some of this revenue for use in community led projects.

The Community Council have contracted Severn Wye Energy Agency Consultants to look at the opportunities available and what kind of community organisation would be most appropriate. Their aim is that by end of the year this organisation will be set up, with a solid business plan and funding identified.

During 2020 they will be working with residents and businesses around the area to find opportunities both current and new. Several workshop sessions are planned during the spring, so if you are interested in being involved or are a budding entrepreneur with great ideas, then please come along.

Contact Llian Cornish, Ystradfellte & Pontneddfechan Community Council on: 07949 056810 or email: WaterfallCountryFutures@gmail.com

New sustainable 'superloos' for Llangorse Common

A problem confronted the Discover Llangorse & Bwlch tourism group in 2018 when the future of the public toilets on Llangorse Common came into doubt. An urgent community consultation was held, resulting in a petition of over 800 signatures asking to keep the toilets open.

The Llangorse Common Community Toilets Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was subsequently set up in May 2018. The aim of the group was to seek to provide a new energy efficient, sustainable community toilet facility with reduced running costs. The CIO trustees (all volunteers) had a combination of business skills and a range of professional qualifications. The trustees were granted a 25 year lease for the toilets.

Substantial sums were required to demolish the existing public toilets and replace them with sustainable toilets fit for the future. Working with Carol Williams and Richard Tyler from the National Park Authority's Sustainable Tourism Team, the group applied to the Welsh Government Rural Community Development Fund. This proved successful and, with continued support from Carol Williams, the group built on this by successfully applying to Powys County Council, the National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund and the National Lottery Awards for All.

Along with active fund raising, community groups, individuals and Llangorse Community Council managed to raise enough funds to undertake the work. The old toilets were demolished in February 2019 and work began on the new build in June 2019.

The first stage of the development was to accommodate the lesser horseshoe bats, a protected species. A dedicated bat roost, known locally as 'The Bat Hotel' was built and installed on site.



The new toilets include solar panels, underground rain water harvesting, dog wash, interpretation panels and a changing table.

Work was completed in February and a community celebration event is planned for June this year.

For further information please contact Carol Williams, Tourism Growth Officer on 01874 620478 or email: carol.williams@beacons-npa.gov.uk



The toilets at Llangorse

and after

Common before...





Receiving the award in Cardiff

Sustainable Academy Wales Award: The Black Mountains Land Use Partnership is Highly Commended!

Project representatives from the Partnership, the National Park Authority and from the Black Mountains Mountain & Moorland Ambassadors group, attended the Sustainable Academy Wales Awards Ceremony in Cardiff on 28th November 2019 at the Principality Stadium.

The Partnership was shortlisted for a Sustainable Education or Training Award. Sadly they did not win the category. However, they came away with a 'highly commended' award from the judges.

The Sustainable Academy Awards celebrate sustainability excellence, innovation and leadership from across Wales. The Awards recognise the brilliant people, projects and initiatives that are contributing towards the seven National Well-being Goals and the five Ways of Working described in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The aim of the Mountain and Moorland Ambassador project is to engage and train people from local tourism businesses, helping them to relay sustainability messages to their customers, so that they might in turn visit and enjoy the Black Mountains area responsibly. This is an innovative initiative which, for the first time, brings together local businesses, graziers, landowners and regulatory bodies to understand sustainability issues.

To have this flagship Partnership nationally recognised for its role in leading the way on innovation in sustainability and in delivering sustainable education and training, is an outstanding achievement and one to be celebrated!

For more information on the Partnership visit www.blackmountains.wales



Recent funding brings many benefits to the Black Mountains

A £45,000 funding pot to support training, ideas or projects related to rural development, resilience and sustainability was launched by the Black Mountains Land Use Partnership (BMLUP) late last year.

To date, this funding has enabled;

- 10 individuals to gain vocational qualifications
- 26 people to receive vocational training
- 2 individuals to gain employment in the Black Mountains area
- 22 local businesses to be supported with one seeing their best ever sales month following funding for bespoke business and marketing training!
- A number of farms and woodland areas in the Black Mountains to benefit from ecological and visitor improvements- bridleways and pathways have been cleared and access restored. Trained individuals have also been assisting other community groups in the area with woodland management initiatives.
- The BMLUP Mountain and Moorland Ambassadors to establish their own coordinating group and to start work on visitor management messages as well as exploring collaboration with Young Farmers.
- A group of Young Farmers to gain chainsaw qualifications and kit, contributing to their success in hedge-laying competitions last year, further raising the profile of hedge-laying in the Black Mountains and for this traditional rural skill.

We look forward to seeing the next few months' progress!

The Partnership is a collaborative venture between local landowners, graziers, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Water and Natural England. Together they are working to shape the sustainable management of the Black Mountains' natural resources, support economic development and enhance the well-being of those who live in and visit this iconic area. Funding has been made available via an EU and Welsh Government Sustainable Management Scheme.

USE PART

Reporting Rights of Way Issues

You can report any issues regarding our rights of way such as damage to footpaths, stiles or fingerposts to our Rights of Way Officer, Eifion Jones

eifion.jones@beacons-npa.gov.uk or call 01874 620452

Planning Surgery

This is available for advice on householder developments every Wednesday from 9.30am -12noon and 1.30pm-3.00pm at the National Park Offices, Brecon. Appointments are available in 30 minute slots and must be booked in advance.

To make an appointment or for any general planning enquiry, please call 01874 620431

Sustainable Development Fund Enquiries

For further information and advice about the fund please see www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/communities/ sustainability-2/substainable-developmentfund or contact

Helen Roderick or Ceri Bevan on 01874 620471

Email helen.roderick@beacons-npa.gov.uk ceri.bevan@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Grant application deadlines for the next six months:

I st April/3rd June/22nd August/ 28th October.

Events

For an extended list and further details of activities and events in the National Park please visit www.breconbeacons.org/events

Art in the Park at Craig-y-nos Country Park

Julia Harris, a local artist, will be running art workshops one weekend each month between March and November in the Hibbert Room at the Country Park.

The workshops cater for all levels of art experience. During the school holidays she will be holding an exhibition and running a children's painting workshops each Wednesday. For further information, dates and prices please check Julia's website: www.juliaharris.wales

Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival 2020

The Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival 2020 will take place between Saturday 23rd May and Sunday 7th June.

Geofest 2020 includes a programme of walks and talks about the Geopark and the popular family day at Craig-y-nos Country Park. For further information go to: www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk/geofest-2020 or contact Alan Bowring, Geopark Development Officer on 01874 620415 or email: alan.bowring@beacons-npa.gov.uk



Need a meeting room in Brecon?

We have the following available for hire:

- Conference Room
- Small Meeting Room
- Members Video Conference Room

Catering available For details contact 01874 624437 or check www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/theauthority/webcasting

Community Marquee Available

The Community Marquee loan scheme offers groups, schools, charities and other nonprofit organisations within the National Park the opportunity to use the 20' x 30' Community Marquee at their local events. A donation is requested.

For booking forms please contact Ceri Bevan on 01874 620471 or ceri.bevan@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Webcasts

All the Authority's meetings are available to view via our webcasts microsite. To find out more visit:

www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/theauthority/webcasting

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way Brecon, Powys LD3 7HP www.beacons-npa.gov.uk

www.breconbeacons.org

Your Authority A-Z

Your helpful guide to contacting the Authority for information or services

Service or Team	Lead Contact/Officer	Contact Details	Telephone N°
General Enquiries National Park Authority Headquarters, Brecon	Reception	enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 624437
Craig-y-nos Country Park Pen-y-Cae	Reception	enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 624437
Chief Executive Officer	Julian Atkins	angharad.hawkes@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620438
Communications	Bronwyn Lally	communications@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620406
Democratic & Office Services	Julia Gruffydd	julia.gruffydd@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620400
Ecology	Brad Welch	bradley.welch@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620411
Education, Interpretation and Information	Reception	enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 624437
Fforest Fawr Geopark	Alan Bowring	alan.bowring@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620415
Finance	Elaine Standen	elaine.standen@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620467
Heritage	Alice Thorne (Archaeology)	alice.thorne@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620418
	Janet Poole (Building Conservation)	janet.poole@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620413
Human Resources	Liz Lewis	elizabeth.lewis@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620426
Information Technology	Paul Funnell	paul.funnell@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620459
National Park Visitor Centre 'The Mountain Centre' Libanus	Information Officers	npvc@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 623366
Planning Services Administration	Jane Pashley	planning.enquiries@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620422

Stay Up to Date

There are now even more ways to keep up to speed with all the latest news and information from the National Park Authority.You can:



Our Instagram feed is www.instagram.com/ breconbeacons

Your Authority A-Z

Your helpful guide to contacting the Authority for information or services

Service or Team	Lead Contact/Officer	Contact Details	Telephone N°
Management Plan	Paul Funnell	epo@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 624437
Planning Enforcement Team	Kathy Jenkins	enforcement@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620416
Planning Strategy & Policy Team	Helen Lucocq	helen.lucocq@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620429
Rights of Way	Eifion Jones	eifion.jones@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620452
Sustainable Communities	Ceri Bevan/Helen Roderick Francesca Bell	communities@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 624437
Sustainable Tourism	Richard Tyler	richard.tyler@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620405
Volunteering	llona Carati	ilona.carati@beacons-npa.gov.uk	01874 620451
Warden Service	Judith Harvey	judith.harvey@beacons-npa.gov.uk	07854 997510



Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way Brecon, Powys LD3 7HP **www.beacons-npa.gov.uk**

www.breconbeacons.org

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