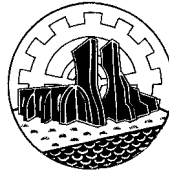


DYFFRYN YMLAEN

HAF
2022
40c

Cylchlythyr
Cyngor Cymuned
Dyffryn Clydach



Newsletter of the
Dyffryn Clydach
Community Council

SUMMER
2022
40p

Additional copies available from the Editor, Cllr Joanne Griffiths
Copïau ychwanegol ar gael wrth y Golygydd, Cyng. Joanne Griffiths
E-mail: joannegriffiths0809@icloud.com

To include local interest items please contact the Editor or your local Councillor
Er mwyn cynnwys eitemau o ddiddordeb lleol cysylltwch â'r Golygydd neu'ch Cynghorwr lleol





EDITOR'S NOTE • GOLYGYDDOL

Hello everyone, my name is Joanne, most people know me as Jo, and I am your new editor for our newly branded Dyffryn Ymlaen. I was very honoured to have been voted as one of your new community councillors for

our ward and I am looking forward to this new and exciting chapter in my life. I have always enjoyed reading Ymlaen and reading it last year, I never imagined I would be editing the next edition. I think we can all agree, the last few years have been incredibly difficult for us all coming out of a global pandemic, and I am exceptionally proud to be part of a neighbourhood that is striving to re-establish our links within our lovely community.

The coverage of the Platinum Jubilee weekend of events across the country was just what we all needed to bring lots of fun and laughter back into our lives. The bunting came out, the memorial hall was opened, and we celebrated in true community style; even the sun came out.

Great fun was had by all as you will see in our Jubilee feature.

The next edition of Dyffryn Ymlaen will be out for Christmas and I would love to hear from those of you who wish to contribute any articles including news, events, gardening ideas, local walks you enjoy, favourite recipes, local stories and photos that are relevant to our magazine. Please send your articles to joannegriffiths0809@icloud.com where I shall look forward to hearing from you.

I wish you all a wonderful summer and hope you get out and about doing the things that you love, and happy memories made for you all.

Joanne

Helo bawb, fy enw i yw Joanne, er bod y rhan fwyaf yn fy adnabod fel Jo, a fi yw eich golygydd newydd ar gyfer Dyffryn Ymlaen ar ei newydd wedd. Anrhydedd fawr i mi fu cael fy ethol yn un o'ch cynghorwyr cymunedol newydd dros ein ward ac rwy'n edrych ymlaen at y bennod newydd a chyffrous hon yn fy mywyd. Dwi wastad wedi mwynhau darllen Ymlaen, ac wrth i mi ei ddarllen y llynedd, prin y gallwn ddychmygu mai fi fyddai'n golygu'r rhifyn nesaf. Dwi'n meddwl y gall pawb ohonom gytuno fod y blynyddoedd diwethaf hyn wedi bod yn eithriadol o anodd i bawb, wrth i ni ddod drwy bandemig byd-eang, a dwi'n eithriadol falch o fod yn rhan o gymdogaeth sy'n ymdrechu mor galed i ailsefydlu ein cysylltiadau o fewn i'n cymuned hyfryd.

Y sylw a roddwyd i ddigwyddiadau penwythnos y Jiwibili Platinwm ledled Prydain oedd yr union beth oedd ei angen i ddod â digonedd o hwyl a chwerthin yn ôl i'n bywydau. Cafodd y baneri'u hongian, agorwyd y neuadd goffa, a chafwyd dathlu mewn ysbryd cymunedol go iawn; fe wnaeth yr haul ymddangosiad hefyd, hyd yn oed.

Cafodd bawb lawer o sbort, fel y gwelwch yn ein heitem am y Jiwibili.

Bydd rhifyn nesaf Dyffryn Ymlaen yn cael ei gyhoeddi erbyn y Nadolig, a byddwn wrth fy modd o glywed gan unrhyw un sydd eisiau cyfrannu erthygl, gan gynnwys newyddion, digwyddiadau, syniadau garddio, llwybrau cerdded lleol sy'n rhoi pleser i chi, eich hoff ryseitiai, straeon a lluniau lleol sy'n berthnasol i'n cylchgrawn. A fydddechystal ag anfon eich erthyglau at joannegriffiths0809@icloud.com ble byddaf yn edrych ymlaen at glywed oddi wrthyhych.

Hoffwn ddymuno haf wrth eich bodd i chi i gyd, a gobeithio y gallwch fynd mas i fwynhau'r pethau sy'n eich bodloni, a chreu atgofion hapus i'w trysori.

Joanne

DYFFRYN INDEPENDENTS

'Brookfield, Cwrt Herbert, Dyffryn, Longford,
Mill Race, Neath Abbey, Penshannel,
Taillwyd & The Highlands'

Election Results – 5th May 2022

County Borough Council Results – Dyffryn Ward			
	Election Candidate	Party	Votes
1	Martyn Peters	Independent/ Annibynnol	862
2	James Henton	Independent/ Annibynnol	427
3	Keith Davies	Independent/ Annibynnol	362
4	Keith Finn	Welsh Labour/ Llafur Cymru	289
5	Joe Baugh	Independent/ Annibynnol	246

Dyffryn Clydach Community Council Results

	Election Candidate	Party	Votes
1	Martyn Peters	Independent	930
2	Alyson Jayne Thomas	Independent	628
3	Keith Davies	Independent	619
4	James Henton	Independent	596
5	Gareth Davies	Independent	584
6	Joe Baugh	Independent	545
7	Taryn Kristel	Independent	347
8	Joanne Griffiths	Independent/	346
9	Tina Marvin	Independent	344
10	Nicola Rhian Evans	Independent	340
11	Maxine Richards	Independent	337
12	Ken Gilmore	Independent	309
13	Phillip Peter Jenkins	Independent	305
14	Lee Ibbotson	Independent	285
15	Joe Brian Rayner	Independent	272

Introducing your new Community Council

Dyffryn Independents are a group of likeminded people who stood for the Community Council simply because they care about where they live and are highly involved in local community life. Our promise to you is to keep the community area in a well maintained condition, maintain the playground and woodland areas and to listen to the residents and advocate and act on your behalf. We will continue to work closely with NPT Council, South Wales Police and other agencies where our duties overlap to ensure issues are always addressed. We will continue to keep you updated on issues of community interest via our newly branded Dyffryn Ymlaen bi-annual magazine, our website and new social media platforms.



Councillor Joe Baugh

Originally from Brighton I moved to Wales in 1987 and settled in Neath Abbey 25 years ago. In the last 10 years, I have become very involved within the community supporting residents as much as I can and in February 2020, started a non-profit organisation to help the community and beyond during the pandemic. I am extremely proud to serve you as a community councillor in Dyffryn Clydach.



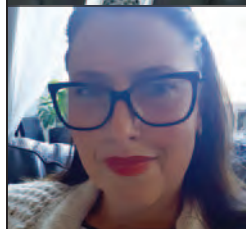
Councillor Gareth Davies

I continually strive to take pride in Dyffryn Clydach so that it is safe and clean, always with a strong emphasis on community spirit. I have lived in Neath Abbey for over 30 years and I worked for the National Autistic Society at Longford Court for seven years. I have regularly taken part in activities such as countryside volunteering groups at Y Cwm and Drummau, as well as local litter picks.



Councillor Keith Davies

I have a vast experience of local government having served on Coedffranc Community Council, Neath Borough Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, and have represented the Council's on a number of influential bodies. I am a former magistrate, and currently a governor at Dwr Y Felin School. My interests are local sports, cricket and rugby (limited to watching these days) an active Bowls player, and local history. It is great to be a member of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council, an area where I grew up, and where the majority of my family live.



Councillor Ms Nicola Evans – Chairperson of the Halls Committee

I have now lived in Neath Abbey for over 20 years. I am a mum to a 10 year old who attends the local school. I have a keen interest in caring for our local environment as evidenced by my efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the area by regularly litter picking. I wish to engage our young people in community activities and to build their sense of pride in where they live.



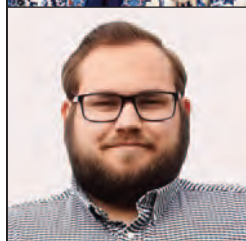
Councillor Ken Gilmore

I have lived in Brookfield for the past 50 years with my wife and 2 sons, and, prior to the boundary change, was a former Councillor for Blaenhonddan Community Council. I am extremely proud of our area and interested in the wellbeing and welfare of our community. I am honoured to be a member of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council.



Councillor Mrs Joanne Griffiths – Chairperson of the Communications Committee

I have lived in Neath Abbey since 2001 and with a background in mental health services, I am aware of the benefits how being part of a community and its links can have a positive impact on our physical and emotional wellbeing. I am privileged to have been chosen as editor for our newly named community magazine 'Dyffryn Ymlaen' promoting our beautiful area and bringing you community news and stories to your door.



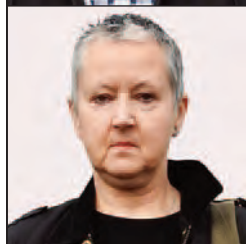
Councillor James Henton – County Borough Councillor

I was born and brought up in Longford and have a great love for our community. I'm heavily involved in different local organisations already, such as being a volunteer at the Ironworks, member of the local historical society, and a member of the community litter picking group. I was honoured to have been elected in the County Borough Council Elections and proud to be on your community council also.



Councillor Phillip Jenkins – Community Council Vice Chair of the Finance Committee

I have lived in Longford for the past 17 years along with my wife and 3 children. My family have originated from the area since before WW2. I am incredibly honoured to have been re-elected as vice chair for Dyffryn Clydach Community Council for another 5 years. I hope to continue to promote and protect the area for future generations.



Councillor Ms Taryn Kristel

Born and bred in Dyffryn Clydach and having been a Community Councillor for the past five years, I am extremely honoured to have been re-elected again. I have a background in adult social care and am a proactive and valued member of the team and am always eager to become involved in local issues and in fundraising activities. I attend litter picking and flower planting sessions as I am a wildlife enthusiast and animal lover and recognise the positive benefits that our work has on others in the community.



Councillor Mrs Tina Marvin – Vice Chair of the Halls Committee

I have lived and farmed in Longford for nearly 40 years along with my husband. I belong to a church family at Briton Ferry and am the head of the fundraising and social committee for Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. I was instrumental in the conception of the Neath Food Bank and have spent many years on the committee for Christian Aid. I have supported the local community on the bingo nights and helped with general fundraising for the community which I am keen to continue.



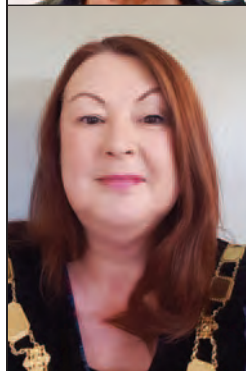
Councillor Martyn Peters – Community Borough Councillor and Chairperson of the Open Spaces Committee

Born and bred in Dyffryn Clydach, I am honoured to be re-elected as County Councillor, and most recently, a newly appointed cabinet member for Economic and Community Regeneration in the newly formed coalition NPT County Council. I am an avid wildlife enthusiast and founder member of the Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Historical Society and have been chairman of the Community Council on 6 previous occasions.



Councillor Mrs Maxine Richards

I am proud to represent you as one of Dyffryn Clydach's new community councillors. I have resided in the Longford area for over 50 years and have a keen interest in maintaining the woodlands and nature areas in our community for us all to enjoy.



Councillor Mrs Alyson Thomas – Chairperson - Dyffryn Clydach Community Council

I am humbled to be re-elected as Chairperson of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. I became a councillor in 2005 and successfully secured funding for the playground at The Drive. I designed and worked with the community to produce our Community Tapestry on display at the hall. I am proud to be the secretary of the new Dyffryn Clydach Community Links group. I have lived in Dyffryn since marrying my husband Ken in 1982 and have two sons. I am a founder member and secretary of the Helping Hands Knitting Group. There are many things I would like to do for the community including improving the council's website and developing an interactive digital walking trail on our 10 miles of footpaths.

YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCIL is responsible to you for delivering a range of services and for the provision and upkeep of local amenities. Dyffryn Clydach Community Council is made up of thirteen members. These unpaid councillors represent the interests of all areas of 'Brookfield, Cwrt Herbert, Dyffryn, Longford, Mill Race, Neath Abbey, Penshannel, Tailwyd & The Highlands'

The Council held its AGM at the beginning of May during which it appointed Cllr Mrs Alyson Thomas for the second consecutive time as Chairperson. There are four committees which can look at various issues (affecting Dyffryn Clydach) in depth and then report back to the full Council when policy decisions are made and comprise of;

Finance, Communications, Halls & Open Spaces Committees.

The Council employs Mrs Tina Draper as caretaker for the Hall and Mr Harry Davies as groundsman responsible for footpaths and open spaces. Randall Shopland is the Council's respected clerk. He prepares the Council's agenda, minutes, and correspondence prior to every monthly meeting. He also undertakes research into planning and legal matters and handles the business of hall bookings and remittances. If you need any information on council matters, contact the clerk (telephone 01639 635787) or any of the elected councillors who will be pleased to help you.

Finance Committee – Chairperson Cllr Mrs Alyson Thomas

The Finance Committee comprises of the chairpersons from the Halls, Open Spaces and Communications committees. The committee's remit is to manage the Council's financial resources. It reviews and decides upon the spending requests of its committees. It determines staff wages and expenses, ensuring that they fall within the recommended national guidelines. It also reviews the charges to be levied for the use of the Memorial Hall and its facilities, considering the costs of heating, lighting, insurance, cleaning and repairs. Donations to charitable organisations are also dealt with in the committee's deliberations. Annually, the committee sets the amount they think will be required from the community rate for the Council to perform duties effectively. All the committee's recommendations are then placed before the full Council for approval. The clerk to the community, Mr Randall Shopland, is in attendance at the committee's meetings and his advice and expertise are of invaluable assistance to committee members during their deliberations.

Communications Committee – Chairperson – Cllr Mrs Joanne Griffiths

The Communications Committee is responsible for the twice-yearly production of Ymlaen magazine and the Council website. The newly elected council members are also looking to promote the community council through social media platforms with the plan to reach out to the wider community. Ymlaen has been a wonderful source of information delivered free to the community over many years. With the new boundary change, the magazine is going to be rebranded and will now be known as Dyffryn Ymlaen. The Council is proud that Dyffryn Ymlaen is delivered free to every household in Dyffryn Clydach; approximately 1800 houses. It is the non-political mouthpiece of the Council and our way of keeping in touch with everyone in the community. Committee members decide on the content of Dyffryn Ymlaen, trying to keep an even balance of articles interesting to all. Then, there is usually a flurry of activity to prepare everything for printing. Perhaps the best part is the distribution, when all is finished, and we can go around the houses delivering it and meeting you all.

Our articles are local and have real relevance to our area. Most are written by committee members, and we always welcome contributions from locally based organisations or members of the public. We will be launching a NEW Community Council Facebook Page where we plan to share news and information all year round. This lends it way to inviting residents wishing to share their news or special events to our page to ultimately reach out to the wider community and for those residents who prefer to read articles online. Our Council Website is currently under review, and we hope to make changes to this in the coming months..... watch this space. Special thanks go to the staff at Serol Printing who work on the layout and printing of the magazine.

Open Spaces Committee – Chairperson Cllr Martyn Peters

The Open Spaces Committee is responsible to the council for the open spaces, Coed Bach & Coed y Graig woodlands and the well-kept play areas in Dyffryn Clydach. Dyffryn Clydach Community Council are working together with Neath port Talbot County Borough Council in the Bio-Diversity projects. We are leading the way with the project and the same format is going to be rolled out within other areas in the Neath Port Talbot Borough. The fruits of our hard labour is evident; wild orchids are growing in the grass verges and the non-cutting of grass is having a positive effect on the local wildlife creating natural habitats where they can thrive. Neath Port Talbot Council are working closely with the Community Council and Swansea University which has contributed greatly to the success of our long-term bio-diversity plan in Dyffryn Clydach. The new trees that were planted a few years ago are thriving and residents are also taking great care of the planters that have been placed around the community.

The childrens playground next to the memorial hall is even more popular now with the opening of the new school. We will be investing more money into the playground and to make safe the equipment following previous spates of vandalism to the playground.

Halls Committee – Chairperson Cllr Ms Nicola Rhian Evans

The Halls Committee make recommendations regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the hall. Everything from repairs and decorations to new furniture and kitchen utensils is considered. For different age and interest groups numerous events are held throughout the year and the new Dyffryn Clydach Community Links Group are extremely busy arranging events for the whole community to enjoy and have already started a monthly Community Links Café Time which takes place on the last Friday of every month. We hope to encourage more groups to facilitate the hall as many long-established groups sadly left during the pandemic.

The hall is a hub of activity all week with weekly Open Public Short Mat Bowls sessions, Lace Making, The Longford over 50's club, Stitcher's afternoons, Neath Abbey WI, Helping Hands Knitters, Quiz & Bingo evenings, Tiny Toes Ballet classes and NEW for a Monday evening is Food Share.

We have lots of exciting plans for the future of the hall with a goal to have an online availability & events calendar as we know not everyone can get to the hall so checking online to see what's on, is something we know a lot of people will find easier.

Celebrations and Jubilations

Just in time the sun came out so that Dyffryn Clydach Residents could celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Neath Abbey WI celebrated together with her Majesty with a sumptuous feast and fun.

Chairman Ann Doran told us

"It was a privilege to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's jubilee. So much has changed in the time she has been monarch, yet she has taken it all in her stride and maintained her dignity. A queen to be proud of!"

Community Links, in conjunction with Dyffryn Clydach Council, opened the hall and the hall grounds to anyone who wanted to join the celebrations. They decked the hall out beautifully with bunting and balloons. Queen Elizabeth honoured us with her presence and stayed all afternoon, happy to have selfies with all who asked her. Everyone brought a picnic and drinks with tea, coffee and delicious home baked cake provided by the Links.

There were many families there and some brought play equipment and the children made many new friends. They played pool, Twister, rounders and had a scavenger hunt. The huge chest of dressing-up clothes was a big success with Spiderman sporting a tutu and Snow White looking rather rakish with a Pirate's hat. It was terrific to see them all having so much fun and giving the parents a bit of well

earned relaxation.

Music played a big part too and were joined at 6pm by local covers trio Atsain who played a great set of upbeat songs from all the decades of the Queen's reign.

Chairman of the group Hayley Beasley-Wade chatted with all the merry makers to let them know what Community Links aims are and to invite them to take part in future events.

Chairman Hayley Beasley said,

"We felt an event like the jubilee was likely to leave lots of people feeling lonely and isolated as not everyone was able to attend parties. It was really wonderful to be able to put something on and enjoy a sense of community and we were proud to do so without spending a fortune - we made homemade bunting, home baked cakes and raffle prizes were donated. The families helped us to co create the event by bringing along their own activities; It was a pleasure to witness"

The evening concluded with the ever-present raffle and all left the hall smiling. What a great day we had!





You may have seen us on Facebook or seen an events poster on the local bus and wondered who we are?

What is your Community Links group for?

We are a group of volunteers, all living in Dyffryn Clydach whose aim is to strengthen the sense of a healthy community. We want to foster an environment where everyone feels included, accepted, safe and respected, where community spirit thrives, and people take ownership of our area. We are not connected to any council, and we raise our own funds through grants, contributions, and fundraising events. Any money we raise goes straight back into the community.

Our Mission

- Hold community events and activities that give people the chance to come together, get to know each other, learn, socialise, have fun and remove barriers such as age, gender and background.
- Providing opportunities for people to participate and volunteer in their local community, to empower people to get involved.
- To promote and encourage better environmental and economical sustainability within the community.
- To liaise and listen to the community to find how we can help to tackle current issues, for instance, looking at ways to help during the current cost of living crisis or to tackle loneliness.

Our Values

- Community connection is at the heart of everything we do.
- We are accepting of everyone from all ages and backgrounds. Everyone should feel included and valued.
- We are willing to collaborate with other groups and organisations when it is in line with our mission.
- To work to develop good levels of communications with all people within our community, including the younger generation.
- To endeavour to be sustainable and use the local resources that are available to us to help us achieve our mission.
- Caring for our environment is a priority and we welcome new ways to learn, teach and help to protect it e.g., through, recycling, upcycling, and gifting.

We have lots of things planned for the coming months. We are very much hoping to secure Summer of Fun funding to give local kids and families a great summer of activities So Watch out for Facebook posts and posters in the community.

DIARY DATES

* EXCITING NEWS *

Every Monday Evening 6-8pm - 'Your Food Share'
(more on our Food Share scheme on page 8)

We've a great **Big Family Quiz** - Aug 18th 6-8pm.

Last Friday Cafe Time at the hall for July 29th 10-12am
Aug 26th 10-12am, Sept 30th 9-11 am

A Christmas Craft Fair
Sunday 27th November 2-6pm

Don't forget to join our Facebook Group
@Dyffrynclydachcommunitylinks
or ring Secretary, Alyson Thomas
07402 240955

Community Links

Food Share

Our first food share was a great success, we weren't left with a single item.

A foodshare is really a way of helping the environment by preventing so much food heading to landfill.

It can be food that is close to its used by dates though it would always be food that is still fit for consumption, it's often food that's had damaged packaging meaning that the main supermarkets won't sell it.

This was mainly what our first weeks food share was made up of, we had lots of cooking oil, cans of coke and coffee as well as some fresh items however each week is likely to be different and we will never know exactly what we're getting until we go to collect it.

We were so happy that our first week was so well supported and we were thrilled to be able to connect with members of the community who were able to offer help and to make sure nothing ends up in landfill.

This will continue weekly on a Monday from 6-8pm as long as there is food and is completely free for anyone to come along and use, just fetch a bag and we promise a welcoming atmosphere.



COMMUNITY LINKS

 FOOD SHARE
Mondays
 6pm to 8pm
**LONGFORD
 MEMORIAL HALL**
 SIMPLY TURN UP, COLLECT
 AND SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT
 For more information 07411110645
 07961010035/07402240955

Pets Corner – Who is your Pampered Pet?

Introducing a proper community cat – Banjo

Banjo puts the 'Cat' & 'Walk' into Catwalk. He can be seen sashaying around with his signature hip sway and super fluffy tail standing tall as he moves around from house to house with a Lion pride like attitude. In the summer months he is likely to laze in the sunshine on your favourite chair so you will be expected to find somewhere else to sit as he won't move for anyone!



Banjo is 12 years old and was the beloved pet of Marlay John who sadly passed away in June 2021. I fell completely in love with him from the moment he arrived, and Banjo has enjoyed many years being made a fuss of by us all. Banjo is well known in the community and despite his gorgeous fluffy appearance and seemingly friendly nature, he is well known for his unpredictable behaviour and his wildcat attitude where, in the blink of an eye, his purr will turn into a roaring hiss from his toothless mouth and those who dare to pick him up, BEWARE!

Banjo finds the summer heat really tiring as his coat is so thick and fluffy and is often seen sleeping under a sun lounger or a bush. Banjo is continually grooming himself and you could probably make a rug with all the fur that moults from him when he loses his winter coat. He is at his fluffiest during the winter and he is a sight to behold, people that see him for the first time say 'Wow, he is huge!' He is also very stubborn and will sit on the wall in the rain not moving when you are calling and calling him. He is also known for sitting in the middle of the road or in front of the car and won't move, even if you are trying to get out of the drive. Banjo's favourite food is raw mince, he goes wild for it, and will stand on his back legs up at the kitchen unit to reach for it with his paw. Aside from mince and sleeping, Banjo loves nothing more than having his coat brushed with a broom or a dustpan brush, preferably one with harder bristles, the harder you brush him, the louder he purrs.

The lovely Sue Edwards has now taken over Banjo's care, and she loves him equally as much as I do. Banjo just loves to wander and make himself at home in the other neighbour's houses and gardens as that is what he has always done. When Marlay died, we knew Banjo would stay in the community, it's where he belongs and is loved by so many.

We look forward to featuring your own beloved and pampered pet photos in our winter edition. Please send us a photo and little story about them and we will do our best to dedicate as many stories and photos as we can – email: joannegriffiths0809@icloud.com

Joanne Griffiths

Woodland Walks and Community Folk

We can sometimes forget that we live in an area that offers some beautiful woodland walks with hidden surprises. For many of us, myself included, the recent pandemic and its resulting restrictions on our daily lives for several months presented the opportunity to rediscover these and retrace steps we had perhaps not taken since childhood.

One such woodland walk is that through the Cwm, with its hidden secrets – its two waterfalls – that attract visitors from neighbouring communities and beyond. Whilst out walking with a friend last month along another popular walk, the dram roads, we met a group of Ukrainian families who had heard about the waterfalls of Longford and set out to find them.

The group was led by Svetlana Lily, a Ukrainian national who has made Neath her home and runs her own arts and craft studio in Briton Ferry, Wool&Silk. She has been supporting her own family who have recently sought refuge in Neath from the conflict in Ukraine, as well as others who have been sponsored by local residents.



We got talking and we offered to join them on their walk so we could show them the way rather than attempt to describe directions to the nearest path that leads to the Cwm. When they asked if we were nearby, I reassured them we were close, and it was about a 5 minute walk away. What I hadn't anticipated was that the group was also on a mission.

During their walk they had noticed some litter, and instead of walking on by they decided to pick it up. This led them to seek out litter in the hedgerows and overgrowth either side of the paths as they made their way in search of the waterfalls.

My 5-minute estimate to the first became more like 35 minutes. I was humbled that these visitors to our community had taken it upon themselves to help keep our community litter free, so we can all enjoy the wildlife and scenery without the blight of litter.

I would like to say a big thank you to Svetlana, Oksana and the families for their example. If we all took our rubbish home, used one of the many public bins in the ward, or combined more of our own walks with litter picking we could collectively make a big difference in the community, and enjoy more walks with less litter about.

Дякую.

Lee Ibbotson

Helping Hands Knitting Group

We have missed sharing all our news with you and we are so pleased to be able to do so again through Dyffryn Ymlaen. During the worst of the pandemic, we were like so many other groups unable to meet together but thanks to our Facebook page and other social media and the good old telephone we were able to continue supporting one another.

Of course, knitting is a terrific pastime, keeps the brain cells and hands supple but also the items we knitted found their way to people who needed them or were sold to raise money. As often as we could we supported the local food banks and Calan DVS (domestic violence services) in the Neath and Skewen area. Sadly, our dispatch route for humanitarian aid to Syria was disrupted by the pandemic although our route to Romania continued to operate in a limited fashion. The area of Dorohoi that we support in Romania is 15 miles from the border with Ukraine and currently this already impoverished area is taking in thousands of refugees, so they need our help more than ever.

Since the end of January when the R rate dropped, we have met every week. A few of our group sadly passed away during the lockdown and not being to pay our respects was very difficult. We remember our friends always with love and thanks.

We recently held our AGM in which we decided a few of our fundraising aims for the coming year. The group has been inordinately affected by bowel cancer so causes connected with this will benefit as will research into Motor Neurone Disease.

You will probably be glad to hear that we have an upcoming Chinese Auction to raise money to donate to them. We enjoy this as much as the bidders do as it is a great social occasion meeting old and new friends and to win some real bargains of course.

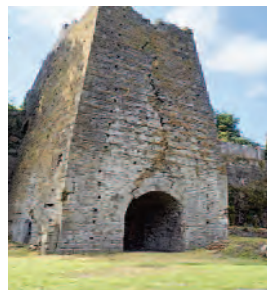
Mrs Val Berni, Chairman of our knitting group says,

"Ours is a friendly and sociable group as this is as much our purpose as our charitable aims. We have been delighted to welcome new friends to the group since things have got back to normal and look forward to many new adventures with them. We also have members in the community who do not come to meetings but knit for us with great enthusiasm. Thanks, you lovely lot! If you would like to do this, please get in touch. We also welcome donations of wool. Enjoy the summer everyone."

Alyson Thomas



FRIENDS OF NEATH ABBEY IRON COMPANY NEWSLETTER



WORK COMPLETED IN MAY

We met on 4 Sundays but were rained off on the 29th. An approximate total of 117 volunteer hours was spent on site:- litter picking; spreading woodchip to enhance the aspect of the "Brunel Bridge"; tidying the area around the concrete patio area; clearing Himalayan balsam; planting the tubs... We took part in "No Mow May" so minimal mowing and strimming was done.

DURING THE WEEK

There were a number of on site meetings during May with outside agencies to discuss work programmes, grant applications and site management. The Trustees met on Tuesday 17th May.

WILDFLOWER PLANTING

With our grant we purchased wildflower plugs which we have planted in the tubs along the fence line. The wildflowers were selected to encourage pollinators. The plugs were grown on before planting out and, so far, a rota of watering has ensured their survival. We have planted donated wildflower seeds throughout the site.

GREEN FLAG

On Monday 23rd May several Volunteers met with Dan Snaith. Dan is an Inspector from Keep Wales Tidy and was looking at the work we are doing to decide if we qualify to be awarded Green Flag status for the coming year. It was a good meeting, and we are hopeful that we will once again be able to claim to be a **GREEN FLAG SITE**.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

On Friday 27th May several volunteers spent the afternoon on site with representatives from CADW and Swansea University to look at ways our work can move forward in the conservation of the Ironworks Site. Together we are creating a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) which when completed, will hopefully secure the preservation of the site for a number of years, and will draw down funding and expert help.

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

A number of onsite meetings have taken place with representatives of NPTC to look at the management of the site. These meetings have resulted in the drafting of an Ecological Survey and Management Plan by Wendy J Larcombe, Consultant Ecologist. The plan will include a work schedule to hopefully take us forward for the next five years. The draft plan is currently being finalised and when complete will be a useful tool in going forward with our work.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Weekly litter pick
- Clearing Himalayan Balsam by hand, an invasive species.
- Spraying the Furnaces to clear weeds.
- Watering programme for planted wildflowers.
- Weekly mowing and strimming.
- Site Visit by Local Guide company.
- Planning for fundraising.
- Miscellaneous tasks as and when needed.

We meet at the Ironworks every Sunday 1pm to 4pm. New Volunteers very welcome! Wear stout shoes, bring gloves and a drink – we supply the biscuits!

NPT Bee Friendly



In recent years, the loss of wildflower grassland habitat and the pollinating insects they support has become an issue of public concern. NPT Council has a responsibility to address the nature and climate emergencies and is also committed to protect, conserve, and enhance our natural environment under the terms of the Corporate Plan, Biodiversity Duty Plan, NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan and Wales Pollinator Action Plan.

The Local Authority manages a significant amount of land as roadside verge through regular mowing and there is a significant opportunity to help pollinators and increase habitat in NPT through a change in management of some of this area.

With this in mind, A new approach to managing the verges and grasslands of NPT has been approved by the Council's Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board on 30th July 2021 and is being progressively implemented as resources allow.

This scheme is called 'NPT Bee Friendly'.

The principles of this approach are:

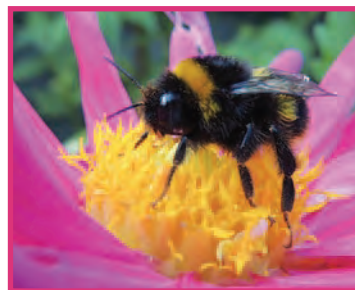
To increase the area and extent of wildflower grassland (i.e. roadside verges and larger meadow areas which are managed to encourage wildflowers and pollinating insects) in Neath Port Talbot County Borough, in support of the Council's Biodiversity Duty and the NPT Nature Recovery Action Plan.

To favour change of management over seeding or planting where possible, to encourage the native seed bank to flourish without introducing non-native species or those which would not naturally occur in the area.

Traditionally, our roadside verges in NPT are all cut every 2-3 weeks during the growing season i.e., late March to end September and the arisings are mulched and dropped on top of the grass. This fertilises the soil, encouraging further grass growth. As of 2021, at certain locations agreed with the Streetcare Services Section, we will be changing this management and instead encouraging the growth of wildflowers and reducing the frequency of required cuts through the use of 'cut and collect' machines. This will mean that in certain locations, you can look forward to a change in appearance from a short sward of green, to a more natural area, colourful with wildflowers and buzzing with life.

The NPT Bee Friendly Scheme includes grassland areas in publicly owned sites and roadside verges and expands on the previous 'Conservation Verges Scheme', which has been in operation since 2004.

Look out for the NPT Bee Friendly signs around the county!



Information taken from the NPT Council Website. For more information on the NPT Bee Friendly scheme and how you can get involved, please visit their website: npt.gov.uk

Cheats One Pan Mac n' Cheese

Simple, Swift, and Tasty cooking on a Budget

As the cost of living rises sharply, I thought we could help by introducing some fresh ideas for cooking a simple, tasty family meal for under £5. At the same time, I don't want people to slave over the stove for hours, wasting valuable time and costing even more money on extra gas and electricity. The first meal is a family favourite, a delicious macaroni cheese that tastes nothing like the Heinz version. It is cooked in one pan (I use a non-stick wok), so it even saves on the washing up.

Cooking Time - no more than 20 mins & makes 4-5 generous adult portions.

Ingredients:

- 350g Dried Macaroni – approx 60p
- 550ml Semi Skimmed Milk – approx 30p
- 300g Tub of Crème Fraiche – approx 89p
- 400g Cheese (I use extra mature cheddar) – approx £1.99 (Lidl/Aldi)
- 60g of any flour – approx 10p
- 2 Slices of bread for breadcrumbs – approx 15p

This is suitable for vegetarians. For meat lovers, adding some crispy bacon bits to the sauce is an optional extra but would obviously push the cost beyond £5.



How to make it

The first thing to say is that a blender helps for the crumb topping but you can crumble the bread by hand and mix in grated cheese in if you haven't got one.

Crumb Mix - Put the bread in a blender and give it a zap till it turns to crumbs. Then add 100g of your cheese and zap that.

Put your crumb mix to one side.

Mac n' Cheese - Add the macaroni to a pan of boiling water and cook for half of the cooking time (usually about 6 mins).

- Drain all the water off and put the pan and macaroni back on your hob.
- Add all the cold milk, crème fraiche, and ripped up chunks of the rest of the cheese.
- Sprinkle the flour in and add salt and pepper to taste.
- Cook over a medium heat stirring constantly until the cheese dissolves and the sauce turns smooth and creamy. Turn the heat down and let it simmer for a couple of minutes, this should be enough to cook the macaroni properly. Don't forget to keep stirring, you don't want it to burn.
- Turn off the heat and spread your crumb topping evenly over the top.
- Put it under a medium heat grill and cook until the top is brown and crunchy.
- Your Mac n' cheese will have the taste and texture of something authentic and oven cooked but you took the short cut.

Enjoyo! – Gareth Davies

Biodiversity & Wild Orchids in the Community

Since 2021 the ward of Dyffryn Clydach has chosen to become more eco-friendly by means of introducing a new limited mowing schedule in many of its public spaces. This encourages new mini eco- systems to thrive allowing a eco-web to exist linking more and more systems throughout the community. Amazingly, after just a short period of time applying this practice, the benefits are already clearly visible.

One of these is the return of the orchid. Once quite abundant it now seems a rarity and certainly something to treasure. The three species that you are most likely to see in the area are the 'Early purple', 'Common spotted' and 'Marsh Orchid, however they can be extremely difficult to identify due to way they easily mutate and form numerous sub species.

These plants belong to the classification 'Orchidaceae' a genus of over 28000 species worldwide making it the most diverse plant on earth. However, many species' does not necessarily mean many numbers so we should protect them as well as admire them.

They have been seen in Longford and the Highlands with even a few spotted in residential gardens. However, make the most of these majestic beauties for unlike other plants there is no guarantee they will pop up again next year.

Before I explain why, please note that it is illegal to uproot any wildflower in Britain without the landowner's permission and furthermore it is illegal to pick certain species or collect their seeds, the Orchid being one of these. It is also worth a mention that an uprooted Orchid which is then replanted in the garden is a death sentence for the plant and any seed collected will prove virtually impossible to germinate. As I mentioned before their scarcity is because they belong to a group of plants that bear seeds without any nutrients, they rely on a symbiotic relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. This relationship is at times highly complex. The Orchid does not produce carbon, therefore lacks a food source to germinate. This is provided by the fungi. When the Orchid forms its leaves above ground it is then able to photosynthesize. By doing so it can return the favour and provide food for the fungi.

The story provides a fascinating insight into the natural world and throws a little light into the complex world of the Orchid, a species which has been around since the Cretaceous period, some 100 million years ago.

The orchids are flourishing at the bottom of Heol Heddwach & Heol Penderyn, and more recently sighted at the memorial field (opposite the memorial hall). So, when you walk past these rare beauties, just think how privileged you are and enjoy their beauty while it lasts.

Joe Rayner

Image: Joe's Granddaughter Sapphire





CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS • GAIR O GADAI'R Y CADEIRYDD

How great it is to receive this new edition of Dyffryn Ymlaen! We have a full slate of new councillors with fresh ideas and a wealth of experience to bring to Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. In particular, I would like to welcome Joanne Griffiths, our new Ymlaen editor, who

has the challenging task of taking over from Sarah Elias. On your behalf I thank Sarah for all her hard work and wish her all the best in her endeavours. We bid farewell to a councillor of particularly long standing, Jennifer Davies, who arranged many of our council events and parties. Councillors also moving on to pastures new are Karon Hopkins, Lynda Lester, Paul Jarrett, Pat Kreischer and Geraint Morgan. Our warmest thanks and best wishes for the future to you all.

An election year is a very turbulent time for a new council and in order that we maintain constancy, I have accepted nomination to continue in the role of Chairman. I am honoured to accept this on your behalf. I am more than happy to come along to any meeting or event to which a resident may invite me as the council's representative.

I have also to thank our clerk Mr Randall Shopland for his continued service, particularly during the pandemic lockdowns and in coping with the need to develop new ways of working for us all. The council's Hall Caretaker Mrs Tina Draper and Groundsman Harry Davies also deserve mention for their continued support over the most difficult period ever.

One thing you may all be able to help us with is in boosting the use of our hall. Since lockdown many groups have sadly finished or moved on and we have a really excellent facility ready for parties, groups, meetings and education or exercise classes. Please contact our clerk for hire details. The newly formed Community Links group is already working hard in reconnecting people which is very helpful. Enjoy the summer season and appreciate the company of your family and friends in our beautiful Dyffryn Clydach.

Cllr Mrs Alyson Thomas.

Dyna braf derbyn y rhifyn newydd hwn o Dyffryn Ymlaen! Mae gennym gyflenwad llawn o gynghorwyr newydd sy'n byrlymu â syniadau ffres a chyfoeth o brofiad i'w roi at ddefnydd Cyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach. Yn arbennig, hoffwn groesawu Joanne Griffiths, golygydd newydd Ymlaen, sydd wedi derbyn y dasg heriol o gamu i esgidiau Sarah Elias. Ar eich rhan hoffwn ddiolch i Sarah am ei holl waith caled a dymuno'r gorau iddi yn y dyfodol. Rydym hefyd yn ffarwelio ag un cynghorydd yn arbennig a roddodd wasanaeth maith, sef Jennifer Davies, a drefnodd sawl un o'n digwyddiadau a phartion yn y cyngor. Y cynghorwyr eraill sy'n dechrau ar fywyd newydd y tu hwnt i'r cyngor yw Karon Hopkins, Lynda Lester, Paul Jarrett, Pat Kreischer a Geraint Morgan. Estynnwn ein diolch mwyaf twymgalon a'n dymuniadau gorau at y dyfodol atoch bob un.

Mae blwyddyn etholiad yn gyfnod cythryblus bob amser i gyngor newydd, ac er mwyn i ni gynnal cysondeb, rwyf innau wedi derbyn yr enwebiad i barhau yn sedd y Cadeirydd. Fy mraint yw derbyn hyn ar eich rhan. Rwy'n fwy na hapus i ddod i unrhyw gyfarfod neu ddigwyddiad pan fydd preswlydd yn estyn gwahoddiad i mi fel cynrychiolydd y cyngor.

Rhaid i mi hefyd ddiolch i'n clerc, Mr Randall Shopland, am ei wasanaeth parhaus, yn enwedig yn ystod cyfnodau clo'r pandemig, ac wrth iddo ymdopi â'r angen i ddatblygu dulliau newydd o weithio i bawb ohonom. Mae angen crybwyll hefyd Ofalwr Neuadd y Cyngor Mrs Tina Draper a'r Gofalwr Tir Harry Davies am eu cefnogaeth barhaus dros y cyfnod anoddaf erioed.

Un peth y gallech chi oll ein helpu ag ef yw hybu'r defnydd o'n neuadd. Ers y cyfnod clo, mae llawer o grwpiau wedi gorffen neu wedi symud i diroedd newydd, yn anffodus, ond mae gennym gyfleuster gwirioneddol ragorol sy'n barod ar gyfer cael ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer partion, grwpiau, cyfarfodydd a dosbarthiadau addysg neu ymarfer corff. Cysylltwch â'n clerc i gael manylion llogi os gwelwch yn dda. Mae'r grŵp Dolenni Cymunedol sydd newydd ei ffurfio eisoes yn gweithio'n galed i ailgysylltu pobl, sy'n ddefnyddiol iawn. Mwynhewch dymor yr haf, a gwnewch yn fawr o gwmni eich teulu a'ch ffrindiau yn harddwch ein Dyffryn Clydach.

Y Cynghorydd Mrs Alyson Thomas.

Cyngor Cymuned
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