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Dyffryn Clydach

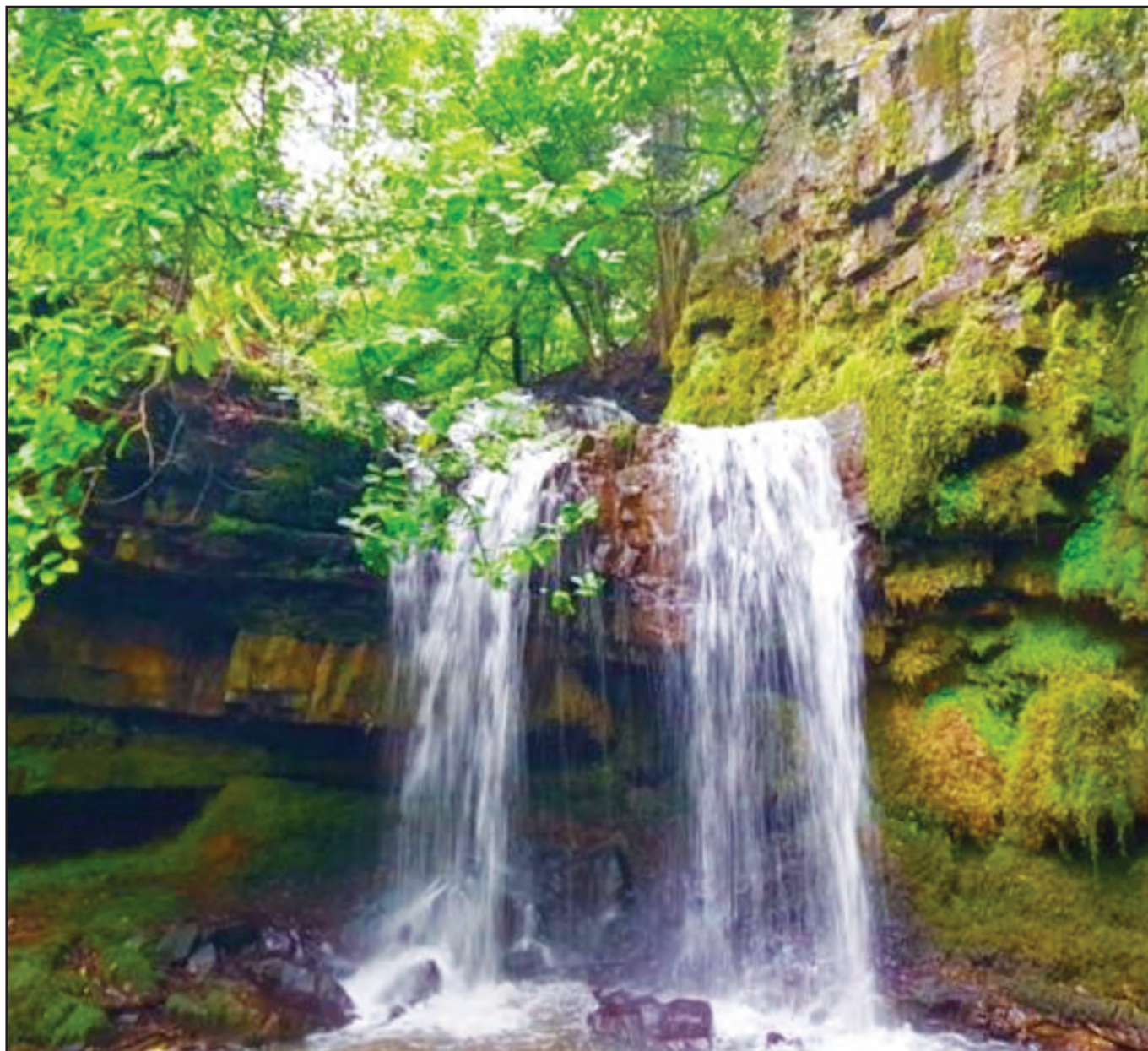


Newsletter of the
Dyffryn Clydach
Community Council

SUMMER
2019
40p

Additional copies available from Abbey Gate Stores and Longford Stores or the Editor, Cllr Sarah Elias
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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



Coed Bach Waterfall, Longford Road.

Photo taken by Jeff Griffiths



Editor's Note

Welcome to the summer edition of Ymalen 2019. There are new beginnings within the Community Council as we wish our new Chairperson Councillor Karon Hopkins every success in her new role. Thankyou to Councillor Jennifer Davies for her hard work as Chairperson this past year and also her team who ensure the success of the parties in the hall run free of charge for the community.



Nature plays a prominent theme in this issue with the fabulous article by Jeff Griffiths on the rare blue ground beetle that has found a home locally amongst other nocturnal residents. We also have our trial of wildflower patches in the hope of attracting pollinators such as bees which need all the help they can get. We hope to grow more if they are a success because they are an attractive feature of the locality as well as helping nature. The planters delivered in the Spring have been a huge success and popular locally and we hope to plant more trees particularly in areas that have not had them yet. Have a lovely summer and enjoy the issue!

Sarah Elias

Abbey Primary School

Councillor Alyson Thomas visited Abbey Primary School recently as part of her role as School Governor. She was impressed by the high standards and took these lovely photos of some excellent work by the pupils there. Well done all!



*Examples of Work from the Pupils of Abbey
Primary School*

Pets Corner

This pretty cat is Phoebe who was rescued twenty years ago from acts of cruelty. A child took her away from the situation and his family went on to adopt the lucky moggy. Phoebe is an avid mouser



and has been depositing rodent remains on the doorstep for years. She also watches local bird life at length but hopefully has never been successful in her attempts to catch them.

Phoebe eventually relocated herself to a new home (as cats tend to). Then in 2017 she sadly lost the use of her back legs but due to weeks of patient occupational therapy from the vet nurses in Skewen and also reiki and acupuncture sessions, she has made a remarkable recovery. She is now a retired and slightly disabled twenty year old lady with all her own teeth (bar three!). She is looking forward to a nice summer so she can lounge in the garden and see in her twenty-first year. What a remarkable cat!

Longford Mothercraft Club Charity Successes!

The members of the long running Longford Mothercraft Club have had success in raising money for many charities recently, through various means. In Easter 2018 they knitted chicks and followed on at Christmas with santas and snowmen, sold them and raised funds. They also held various social evenings throughout the year to fundraise.

This enabled them to give £1000 to the friends of nurses at MacMillan in Neath Port Talbot and Singleton hospitals in January 2018. They donated again to the same cause in June 2018, again another £1000. They fundraised for Amelia Evans from Bryncoch and donated £200 towards her trip to the USA for special treatment that she was unable to access in the UK. Their latest donation was to the A.B.M.U.H.B Cimla nurses and the amount was £200. Congratulations to all involved on a splendid achievement and we wish you luck in your future endeavours.



Sad loss of a hero who lived in the community of Dyffryn Clydach

Mr Arthur Pigeon has sadly passed away; he lived in the community for many years and was awarded five garden certificates from the Community Council for his gardening skills. However he was far better known for his military honours including the French Legion D'Honneur, which is a prestigious medal, awarded to the few. The medal was received for his part in the D-day landings and is the highest honour that the French government awards.



He lived an exciting life and when only twenty-three years old trained with the Navy Commandos prior to joining HMS Ojojo. He took part in the D. Day landings under the command of Captain RL Hamer to fight that day to rescue servicemen from Gold Beach in Normandy. At 6pm on D. Day the ship was bombed and a 250 gallon tank of fuel exploded. Arthur was asleep during a rest period on the deck of the ship at the time. The blast lifted him several feet up in the air and he woke as he fell back down onto the deck.

During his five and a half years on the ship he earned a further three medals through a packed naval career which included many other dangerous missions. He sailed on 13 North Atlantic convoys, one of which claimed a U boat but this was not proven. They also took down a Meschersmitt.

Arthur Pigeon was born in Derby but lived in Wales for many years. Prior to becoming a sailor, Arthur worked as a baker, which is where he met wife.

Mr Pigeon's working life remained exciting, trying a variety of jobs when back on Civvy Street including at one time being a bodyguard to a Mafia boss!

His modesty at his wartime contribution and receiving the Legion d'Honneur was striking. He did not want the pomp and ceremony of an official presentation opting for courier delivery instead. 'I was only doing my job, that's what I was trained to do.' He had moved away from the area fairly recently and will be well remembered and sadly missed.

Dates for the Diary

After the summer holidays with the approach of Autumn there will be a Halloween children's disco free of charge in Longford Memorial Hall on Saturday, 26th October, at 2.30pm until 4.30pm.

As usual there will be hotdogs, drinks, games and music and we hope to see children in their spookiest, scariest Halloween costumes, see you there!



PACT MEETINGS

Local PACT meetings are held bi-monthly in Longford Memorial Hall at 6.30 pm on the following dates;

- Thursday, 13th June, 2019
- Thursday, 8th August, 2019
- Thursday, 3rd October, 2019
- Thursday, 12th December, 2019

The purpose of the meetings is to bring together our local PCSO Sally Thomas and Councillor Martyn Peters to meet members of the public from the Dyffryn Clydach area who have any issues they would like to discuss and possibly seek action on. Topics covered frequently are anti-social behaviour, vandalism, parking and motoring issues. Everyone is welcome to attend.

HELPFUL INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY YOUTHS

Interesting information from a neighbouring area where a group of under twelves are behaving in anti-social ways and causing a great nuisance and upset to the community. From discussions with PCSOs and officers it transpires that children can be found culpable from age ten and if you suspect they are causing criminal damage, theft or assault you are perfectly within the law to photograph or film such youngsters. Knowing where your children are and what they are up to helps prevent anti-social behaviour as does teaching respect for others and their property.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Canon Dr. Brian Lodwick on his recent election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. This is an honour given only to those who have made an exceptional contribution to the study of history and antiquities. The total membership is limited to 3300 Fellows and so this is a considerable achievement by Dr Lodwick who serves as President both of the Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Historical Society and of the Skewen and District Historical Society. Canon Lodwick, a resident of Neath Abbey, formerly served in the offices of Treasurer and Chancellor of Llandaff Cathedral during his illustrious career in the Church in Wales. He has published a series of local studies including those on St John's Church, Skewen, and the Neath Abbey School. He recently published 'Morgan Reynolds and Maesyllan Neath Abbey'. Among his other achievements, Reynolds was responsible for designing the school which has variously been called Skewen Lower, Mynachlog Nedd and is now known as the Abbey School. We are fortunate to have such a distinguished Churchman and scholar of history in our community.

After Dark ...

Whilst we can appreciate the joys of Nature surrounding us by day we mightn't be so aware of what's going on in the animal kingdom after dark.

The Bryncoch Environment Group (BEG) undertakes an annual 'Toad Patrol' between February and March when members go out at night helping rescue amphibians – toads, frogs and newts – which are on their annual migration to their breeding ground at Cwm Clydach / Dyffryn Pond. The expansion of housebuilding locally has cut across a traditional migration route and we've seen a year-on-year reduction in numbers as a result. Amphibians find themselves vulnerable on our hard surfaced roads and pavements and through falling down drains. BEG members go out after dark – amphibians prefer to move on wet nights – picking them off roads and netting them out of drains before taking them to the pond side for release. This year over 700 amphibians were rescued but also many scores of them were found killed. An increasing number of children are now joining us on these annual Toad Patrols. It's so encouraging to see the emphasis which the local schools now place on environmental studies. After all, it's their future world we're seeking to protect.

Another annual exercise the BEG undertakes is a bat survey. Let's demolish some myths about bats. They are not flying rodents nor do they suck your blood or get entangled in your hair. They just might fly close to you in search of insects but their amazing use of echolocation will prevent them from landing on you. Each of the different bat species emits a distinct sound pattern which can be identified with electronic bat detectors - Pipistrelle bats are the ones most commonly identified. So, enjoy seeing them flitting in the air on a summer's night ... and forget those myths about vampires!

If you have hedgehogs in your garden please look after them well as you're one of the few lucky ones to enjoy the presence of these endangered creatures.

Hedgehogs need space to roam so, if you have an enclosed garden, you might be getting in the way of their plans. We can make their life easier by, for example, making holes in or under our garden fences

and walls for them. Hedgehogs are insectivores with over 70% of their natural diet being insects and beetles, some worms and only a very tiny amount of slugs and snails. ****Do not give them bread and milk**** - they cannot digest the bread and cows milk gives hedgehogs very bad diarrhoea so many die because of this wrong diet. They'll appreciate food left out at night for them especially cat and dog food, chicken in particular. You'll need to protect this food so it's not eaten by others with something like an upturned plastic bowl with a small door cut into it. Put out food at night after the flies have gone too as fly maggots cause serious harm to hedgehogs. And they'll



certainly appreciate water being left out for them. If you find an injured hedgehog then try to get it to one of the specialist animal hospitals which look after these delightful creatures. Come the autumn do please check you don't have a hibernating hedgehog in your Guy Fawkes bonfire pile.

In recent years keen-eyed locals began to find a large beetle which, when sent for identification, turned out to be



the rare Blue Ground Beetle. Growing to over an inch long it is Britain's largest ground beetle with metallic blue markings and long legs which is active nocturnally. It had been thought to be extinct until the 1990s and has only previously been

identified in Devon and Cornwall. Buglife Cymru and the Woodland Trust obtained Heritage Lottery Fund sponsorship to investigate the Blue Ground Beetle in this area. Night hunts this year have exceeded expectations with numbers of this distinctive species having been found. The record books will have to be rewritten now to reflect the fact that the Dyffryn Clydach locality has what appears to be a long-established colony of this globally threatened species, such an exciting development for us.

Jeff Griffiths is the Chair of the Bryncoch Environment Group

Litter Bugs

Well Spring has sprung and as we see the lighter evenings and warm dry weather we also see a return of the litter bug - especially in certain 'party' areas. It never ceases to amaze me that people will happily struggle to carry heavy bottles and cans but leave the empties for others to clear away. Even worse is the deliberate smashing of bottles – leaving the area very dangerous for children and animals. Broken glass is extremely difficult to totally clear up and it only takes a small shard to cause an injury. Some of this littering is happening in farmers fields where horses graze and the grass is cut for hay.

Another interesting litter problem is the people who think it is okay to bag up litter and throw it out of their cars as they drive along. This is a particular problem along Longford road. We have many volunteers in the area who give up their time to regularly litter pick, only to see their hard work undone by thoughtless individuals.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem though there are bins placed through the Dyffryn Clydach area. it should be noted that any bin will do not just the red waste bins. Dog poo bags are cheap enough, so please clean up after your dog, not only is it unsightly but can be a serious health hazard. Prosecutions have been made locally from people littering, fly tipping and allowing their dog to foul the area and not clean up afterwards. Dont let that be you - please bag it and bin it- be it litter or dog waste!

LOCAL HISTORY

The Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Historical Society takes a break during June and July. Our next talk then is on Tuesday, August 13 at Bryncoch Community Centre at 7 pm where Tim Fearnside will speak on 'Relating Maps to Landscape and Archaeology' which provides new insights into this area.

Our Facebook group now has around 430 members. If you're online why not join this group to see the many fascinating photos and information on there? Recent postings have included photos and discussions about the Main Colliery Company's railway lines from their pits in Bryncoch and Skewen. These met at Penshannel and wagons were then lowered by cable down the Skewen Incline under Brunel's three arched bridge, across the White Gates - a name which some hadn't realised came from the railway crossing gates there - and eventually on to the Company's Neath Abbey wharf from where the coal was exported by sea. There've also been photos of Bater's Maesmelin Quarry, once a thriving enterprise. Your recollections and photos are very welcome so do join us if you're not already a member.

Jeff Griffiths
Events Secretary

Claim the verges for your community!

We are trialling a scheme that sees members of our community take responsibility for pieces of land such as verges local to them. It is hoped that people will take the initiative and look after grass verges and such and make something of the land or cut the grass on the verges and keep them tidy and litter free. Some examples of projects would be to plant up a herb garden for the community or to plant wildflowers to help our ailing bee population and encourage other pollinators which are crucial for the survival of future generations due to their role in the production of food. If you are a resident of Dyffryn Clydach and are interested please contact Councillor Martyn Peters (E-mail cllr.d.m.peters@npt.gov.uk) for help and advice. This would make a lovely project to include the children in and could enrich our local environment as well as helping the insects. Happy gardening!



Community award for Mrs Ann Harries

On a lovely sunny afternoon in Longford in February 2019, Dyffryn Clydach Community Council held a ceremony honouring Mrs Ann Harries (MBE) for her charity and community work. Mrs Harries who lived in Longford for two years (in the police house as her husband was a Constable), works for many different organisations. She is head of the Mother's Union, a member of the WI, a Committee member of the Historical Society, and though semi-retired has been a Justice of the Peace, Deputy Lord Lieutenant and a District Commissioner for Neath Scouts, becoming the first female to hold the position in the whole of West Glamorgan. She was presented with her award by the Chair of the Community Council Mrs Jennifer Davies and Mrs Harries said 'I've had fun doing what I do with friends'. Councillor Martyn Peters said he was proud to know Mrs Harries and that she was 'an asset to the area'. Mrs Harries said she likes to have a challenge and we are grateful for the wonderful work she has done, so while we all wish her many congratulations, we ask what she will do next!



Longford Memorial Hall Information

For bookings please contact Mr Randall Shopland - 01639 635787

DYFFRYN CLYDACH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Day	Room	Times	Organisation
Monday	Main Hall	Morning	Longford Shortmat Bowls (9:00am – 11:00am)
		Evening	DRACO Youth Group
	Committee Room	Evening	Council Meeting (1 st Monday of month) Plaid Cymru Constituency Party (Last Monday of month)
Tuesday	Committee Room	Morning	WI Committee (2 nd Tuesday of month)
	Main Hall	Afternoon	Neath Abbey / Longford OAP / Over 50s Club (Alternative Tuesdays) Dyffryn Clydach / Bryncoch Historical Society (Monthly)
Wednesday	Main Hall	Morning	NPT Parkinson's Support Group (3 rd Wednesday of month)
		Afternoon	Wednesday Stitchers
		Evening	Neath Abbey WI Branch (Last Wednesday of month))
Thursday	Main Hall	Afternoon	Helping Hands Group
	Main Hall	Evening	Karate Club
	Committee Room	Afternoon	Mothercraft Club
		Evening	Neath Abbey Labour Party (3 rd Thursday of month)
Friday	Main Hall	Evening	Charity Social / Bingo
Saturday	Main Hall	Morning	Tiny Toes Ballet (Term-time only)

Dyffryn Clydach Community Council Longford Memorial Hall - Schedule of Hall Charges With effect from 1st April 2019

Main Hall	Children's party	£33.60 for two hour session and £16.80 per subsequent hour. Residents of Dyffryn Clydach pay £31.50 for two hours and £15.75 per subsequent hour. All party bookings must be for a minimum of two hours and a refundable security bond of £25 is payable in advance.
	Fund-raising Events	£19.50 per evening session to 9:00pm (Social Evenings / Jumble Sales / etc)
	Regular Users	Local voluntary organisations / groups £8.40 per hour. Others £9.65 per hour.
	Non-regular Users	Meetings etc £13.00 per hour. Others £9.65 per hour.
Committee Rooms	Meetings / Seminars / Classes	£10.70 per morning / afternoon / evening sessions

All charges shown are inclusive of VAT at 20%

A Pleasurable Place to Live

As a community we still lead the way and we need to challenge ourselves to be even better. We were aiming to improve the local environment even further by taking delivery of sixteen recycled planter boxes with roses and lavender inside. This was achieved with the help of



Martyn Peters, Eloise Stanton and Paul Hinder

Paul Hinder, Eloise Stanton and Phil Davies, the supervisor of Grounds Maintenance and his staff so many thanks go to them. They have been placed in positions where local residents have agreed to take care of them. They appear to be a success but will need maintaining over the coming years.

Dyffryn Clydach is a community made up of smaller communities, we have Penshannel/The Highlands, Longford,

Neath Abbey, Cwrt Herbert and Dyffryn. All have their qualities and are a part of this special area in which we live however we have a problem that is a blight and that is littering. There is no need for it and it is easily solved. We have local litter



picking groups and also many individuals and will be posting litter picking outings on the residents facebook page over the summer. If anyone locally wishes to receive a litter picking stick please contact Councillor Martyn Peters, his e-mail is cllr.d.m.peters@npt.gov.uk. We are also trialling cultivation of wildflowers in small patches around Longford, Drummau Road and The Highlands. If these are a success we hope to plant up many other areas through Dyffryn Clydach. We have also planted trees to improve the appearance of our locality and will continue to do so focusing on areas where there are none currently.

Fabulous Fashion Fundraising

A fundraising event was held in March to raise money for the South Wales Humanitarian Aid. This wonderful organisation helps refugees in camps in places such as Syria. They held a fabric, clothing and craft sale in the Coach House in Longford and raised £1288. The event was very busy and a resounding success.



Amongst the stallholders were Carol Jones the textile artist whose stall is pictured here, and artist Julie Whitehouse's pictures amongst many others. Tea and cake was free on the day and there was a raffle as well as lovely Welsh folk music.

Well done on such a fabulous day and let's hope there will be another one soon!



Colourful wildflowers have been planted in Neath Abbey. A nice way to cheer up the locality



Here is a vintage picture postcard of 'Dyffryn Church and Vicarage'. Can you guess the approximate year this is from?

Chairperson's Address • Cyfarchiad y Cadeirydd

I would like to open with a big thank you to all the residents of Dyffryn Clydach for all you do in making the area such a lovely place to live. I am originally from Cardiff and moved here in the early 1980s and decided to stay (despite the teasing!). I have found a neighbouring spirit sadly missing in many places. Whether that is looking out for and helping vulnerable neighbours, finding lost pets, raising awareness of possible trouble or helping to keep the area looking its best with regular litter picking. Recently some hardy volunteers cleaned mud from extended stretches of the Dram Road.

We live in such a beautiful area that is so full of history – if you have not attended a talk given by the Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch History society then you are missing out.

I would also like to thank my fellow Community Councillors and Clerk for their support and confidence in me as I undertake the role of Chairperson for this coming year.

I would also like to give a special mention to groundsman Harry for all of his hard work to maintain the hall and play areas; Tina the caretaker and Jen's army of volunteers who help out at the Council events in the hall.

I can often be found out and about walking my dog and litter picking in the locality so please stop and say 'hello'.

Councillor Karon Hopkins



Hoffwn gychwyn gan ddiolch yn fawr i holl drigolion Dyffryn Clydach am gadw'r ardal mor ddymunol i fyw. Rwy'n wreiddiol o Gaerdydd ond symudais yma i fyw yn y 1980au cynnar. Nid oedd angen llawer o berswâd arnaf gan fod ysbryd cymdeithasol yn amlwg yma boed yn cynorthwyo cymdogion bregus, chwilio am anifeiliaid anwes, neu fy rhybuddio am ryw anawsterau neu broblemau all godi ynghyd â chadw'r lle mor gymen. Hyd yn oed yn ddiweddar bu gwirfoddolwyr yn glanhau mwd o'r Dram-ffordd.

Mae Dyffryn Clydach yn hardd ac yn gyfoethog o ran hanes fel mae rhai ohonoch yn gwybod wrth fynychu Cymdeithas Hanes Dyffryn Clydach a Bryncoch.

Hoffwn ddiolch i'm Cyd-Gynghorwyr a'r Clerc am eu cefnogaeth a'u hymddiriedaeth ynof wrth i mi cael fy ethol yn Gadeirydd am y flwyddyn nesaf. Diolchaf hefyd i Harry ein tirmon am ei waith wrth gyroni o amgylch y neuadd a'r ardal chwarae; i Tina ein gofalgwraig a'r tîm o wirfoddolwyr, sydd, o dan adain Jen yn llywio gweithgareddau'r neuadd.

Falle y gwelwch fi o gwmpas yr ardal yn cerdded fy nghy neu'n casglu sbwriel; os byddwch, croeso i chi ddod ataf i gael sgwrs.

Y Cynghorydd Karon Hopkins

Karon's Eurovision Tasty Treat

This recipe comes from our very own Karon Hopkins, famous for her love of Eurovision and she assures me this is good party food but you can eat it anytime, it is Cheese and Olive Puffs (Burek - a recipe from Montenegro);

Ingredients

- Puff pastry (shop bought)
- Feta cheese diced
- 2 eggs beaten
- Kalamata olives – destoned and chopped
- A few sprigs of parsley-chopped
- Sesame seeds
- Egg for the wash

Method

Add the parsley/olives to the cheese and mix well
Roll out the puff pastry and cut into small rectangles
Place a spoonful of mixture onto the pastry
Brush the inside edges of the pastry with the egg wash and fold over. Crimp the edges together with a fork.
Prick the top of the pastry brush with the egg wash and sprinkle with sesame seeds
Cook for 15-20 minutes on Gas Mark 5 or 375 degrees fahrenheit.

Leave to cool before eating

Karon says she has made them several times and they have always gone down well, Enjoy!



Dyffryn Clydach Community Council chairperson handover from Councillor Jennifer Davies to Councillor Karon Hopkins.

Extra copies of *Ymlaen* will be available at Abbeygate Stores and Longford Stores. Thank you to Jagtar and to Jan for their support. Remember to support your local shops and businesses.

Bydd copi'au ychwanegol Ymlaen ar gael yn Siop y Gât a Siop Rhydhir. Diolch i Jagtar a Jan am eu cymorth. Cofiwch gefnogi eich siopau a busnesau lleol.

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