

Monmouthshire Countryside Cefn Gwlad Sir Fynwy



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sir fynwy

A newsletter for Volunteers and Friends of Monmouthshire Countryside Service

Issue 29

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If you would like to receive this newsletter in Welsh please contact Morag Sinton.

Welcome

I hope you had a good summer, and perhaps enjoyed some time at the **National Eisteddfod** held on our very own Castle Meadows. They are predicting a colourful autumn, and there are lots of opportunities to walk in Monmouthshire and enjoy it, including the **MonDean Walking Festival**, our **guided walks programme** and the new **Pathcare Walking Group**. You'll find details about all of these below.

If you have comments or questions or would like to contribute to future newsletters please contact Morag Sinton, Countryside Volunteer Coordinator on 01633 644663 or moragsinton@monmouthshire.gov.uk

New Pathcare Walking Group

I have started a pathcare walking group in order to provide opportunities for volunteers to work together, socialise and share knowledge as well as getting more promoted routes checked and maintained.



To start with, walks are taking place fortnightly on Wednesdays, and have been aimed at pathcare volunteers.

There were six of us on the first walk, the five mile Dingestow Court circuit. We were able to cut back a lot of encroaching vegetation, replace waymarks and take advantage of all the ripe blackberries. The second walk was 'In the Shadow of St Teilo's Spire', a leaflet produced as part of the Walking with Offa project to promote circular walks from the Offa's Dyke Path. As well as the usual pathcare tasks we surveyed two footbridges and enjoyed lunch on the steps of St Teilo's church in Llantilio Crossenny.

If you are interested in the Pathcare Walking Group please let me (Morag) know. Our next walk will be on Wednesday 12th October on the Wye Valley Walk from Chepstow to Brockweir.



Pathcare

Autumn Pathcare Check

Jobs to focus on in the Pathcare checks in September and October include:

- scraping any build up of soil, leaves etc from steps and bridge decking
- making sure stiles and other path furniture are free of brambles etc

Summer Pathcare Check

Thank you to all the volunteers who carried out Pathcare checks in June and July. Volunteers spent 176 hours checking 36 routes, a great effort which helps keep the paths open and in good condition.

Pathcare Groups

Brian Mahony from the path group in **the Narth** writes:

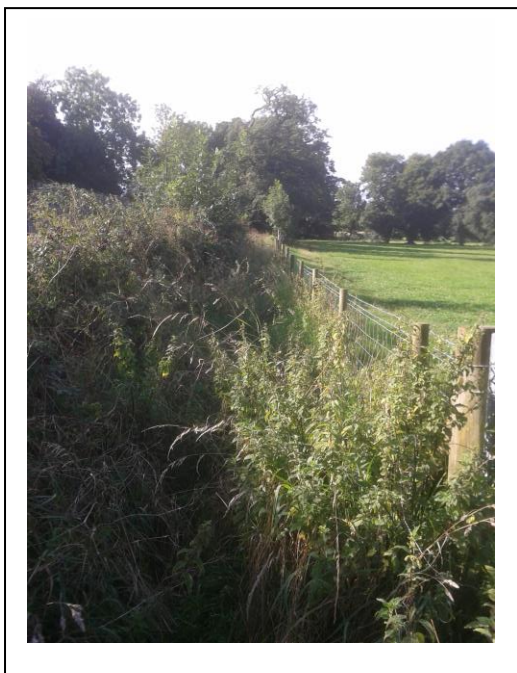
In addition to the 4 volunteers who worked on the surveys, we now have another 5 volunteers who have participated on the work days with the Countryside Team. We cleared 150 metres of an attractive footpath across the bottom of the Manor Brook valley that has been impassable for probably thirty years and installed 24 new or replacement waymark posts and fingerposts around the village. We also did some light clearance work as we went clearing existing way marks and stiles.

All of the volunteers have enjoyed it and are happy to do more!

We are now planning our first village walk in October.



A group from **Chepstow Walkers are Welcome** are now going out regularly on Thursdays to pathcare routes in their area. The photos below show a path on the Mathern Wyelands circular walk before and after it was cleared in early September.





In July **Treadlightly's** local LaneCare volunteers spent a morning on pathcare route 26 (Llanvetherine to Llangattock Lingoed) on a section of

unclassified county road (UCR) which can become impassably wet and muddy. They put down 3 tons of stone and made improvements to the drainage. More work will be needed but this should make it easier to use the route through the winter.

Treadlightly is a voluntary organisation that sets out to protect motorised recreational access opportunities through education, partnership and conservation initiatives. In Monmouthshire Treadlightly is working with the Council's Highways department to develop a 'LaneCare' project to work on some of the County's UCRs in a similar way to Pathcare on public rights of way.

We hope to hear more from John Askew, Treadlightly's local representative, in a future issue.



National Eisteddfod 2016

Castle Meadows underwent quite a transformation in order to host an outstanding National Eisteddfod in August. Covered with tents, pavilions and stalls, it welcomed thousands of people to the Maes over the course of a mostly dry week.

Countryside Volunteers helped erect signs produced by retired warden Denis Manning for use around Monmouthshire County Council's tent. Friends of Castle Meadows were there and displayed the Green Flag award presented to them in a ceremony during the week. The Countryside Service, with help from volunteers, offered treasure hunts, pond dipping and guided walks from the Gwyddonle (science tent). It was a great opportunity to use our Welsh and show off our area with pride.

All the trappings of the Eisteddfod have now been removed from Castle Meadows and it just requires some time to allow the grass to grow back, compacted areas to recover and cattle to return and graze the meadows.



Volunteer Timesheets

Please remember to send in a record of any hours spent volunteering in July, August and September as soon as possible. Volunteer hours demonstrate clearly the huge amount of support we receive from volunteers and help us continue our support for volunteers.



This year's MonDean Walking Festival runs from Saturday 1st to Sunday 9th October. Experienced walk leaders will help you explore hidden corners as well as well-loved areas of the Wye Valley, Monmouthshire and the Forest of Dean. The programme includes: rambles ranging from 3 to 7 or 8 miles; longer hikes up to 12 miles; a canoe and walk trip from Monmouth to Redbrook and back; several peaks of the Black Mountains on a 20+ mile walk; the 3 Castles Walk; history and wildlife in the Forest of Dean; and walking the old railway from Chepstow to Monmouth.

For more information and to book tickets please visit www.walkinginmonmouthshire.org

Guided Walks

The Countryside Service organises a programme of walks which usually take place on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. The walk leaders are countryside volunteers, bringing their own expertise and local knowledge to the walks. For further information please contact Mark Langley, Head Countryside Warden, 01291 691237.

Sunday 23rd October 2016

Usk to Cefn Ila for Apple Day

Outward walk 11.00am (Approx. 1 hour), 1.5 miles (2.5 km)

Return walk 2.00pm (Approx. 3/4 hour), 1.25 miles (2 kms)

Join Countryside Warden Mark Langley to walk from Usk to the Woodland Trust Apple Day event at Cefn Ila. Spend 2 hours at the event before walking back to Usk, (or you can catch a minibus if you prefer). A few stiles and 1 steep slope. Dogs on short leads permitted.

Meet at the entrance to the Usk Rural Life Museum ([SO 375 007](http://SO375007)). Post code NP15 1AU.

Saturday 5th November 2016

Little Skirrid

10.30am (Approx. 2 hours), 3.5 miles (5.7km)

A walk from Abergavenny to the summit of the Little Skirrid for breath taking views.

10 stiles, steep ascent and descent. This is one of Monmouthshire Countryside Service's promoted walk routes.

Meet at Abergavenny Bus Station Car Park, Pay & Display ([SO 301 140](http://SO301140)) Post code NP7 5HF.

Sunday 20th November 2016

Dingestow to Kingswood Circular

10.30am (Approx. 3 hours) 5 miles (8km)

A varied walk taking in St. Dingat's Church, Kingswood and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, and passing two castle mounds and Treowen, once the tallest house in Monmouthshire. A few stiles and 1 steep slope. Bring a packed lunch and a drink.

Dingestow village is off the old Raglan to Monmouth road 3.5 miles west of Monmouth. Park in the car park opposite the village hall ([SO 458 101](#)). Postcode NP25 4BE.

Saturday 3rd December 2016

Fantastic views, ancient cave and beautiful river

10.30am (Approx. 6 hours) 10.5 miles (17km)

A steep ascent to the Kymin, followed by woodland to the Suckstone and Near Harkening Rock, then returning by King Arthur's Cave and the banks of the River Wye. 2 very steep slopes, 2 other slopes and a few stiles. Bring a packed lunch and a drink.

Meet outside the Leisure Centre in Monmouth ([SO 513 131](#)). Postcode NP25 3YT.

Sunday 18th December 2016

Llanover and Out!

10.30am (Approx. 4.5 hours) 7.5 miles (12.km)

A circular walk taking in Llanover Park, the foothills of the Brecon Beacons, the Goose and Cuckoo public house and a section of the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal. Bring a packed lunch and a drink. Several steep slopes and 32 stiles. This is one of Monmouthshire Countryside Service's promoted walk routes.

Meet at the large lay-by on the eastern side of the A4042 between Llanellen and Llanover ([SO 306 097](#)). Postcode NP7 9EB.

Websites and the Internet

Some forms for volunteers (expenses claim, timesheet, pathcare survey form) are now available to download directly from the MCC website [here](#).

You can also view a working copy of our definitive map of public rights of way at <http://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk>, download pages to print off and report problems you come across.

You can still download information and documents from the Monmouthshire Countryside website - <http://www.monmouthshirecountryside.wordpress.com>. Much of the content of this site will be moving to the VisitMonmouthshire website at www.visitmonmouthshire.com soon.

Contact Details

Monmouthshire County Council Countryside Service

PO Box 106

Caldicot

Monmouthshire

NP26 9AN

01633 644850

countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Morag Sinton

Countryside Volunteer Coordinator

01633 644663

moragsinton@monmouthshire.gov.uk