

Monmouthshire Countryside Cefn Gwlad Sir Fynwy



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A newsletter for Volunteers and Friends of Monmouthshire Countryside Service

Issue 30

December 2016

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

Season's Greetings

As we come to the end of 2016, I and the whole countryside team would like to thank you all for your continued support as volunteers and partners. We are hugely grateful for your contributions to managing Monmouthshire's countryside, which helps us to deliver a better and more extensive service. We wish you a restful and enjoyable Christmas and look forward to continuing to work together in 2017.

Matthew Lewis, Countryside Manager

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



Review of Rights of way Improvement Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is inviting residents, businesses and organisations to comment on the review of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). The outline plan has been published on the council's website - <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/?p=39506> – and comments may be sent to countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk at any time until Sunday 29th January.

Monmouthshire's Principal Countryside Access Officer Ruth Rourke said: "We invite as many groups, individuals and organisations as possible to contribute to the review of our Rights of Way Improvement Plan. We welcome your views and any information you may have to provide a new RoWIP document that will serve the county's communities into the future."

Pathcare

Pathcare Vacancies

We are very grateful for all the work Alan Cunningham has done over the years with the ROW maintenance team and Pathcare. As Alan is now retiring as a volunteer we are looking for people to take over his Pathcare routes:

- Little Skirrid (3.4 miles)
- Llantilio Crossenny to White Castle (5 miles)

If you are interested in either of these routes please let Morag know.

Autumn Pathcare Check

Thank you to all the volunteers who carried out Pathcare checks in September and October. Volunteers spent 218 hours checking 34 routes, a great effort which helps keep the paths open and in good condition.

Pathcare Walking Group

Since September the Pathcare Walking Group has done seven walks on Wednesdays, pathcaring as we go. The photos illustrate some of our recent outings on the Wye Valley Walk, Monnow Valley (Swan) walk and Pathcare route 25 Tregare and Penrhos.



If you are interested in the programme for the Pathcare Walking Group in the new year please let me (Morag) know.



Film Making for Social Media

The following information has come from Monmouthshire Rural Development Project. It is aimed at Tourism Ambassadors in the first instance, but if you think you could contribute to the project please express an interest.

We have an exciting new training project starting in the New Year. We are looking for Ambassadors who would like to take part in a social media marketing campaign to encourage visitors to come here during 2017 (Visit Wales' Year of Legends) and 2018 (Maritime Wales year).

The idea is that Ambassadors give personal recommendations about their favourite legendary places, seasonal events, hidden gems, best walks etc in short film snippets (30-90 seconds), which they upload to Facebook, Youtube and Twitter. The snippets will be filmed by Ambassadors, through the eyes of Ambassadors, inviting visitors to come and see it, feel it, try it, taste it, walk it!

We are offering training for budding film makers, presenters and editors, or people who want to learn more about how to use social media to promote the area. In fact any Ambassador who wants to get involved and share their love for where they live and work. The training will cover filming (using mobile phones and iPads as well as 'proper' cameras), editing and uploading, social media techniques and familiarisation trips. Equipment, including Go Pro cameras and editing software, will be available for Ambassadors to use.

There will be support and backup from a film training company and we have a social media expert on board who will offer advice and training to Ambassadors to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved from the campaign. Ruth Waycott will be coordinating the training project.

If you would like to be involved please register your interest with Ruth via the Ambassadors Facebook group or ruth@wyeknottourism.co.uk . We need to get an idea of who is interested **now**, so we can finalise details for a 'hands on' session to kick the programme off in January. Looking forward to hearing from you!

PS. The funding for this project is coming from the Vale of Usk RDP Leader Programme.



Volunteers Simon, Dave and David with a newly installed interpretive panel on Castle Meadows, Abergavenny.

Volunteering Opportunities at Caldicot Castle

Caldicot Castle & Country Park is a busy visitor attraction located on the outskirts of Caldicot. The castle dates to early medieval times and sits in the middle of 60 acres of beautiful country park. The castle houses a museum and café and is well attended by a range of visitors. The site hosts a range of events, from medieval fayres to playing host to international musicians.

The castle has been a focal point for the local community for generations and we are keen to provide opportunities for people to come together in both social and work environments. Whether you are interested in helping others learn more about our history, keen to gain experience of working in the country park and community gardens, love chatting to our visitors over a cup of tea or would like to be part of our large events, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Kate for more information. kateedwards@monmouthshire.gov.uk 01291 420241

Volunteer Paperwork

With the end of another year it is time to make sure our files are up to date. You will receive requests soon for your **quarterly timesheets**, and for you to **update your details**, and we would be very grateful if you could complete and return these as soon as possible. We will then send out your **ID cards** for 2017 in the New Year.

Monmouthshire Volunteer Achievement Awards

Groups associated with the Countryside Service swept the board in the Environmental category at the annual Volunteer Awards ceremony held at Caldicot Choir Hall on Friday, 25th November 2016. The Awards are run by GAVO (Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations) each year to celebrate those who dedicate their time and skills to make a positive impact in our communities.

The **Friends of Castle Meadows** were Highly Commended for all they have done to enhance this special area in the Abergavenny landscape over the last six years. This includes controlling Himalayan balsam, managing of Castle Copse, organising a programme of walks and talks, and developing a Young Friends group with local schools.



Llanbadoc Community Council Pathcare Group were also Highly Commended, particularly for their ongoing work on the Reservoir Trail at Llandegfedd.

The winners in this category were the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service **GDAS Countryside Volunteers**. A small group of service users and their supervisors have been volunteering with Monmouthshire Countryside Service, Keep Wales Tidy and Monmouthshire Housing for ten years or more. Working on projects throughout the county which benefit residents, visitors, wildlife and the environment in general, members of the group itself benefit as they build on their self esteem, learn new skills and combat isolation.



Countryside Code

Updated Countryside Code leaflets, published in October, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code> The Code is available in web format, pdf and as a bookmark!

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.



Saturday 7th January 2017 “Llandogo Village Area Walk”

10.30am (Approx. 1.5 hours)

This 3 mile (5km) route follows the River Wye then gradually ascends through woodland to emerge at the upper end of the village and descends via Cleddon Shoots back to the start. There are two stiles and a steep climb. Bring a packed lunch and a drink. Meet at Llandogo Village Hall car park (SO 526 041) Post Code NP25 4SR.

Sunday 22nd January 2017 “In Search of Charles Rolls”

10.30am (Approx. 4 hours)

On this 6 mile (10km) circular walk we will be travelling across fields to the church at St. Maughans. We will then continue through fields and lanes, enjoying great views across to Abergavenny and the Black Mountains along the way to reach the Hendre once the home of Charles Rolls. Crossing more fields, we will reach the Church at Llangattock Vibon Avel, which contains the resting place of Charles Rolls and a spectacular memorial to the men who fell in the First World War. Lots of stiles. Bring a packed lunch and a drink. Meet in the car park of the Montessori School at Llangattock Vibon Avel ([SO 458 159](#)) Post Code NP25 5NG.

Saturday 4th February 2017 “River, castle and ancient hill fort”

11.00am (Approx. 4 hours)

This 6 mile (9.5km) route follows the Usk Valley Walk to Chainbridge then leaves the river to go via Bettws Newydd and the Iron Age hill fort of Coed y Bwnydd before passing Clytha Castle and returning to the car park. One steep slope and lots of stiles. Bring a packed lunch and a drink. Leave the old road from Raglan to Abergavenny at the turning signposted “Bettws Newydd.” Park in the National Trust car park on your right after 400 metres ([SO 361 085](#)). Postcode NP7 9BW.

Sunday 19th February 2017 “River, church and abandoned settlement”

10.00am (Approx. 5 hours)

This 10 mile (16 km) walk takes us along the banks of the River Usk, passing the ancient church of St Peter’s, Llanwenarth Citra. We will continue up onto the lower slopes of the Sugar Loaf Mountain to reach the abandoned settlement known as Y Graig. After lunch at Y Graig, we will make our way back to Abergavenny. 1 steep slope and lots of stiles. Bring a packed lunch and a drink. Meet at the car park near the Bus Station and Tourist Information Centre in Abergavenny ([SO 330 142](#)) . Postcode NP7 5HF.

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

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