

# Vale of Usk Local Action Group

## Langstone Village Hall, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020

### Theme 1 – Cultural and Natural Heritage – Tourism

#### **Our View Social Media Campaign**

During the Autumn, some of the Our View participants have been involved with the production of a set of short videos for the RDP Review. These videos are for Welsh Government, to showcase what RDP funding has achieved, where it has been particularly successful, and to raise the question of where funding for these types of project will come from following the end of the RDP scheme. Ambassadors have assisted in the filming, directing and editing of six films to date on Abergavenny Food Festival, Made in Monmouthshire, Monmouth Off Street Project, the Green Energy Electric Charging Project, the Pen y Cae Green Energy Study and the Tunnel Centre at Sudbrook. These films will be available to view at the LAG meeting.

#### **The Visitor Information Project**

##### **Visitor Information / Coach Tourism Project Update**

A Group Sales training event was delivered on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October at Shire Hall, Monmouth aimed at helping businesses attract more and better quality group visits. The session was led by Steve Reed of Steve Reed Tourism Ltd, recognised UK market leaders in the field of group travel - both domestic and inbound. An online Group Sales Toolkit has been developed to support the training and provide legacy for businesses unable to attend the session.

A new Wye Tour groups itinerary was launched at this event to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of William Gilpin's boat trip down the river Wye in 1770.

Press coverage of the new itinerary (and the Gilpin 2020 anniversary) included the following:

Page 20 of the December edition of Coach Tours

UK. <https://en.calameo.com/read/0028633515a608484f09d...>

Group Travel World website <https://www.grouptourworld.com/new-welsh-tourist-trail-launched-for-groups/>

The Guardian Travel [https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/nov/29/canoeing-river-wye-symonds-yat-william-gilpin-250-anniversary?fbclid=IwAR1Q6a\\_3BSUhZHJDPvSolMug4ta1hYkPg7DplhI9EOZlhOqUqUXfBQ5sQ4Q](https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/nov/29/canoeing-river-wye-symonds-yat-william-gilpin-250-anniversary?fbclid=IwAR1Q6a_3BSUhZHJDPvSolMug4ta1hYkPg7DplhI9EOZlhOqUqUXfBQ5sQ4Q)

Visit Wales website <https://www.visitwales.com/info/travel-trade/news-and-updates/new-coach-itinerary-south-wales>

The Picturesque Wye Tour visitor guide was updated to tie in with Gilpin 2020 anniversary.

A familiarisation trip for businesses was delivered on 31<sup>st</sup> October, led by a professional Wales Tourist Guide. A second trip is planned for 7 February.

The part-time post funded under this project comes to an end on 14 January. During her time in post Susan Ward has developed an extensive group travel database which we can continue to promote group travel offers and experiences to after her departure. She also undertook a coach driver survey so we have a much better understanding of the coaches visiting Monmouthshire, where they come from and the routes they take.

A training course is in development aimed at existing and student Blue Badge Tour Guides to improve their knowledge of 'Roman Caerleon and Caerwent'. This training is scheduled to be delivered 9/10<sup>th</sup> March. We are in the process of procuring a large smart TV to be installed in the window of the relocated TIC in Abergavenny Market Hall, and a set of tablets for use in Abergavenny & Chepstow TICs.

## **Monmouthshire Brecon Canal – Educational Community Boat Project.**

Changes to the way we pay the invoices means that the payments are now in line and unlikely to cause debt to the project. Broadband /Wifi connection is to be discussed with Mike Powell.

They want to employ a consultant, it should be for about £4-6k, as an indicator. An advert to go out to engage interested persons - the expected date was 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 for the advert.

## **Tintern Abbey Trail**

The Tintern App Trail is progressing well with a recent site visit with the developer to the Abbey and around the village to test the app and resolve issues with GPS. Three augmented reality features have been developed: a couple on the Wye Tour visiting the abbey and sketching the ruins; a reconstruction of a Wye trow in the tidal dock at Abbey Mill; a reconstruction of a steam engine running through the Old Station at Tintern (where tourists used to alight from trains to view the harvest moon rising through the Abbey's east window). There is also a painting game which will appeal to children. These will be available to see on a mobile phone at the LAG meeting for those interested. Supporting the app is promotional material to raise awareness of the app, a leaflet/map of the trail around the village (which includes a trigger to view the augmented reality) and beer mats and coasters (also with the trigger) supplied to the local businesses in Tintern. A community walk trialing the app is planned before general launch to the public this Spring to support the Gilpin 2020 anniversary.

## **Theme 2**

### **Food Hub and data project**

The aim of this project is to better understand the food /growing landscape and develop a partnership with relevant organisations and individuals in delivering support to the food sector. This in conjunction with The Food Hub Feasibility Study and the SBRI challenge will allow us to progress the original bid without the EU element from Brussels.

The project is approved and will now be progressed to develop the food and supply chains.

Note: the SBRI is continuing to be developed and we are in discussion with Welsh Govt as to how best to work in partnership to analyse data

### **Gilwern Clusters Schools Educational Project.**

The schools educational food project has started and Elaine Blanchard( who is managing the project) has set up a number of meetings and all members invited to join the pilot project

All members invited to join the pilot project have accepted - and pushing forward to discuss, plan and create an action plan to begin the project.

A meeting was held recently at @ at Gilwern School. I so that the project can capture harvest and discuss how teachers are going to incorporate it into their planning?

The action plan will be available shortly.

### **Nature isn't Neat**

During July and August 2 events hosted by Monmouthshire Housing Association welcomed Nature Isn't Neat into its ranks. This partnership will plan more family events to raise awareness of pollinators with a pop-up potting session planned for March. This October sees the beginning of 6 monthly talks/workshops, all focusing on pollinators. Schools have been contacted with dates to give assembly talks and workshops due to start in February 2020. There have been four monthly talks, all of which were well attended and appreciated. The educational element has a change of provider with Gwent Wildlife Trust delivering the assembly talks and classroom based workshops. We are in conversation with [Alex Hirtzel](#) to deliver workshops for the three primary schools where the designs for verge posters will be created. Resources such as town maps, crews leaflets and seasonal planting guide are currently being developed.

## Theme 3

### **Be. Community Leadership Programme**



During the last quarter a funding skills workshop was delivered in partnership with Big Lottery Community Fund. It was attended by 18 different community groups from Monmouthshire and Newport. Working with Mind, two different Mental Health Awareness training courses were delivered, one in Abergavenny and one in Beachley which was specifically for Severn Area Rescue Association.

A Social Media Awareness course for volunteers in Newport was also delivered. This was excellent for building relationships and the network across the border.

Managing an Online Presence was delivered by Mon CC Communications team as a result of challenges identified by volunteers.

We are currently busy booking the Spring programme to be launched ASAP and there are plans for a Be Community network event in Caldicot within the next few months.

### **Rogiet Community Shop & Café**

Following early progress the project has come up against an issue in respect of the parcel of land attributed to Rogiet Community Junction by the community council. This land had received positive pre-planning advice but the community council have now offered a different site which looks unlikely to receive planning consent. A meeting has been arranged with Rogiet Community Council on 15th January to discuss renegotiating the land. The outcome will be reported at the LAG meeting.



## Theme 4

### **Fully Charged (Electric Vehicle Charging Points)**



This one year pilot project is now complete and the final report is available to download from the website. Following sub group member consultation the report now includes an executive summary.

Members may also be interested to know that Silverstone Green Energy has been awarded the contract to supply, install and operate a number of charging points within the Gwent area, mainly within public car parks. Installation is due to start later this month. The Monmouthshire sites include six car parks, two in

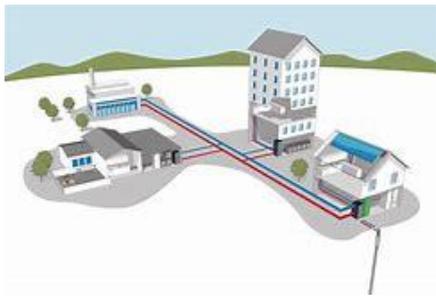
Abergavenny, one in Chepstow, one in Monmouth, one in Caldicot and one in Usk. Newport have included five sites within the overall bid. Funding has been secured through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) with match funding provided by the local authorities.

### **Village Hall Energy Make Over**

Good progress is now being made on the installation of LED lighting at the six halls. Work is due to start within the next month in respect of two halls with two further halls expected to start in March. Asbestos surveys have been carried out at four halls so far in readiness for the installation works.



## Master Planning for Heat Networks



A tender brief has been advertised on the Sell2Wales procurement website with responses required by the end of this month.

Members are reminded that the funding has been provided to undertake an energy mapping and modelling study of The Vale of Usk area to identify potentially useful heating, cooling and power demand loads and potentially useful heat supply opportunities for the purposes of district energy scheme development. Additional funding amounting to £26,800 has been secured through the Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) who have been fully supportive of the project.

## Theme 5.

### Llanover digital halls project

15 training sessions have taken place which were well attended, with more planned for 2020. The website is live giving details on the 4 halls, their facilities and what events and bookings are happening.

### IoT and Independent Living

The 3 participants are being selected this month by the occupational health officer Delia Newell, to start the IoT side of the project on the 1<sup>st</sup> November. A bid was placed on Sell2Wales to develop delivery the technical side of the project. Cardiff University were selected by the project steering group. Inception meeting were arranged for October allowing the project to start on 1st November 2019.

## Cooperation

**BEES** Completed in June 2019

An evaluation of the project is currently being undertaken.

## **Pipeline Projects**

There are a number of projects in the pipeline, as follows:

1. Monmouthshire Rural Support Network - Health and wellbeing of the farming fraternity
2. Commuter transport support in cooperation with Vale of Glamorgan. May not be co-operation.
3. A deep dive into one or two communities in the region to fully understand, and support their transport needs
4. Village halls cooperation project