

Vale of Usk Local Action Group

Llanover Village Hall, Thursday 17th October 2019

Theme 1 – Cultural and Natural Heritage – Tourism

Our View Social Media Campaign

The volunteers are going to be producing the films/photos of the identified projects below over the 18 years of advent and the current programme.

Made in Monmouthshire
Abergavenny Food Festival
Monmouth Off-Street Project
Community Led Plans
My View
Be-Community Leaders
Digital Projects
The Severn Tunnel Heritage Centre
Walker Are Welcome, Chepstow
The Bees Project
Energy Projects

They have started the filming and will be in touch with project officers and representative from the projects.

The Visitor Information Project

Visitor Information / Coach Tourism Project Update

An Abergavenny Town Ambassador Scheme has been developed and delivered in partnership with Abergavenny Food Festival. Seven Abergavenny Town Ambassadors went on to volunteer at the 2019 Abergavenny Food Festival. Training comprised of a Food & Drink Familiarisation Trip which took place on Monday 2 September and a Customer Care, Welcome and Product Knowledge training session which was delivered on Thursday 5th September in the Angel Hotel. (See attached photos).

A new itinerary is being developed and promoted to group organisers and coach tour operators to celebrate the 250th anniversary next year of the artist William Gilpin taking the Wye Tour in 1770, an event which heralded the birth of British tourism. He published a book, 'Observations on the River Wye', which was probably the first ever tour guide and helped to inspire the world's first package holiday. Gilpin was a pioneer in the appreciation of landscape in Britain and his ideas led, much later, to the designation of protected landscapes – including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and National Parks) of which the Wye Valley is one. The new itinerary is being supported by an update and revision of the Picturesque Wye Tour Guide. A familiarisation trip for Ambassadors is also being organised based on the Gilpin itinerary.

A Group Sales training event is planned for Thursday 24th October at Shire Hall, Monmouth aimed at helping businesses attract more and better quality group visits. The session will be 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 is being developed to support the training and provide legacy for businesses unable to attend.

Training is also being developed for existing and student Blue Badge Tour Guides to improve their knowledge of 'Roman Caerleon and Caerwent' under this project. This training will be delivered in the New Year. Opportunities to install a large smart TV in the window of the relocated TIC in Abergavenny Market Hall, promoting local activities, attractions and events are also being explored.



Living Levels Accommodation Study/Pilot

The consultants have completed their final report and the pilot project, originally thought to be an action will not be completed. Instead we asked that the consultants produce a support document for businesses wishing to diversify.



This project if now complete.

Monmouthshire Brecon Canal – Educational Community Boat Project.

There have been some hiccups with funding payments from us but this is now resolved. An action plan and engagement programme is being drawn up to begin working with schools.

LAG will be updated on this project at the October meeting

Tintern Abbey Trail

A walking trail from Tintern Abbey to the village and surrounding area with iBeacon interpretation (free download from Tintern Abbey shop or prior to visit) is being developed by Wye Valley AONB and CADW. At present an app is being developed which will give the visitor a 3-D description at various points along the trail.



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.

Theme 3

Be. Community Leadership Programme



During the summer/autumn period we have been busy delivering 7 training opportunities attended by 85 volunteers located across the region including one that was nationally accredited. In addition, we have offered 15 mentoring sessions for individual community leaders to explore their successes and challenges. The networks being developed through our offer are now measurable and making an impact. We still have a Mental Health Awareness Session in Chepstow and Social Media Training in Newport left to deliver on the autumn plan in October.

Sessions have been delivered by a mixture of local charities, GAVO, MCC employees and community volunteers. We are focussing on local delivery to help local organisations to build their network and relationships with community leaders. Working with individual community groups such as Gilwern Roots, we are developing a future training plan for their group of volunteers. We now have a strong evidence base on the need, how we are addressing it as a project and what gaps remain. Be. Community is allowing us to build a much better relationship with community leaders as we are offering some of what they need. Peer mentoring is developing and along with a strengthened E-Learning offer will be the priority moving forward. We have much more to do as we have been told consistently that leading volunteer groups in our area is tough, highly criticised and that as a region our support structure needs to improve. However, it is heartening that the programme receives positive feedback, as illustrated by the example below:

'I would like to say thank you for the amazing course you commissioned. I found the Youth Mental Health First Aid course so very inspiring that I decided to return to University and study a Mental Health Degree with Worcester University. It is amazing how some extra training has brought up an inspiration and courage to pursue a new career. I am so very grateful for all your support and the opportunities that you provide for us community volunteers'.

Rogiet Community Shop & Café

The project is at an early stage. Activity so far includes preparatory work towards a Big Lottery funding bid, preparation of an architectural brief, business plan research and admin, preparation, attendance and evaluation of a community engagement and consultation event. A fuller report will be provided at the next 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.

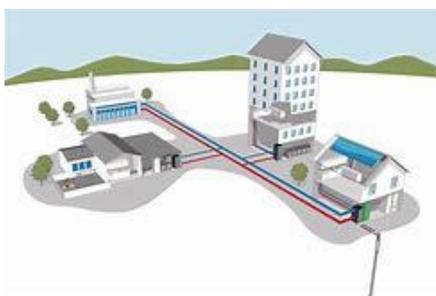
Members may also be interested to know that a contract has been advertised to supply, install and operate a number of charging points within the Gwent area, mainly within public car parks. The Monmouthshire sites include six car parks, two in Abergavenny, two in Chepstow, one in Monmouth and one in Usk. 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

Recent meetings have been held with representatives of the six halls. In view of difficulties associated with procurement and increased costs it has been decided to offer grants to the halls to manage the LED lighting installation themselves. It's likely the halls will have to provide some of their own match funding should they wish to go ahead.



Master Planning for Heat Networks



A tender brief has been written and agreed by HNDU and as soon as we receive confirmation from Newport City Council that they are happy with it we will advertise the contract on the Sell2Wales website.

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

Nine training sessions have taken place which were well attended, with 6 more planned for October and one in November so far. The website will be live very soon with details on the 4 halls, their facilities and what events and booking are happening. Full update to be given during the October LAG meeting by one of the steering group members.

Communication First



The project is now complete and a full report covering project activity, summary of findings, lessons learnt and recommendations is available on the website. The applicant has recently shared information about their findings with Digital Communities Wales and it is hoped they will be offering training to the staff of relevant organisations. They have also talked to the University of Wales about a working party to include beneficiaries doing access audits on one of their campuses, and are hopeful this will progress and create opportunities for better integration and inclusion. The project officer is currently working on a short video which highlights some of the work carried out with a project beneficiary. This will be made available to members once ready.

IoT and Independent Living

The 3 participants are being selected this month by the occupational health officer with the idea to start the IoT side of the project on the 1st 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 are being arranged for October so that the project can start on 1st November.

Cooperation

BEES Completed in June 2019

We are currently looking at the process of sustainability as we look towards the end of the project in 2019.

Given the time of year most of the work has been through regular monthly meetings with ideas being shared and developed. The education resource pack is being discussed between the three LAG areas with a view to VoU delivering on this element. A successful workshop on hive hygiene and bee keeping skills given by Adam Parker, Bee Inspector is being repeated in the three LAG areas, this is open to all bee keepers not only those involved with the project.

Pipeline Projects

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

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