



Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020

Funding for Community Regeneration in Neath Port Talbot Rural Wards

The Rural Development Programme

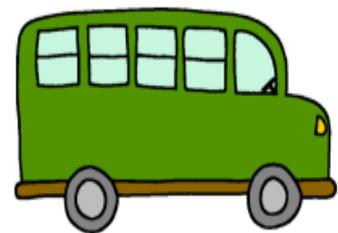
Neath Port Talbot qualifies for Rural Development Plan funding from the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for the period 2014 - 2020. The aim of the Programme is to increase the economic prosperity of rural areas in Wales.

LEADER Project Updates

The Local Action Group is pleased to announce that the following projects have been approved for funding:

Promoting Public Transport Access to the Countryside

BayTrans is a partnership of transport operators, local authorities, countryside bodies and voluntary organisations, working together to develop and promote sustainable travel opportunities for local people and visitors alike in order to access the countryside of Gower and the Valleys of Neath Port



Talbot. By encouraging people to walk, cycle, take the bus or local train, this will benefit health, the environment and the local economy as people enjoy more outdoor activity, and spend time in the most beautiful parts of Wales.

This particular BayTrans project is designed to encourage and increase the numbers of people visiting the countryside in the Neath Port Talbot Valleys using (more sustainable) public transport. It is aimed at both day and staying visitors; and at residents of NPT to get out and explore their beautiful hinterland.

Some key actions to achieve this aim will include:

- *A complete appraisal of the attractions, activities and walks that are accessible by bus in all the rural wards of NPT;*
- *An audit of the provision of waiting facilities and timetable information at key bus stops serving the above;*
- *Designation of suitable walking routes (either circular or out and back routes starting and finishing at the same bus stop; or linear walks starting and finishing at different bus stops);*
- *Walking the selected routes and preparing itineraries which include the walk itself, availability of local services (food & drink, toilets, etc.) and suitable bus services there and back;*
- *Preparation of bus stop specific information posters which will include a map showing walks, attractions and local services; and space for the route timetable;*
- *Preparation of pictorial posters for display at train and bus stations in Neath and Port Talbot showing the range of bus routes to access the main walks and country attractions;*
- *Preparation of information posters showing availability and times of public transport services for distribution to hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafes, pubs, camp sites, activity centres, country parks, libraries, etc.;*
- *Working with bus companies to help improve and promote the appropriate services.*



Cognition - Bike Give Sustain

Cognition mtb trails South Wales is a mountain biking project established in 2010 through Visit Wales' Environment for Growth programme to create a unique brand to cover all mountain bike facilities, run an extensive marketing campaign and a programme of investment in mountain bike trails and facilities in 4 key sites across South Wales, namely Afan Forest Park and Margam Park in Neath Port Talbot, Bike Park Wales at Gethin Woods in Merthyr Tydfil and Cwmcarn in Caerphilly.



The social enterprise, Cognition Limited, was incorporated in 2013 and the Bike Give Sustain pilot scheme was then launched with the aim of generating income to help maintain the mountain bike trails.

This Bike Give Sustain project will build upon the success of the pilot scheme by undertaking the following activities:

- Increase the number of branded donation boxes installed in businesses;
- Establish a visiting giving scheme in accommodation businesses ;
- Explore the feasibility of developing a membership scheme for mountain bikers with rewards and offers from Afan Forest Park businesses to incentivise participation. The scheme would seek to bring local businesses together to achieve a common goal, encouraging greater partnership working;
- Cultivate relationships with retailers and manufacturers in order to merchandise Cognition branded goods;
- Develop professional fundraising initiatives to target potential corporate sponsors and other sources of public, third and private sector investment.



- The primary purpose of the Cognition Bike Give Sustain project is to generate income to maintain the trails in NPT, which will help to ensure the continued contribution that mountain biking visitors make to the local economy.

Tourism Business Development in NPT

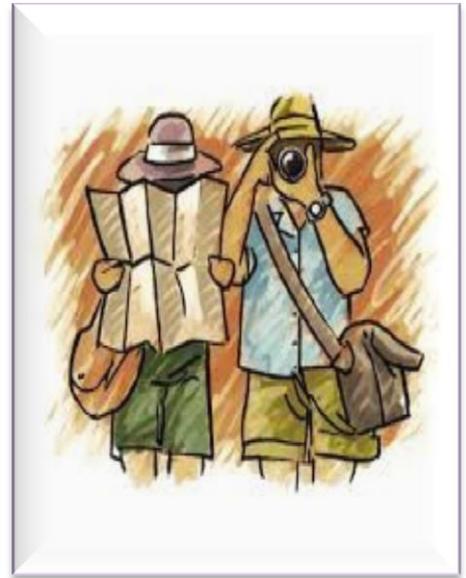
Tourism and leisure is an important sector for the local economy in Neath Port Talbot. It has seen the redefining of areas of the County Borough, developing facilities and activities that have created jobs and attracted a growing number of visitors e.g. accommodation and mountain biking at Afan Forest Park.

The outputs/outcomes of the project include:

- *Increasing the quality and diversity of facilities, services and activities*
- *Creating new employment opportunities*
- *Safeguarding existing jobs*
- *Encouraging joint marketing initiative to Promote “local distinctiveness”, and;*
- *Improving the long term sustainability of tourism-related businesses*

This will be achieved by:

- Improving links between providers and local services to increase local spend
- Encouraging the development of new attractions, facilities and services;
- Encouraging a “sense of place” to enhance the visitor experience
- Supporting and enabling tourism businesses to use ICT and digital marketing to ensure they exploit developments in new technology
- Encouraging tourism businesses to invest in energy saving measures that have a positive effect on the environment and improve business performance
- Providing support to existing businesses and new investors to access funding and develop product ideas; and
- Encouraging networking, sharing of best practice and joint working arrangements and using case studies to demonstrate effective partnership working.



Green Business

The aim of the project is to enable business and development in Neath Port Talbot and to encourage innovative green business through appropriate use and improvement of our natural heritage. It is intended that this project will deliver an innovative project that will aim to inform best practice nationally in relation to providing a strategic approach to biodiversity compensation. This will aim to enable business and development and therefore investment in Neath Port Talbot through reducing the burden on investors whilst developing a new green business approach that would deliver benefits for both the natural heritage of Neath Port Talbot and local rural residents and landowners throughout the County Borough. This project will be run by the NPTCBC Countryside and Wildlife Team.



The project will:

- *Encourage local landowners and communities to diversify their land uses and current business uses to develop a new green business of providing new areas of biodiversity habitat to offset losses to developments*
- *Develop a strategic approach to locating appropriate locations for such provisions that will continue to support and improve our natural heritage and provide better value compensation both in respect of development investment and ecological functioning*
- *Encourage and promote the improvement and development of more natural open green space areas, where the natural heritage can be enjoyed by residents*
 - *Set out specifications for on the ground habitat creation/restoration or improvement*
 - *Work towards demonstrating the approach that may develop into best practice*



The Engagement Retreat

Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting (WREC) is a leading provider of innovative educational, youth and social welfare programmes. Launched in April 2012 and supported by the Welsh Government's Graduate Business Start-up programme.



This Engagement Retreat project will engage 80 young people over 2 years (ages 14-18) through ten exhilarating overnight retreats involving outdoor pursuits and activities. The retreats will support the young people to gain qualifications, develop their confidence, motivation, team working and communication skills. In addition, WREC will provide new experiences and provide a platform for young people to meet with other young people from across Neath Port Talbot.

Each retreat will take place over 2 days and cater for 8 young people. We will use Black Mountain Activities near Brecon and provide a minibus collection service across the rural wards to remove barriers to participation.

In addition, detached youth work across the rural wards will be designed to support young people to stretch horizons, challenge their thinking and develop their skills. Activities will be young-person led from a wide variety of options including t-shirt tie die, photography, job search skills, enterprise, sports, art and craft, website building, cupcake decoration, fashion, DVD nights, citizenship and street dance to name a few.

The main project outcomes will include:

- *80 young people engaged (aged 14-18)*
- *10 outdoor pursuit retreats delivered*
- *60 City and Guilds Level 1 Introductory Awards in Employability Skills.*
- *80 positive outcomes achieved with improvements in soft skills, measured through an initial and end of project questionnaire*
- *48 young people progressing on to other learning or engagement activities*



A word from the Chairman...

"I am delighted that work can formally begin on these projects after several months of preparatory work by the Local Action Group and the Lead Body. All of the projects that have received formal approval by our Local Action Group are based on evidenced need, therefore we can be assured that they will make a real difference to our rural communities."

Cllr. Anthony Taylor – Regenerate NPT Chairman

The Local Action Group (LAG) – Regenerate NPT



The LAG ensures that the Lead Body and any community representatives and projects operate within the legal and comprehensive framework set out by the Welsh Government in relation to the Local Development Strategy (LDS) which is a strategy that addresses the needs and opportunities within our area. It is made up of volunteer representatives from local businesses, social enterprises, the local authority and town councils. A key element is that the group represents the private, third and public sectors evenly as well as each of our 5 rural valleys, in order to ensure equality.

You can contact the team on rdp@npt.gov.uk or telephone 01639 686077. Visit our website: regenerate.npt.gov.uk

