

Nell's Point Coastwatch team is first in Wales



One of the most knowledgeable members is Doug Jones, a working Master Mariner.

Since its official opening in February, the new National Coastwatch Institution station at Nell's Point, Barry Island, has been manned five days a week in daylight hours – pretty impressive for a group of volunteer watchkeepers, most of whom, six months ago, didn't know each other.

From a meeting last August, volunteers from all walks of life came together to form the present team who range in age from 28 to 78. Some are retired, while others are working people.

As the group's publicity officer/treasurer, Glynis Parsons, explained: "There is so much more to watchkeeping than just having a quick look round. Qualified keepers have to know about weather, buoyage, tides, charts, plotting, flags, first aid and emergency procedures as well as developing a background of local coastal knowledge. Volunteers must be

trained to a set national standard.

"During a watch, observations of marine activities are strictly logged – passing vessels and small craft, surfers, people on lilos, swimmers, marine mammals and water pollution are all noted. Any emergency is immediately reported to Swansea Coastguard Station where appropriate emergency services are put into action."

The team at Nell's Point is part of the national network of coastwatch stations being set up all over Britain and, with pride, is the first in Wales. But, like all others, is entirely self supporting. As a registered charity, each station must raise funds to the extent of about £2,000 annually to cover running costs.

The Nell's Point team, who meet socially every week, is organising a number of events throughout the year and welcome the support of local people. Look out for posters and

information in the local press or ask at the Nell's Point station.

If you would like to volunteer to join the team of watchkeepers, telephone Station Manager Clive Wilton on 07969 435787 or join the team any Wednesday evening at the RAFA Club in Porthkerry Road for an

informal introduction.

There is exhibition space on the station's ground floor that the Vale invite local organisations such as clubs or schools to use. Contact Malcolm Drysdale at the Docks Offices on (01446) 704745.

The £370,000 project at the former Coastguard Station was undertaken by the Council with support funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Council Leader Cllr Margaret Alexander said: "I am delighted this project has the full support of volunteers and the local community. "The Council is keen to work with partners across a wide variety of sectors, and the station project provides a focus for voluntary activities and community participation."

Commander Tony King, of the NCI, said: "The excellent refurbishment of the watch level in the old Coastguard building has enabled our volunteer watchkeepers to significantly enhance the safety of all who use the waters in and around Barry Island."

Another key partner is Associated British Ports who operate a radar installation at the station to provide information to shipping using this busy part of the channel.



Make space for wildlife

Schools, community/town councils and residents urged to offer a helping hand to wildlife.

2



"Activale" Directory

So much information on organisations and summer activities now available for young people

3



"Home cooked" meals for Vale pupils

Vale catering services has the "Appetite" to meet revolutionary nutritional challenges

6



"Excellence Wales" award for helping prevent homelessness



Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety Cllr Margaret Wilkinson and staff celebrate the "Excellence" award.

Helping to prevent homelessness has earned the Council national recognition.

The Council's Homeless Prevention Team was commended at the 'Excellence Wales' awards under the 'Our Homes' category for its outstanding work with people threatened with losing their homes.

The Homeless Prevention Team works closely with clients to prevent a breakdown in their existing accommodation, and offers a number of options, including financial assistance for those eligible, to either remain in their current accommodation or to help find a new home.

Where a tenancy cannot be saved, the team helps eligible clients to find alternative accommodation with assistance from the Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme (VATS) in the private sector.

Cllr Margaret Wilkinson, Cabinet

Member for Housing and Community Safety, said: "This service has dramatically reduced the number of homeless acceptances by the authority from 314 in 2004 to 165 in 2006.

"The Homeless Prevention Team has not only reduced the number of homeless acceptances, it has enabled many vulnerable individuals and families to remain in their homes and to avoid the disruption and stress of moving into temporary accommodation."

Welsh Local Government Association director Steve Thomas said: "Once again our national awards scheme shows that councils across Wales are achieving the highest level of performance in serving their communities."

For further details about the work of the Vale Council's Homeless Prevention Team, contact Hazel Allen on (01446) 709467.

Children hooked on Dragon Sport



Vale Cabinet Member for Tourism and Leisure Cllr Gwyn John joined youngsters at the Dragon Sport Extravaganza

More than 800 youngsters have enjoyed a host of sporting activities at an inaugural Dragon Sport Extravaganza at the National Indoor Athletics Centre in Cardiff.

The event allowed youngsters to indulge in 10 sporting activities, including golf, hockey and cricket, and aimed to entice them away from simply watching our elite sportsmen and women on television and, instead, emulating their achievements.

The Lottery-funded Dragon Sport scheme – Wales' biggest campaign to get primary schoolchildren hooked on out-of-school-hours sport – is helping draw more children into sport and increase activity levels and has exceeded all expectations since its launch in 2000.

Vale Cabinet Member for Tourism and Leisure Cllr Gwyn John said: "Dragon Sport has made a significant contribution towards physical activity in primary schools. Participation in the programme has also helped schools to offer a wider range of activities."

Participating Vale schools were Barry Island, Jenner Park and Ysgol Sant Baruc in Barry and St Joseph's RC, Penarth.

For more information on Dragon Sport in the Vale, contact Rachel McGuinness or Pete Hardwick on (01446) 704681.

Proud to live in the Vale

Overall satisfaction levels with the service provided by the Council have risen from 74% in 2005 to 86%, according to a 2006 public opinion survey.

The third large scale survey designed to gain an insight into public opinion of Council services involved the Citizens' Panel – a group of Vale residents whom the Council regularly consult with on a range of issues.

The encouraging results further revealed that the number of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area has increased from 34% to 47%, while the figure for the number feeling proud to live in the Vale remained high at 87%.

There were, however, some areas where satisfaction levels have slightly declined slightly, including public

toilets and access and provision of public transport information.

Satisfaction levels are increasing in a number of areas including refuse collection, street lighting, the library service and adult education services.

The results of the survey are being shared with appropriate Council departments to ensure they are aware of the public perception of their services.

Great ideas to encourage wildlife

In the last 40 years, farming within the Vale has become more intensive, woodland has dwindled and urban areas have expanded.

All this means that the pressure on native plants and animals has never been greater and so it's essential to give them a helping hand.

Wildlife areas outside farmland, such as gardens, are thought to support 75% of the frogs in the UK, and one sixth of the food fed by blue tits to their chicks is from bird tables.

Now a new member of the Council's Ecology Team has started work to offer guidance on how to create, manage and enhance small open areas for as much wildlife as will fit in!

A series of leaflets, Make Space for Wildlife, is being produced to help schools, community/town councils and the people of the Vale.

Two bird boxes will also be available for each school and

town/community councils to give them a helping hand.

Ecology Assistant Richard May said: "The leaflets have been designed to enable everyone to create, manage and enhance a space for wildlife. The leaflets are full of practical ideas, showing you how to create ponds, build bird or bat boxes, establish wild flower meadows, feed small



mammals, plant a hedge and encourage butterflies."

The leaflets will soon be available from the Ecology Team and at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk but, until then, here are three great ideas for individual wildlife areas:

Leave a logpile – Piles of logs, twigs and leaves provide a place for lots of animals to hide, hibernate and reproduce. Longhorn and lesser stag beetle larvae feed on dead wood – sometimes for up to seven years

Plant a tree – Trees support loads of minibeasts (oak trees can have over 300 species), which, in turn, provide food for many other animals

Become an expert tracker – Fill a shallow scrape in the garden with

sand so that any animals walking over it will leave clear prints. To make a permanent record, carefully spray it with hairspray to keep the sand in place and fill in the tracks with plaster of Paris

For further information on the initiative, contact Richard May on (01446) 704855 or email rimay@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



By-election winner

The Council by-election in the Llantwit Major ward following the death of Cllr John Readman was won by Sally Bagstaff (Llantwit First Independents) who polled 1,062 votes.

In a turnout of just over 34 per cent, the other candidates were Ralph Austin (Conservative), 640; Barry Doughty (Labour), 443; Rusell Downe (Independent), 365; Simon Stephens (Plaid Cymru), 99; James Thorley (Liberal Democrats), 75.



Vale Waves
 We want to hear your views.
 Contact Vale Waves on
 (01446) 709454
 or email
 press@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Really useful

Young people in the Vale can now find out about local activities by accessing the "Activale Youth Directory."

The directory contains information on more than 250 organisations providing services and activities for young people aged 11-25 years.

You can access all of the information 'on line' at www.activale.co.uk.

A directory and a supply of CD versions are also available from every school and library in the area.

The directory has been created and produced by the Council's Children & Young People's Information Service (CYPIS), through a steering Group of representatives from the Young People's Partnership (YPP) and 14-19 Network.

CYPIS already provide an information service to parents and carers, about childcare available in the Vale as well as other services for children aged 0 – 10 years, information on tax credits and how to set up childcare provision. This project has expanded the database of information to include services for young people up to age 25 years. It has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, and young people and youth groups have been

involved throughout.

Project officer Steve Maher commented: "Information for young people wasn't available from a single information source. Hopefully, this initiative will help more young people use the services that are provided for them and encourage them to make better use of information providers in the area.

"We also hope that groups and organisations find the directory a useful guide for both signposting and to identify areas for development."

The Activale Summer Brochure 2007 will be available at the end of June. This will list all activities taking place during the summer holidays for children and young people up to 16 years of age.

The brochure is being produced by the Children and Young People's Information Service (CYPIS) and will contain information on all Council-run services such as leisure and tourism and libraries.

You can request a copy by contacting CYPIS on (01446) 704704 or email cypis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk. The information will also be available 'on line' at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/cypis.



Local youngsters launch the "Activale Youth Directory."

Play day at country park



Barry's Porthkerry Country Park was the venue for an inaugural "Get Out and Play" Day involving more than 80 children and adults.

The successful event was organised by the Council's Play Development Officer, Jo Jones, who worked in partnership with the authority's Parks Department and was supported by Re-create (Cardiff and the Vale Play Resource Centre) along with the Vale Play Forum. It was funded by the EYDCP (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership).

The day provided an excellent opportunity for children and young people to play and for parents and carers to develop skills, and to raise awareness and confidence of working with the elements.

Jo said: "In the Vale we are lucky to have beautiful country parks that lend themselves to a wealth of outdoor opportunities."

Parents reported that children had the "time of their lives."

For more information on play in the Vale, telephone Jo on (01446) 704809, email joajones@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or visit www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/playdevelopment

Secret ingredient to prevent school burglaries



School cleaners at Llantwit Major Comprehensive are among those who have been supplied with personal attack alarms.

In a campaign to prevent burglaries, security measures have been tightened across the county's 88 schools.

With criminals increasingly targeting expensive hi-tech IT equipment such as overhead digital projectors and laptop computers, schools have welcomed the campaign, a key component of which is the proactive and continued support from cleaners.

Crime Reduction Officer PC Dick Collins and Schools' Liaison Officer PC Phil Davies, who came up with the unique initiative, explained: "The cleaners can play a pivotal role in helping to prevent crime at their school. This is because the majority of burglaries at schools occur at the end of the school day, whilst the school is still open and occupied by cleaners and teachers.

"The offenders know that the pupils are leaving in large numbers and the volume of people traffic that this provides allows the offender a level of anonymity.

"Not only that, they know they don't have to force an entry or overcome alarms."

As part of the initiative, the Council's Building, Cleaning and Security section has provided funding for 300 personal attack alarms.

PC Collins and PC Davies added: "If they come across an offender, they'll activate the alarm and contact the police immediately. Most importantly, however, the cleaners have received training in how to keep the school secure.

"From now on, the cleaners will follow best practice by locking themselves into the area that they are working in so, therefore, preventing an intruder from entering the school in the first place."

Simon Bowden, Cleaning and Security Manager at the Council, said: "We really welcome this initiative as the cleaners are often isolated when they are going about their duties and can, therefore, feel vulnerable."

Spotting a dodgy deal

Holidaymakers jetting off to the sun have been warned not to be seduced by offers from bogus holiday club firms.

Trading standards officials targeted people setting off from Cardiff International Airport to tell them the dangers of connmen who might approach them while they are away.

Staff from the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff councils and the Office of Fair Trading spoke to passengers and handed out leaflets explaining how to spot a dodgy deal.

Kate Palmer, consumer education officer with Vale Trading Standards, said: "Holiday clubs often promise far more than they deliver. After spending thousands of pounds, many consumers find that they have bought little more than access to an internet booking service."

The airport initiative was part of the annual OFT scam awareness month which aims to highlight the techniques used by scammers to con UK consumers out of £3.5 billion per year and give consumers the knowledge and skills they need to recognise, report and stamp out mass market scams. There was also a major campaign surrounding lottery and prize draw scams directly affecting Welsh residents.

Head of Scambusters at the OFT Mike Haley says: "Scammers are finding more ruthless and sophisticated ways to con the public of money by preying on their hopes and fears. Though anybody can be conned, it is always the most

vulnerable who end up suffering the most."

Vale Principal Trading Standards Officer Simon Wilkinson said: "The most prevalent scams affecting Vale residents are fake lotteries and prize draws. Trading standards officers' advice is to be sceptical - if the offer is too good to be true, it probably is."

Other scams are:

- pyramid selling and free gift schemes
- working from home schemes
- online dating
- investment opportunities/shares
- miracle health cures
- phishing scams



Kate Palmer (right), consumer education officer with Vale Trading Standards, has been warning holidaymakers travelling through Cardiff International Airport

If you feel you have been a victim of a scam, please contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

Driver refresher courses

The Council's Road Safety Department continues its highly successful driver refresher courses.

Free to Vale residents, the course consists of an informal presentation by an ex-police driver, a session giving participants the opportunity to raise issues or concerns regarding road safety, a talk by a local optician on eyesight requirements/ legislation, and health checks (blood sugar levels/blood pressure) are also available courtesy of Age Concern.

An optional one-hour drive with an approved driving instructor is offered at a later date.

For further information and to register your interest, please contact Shirley Dodd-Clark on (01446) 704783 or e mail sdodd-clark@valeofglamorgan.org.uk



Good news for the newts



Britain's largest and most spectacular newt species, the great crested newt, is protected by UK and European wildlife law. Photo by David Kjaer.

A Council project, which has saved hundreds of rare great crested newts from going down the drain and been featured in a BBC documentary programme, could be adopted at similar sites across the country.

In 2005, the Council's Highways Division pioneered a new approach to protecting the internationally threatened species which centred on a local authority-owned pond – home to South Wales' largest population of the newt.

The newts (*Triturus cristatus*) need somewhere to hunt for food and to shelter during cold or very dry times of the year and, to get to these sites, were forced to cross a nearby

road and ended up falling into the kerbside drains.

Undertaken through a partnership between the Council's Ecology team, the Vale's voluntary newt surveyor, Stephen Lowe, and the Council's Highways Division, with match funding from the Countryside Council for Wales, the work involved moving the drains away from the kerb, leaving a little ledge for the newts to walk along.

The problem was initially highlighted by Stephen Lowe, who reported that hundreds of newts a year were starving and dying after falling down the drains. Now, recently published survey results suggest that the kerb changes have had a dramatic and successful effect, with just 65 newts found in the drains in 2006 compared to 318 in the year before works were undertaken.

Highways chief Keith Jones said: "These works demonstrate the commitment that the Council has made to conserving the great crested newt.

"The drain modifications have proved to be a great leap forward in protecting this rare species."



BBC film crew in the Vale.

Inspiring rural projects

A project helping to improve life in the rural Vale is planning to extend its work.

Launched three years ago by the Council's Economic Development Unit, Creative Rural Communities is a regeneration programme led by the Council in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

Creative Rural Communities is funded via the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Community Action scheme, and has also been able to access Article 33 funding for capital projects.

Thanks to CRC, more than 30 community building projects have received a cash injection from Article 33 of over £2m and, with match funding, this has led to a total capital investment of £3m.

Most of the projects have been initiated and delivered by community groups through a combination of time, skill and commitment.

Decisions on funding are made by a Vale Rural Partnership chaired by farmer Norman Jenkins, who says: "I am pleased that over the past three years we have been able to help such a wide range of varied and interesting community projects to fruition."

Speaking of the Council's close



support for the project, Leader Cllr Margaret Alexander says: "CRC helps communities in the rural Vale acquire the knowledge and skills needed to take direct responsibility for their own regeneration and to realise their own ideas.

"Key to this major success story has been the enthusiasm and energy of the community groups.

"I know that recent rural roadshows were full of suggestions for a range of exciting new schemes, and CRC will be continuing to build relationships with community groups to help make these ideas a reality."

CRC and the Council have been working hard on securing new funds to not only continue the good work but to increase the scope of the project over the next six years.

Examples of where support and funding might be available are:

- training;
- feasibility studies;
- community-led events;
- community planning;
- revenue projects benefiting the wider community, and
- capital projects



More than £770,000 has been invested in the last three years in the development or refurbishment of 11 village and community halls, including Llansannor

Based at the Old Hall, Cowbridge, CRC is constantly on the lookout for projects ideas which will improve the quality of life for rural communities – Barry, Penarth and Llandough are excluded – over the next six years. They hope to place more emphasis on initiatives involving women and young people.

If you are a resident in the rural Vale, or a member of a rural community group looking for some support and guidance in the development of community projects, please feel free to contact the CRC team by emailing Create@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or by calling 01446 774634

Classroom experience is a step back in time

Youngsters from Barry's Gladstone Primary School enjoyed a step back in time to help with the official launch of the centenary year of Welsh education inspectorate Estyn.

A publication outlining developments in schools, the first area of responsibility given to the Welsh inspectorate, was launched by Susan Lewis, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, to mark the occasion.

The launch was held at the National History Museum at St Fagans and, among the guests, were the group of Barry children

experiencing life as it would have been 100 years ago.

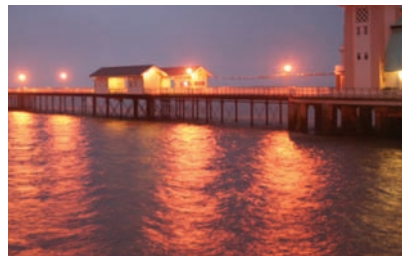
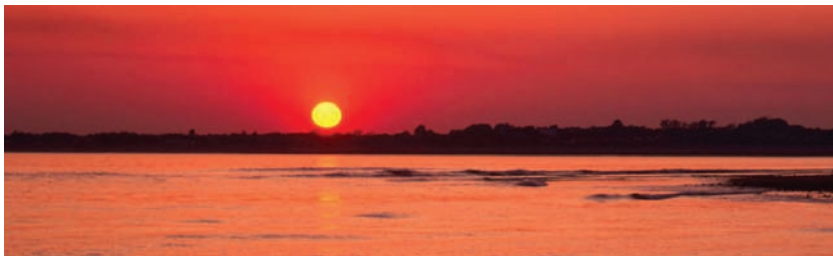
Susan Lewis said: "I am proud to think that the inspectorate has played its own part in securing improvement for generation after generation in Wales."

"The interests of the learner remain at the heart of our work as we look forward to the challenges and opportunities presented by the 21st Century."

The centenary year celebrates Estyn's continuing contribution to raising the standards and quality of education and training in Wales through inspection and advice.



Susan Lewis, HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, visits the schoolroom at St Fagans to meet children from Gladstone Primary School, Barry.



All residents are urged to recycle their copy of Vale Waves

What's on in the Vale this summer

June

Fri 22 – Ballroom dance, The Paget Rooms, Penarth

All are welcome at this friendly social evening. Suitable for anyone who has mastered the basic ballroom steps or is familiar with a few popular sequence dances. Tickets: £4, available on the door. For further details, call Alan Taylor on 07890 707759.

Sat 23 – Llantwit Major Victorian Fair

An all day fair with a Charles Dickens theme. Call 01446 795378 for more details or visit www.victorianfairday.co.uk

Sat 23 – Summer fete at Ysgol Erw'r Delyn, St Cyres Road, Penarth

From 11am and featuring face painting, children's fancy dress, pets' corner, tombola, children's games, plant stall, raffle, books, bric-a-brac, etc

Sat 23 & Sun 24 – Off to the wars, Cosmeston Medieval Village, Penarth

What does it take to go to war in the 14th Century? Meet the troops and the crafts people that keep them in action! Call 029 2070 1678 for more information.

Sun 24 – Music in the Garden at Dyffryn Gardens

On the last Sunday of every month up until September 30, you can relax in the gardens whilst listening to a range of music. For further information call 029 2059 3328.

Sun 24 – Farmers' market, Penarth Westbourne School from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Tues 26 – Café concert, St Donats Arts Centre

The centre's beautiful Glassroom is turned into a relaxed music café from 3pm for you to enjoy your favourite pieces of classical music performed by highly talented musicians from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Tickets cost £3.50, with free tea and cake for everyone! Call 01446 799100 or visit www.stdonats.com

Thurs 28 to Sun 1 July – Cowbridge Jazz Festival

Something to please every lover of jazz, whatever the style. Climaxes with a six-hour open air concert starring the internationally renowned "Temperance Seven." For bookings and news, visit www.cowbridgejazz.co.uk

July

Fri 6 to Sun 8 – Beyond the Border, St Donats Arts Centre

Britain's leading international festival of storytelling is a three-day celebration of world myth, legend and folktale featuring storytellers, musicians, poets, singers, writers and artists from around the globe. Call 01446 799100 or visit www.stdonats.com

Sat 7 – Farmers' market, Cowbridge Arthur John's car park from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Sat 7 & Sun 8 – "Ivor the Engine" weekend, Vale of Glamorgan Railway, Barry Island

A new event for the railway with the first ever visit of "Ivor the Engine." Support the little engine from Wales! For details, call 01446 748816, email valeofglamrail@hotmail.com or visit www.valeglamrail.co.uk

Wed 11 – RHS Talk and Walk, Dyffryn Gardens

The project manager will give a special guided walk introducing the new plant collection. Call 02920 593328 for more information.

Thurs 12 to Sun 22 – The Penarth Summer Festival

A variety of events for the whole family culminating in a fun day, parade and firework display on Sat 21. For details, call 029 2070 0721.

Sat 21 – Farmers' market, Cowbridge Arthur John's car park from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Sat 21 & Sun 22 – Day out with Thomas, Vale of Glamorgan Railway, Barry Island

A great opportunity to meet that cheeky chappie Thomas the Tank Engine. "Daisy" the DMU will also be available to shuttle Thomas' friends from the Waterfront to Barry Island. For details, call 01446 748816, email valeofglamrail@hotmail.com or visit www.valeglamrail.co.uk

Sun 22 – 'Summer Splendour' concert series, St Donats Arts Centre

Following the success of Arcata's concert last year, this professional ensemble returns to St Donats to



Let battle commence – Cosmeston Medieval Village

perform music by JS Bach, Rachmaninov, Dag Wiren, Meurnyn Hughes, Grace Williams, Karl Jenkins and other composers from Wales. The concert starts at 3pm and tickets cost £12 or £10. Call 01446 799100 or visit www.stdonats.com

Wed 25 – Day out with Thomas, Vale of Glamorgan Railway, Barry Island

More family fun with the cheeky tank engine. For details, call 01446 748816, email valeofglamrail@hotmail.com or visit www.valeglamrail.co.uk

Fri 27 – Ballroom dance, The Paget Rooms, Penarth

Great dance floor fun and a good atmosphere guaranteed. Tickets: £4, available on the door. For further details, call Alan Taylor on 07890 707759.



Entertainment from youngsters at the Vale Show.

Sat 28 – Farmers' market, Penarth Westbourne School from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Sat 28 & Sun 29 – Day out with Thomas, Vale of Glamorgan Railway, Barry Island

More fun with the cheeky tank engine. For details, call 01446 748816, email valeofglamrail@hotmail.com or visit www.valeglamrail.co.uk

Mon 30 – Circus workshops, Dyffryn Gardens

Try your hand at juggling, unicycling, plate spinning, and much more under the expert guidance of the specialist tutors from NoFit State Circus. From 12pm to 2pm. For more information, call 02920 593328.

August

Fri 3 – Modern jive dance, The Paget Rooms, Penarth

Get on the dancefloor for a good night out. Tickets: £5, available on the door. Call 07977 901562 for details, or visit www.southwalesmodernjive.com

Sat 4 – Farmers' market, Cowbridge Arthur John's car park from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Tue 14 to Mon 27 – Guided tours of St Donats castle and Renaissance Gardens

Fancy taking a peek inside one of the oldest continually-inhabited castles, visited by Celtic Kings, Romans, Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin and John F Kennedy? Times: 2.30pm and 3.30pm. Tickets: £4.50 (adults) £2.50 (children). Call 01446 799100 or visit www.stdonats.com for details.

Wed 15 – Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show, Fommon Castle Park

A great day out for all the family from 10am to 6pm. Attractions include: Rockwood dog display, food hall, horticultural show, home produce marquee, BSJA show jumping cattle, sheep, pigs and goats, craft fair, KC dog show, laser clay shooting, agricultural marquee, and over 200 trade stands. Cost: £8 adults; £4 children; £6 senior citizens. For details, call 01446 710099, email vale.show@btinternet.com or visit www.valeofglamorganshow.co.uk

Fri 17 – Wind in the Willows, Dyffryn Gardens

Enjoy an evening of family entertainment as Illyria perform Wind in the Willows. Details from 02920 593328.

Sat 18 & Sun 19 – Family fun weekend, Dyffryn Gardens

A wide range of activities for the whole family. Call 02920 593328 for further information.

Sat 18 – Farmers' market, Cowbridge Arthur John's car park from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Mon 20 – Circus workshops, Dyffryn Gardens

Try your hand at juggling, unicycling, plate spinning, and much more under the expert guidance of the specialist tutors from NoFit State Circus. From 12pm to 2pm. For more information, call 02920 593328.

Fri 24 – Ballroom dance, The Paget Rooms, Penarth

More dancefloor fun from 8:00pm to 10:30pm. Tickets: £4, available on the door. For details, call Alan Taylor on 07890 707759.

Sat 25 – Farmers' market, Penarth Westbourne School from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Sat 25 to Mon 27 – Diesel weekend, Vale of Glamorgan Railway, Barry Island

All the BIR diesel fleet in operation, with DMU's and visiting traction. For details, call 01446 748816, email valeofglamrail@hotmail.com, or visit www.valeglamrail.co.uk

Sun 26 & Mon 27 – August Fair, Cosmeston Medieval Village, Penarth

All the fun of a medieval fair. Join the Lord of the Manor for crafts, games, medieval Punch and Judy, combat, have a go archery - a great family day out. Call 02920 701678 for further information.

September

Sat 1 & Sun 2 – Tall Ship Festival, Barry Waterfront

Tall Ships, crafts, fairground rides, street entertainers, demonstrations, food, live bands and steam train rides. Further details from 01446 747171.

Sat 1 – Farmers' market, Cowbridge Arthur John's car park from 10am to 1pm. Call 01656 729305 for details.

Tue 4 to Sun 9 – Vale of Glamorgan Festival of Music, St Donats Arts Centre

The Vale of Glamorgan Festival is dedicated to the work of living composers and has an international reputation for featuring world-class performances in atmospheric venues around Cardiff and the Vale. For details, call 01446 799100 or visit www.stdonats.com

- A staggering 81% of Vale of Glamorgan residents attend arts events according to the Arts Council of Wales - that's 96,626 people. What was the last arts event you attended? A panto, a film, or perhaps live music down the local?

- A website has been launched to help the people of Wales find out what arts events are going on throughout the country. Audiences Wales, a marketing and audience development agency, has established www.whatsonwales.co.uk, the first bilingual arts listings website in Wales. The site is a one-stop resource for planning a night out from theatre to pop music, gallery exhibitions to dance, comedy to opera and much, much more.

- Visitors to the site can search for specific events in their region, sign up for a weekly e-newsletter and enter competitions to win tickets for events around the country - prizes so far have included tickets to the Brecon Jazz Festival and Guys and Dolls at the Millennium Centre. Visit www.whatsonwales.co.uk or www.golwgargymru.co.uk to find out what's going on near you.



Meetings

All members of the public are invited to attend meetings of the Council which start at 6pm in the Civic Offices unless otherwise stated:

- Cabinet (2pm) - July 4, 18 and 25, and September 5.
- Council - July 11
- Planning - July 19 and September 6
- Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison - July 10
- Community Liaison (7pm) - July 18
- Licensing (10am) - July 17

Scrutiny meetings start at 6pm and are generally held at the Civic Offices:

- Lifelong Learning - June 25, July 23 and September 10
- Corporate Resources - June 26, July 24 and September 11
- Community Wellbeing and Safety - July 16 and September 3
- Economy and Environment - July 17 and September 4

Alleygates success

More than 3,200 properties in Barry are now covered by the extremely successful Alleygates initiative.

The crime reduction project led by the Council, Barry Police and South Wales Fire Service involves the sealing off of back lanes to reduce opportunities for individuals to commit burglaries, vandalism and other anti-social activities.

Gates – more than 200 to date – have been erected at both ends of pathways, back lanes and alleyways, and only residents and authorised bodies are given unique keys.

Alleygates earned national recognition in 2005 when it was named as the “Best Community Initiative” at the annual Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) awards.

Contributions to the latest project have been received from the Safer Vale Partnership and the European Funding Office, and Cllr Rob Curtis, Cabinet Member for Visible Services, said: “This successful partnership is a great example of how the Council, Police and Fire Service are addressing crime and disorder together.”

Chief Inspector Nigel Lewis, from South Wales Police, said: “The Alleygates project produced remarkable results in the three-year period to 2005, with a 73% reduction in house burglary, 60% cut in burglary of commercial property, 74% reduction of thefts of vehicles, and 44% reduction of theft from vehicles. People are also telling us how they feel safer and that, for me, is a real measure of the scheme’s success.”

So much food for thought

The Council's Vale Catering Service is bouncing back after a couple of tough years and is more than ready to take on revolutionary nutritional challenges set by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The much-publicised 'Jamie Oliver effect' had an enormous impact on school meals and, while the majority of people support the campaign to get children eating fresh, tasty and nutritious food, the TV series, unfortunately, caused a slump in school meal uptake nationwide.

Although the schools featured certainly had massive problems, that is not the case everywhere, as catering boss Rita Hicks said: “The Jamie Oliver series implied that all schools had outdated menus full of unhealthy, processed junk foods.

“In the Vale, we provide a prime cooked service, which means that our school meals are ‘home cooked’ with fresh produce, with chips only served once a week. All of our menus are assessed by dieticians and each meal contains one third of any child’s daily nutritional requirements.”

With parents becoming reassured, the children are returning – school meal uptake has increased in the last year, and continues to rise.

Rita credits this to the continuing high standards maintained by her staff, who, she says, are “second to none.”

It’s not just the staff in 54 Vale schools that Rita would like to praise though. Over 300 people work for Vale Catering Services, which also provides catering in 18 welfare units, Cosmeston Country Park, Dyffryn Gardens, vending machines at Council offices, and hospitality functions.



For the past two years, Barry's Romilly Junior School, in conjunction with Vale Catering Services, have organised a special event for parents and pupils to sit down together for lunch.

However, it's school meals that are currently very much at the top of the agenda, and the challenge is about to get even tougher.

The Assembly has raised the bar with their five-year 'Appetite For Life' scheme which involves caterers looking further into their menus to actually consider the nutritional compounds of the foods..

Rita said: “This scientific approach is obviously fantastic news for youngsters who will reap great benefits of finely tuned meals, but it involves an astronomical

amount of work for us. Thankfully, the Vale is already ahead of most Welsh local authorities in working towards these further improved standards, and we will cope thanks to having a very committed team.”

For the state of children's health to improve, an equal commitment is

required on behalf of parents and the children themselves, as Rita said: “Children can eat a healthy meal each day in school but they undo any good work if they then go straight down the takeaway, sweet shop or eat badly at home.”

A typical primary school weekly menu:

Monday – Homemade cheese and tomato pizza served with chipped potatoes, baked beans and crusty bread; apple spice crumble and custard

Tuesday – Oven baked chicken fillet with boiled and roast potatoes, cauliflower florets, peas and gravy; rice crispy bar and fruit slices.

Wednesday – Spaghetti bolognaise and cheese served with pasta spirals, salad garnish and French bread; fruit yoghurt.

Thursday – Roasted Welsh beef and Yorkshire pudding served with boiled and roast potatoes, carrot roundels, shredded cabbage and gravy; orange sponge and custard.

Friday – Baked salmon fingers, with jacket wedges, raw vegetable platter and wholemeal bread; fruit flapjack and custard.

Our website – did you know?

It is now six months since the Council’s new and improved website was launched. Thanks to the hard work of staff, a vast range of interesting features can be found on the site. Here are eight useful features available at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

1. Recycling

The recycling section of the website gives you everything you need to know about going green in the Vale. As well as the details of every site in the county that you can take your materials to be recycled, and what materials can be recycled there, you can also enter your street name or village to find out what day your refuse is collected, and what day your recycling is collected.
Living / Recycling & waste (From the 'Living' section on the website's home page, click the 'recycling & waste' link)

2. Homes4U

If you are seeking accommodation from the Council, you can find details of the Homes4U scheme and listings of all current Council properties for rent. Living / Housing / Homes4U

3. Pay your bills online

You can pay your council tax, business rates, council house rents, council mortgages, and more online. Our Council / Online payments

4. Activities for young people

The Activale youth directory contains over 280 services in the Vale for young people aged 11 - 25, so there is no excuse for any youngster to be bored this summer!
Living / Life in the community / Activale

5. School holiday dates

Planning a trip next year and want to find out the school holiday dates? You can find all the dates for the Vale school terms up until 2010 here. Living / Schools & holidays

6. View planning applications

In addition to comprehensive advice and guidance on the planning process, a weekly list of planning applications that have been submitted to the Council is available to download. You can also view proposals for major planning applications such as the Penarth Heights housing development. Living / Planning / Planning Applications

7. Report a problem

If you have a problem with abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping or potholes in

your street, you can report these, or other problems to the Council online. Living / Report a problem

8. Welsh

As well as the English language website, there is also a Welsh version at www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk. Over 61% of the English site has currently been translated into Welsh, and the figure will continue to rise. There are also plans to develop the Welsh site in a way that reflects the needs and interests of Welsh speakers and learners in the Vale by promoting Welsh resources that are available in the Vale's Libraries, developing resources for schoolchildren such as the homework help pages and developing resources for Welsh learners.



What's in your bin? Great news on garden waste!

The Council is thrilled to announce that, thanks to the support of residents, its new kerbside garden waste collection service is proving to be a huge success.

Over 5,000 bags for use with the service were sold within the first four weeks of its launch in April resulting in a massive 92 tonnes of garden waste being collected for composting.

This was three times as much as was collected during the same period last year and we have continued to collect an average of five tonnes per day ever since.

This means that over 700 tonnes of waste (equivalent to 700 average Vale households not putting out any rubbish for a whole year!) will have been composted by the end of October which is a huge achievement.

Head of Visible Services Miles Punter said: "The response to the new service has been excellent and the results so far speak for themselves.

"We introduced a kerbside collection to make the service more user friendly and to help us reach challenging targets set by the Welsh Assembly which require local authorities to recycle and compost at least 40% by 2009/10.

"Our composting rate has shot up

and we have also seen a marked increase in the amount of recycling being placed out for collection."

If you haven't used the service yet, it's really easy. Just buy bags from one of the offices listed below and place them out on the same day as we collect your cardboard and plastic for recycling.

All garden waste collected in the Vale is taken to a local farm where it is composted. This compost is then used on the farm, providing an environmentally friendly method of waste disposal.

Barry resident Steve Hilton is very impressed with the service. He said: "I used to take my garden waste to the tip in Sully but now all I have to do is place it out on collection day. It's also good to know that it's being composted locally and not ending up in landfill."

Please note kerbside collections for garden waste will stop on October 31 when we will revert to a 'ring and request' collection service. From November 1, 2007, to March 31, 2008, please call 029 2067 3000 to arrange a collection.

In order for the service to continue to be successful, please remember the following:



Sam, aged three, of Rhoose, has been having great fun helping to fill up garden waste bags for his mum and dad.

1 - We can only collect compostable garden waste

Yes please

- grass cuttings
- hedge clippings
- shrub prunings
- leaves
- plants
- flowers

Bags containing anything else will be left. There is no restriction on the number of bags you can put out. Please do not place plastic bags inside your garden waste bags as these cannot be composted and contaminate the process.

No thank you:

- Logs or soil
- Rubble of stones
- Turf
- Any kind of plastic including bags and plant pots
- Kitchen waste, including vegetable peelings
- General rubbish
- Animal Waste
- Invasive weeds eg Japanese Knotweed

Our crews were very surprised to find the following placed out for collection - a roll of chicken wire (inside a biodegradable bag), beer cans, plastic bottles, house bricks and

most bizarrely a lawn mower and a Hoover!

2. Your garden waste is collected between 7am and 7pm

Your collection is on the same day as we collect your plastic and cardboard for recycling. Please place your garden waste bag(s) out by 7am as your collection times can vary depending on how much waste the crews have to collect. Please note, your bag(s) will be picked up later in the day than your recycling as they are collected by a different vehicle.

3. You must use council bags

We will only collect garden waste placed out in council bags as they need to be easily recognisable for our crews. Do not use plastic bags as these contaminate the composting process. We will not collect black bags containing garden waste.

4. Bags are available from

Reusable and biodegradable bags can be bought from the council offices in Barry (Civic and The Docks), The Alps, Wenvoe, Penarth, Llantwit Major and Cowbridge. The biodegradable bags are priced three for £1 and the re-usable bags are £1 each.

5. You can use your local Household Recycling Centres

Garden waste can be taken free of charge to the garden waste skips at Llandow and Sully Household Recycling Centres. The Llandow site is on the Llandow Trading Estate, Sully is on Hayes Road.

6. You can compost at home

Garden waste, along with other organic waste such as fruit and vegetable peelings, can be composted at home. Discounted compost bins are available to all Vale residents priced from just £10; please call

01884 841515 or e-mail sales@originalorganics.co.uk to order.

There has been a significant increase in the number of residents ordering bins this year which is great news. However, we are aware that some people have experienced problems getting through to our supplier, Original Organics. We apologise on their behalf and they assure us that the problem has now been rectified. If you do have any problems getting through, please let us know by calling 029 2067 3000.

Vale Show

For advice on waste minimisation, recycling and home composting visit the council's waste management stand at the Vale of Glamorgan Show on Wednesday, 15th August. Garden waste bags will also be on sale.

For further information on any of the above, please contact Visible Services on 029 2067 3000, e-mail visible@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or visit www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk





Warm feelings to grants scheme

Now in its fourth year in the Vale, a grants scheme has helped more than 1,000 people who were viewed as being at risk living in cold and damp homes.

Health Through Warmth (HTW) has trained more than 800 key workers, who regularly visit vulnerable people through their work, to recognise when someone's health is being affected by their living conditions and to refer them for help and advice.

The scheme is run by the Council in partnership with npower, Neighbourhood Energy Action, the NHS and other local health and community bodies. Energy Manager

David Powell says: "Our scheme helps residents with health conditions whose homes are in need of insulation measures and heating repair/replacement. HTW helps all ages, and whether people own their homes or rent, as long as they have a health condition."

Individuals who may be eligible include homeowners aged 60 and over who are entitled to a £500 insulation grant and those aged 80 and over who are entitled to a £3,600 grant for energy efficiency measures.

To help householders take advantage of the scheme, a series of Health Through Warmth events are taking place in the Vale this year and,

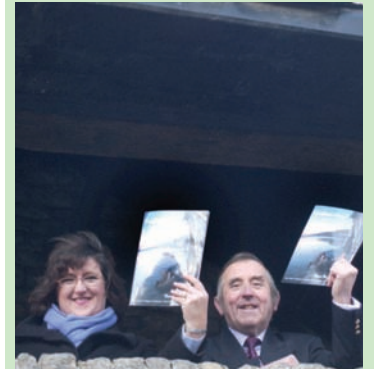
as well as finding out about keeping warm for less money, visitors may also find they're entitled to receive two free low energy light bulbs that can cut their electricity bill by £16 a year.

There will be Health Through Warmth events at Barry Market on Tuesdays, July 24 and October 23 (9am-3pm).

Anyone working regularly with vulnerable people who would like to arrange HTW training for themselves or colleagues and, indeed, anyone wanting information, please contact HTW on (01446) 709847.



New tourism brochure



The many attractions in the Vale and Bridgend areas are once again highlighted in a joint tourism brochure.

The free 2007 Glamorgan Heritage Coast and Countryside publication is informative and stylish.

The tourism departments in the Vale and Bridgend County Borough Councils have once again teamed up to produce the prestigious 44-page brochure which showcases the region's attractions and promotes a diversity of quality recreational ideas.

Vale Tourism Chief Claire Evans said: "The brochure complements our range of literature, 'Days Out, Fascinating Towns, Country Parks and Legendary Villages.' We are keen to highlight that the area boasts all year round opportunities."

To obtain a copy of the brochure, visit www.visitthevale.com or telephone the Vale tourism unit on (01446) 709328.

Valued role of carers

Do you help and support a partner, child, neighbour, relative or friend, either practically or emotionally? Would they be able to manage without your help?

You may be a parent that cares for a disabled child or a husband/wife of someone with Alzheimers, for example. If you are providing unpaid help to someone due to their age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability, then you are a carer.

A child or young person under the age of 18 carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would normally be taken by an adult, is a young carer.

The Council recognises the valuable role carers fulfill, enabling vulnerable children and

adults to maintain their independence within the community as far as is possible.

A range of support is available to carers including:

- Training in moving and handling, stress management and first aid. Training in other skills, identified by carers themselves, will also be made available.

- Events to celebrate Carers' Week and Carers' Rights Day offer individuals a chance to meet other people in the same situation.

- If you are a carer and would like to get involved in the decision-making process, we are always looking for carers to be part of our development group or to get involved in one off work like developing our local strategy for carers, etc.

- There are a variety of Vale-based support groups for carers from Crossroads for carers of those with dementia to the Parents' Federation for people caring for someone with a learning disability.

- If you are over 16 and look after an adult on a regular basis, you are entitled to a carers' assessment which looks at whether you are entitled to any help, such as breaks, household services, emotional support, in your caring role.

For further information, visit the council's website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/living/social_care/looking_after_someone.aspx

or contact Kate Isaac, Carers' Development Officer, on (01446) 704604.

Rewarding

The Vale of Glamorgan Adoption Agency is looking for people from all walks of life who could consider adopting a child.

Adoption can be challenging and rewarding, and adoptive parents need to be able to offer a lifetime commitment to a child.

Adoption Team Manager Jean Letton said: "There are many myths about who can become adoptive parents, and people assume that they have to be married, wealthy and of a certain age.

"What we are looking for are people who can match the needs of children wanting adoption, people, for example, who could take the younger or older child or maybe a child with a disability or, perhaps, could keep brothers and sisters together by adopting a sibling group.

"We welcome applications from everyone irrespective of relationship status, age, sexuality, ethnic background or wealth."

Anyone requiring further information or just looking for a chat about the process can contact Team Manager Jean Letton or Assistant Team Manager Chris Williams on 029 2035 0954 or e-mail adoption@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Special Volunteers

The excellent work of volunteers in running community centres across the Vale has been recognised at a civic reception.

Hosted by Vale Mayor Cllr Nic Hodges, the event was attended by individuals representing 12 of the area's 22 centres and recognised their invaluable help in the past year.

Providing affordable facilities for local people to meet on a regular basis and participate in a wide variety of activities, the centres are located across Barry, Penarth, Dinas Powys and the rural Vale and are used by all members of the community from the very young (usually attending a playgroup or a parent and toddler session) to senior citizens who participate in activities

including dance, bingo and various hobbies.

Vale community development officer Siân Vaughan said: "Community centres make a big difference to the lives of local people, with some of them welcoming 600 customers per week.

"A recent satisfaction survey showed that 95% of customers feel they receive good value for money when they attend an activity. This is all down to the commitment of these special volunteers."

For further information on community centres, contact Siân Vaughan on (01446) 704828



Vale Mayor Cllr Nic Hodges and the Mayoress, his wife, Shirley, were joined by Cabinet Member for Tourism and Leisure Cllr Gwyn John and community development officer Sian Vaughan at a civic reception for community centre volunteers.

Knowing their rights

Vale Mayor Cllr Nic Hodges hosted a visit by a team of students to mark their hard work and commitment in a national trading standards competition.

Following their success in the local heat of the annual Young Consumers of the Year event, organised by the Council Trading Standards Division, the teenagers from Llantwit Major Comprehensive School reached the semi-finals of the Welsh round before being edged out in a close battle.

Teams are quizzed on a wide range of topics including consumer law, credit and finance, food and drink, the environment and social responsibility, current affairs and politics.

Congratulating the Llantwit team members and teacher Helen Hatton on their success, Cllr Hodges said: "The Council's Trading Standards Division actively promote this worthwhile event as it makes competitors aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights and gives them essential life skills as they prepare for the world of work."