

Talybont Community Forum 14/11/24

GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The group discussion largely focused on these issues in terms of the areas rich range of beauty spots and nature-based activities that are part of attraction for tourists and visitors, feeling that the environment and tourism are linked.

Tourism/visitors was perceived as a mixed blessing .

- positive that the area attracts people and business, and could be key to greater development of businesses, jobs, income in the areas
- But negative in that some visitors bring little to the area and can adversely impact local people, the area and the environment.

Members of the group felt the area already has a lot of natural advantages and these could be used more effectively to promote the area yet protect the environment. These might include the National Park, the canal and tramroad with its history, the forestry, local rare species of bird such as Osprey. These natural resources are damaged by the impact of deforestation on flooding and of farm practices on pollution. The group felt there was no overarching body or group coordinating the protection of our environment and its biodiversity and a sense it's not being done well, in particular not clear if different responsible bodies actually talk to each other. A lot of questions on who is/should be coordinating these areas– NRW? Council? BBNP.

There was also a feeling that the area is very special from a biodiversity perspective and that whilst the Gilestone Farm plans worried many, the farm now presents a real opportunity for the development of sustainable farming and wildlife tourism. The plans for Gilestone are not yet known but there was real enthusiasm for the farm perhaps linking in with an agricultural college teaching rural skills and promoting sustainable farming and biodiversity. The group was keen to know of any concrete plans the Welsh Government may have for the farm.

Another positives in this area was felt to be Talybont Energy. This agency has a strong record of promoting biodiversity through both education and grants and there was the hope that now the turbine was running again this enterprise could thrive.

The Osprey group is very active and well supported and again looks very positive for the future.

A range of options were raised for making sure visitors/groups put in something to the area e.g. charges for toilets/parking. Interest in possible community ownership of such and a need for a more organisation and information to attract people e.g. more information boards, marked trails for walking/biking. Look at how to bring more value from those already visiting e.g. those using canal/walking/cycling. Should regular large groups eg outward bound companies contribute more?

KEY POINTS & ACTION POINTS:

- Should there be a local biodiversity group beyond that of the Community Council. This group might include representatives from the CC, Osprey group, Talybont Energy, local farming, village hall as well as NRW, Canal and River Trust, BBNP,

amongst others . The aim of the group being to bring some coordination and impetus to biodiversity initiatives.

- Should there be more and clearer information on what is available e.g. paths/walking routes/facilities;
 - Look at how other areas use forest trails/paths
 - How can visitors be informed about how to care for the area e.g. how to clear litter/make a contribution
 - To what extent should local volunteers step in to supplement efforts of NRW, BBNP and others given the reduction in money and service that is being seen?
 - Talybont Energy already has a school programme, this should be supported as much as possible by the wider community.