

YOURS FAITHFULLY

February 2024

MA Office address

Mail:
office@cnb-parish.org.uk

Tel: 01656 667690

Clergy

The Rev'd Maggie Thorne

Leader,
Ministry Area of
Penybont ar Ogwr
The Rectory

Merthymawr Road North
Bridgend
CF31 3NH

Tel: 01656 652247

Mail:
maggie53thorne@gmail.com

The Rev'd Roger Pitman
(Team Vicar to MA) –

The Vicarage,
Rogers Lane, Laleston,
Bridgend,
CF32 0LB,

Tel: 01656 532402,

Mail:
vicar@the-vicarage.net

Sunday Schedule
09:30, 11:00 & 6:30pm

Wednesday Schedule
Please see detailed
service schedule

Morning & Evening
Prayer at
8am & 7pm Monday to
Thursday via Zoom

Please see detailed
service schedule for
dates, times and
Churches

Please send any
information for the
March newsletter in to
mapenybontinfo@gmail.com
by 15 February 2024.

Dear friends

There is a song from the 1980's by a pop group called Foreigner. It is called "I want to know what love is"

To love another is a difficult thing - especially when our experience of love is flawed, especially when we are unaware of how much we are loved, and most especially when our experience is of anger or bitterness or resentment towards others for what they have done.

To really love another we need a standard or guide to follow and within that standard or guide - we need help - help to not only know what love is - but to know that the love we need is within us; that it is embracing us and has the power to embrace others through us, especially to embrace those others towards who we do not feel love.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, and love your neighbour as yourself."

These commands, Jesus and The Prophets said summarize the Law, the law which Jesus says will not pass away until all is accomplished.

To that law, that law which can be most difficult for us to keep – Jesus added one commandment, and one commandment only during the three years of his ministry. The commandment given by Jesus as Judas departs from the Last Supper to betray him to his death.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

And he said this knowing that the people he loved and trusted most were soon going to inflict heart wrenching pain on him. Judas would betray him but, Peter and the Apostles were going to desert him, abandon him and deny him.

In Rev. Maggie's January letter New Years resolutions were mentioned. If you like me and many others have not been able to keep yours already, then instead of giving up try taking up instead. Taking up for Lent His commandment for ourselves and saying:

"As Jesus has loved me, so you I will love others."

That love starts with forgiveness.

Rev'd Roger

Rev'd Roger

Note: Rev'd Maggie is on retreat from 12th Jan, returning for services on 14th Feb, and can only be contacted in emergencies. Rev'd Roger should be the first port of call for all enquiries/pastoral needs.



Inside this issue:

Service Schedule ... Page 2

Collect and
Sunday Readings ... Page 6

Psalms Page 9

For Your
Prayers Page 12

Green News Page 13

General News Page 14

Services Schedule

Date	Time	Church	Service	Vicar
Sunday 21 st January 2024 (Third Sunday of Epiphany)	9:30am	Brackla	Café Church	Val or Penny
		Coity	Eucharist	Edward
		Coychurch	Eucharist	Roger
		Laleston	Non-Eucharist	Pete
	11:00am	Merthyr Mawr	Eucharist	Edward
		Newcastle	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Nolton	Eucharist	Roger
		Pen-y-fai	Non-Eucharist	Pete
6:30pm	Zoom	Evensong	Roger	
Wednesday 24 th January 2024	9:30am	Laleston	Eucharist	Roger
		Note: No service in Nolton this week		
	11:00am	Coychurch	Eucharist	Roger
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Mike Lewis
Sunday 28 th January 2024 (Fourth Sunday of Epiphany)	9:30am	Brackla	Eucharist	Tim
		Coity	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Coychurch	Non-Eucharist	Pete
		Pen-y-fai	Eucharist	Roger
	11:00am	Laleston	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Merthyr Mawr	Eucharist	Roger
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Tim
		Nolton	Non-Eucharist	Pete
6:30pm	Zoom	Evensong	Roger	
Wednesday 31 st January 2024	9:30am	Coity	Eucharist	Roger
		Laleston	Eucharist	Edward
	11:00am	Coychurch	Eucharist	Edward
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Roger

Services Schedule cont...

Date	Time	Church	Service	Vicar
Sunday 4th February 2024 (Second Sunday before Lent) (Creation Sunday)	9:30am	Brackla	Café Church	Local Lay Team
		Coity	Eucharist	Roger
		Coychurch	Eucharist	Mike Lewis
		Merthyr Mawr	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
	11:00am	Laleston	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Newcastle	Non-Eucharist	Local Lay Team
		Nolton	Eucharist	Mike Lewis
		Pen-y-fai	Eucharist	Roger
6:30pm	Zoom	Evensong	Roger	
Wednesday 7 th February	9:30am	Laleston	Eucharist	Roger
	11:00am	Coychurch	Eucharist	Roger
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Edward
Sunday 11th February 2024 (Sunday before Lent) (Transfiguration Sunday)	9:30am	Brackla	Eucharist	Roger
		Coity	Non-Eucharist	Local Lay Team
		Coychurch	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Laleston	Eucharist	Tim
	11:00am	Merthyr Mawr	Non-Eucharist	Local Lay Team
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Tim
		Nolton	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Pen-y-fai	Eucharist	Roger
6:30pm	Zoom	Taizé Service	Roger	

Services Schedule cont...

Date	Time	Church	Service	Vicar
Wednesday 14 th February (Ash Wednesday)	9:30am	Laleston	Eucharist	Maggie
		Nolton	Eucharist	Roger
	11:00am	Coychurch	Eucharist	Maggie
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Roger
	7:00pm	Coity	Eucharist	Maggie
		Pen-y-fai	Eucharist	Roger
Sunday 18 th February (First Sunday of Lent)	9:30am	Brackla	Café Church	Local Lay Team
		Coity	Eucharist	Maggie
		Coychurch	Eucharist	Roger
		Pen-y-fai	Non-Eucharist	Pete
	11:00am	Laleston	Eucharist	Maggie
		Merthyr Mawr	Non-Eucharist	Pete
		Newcastle	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Nolton	Eucharist	Roger
	6:30pm	Zoom	Evensong	Roger
Wednesday 21 st February (Ember Day)	9:30am	Coity	Eucharist	Maggie
		Laleston	Eucharist	Roger
	11:00am	Coychurch	Non-Eucharist	Pete
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Maggie

Services Schedule cont...

Date	Time	Church	Service	Vicar
Sunday 25th February (Second Sunday of Lent)	9:30am	Brackla	Eucharist	Maggie
		Coity	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
		Coychurch	Non-Eucharist	Pete
		Merthyr Mawr	Eucharist	Roger
	11:00am	Laleston	Eucharist	Roger
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Maggie
		Nolton	Non-Eucharist	Pete
		Pen-y-fai	Non-Eucharist	Val or Penny
6:30pm	Zoom	Evensong	Roger	
Wednesday 28 th February	9:30am	Laleston	Eucharist	Roger
		Nolton Rectory	Eucharist	Maggie
	11:00am	Coychurch	Eucharist	Maggie
		Newcastle	Eucharist	Roger

Morning and Evening Prayer at 8am and 7pm, Monday to Thursday via Zoom
Please contact Rev'd Roger for the Zoom links you need.

Sunday clubs run at Brackla, Coity and Pen-y-fai.
Please contact Rev'd Roger for details.

**Note: Rev'd Maggie is on retreat from 12th January, returning for services on 14th February,
and can only be contacted in emergencies.**

Rev'd Roger should be the first port of call for all enquiries/pastoral needs.

Collects and the Sunday readings for the month

Date	Collects	Readings
Sunday 21st January 2024 (Third Sunday of Epiphany)	Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.	Genesis 14. 17-20 Psalm 128 Revelation 19. 6-10 John 2. 1-11
Sunday 28th January 2024 (Fourth Sunday of Epiphany)	Creator God, who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness: we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, shine into the hearts of all your people, and reveal the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.	Deuteronomy 18. 15-20 Psalm 111 Revelation 12. 1-5a Mark 1. 21-28

Collects and the Sunday readings for the month cont...

Date	Collects	Readings
Sunday 4th February (Second Sunday before Lent) (Creation Sunday)	Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever. Amen.	Proverbs 8. 1, 22-31 Psalm 104. 24-35 Colossians 1. 15-20 John 1. 1-14
Sunday 11th February (Sunday before Lent) (Transfiguration Sunday)	Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.	2 Kings 2. 1-12 Psalm 50. 1-6 2 Corinthians 4. 3-6 Mark 9. 2-9

Collects and the Sunday readings for the month cont...

Date	Collects	Readings
Sunday 18th February (First Sunday of Lent)	Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.	Genesis 9. 8-17 Psalm 25. 1-10 1 Peter 3. 18-22 Mark 1. 9-15
Sunday 25th February (Second Sunday of Lent)	Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant that all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, may reject those things that are contrary to their baptism, and follow in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen	Genesis 17. 1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22. 23-31 Romans 4. 13-25 Mark 8. 31-38

Psalms for the month

Date	Psalm	Readings
<p>Sunday 21st January 2024 (Third Sunday of Epiphany)</p>	<p>Psalm 128</p>	<p>A Song of Ascents. Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.</p> <p>Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.</p> <p>The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!</p>
<p>Sunday 28th January 2024 (Fourth Sunday of Epiphany)</p>	<p>Psalm 111</p>	<p>Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. Full of honour and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures for ever. He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established for ever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant for ever. Holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practise it have a good understanding. His praise endures for ever.</p>

Psalms for the month cont...

Dates	Psalm	Readings
<p>Sunday 4th February 2024 (Second Sunday before Lent) (Creation Sunday)</p>	<p>Psalm 104. 24-35</p>	<p>O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.</p> <p>These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.</p> <p>May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in his works— who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!</p>
<p>Sunday 11th February 2024 (Sunday before Lent) (Transfiguration Sunday)</p>	<p>Psalm 50. 1-6</p>	<p>The mighty one, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.</p> <p>Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: ‘Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!’ The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. Selah</p>

Psalms for the month cont...

Dates	Psalm	Readings
<p>Sunday 18th February (First Sunday of Lent)</p>	<p>Psalm 25. 1-10</p>	<p>Of David. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.</p> <p>Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.</p> <p>Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!</p> <p>Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.</p>
<p>Sunday 25th February (Second Sunday of Lent)</p>	<p>Psalm 22. 23-31</p>	<p>You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.</p> <p>From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live for ever!</p> <p>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.</p> <p>To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.</p>

For your Prayers

Please pray for:

Dilys Leyshon
Sandra Shelly

And all those who are sick whether in body,
mind or spirit.

Baptisms

Please pray for those who are preparing for baptism, including:

Arabela Margulescu



Weddings

There are no weddings in February or March.



Please continue to pray for Ukraine

God of all people and author of peace,
we pray for all who are involved in the current confrontation in and surrounding Ukraine.
May the nations of the world, their governments and leaders
base their decisions upon your wisdom in all that makes for peace.
Loving God, we recognise that conflict brings tragic loss for all involved,
and so, we pray that eyes and hearts may be opened to those things that unite
us in our common humanity.

Amen



Prayer for Gaza and Israel

Dear God,

We cry out to you on behalf of the people seriously affected by the conflict in Gaza and Israel. Our hearts break at the devastation and suffering that we see, and we know it breaks yours, too.

We ask that you would stretch out your mighty hand to bring an end to this war.

We cry out for people who have been injured or traumatised, who have lost loved ones or their homes. Please provide everything they need and be their comfort, their hope, their healer, and their safe refuge.

We pray for your peace to reign. We look to you as our Saviour and the hope of the world.

Amen.

Ministry Area Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to work together as a Ministry Area. May we engage with each other with faith and encouragement and manage each situation with wisdom and mutual respect. May we serve with integrity, creativity and purpose and speak with openness and gentleness. May we offer our gifts, time and finances with generosity and face each challenge with courage and the desire to grow through it. May we all be drawn deeper into our relationship with you and be known as your disciples. Help us to tell our joyful stories, increase our capacity for good and extend your kingdom in this place. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Rev'd Maggie – Silent Retreat

Please pray for the Rev'd Maggie as she enters her silent retreat.

“Help her to quiet her mind so that she may hear God’s word and receive God’s wisdom. Ask that she is filled with peace and God’s presence. Help her to find rest and rejuvenation during her retreat so that she may return to the MA refreshed and renewed in spirit.”

Amen.

RIP:

Margaret Hart
Graham Miles

Jacqueline Jones

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace and rise in glory.

Amen.



Eco Church & Forest Church news

Forest Church

AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT
WILD CHRISTIAN
connecting faith, nature and climate

A poster for a Lent event at Forest Church. The background is a stylized illustration of a forest with green trees and brown trunks. The text is overlaid on this background. The word 'Lent' is at the top in large white letters. Below it, 'Forest Church' is written in a larger, bold white font. The main event details are: 'Join us at Pen Y Fai', 'Sat. 17th February', and '3.30 - 4.30 pm'. The location is 'Meet at carpark of Scout & Guide Hall, Court Colman Road..'. The purpose is 'For a woodland walk and worship'. Contact information is provided at the bottom: 'Contact Philippa On 07553 928088' and 'Or Rev Maggie on 01656 652247 for more information'.

January

Make 'enjoying nature' your priority. From bird watching to writing about or drawing something that inspires you in nature, growing your own fruit or vegetables, or exploring an area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK, be sure to fall in love with nature in a new way this coming year and allow it to lead your thoughts towards God our Creator. Further ideas can be found at arocha.org.uk/ideas-to-enjoy-nature/

February

Go green for Lent. The weeks leading up to Easter are a time for self-reflection, repentance and emulating Jesus' obedience to the Father. Is there something you'd like to give up or take up during Lent that will enable you to reflect on God, contribute to our planet's well-being and enhance others' lives through sustainable, ecofriendly living? Explore some of these changes at arocha.org.uk/go-greenfor-lent/

March

Celebrate Spring. Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the season – breathe in the fragrance of blossoms, observe budding catkins, note different bird songs, spot footprints, or use the Pl@ntNet app to identify spring flowers. Nature can boost our happiness, so spend time in your garden, on your balcony, and in local green spaces. Dedicate quality time to appreciate creation's beauty, and thank God for the hope that spring can bring with our Lent resources at arocha.org.uk/connect-with-gods-creation-overlent/

For more practical ways to enjoy, nurture and defend nature, sign up to A Rocha UK's Wild Christian email at: arocha.org.uk/wild-christian

Plea:

Is there a calligrapher in the MA who could update our memorial books across all the churches?



Please contact Rev'd Maggie if you can help.

Ukraine – Host Families Urgently Required

The situation in Ukraine continues and more host families from Bridgend are urgently needed for refugees. If you have a spare room, or know of anyone who has, and could help in this way, please contact Maggie (usual email), or Christoph Auckland (Outreach and Social Justice Lead for the Diocese) on christophaukland@churchinwales.org.uk

Lectionary Books

Several of our churches require lectionary books. As the cost of printing is high, we hope to issue general CiW booklets which have the words of the Eucharist, but no readings. Many of you like to follow, so we suggest that you take note of the readings published in the newsletter and use your own Bible (some are available in the churches) or, if able to use an online version, 'Oremus Bible Browser'. The psalms will be published in the newsletter for ease of congregational participation.

Rev'd Maggie



Bridgend Repair Café

Do you want **something fixed for free, your bike safety checked or some sewing repairs carried out?**

Bridgend Repair Café is a volunteer organisation that helps fix household items for free, **for anyone**, in a friendly environment at the following locations and dates (ample parking):

January 20th Bryntirion & Laleston Community Centre, Mount Pleasant, CF31 4EF

February 17th Bryncethin Community Centre, Ogmores Terrace, Bryncethin, CF32 9YF

March 16th Bryncethin Community Centre, Ogmores Terrace, Bryncethin, CF32 9YF

All from 10am to 12.00 mid-day

We will have fixers for a range of items including:

- ✓ **Bikes** an 'M safety check'
- ✓ **Electrical items** e.g. toasters, kettles, vacuum cleaners
- ✓ **Clothing** e.g. jeans, bags, shirts (Repairs of all types of textile products- not general alterations but **we will repair or alter/adjust school clothing**)
- ✓ **IT** e.g. PCs, laptops (hardware and software)
- ✓ **Costume Jewellery**
- ✓ **General** e.g. toys, ornaments, small furniture

Bring your items to us and we'll try our best to fix it! Free Tea and biscuits while you wait!

To make sure we have an appropriate fixer for your item, it would be really helpful if you could email bridgendrepaircafe@gmail.com with basic details of your item before the relevant Saturday or just turn up and take a chance!

Welsh Government – Road Safety Strategy – consultation



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Welsh Government wants to our views about road safety, so they can understand our priorities and how to make roads safe for all.

I don't know about you but I have a few thoughts on what should be done around 20 MPH zones, e-Bikes, e-Scooters etc. so please take the time to make your feelings known.

Consultation ends on 31st January 2024

<https://www.gov.wales/road-safety-strategy>

Calling all confirmation candidates!

Confirmation classes will be held during April.

Please send your name to Rev'd Roger so that you don't miss out!

MA News – Lay Chair

As this Ministry Area newsletter is circulated, we will all be reluctantly preparing to bid farewell to the Reverend Maggie and aiming to seek a new leader. We very much hope, and pray, that potential candidates are aware of the wonderful family spirit and the endless possibilities that exist within our special group of churches. Our thoughts, and prayers, are also with Reverend Maggie in her period of silent retreat and her preparations for retirement.

As dreadful images of war and suffering across the world continue to fill our television screens, these have recently been accompanied by additional images of the shocking effects of the adverse weather conditions both here in the UK and in the wider world. As these events are uppermost in our minds, and as we empathise, with those who have been injured, those whose homes have been lost or damaged, and those who live in fear, whatever our own concerns, may we always be mindful of, and thankful for, the relative safety and security of our Ministry Area.

Jenny Morgan.
Lay Chair to the MA.



St Teilo's, Merthyr Mawr Craft and Chat 2024



Come and join us on Thursdays 10.30am – 12.30pm for craft, chat, tea/coffee, and cake.

Either bring your own project to work on or join us to make items for our Christmas Fayre – materials provided.



Group will take place on the following Thursdays:

Jan. 11th, Feb. 15th, Mar. 14th, Apr. 11th, May 9th, June 13th,
July 11th, Aug. 8th, Sept. 12th, Oct. 10th, Nov. 14th, Dec. 12th.

Giving:

For details on how to give, please contact Sandra Arnott (Treasurer to the Ministry Area) sandra.arnott49@gmail.com or 862211.

Also, here is the link to our easy-to-use online Campaign Page:

[MA Penybont ar Ogwr Donation Page](#) or scan the QR code with your smart phone or tablet.

For your interest, there's also a card reader in church, allowing you to donate via debit/credit cards.

Those in CNB who are used to giving through the envelope system will find envelopes in Coity Church.

Please contact Karen Phillips on 651338 or 07944 627519 if you'd like to be included in this scheme.

Please be as generous as you possibly can in your giving as we are very worried that with escalating fuel costs, the Church might be affected detrimentally yet again.



Bridgend County Borough Council News



Funding for forest schools to boost children's wellbeing

Bridgend County Borough Council has been awarded £400k of Welsh Government funding to create outdoor forest schools in eight primary schools across the county borough.

The funding is part of a larger £2m Community Focused Schools Grant offered by Welsh Government to increase community use of schools. From 2023 to 2025, the funding will support a variety of projects in schools throughout Bridgend County Borough, with establishing forest schools being one of those ventures. Selected schools to host the outdoor learning provision are across the county borough:

- Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School, Brackla.
- Bettws Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd (shared provision), in the Garw Valley.
- Pîl Primary School, in Pyle.
- Llangynwyd Primary School, in the Llynfi Valley.
- Ogmere Vale Primary School, in the Ogmere Valley.
- Croesty Primary School, Pencoed.
- Nottage Primary School, Porthcawl.
- Tondu Primary School, in Aberkenfig.

The forest school provision is to be used by the schools, internal local authority organisations, and external community organisations. The aim is to promote outdoor learning and wellbeing, as well as encourage people to spend more time outdoors and experience the benefits of being in the natural world.

The natural environment and learning outdoors play a significant role in the new Curriculum for Wales. Sue Williams, Team Leader for Health, Education and Natural Resources said: *"We are thrilled that being outdoors is now recognised as equal to the indoor classroom, and outdoor learning is positioned as a central pedagogy [teaching method] which all settings will engage in."*

The new curriculum covers all learners aged three to 16 and was first implemented in September 2022 for all primary schools, and for Year 7 in some secondary schools. Since September 2023, all Year 7 and 8 pupils are taught through the new curriculum with a continuing roll out each year, until Year 11 are included by 2026.

Cllr Jon Paul Blundell, Cabinet Member for Education, said: *"What a wonderful way for our schools to move forward and embrace the new Curriculum for Wales. Research shows how learning outdoors can lead to high levels of wellbeing, confidence and engagement, along with social, emotional and physical development. A forest school consultant has met with each of the named schools and is currently working on concept drawings. The consultant will continue to work closely with the schools to plan, establish and develop their grounds to create the forest schools. We are very grateful for this Welsh Government funding, enabling us to offer this outdoor provision to our learners and wider communities."*

Bridgend County Borough Council News

Give blood and save lives

Appointments are available at:

- 24 January – Tesco Extra Bridgend (CF31 3SQ)
- 30 January – Bridgend Designer Outlet
- 08 February – Asda Bridgend (CF31 3AU)
- 14 February – Bridgend Masonic Hall (CF31 2AP)
- 23 February – Tesco Extra Bridgend (CF31 3SQ)



Welsh Blood Service

Please be advised that if you have recently had a Covid-19 vaccination, then you must wait two days before making a blood donation.

[Book your appointment today to help save lives.](#)

Bridgend County Borough Council News cont...



Budget settlement news prompts warning over council services

News that Bridgend County Borough Council is set to receive a 2024-25 budget settlement increase of 3 per cent has led the authority to warn that it is now impossible to avoid major changes for some council services.

As the settlement is below the current UK inflation and represents an increase in funding of £7.4m against known budget pressures of £28m, the council will need to take urgent action if it is to meet its legal obligation of delivering a fully balanced budget for the year ahead.

Cllr Hywel Williams, Cabinet Member for Resources, said: "For 13 consecutive years, local councils have been forced to make cuts and deliver savings as a result of experiencing the full impact of national austerity measures combined with Brexit, the global pandemic, increased costs, additional customer demand, and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Food and energy bills for public buildings such as schools and day care centres have risen, higher numbers of vulnerable children and adults now require essential care and support, and councils have to meet the additional cost of salary and pension increases for teachers and other staff.

Similarly, the cost of materials for works ranging from constructing new schools or maintaining existing infrastructure such as the highways network have all significantly increased, and since March 2020, we have seen a 237 per cent increase in demand for temporary accommodation for homeless households.

National media is full of stories warning that this situation has now reached breaking point, and that there is a real risk of one in five English councils and a quarter of Scottish councils effectively going bankrupt in the next two years.

Bridgend County Borough Council is not immune to these challenges, and having already done everything we can to protect local residents from experiencing the brunt of cuts over the last 13 years, we are now at a stage where this is no longer possible.

While we will, of course, ensure that all of our funding is used effectively and efficiently, we should also all be prepared to make some particularly hard and unavoidable decisions before the council's final budget is agreed for 2024-25."

The Leader, Cllr Huw David added: "While a glance at the news headlines will tell you that this is a national problem, not just a local issue, research by the Welsh Governance Centre has highlighted that Welsh Government has received nearly £800m less in funding for 2024-25 – a total loss of £1.5bn in real terms and after accounting for inflation.

"This is clearly bad news for local government. As a council, we provide more than 800 different services that range from education, social care for children and older people and supporting the homeless through to implementing regeneration projects, undertaking school modernisation programmes and much, much more.

We already face huge financial pressures in areas such as social services and home to school transport, so it is important to be entirely realistic about the fact that some very difficult decisions will need to be made for next year's budget. We are going to have to look very closely at everything we do, including the level and frequency of each service, and determine whether changes are necessary. That is why this year, more so than ever before, we need the residents of Bridgend County Borough to take part in our forthcoming budget consultation, and to tell us where you think our resources should be prioritised.

Details of how you can do this will be announced early in the new year, but in the meantime, you can find out more by visiting the 'Council budget challenges explained' page at www.bridgend.gov.uk."

Bridgend County Borough Council News cont...

New mural unveiled to 'give a voice' to care experienced teenagers in Bridgend County Borough

A striking, new mural has been unveiled in Bridgend town centre of a poem reflecting the voices of care experienced teenagers in Bridgend County Borough.

A former Children's Laureate Wales, Connor Allen, worked with care experienced teenagers, in a partnership facilitated by Foster Wales and Voices from Care Cymru, to create a piece of poetry sharing their life experiences, in the hope of educating people around the realities of fostering.

The aim of the poem, which has been brought to life in a distinctive mural created by local street artist and co-founder of Peaceful Progress, Bryce Davies, is to raise awareness and challenge perceptions of care experienced teenagers in the county borough.

The group of young people, aged 11 plus, hope their poem, which has been displayed publicly at Brackla Street in the town centre, will encourage people to consider fostering older children and teens in their local authority. Recent government statistics state that there are currently nearly 5,000 children in foster care across Wales and 53 per cent of those are children aged 11 and over. Many of these young people have faced extreme hardship and adversity, and yet when asked, it's the negative perceptions of wider society that hurt them most.

Molly*, aged 14, from Bridgend, who co-wrote the poem, shares her experience of being a looked-after person: "Having a foster carer who sees through false perceptions and recognises my past but still continues to support and encourage me to make positive steps forward is helpful for my wellbeing."

The council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health, Cllr Jane Gebbie, said: "We are delighted that this collaboration has reflected the thoughts and feelings of our young people in such a creative way. Thank you to everyone involved in this project, particularly our young people who have shared their experiences with us to help raise awareness of the positives and dispel some of the myths around fostering teenagers."

Alastair Cope, Head of Foster Wales, says there are many benefits to fostering a young person aged 11 plus: "In many ways, teenagers in care are easier than fostering younger children. They have more understanding of what's going on in their lives, and able to do things on their own. They need involvement in decision making and a place where their voices can be heard, support, a mentor, someone to stand by them, advocate for them and champion them."

Emma Phipps-Magill, Operations Director, Voices from Care Cymru, adds: "Young people want to strip away these labels that have been given to them and just been seen as a teenager, and with the right support, thrive just like their non-care experienced peers. That's why this project with Foster Wales is so important, because it gives them a voice and it's helping to challenge these negative perceptions."

To find out more about local authority fostering in Bridgend County Borough, visit the [Foster Wales Bridgend](#) website.

- Foster Wales is the national network of 22 Welsh local authority fostering teams.
- Peaceful Progress is a professional graffiti arts organisation.
- Voices From Care Cymru is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people in Wales by being an independent voice for the care community.

* Names of the young people have been changed to protect their identities.



General News cont...

Ministry Area Social Media Pages

MA Webpage 

[Ministry Area of Penybont ar Ogwr – Celebrating Christian worship for over a thousand years \(cnb-parish.org.uk\)](http://cnb-parish.org.uk)

Facebook Pages 

[Parish of Coity, Nolton and Brackla with Coychurch](#)

[Laleston St David's Church](#)

[Merthyr Mawr](#)

[Penyfai](#)

[Newcastle \(St Illtyd\)](#)



Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, is the gift of Christ, the Lord