

I ♥ MERTHYR TYDFIL - ENVIRONMENTAL DAY

The I Love Merthyr Environment Day which was held on Friday 12th September saw many partners from across the Borough who sit on the Merthyr Tydfil Environment Partnership organise a range of different activities within their communities. Town and Park Communities First activity in partnership with MTCBC Countryside Officer Rolf Brown was entitled **'Learning Through the Environment'** and saw 26 pupils from Brecon Road Infants School participating.

The children were taken to Cyfarthfa Christ Church in Georgetown to explore the grounds and the different habitats including Grassland, Garden and Woodland.



Bug box magnifying pots made the whole experience even more exciting by giving the children the opportunity



to see the creatures they had captured up close! Nature Trail Keys were used by the children so they could identify the many different types of mini-beasts, berries and foliage they encountered.

A fantastic afternoon was had by all involved and to make the enjoyment last that little bit longer all tools and materials provided on the day were donated to the school for use as part of their future environmental activities.



Town and Park Communities First, Canolfan y Menter Gymraeg and MTCBC Arts and Regeneration Departments have come together to organise an evening of **Bilingual Carol Singing** to be held at the Zoar Chapel, Pontmorlais on **Wednesday 3rd December**.

A Lantern Procession from the Town Centre to the Chapel will take place, it is to be lead by a Welsh Piper and accompanied by

entertainers. Children of the 5 local junior schools in Town and Park will be involved in workshops leading up to the activity to create their own lanterns and a 'giant' lantern that represents their school.

The procession will **start at 4.45pm meeting at the Fountain at the lower end of the Town Centre**; it will then proceed through the main High Street up to the **Zoar Chapel for 6pm**. There will

be carols at intervals during the procession hopefully with the backing of a choir (this has yet to be confirmed).

All are welcome to join in the procession; entry to the Gymanfa Ganu is strictly invitation only due space restrictions.

For further information please contact Town and Park Communities First Office on 01685 353944.

WELCOME TO THE 4TH EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

With Christmas on our door step and The New Year fast approaching we are aware that people will be starting to consider new options as part of their New Year Resolutions.

We have therefore included a Questionnaire that we would like you and your family to complete in relation to training courses. We believe community based training is a fantastic option not only to learn new skills; but also to socialise and meet up with members of your local area. We have put boxes in many local venues to enable you to return the forms with ease and we look forward to hearing your comments. If you want extra forms please phone us or call into the office. **Closing Date for returns is 28th November and there is a £50 raffle for all entries**, which could help towards the Christmas bills!

All that's left is for us is to wish you Seasons Greetings and we hope to see you at our Lantern Parade on Wed 3rd December 4.45pm by the Fountain at the Lower End of the Town Centre.

**Communities First
Team**

COMMUNITIES FIRST OFFICE

Main Office Number: 01685 353944

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● Focussing on Our Health...

Communities First supported by Diabetes Peer Support; held a Health Awareness Day on July 16th in the High Street Baptist Church. There were various



organisations present offering information to community

members. The Local Health Board covered breast awareness, smoking cessation, blood pressure and general well being. Other organisations in attendance were Alzheimer's, Osteoporosis, Chiropody, MIND, Expert Patient, Epilepsy, Benefits Agency & Energy advisors. There was also a diabetic nurse on hand offering advice & free diabetes blood monitors. This was followed by a relaxing head massage preformed by Gaynor

Humphrey's then the newly developing social enterprise; Bak on Trak provided a buffet. The day proved successful with 36 people attending, 12 of whom signed up to join the Diabetes Support Group. Please phone if you would also like to be part of this developing group.



● Stories from Medieval Times...



A trip to Cosmeston Medieval Village on July 3rd was arranged in partnership with

Communities First and Angela West; Family Learning Coordinator from Newport University. The trip included children from Caedraw, Cyfarthfa & Twynyrodyn Junior Schools and elderly residents from Georgetown and Kevin Ryan Court Tenants & Residents Boards. The purpose of the trip was "storytelling" which was previously requested

by the elderly residents. Following the trip workshops were carried out in the schools relating to storytelling and creative writing. Angela West will now produce a DVD for each of the schools & elderly groups.



● A Healthy Start for our Children...

Communities First is supporting Sure Start to pilot a "Healthy Start Eating Initiative". The sessions aim to combat "Childhood Obesity" and hopefully prevent the on-set of

Type 2 Diabetes. The sessions include fun exercises for babies and toddlers, quick and easy cooking ideas, healthy eating and weaning advice with free crèche facilities. A 6 week pilot course started on September 18th in the High Street Baptist Church and following its success

we are now seeking funding to continue to develop these sessions into a long term project - Interested in joining then call us now!



FORTHCOMING PROJECTS

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ART WORK...



For those residents who frequent the town centre, I'm sure you'll be aware of the state of disrepair of **Hong**

Kong Alleyway, which is the route between the bus depot and the town centre (next to Glamorgan Gates/ Natwest Bank). Thanks to some strong voices of our young people we are in the process of developing a partnership project to revamp the Hong Kong Alley with Community Designed Artwork. The project is awaiting a funding decision and if successful the project should commence after Christmas. If you would

be interested in having a say in the final art please contact Jo-ann on 01685 353944 to join in on a forthcoming workshop.



We are in the process of developing a **Cross-Genre Music Project with Youngsters** from **"The Young Persons Information Shop"** and **"The Rock Foundation"** where young people of different backgrounds and beliefs will come

together to undertake music workshops and ultimately develop their own songs and then in-turn deliver a performance back to their families and friends... watch this space for more news!



The Pontmorlais Promenade was once a prominent and important part of Merthyr's heritage, today the promenade has become a walkway for pedestrians and a thoroughfare for traffic. We would like to try and install some artwork along the promenade that would resurrect the area to its former glory.

At present this project is still in its infancy but if you live near the promenade or would just like to be a part of this project please contact the Communities First Office.

ENTERPRISE WEEK COMES TO MERTHYR TYDFIL

NOVEMBER 17TH-21ST 2008

Enterprise Week is an international event to help people start their own or develop their existing business.

It is also a great opportunity for showcasing what hundreds of organisations deliver all year round to help existing businesses and social enterprises grow.

9 events will be held during Enterprise Week following on from the success of last year. There will also be 2 brand new and exiting events for people of your community to get involved in, they are:

START YOU BUSINESS AT HOME - Enterprising Art & Business
Tues 18th Nov 6-8pm

This event will focus on helping people find out how they can start their business at home, with expert advice and information available. If you want to turn a hobby into a business, or start a business working from home but you don't know where to start come along and find out how!

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EVENT - Merthyr College
Thurs 20th Nov 10am-1pm

Are you interested in working in TV, Radio and Film? Do you have an Arts and Crafts interest or hobby that you would like to make a little money from? Are you a budding musician or performing artist, or do you simply want to find out more about working within the Creative Industries?

If the answer is yes to any of the above questions then please come along and meet the people who can provide expert advice and answer your questions.

For further information on how to get involved contact Sharon Doherty - Business Development Manager
Email: sharon.doherty@merthyr.gov.uk or contact Michelle at the Communities First Office.

FREE BOOK BORROWING SCHEME HERE NOW

The Library Service have loaned us a selection of books from the Welsh Books Council as part their **Annual National Outreach Campaign.**

We have a wide range of books for loan suitable for adults and children on various topics including Welsh History & Culture, Poetry, Short Stories and Children's Books. Books are also available both in English and Welsh. Call into the office now to arrange a loan of

these fantastic titles. Accessible Mon to Fri (10am-3pm)



FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME...



Anyone living in Wales can contact the Fire Service who will come and undertake a **FREE HOME SAFETY CHECK** on your property and if necessary install free smoke detectors in your home. If you would be interested in registering for this free service either contact the Wales hotline direct on 0800 169 1234 or alternatively contact Communities First on 01685 353944 and we will pass on your details.

KEEPING FIT FOR FREE...

Merthyr Tydfil now has a dedicated officer - Kay Maybank who co-ordinates organised walks for local people as part of the Lets Walk Cymru Project.

September saw the first Walk Leader training course where locally interested residents were trained to become Walk Leaders. This training is designed to encourage local people to join a walking

group, and in turn socialise with fellow community members but ultimately to keep fit & active. Nicola Davies Town and Park Administrator, along with local residents; Malcolm Browne and Sheilagh McCarthy attended the course and are all looking forward to leading their first walk. Future walks will vary in both distance and theme and are suited to local need.



Interested in becoming a Walk Leader or Joining a Local Walking Group? Then contact Communities First Office on 01685 353944. Our three new leaders - Nicola, Sheilagh and Malcolm look forward seeing you on a walk soon!

COMMUNITY ADVICE

We realise that sometimes it's difficult to get advice or guidance when offices are located in numerous venues, thus we are in the process of developing **Outreach Surgeries** at our offices on Pontmorlais.

This issue we will focus on the services of A4E: If you are claiming sickness or disability benefits and want to get back to work - A4E can help! With dedicated support they can offer help on: Creation of

CV, Assistance with Interview Techniques, Action Plans to reach personal goals and a discretionary £200 back to work grant with up to 52 weeks in-work support.

Call A4E Customer Service Staff on 0800 988 2265 to make an appointment to see Gavin Thomas -

Call Now!

BENEFITS & WELFARE ADVICE

1st Wed each Month 1-3pm

A4E (INTO WORK SUPPORT)

Every Thursday 10am - 4pm

AGE CONCERN

Every Friday 10am - 12 noon

EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP

Call 01792 873519 for details

DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Call 01685 353942 for details