

walks & hidden wonders in the country parks



Gnoll Estate Country Park: Neath

Surrounded by a beautiful landscaped garden, the Gnoll Estate Country Park is full of interest where you can enjoy the countryside and discover some of the water works the Mackworth family had constructed in the 18th Century to supply power to local industry. There are a number of short walks around the Estate and information on these is available at the Visitor Centre.

- www.visitnpt.co.uk
- Leaflets at visitor or tourist information centres
- Neath Bus Station (½ mile/0.8 kilometre)

Margam Park: Port Talbot

Set in 1000 acres of parkland, Margam Country Park offers beauty, history, wildlife and a wide range of facilities appealing to all tastes. It has numerous hidden wonders in its boundaries including an ornamental garden, an 18th century Orangery and its own herd of fallow deer. There are a number of short walks around the Park and information on these is available at the Visitor Centre.

- www.visitnpt.co.uk
- Leaflets at visitor or tourist information centres
- Margam Park Main Gates (¼ mile/0.4 kilometre)

Craig Gwladus Country Park (Neath)

Situated on a wooded hillside offering spectacular views of the Vale of Neath, it offers a number of woodland walks including that along a former tramroad from Cilfrew to Cadoxton; strenuous walking with steep downhill slope, 2 miles/3 kilometres.

- www.visitnpt.co.uk
- Leaflet at tourist information centre
- Cilfrew March Hywel (adjacent) return from Cadoxton Green Dragon

GETTING TO THE COUNTRY PARKS BY BUS

WEEKDAYS: Direct buses from Swansea to Neath for Gnoll CP (change for Craig Gwladus) and Margam. Direct buses from Neath to Margam and Craig Gwladus. Direct buses from Port Talbot to Neath for Gnoll CP (change for Craig Gwladus) and Margam.

SUNDAYS: Direct buses from Swansea to Neath for Gnoll CP and Craig Gwladus only. All bus services at least every hour day time. Need help planning your journey visit: www.travelinecymru.info or call: 0871 200 22 33

Staying in Neath, Port Talbot and the Valleys

There's so much to do in Neath Port Talbot, you'll need more than a day's visit especially if you live in other parts of Wales, the UK and overseas. Neath and Port Talbot have centrally sited train and bus stations with excellent train and coach links from all parts of the UK including the major airports. So why not plan a short car-free or long sightseeing walking holiday - you'll get a warm welcome and enjoy Welsh hospitality at its best.

You'll find a wide choice of accommodation from self catering cottages to comfortable guest houses and hotels.

For details of how to book:
Telephone: 01639 636674
Email: aberdulaistic@nationaltrust.org
Visit: www.visitnpt.co.uk

Your Ticket to Ride

The best value ticket for a day's unlimited travel in Neath, Port Talbot and the Valleys is the First Day Neath Port Talbot; weekly tickets also available. Simply buy your ticket from the driver on your first journey (valid only on First Cymru bus services). Holders of the Welsh Concessionary Pass can travel free all day, any day.

Use Plus Bus if you're coming by train

Buy your train and bus tickets at the same time at any UK station. Port Talbot Plus Bus is valid throughout the area including all of Afan Forest Park. Neath Plus Bus is valid in Neath and throughout the Vale of Neath and Dulais Valley.

BayTrans

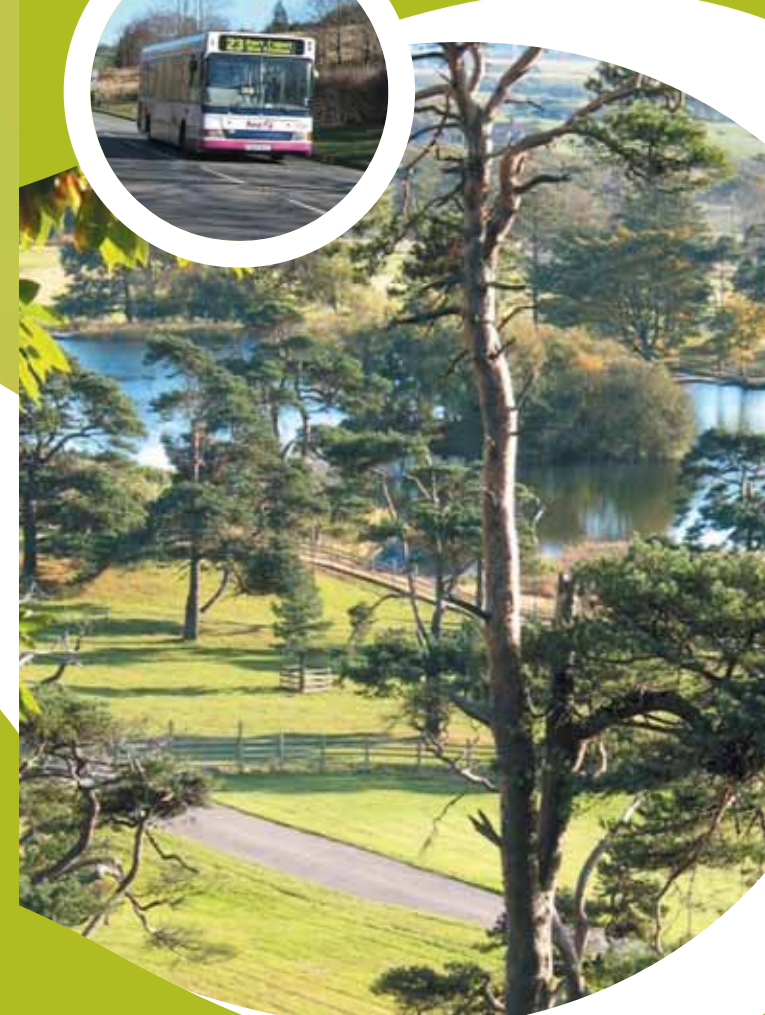
The BayTrans website is packed with information on bus times, places to go, things to do and downloadable walks. Visit: www.baytrans.org.uk

For comprehensive travel information to and around Neath Port Talbot visit: www.baytrans.org.uk

This leaflet is produced by BayTrans and is part funded by Neath Port Talbot Council. For a Welsh language version, download a pdf copy from our website.



walks, waterfalls & hidden wonders



In Neath Port Talbot
and the Valleys...
without a car!

2011 EDITION

walks, waterfalls & hidden wonders

Neath Port Talbot and its Valleys are Wales' undiscovered secret; where once pithead wheels turned and steam engines panted are now enchanting valleys, sparkling rivers, forests, forgotten railway trails and canal towpaths perfect for walking, cycling and bird watching.

Keen walkers can find challenging routes but for the less energetic, there are lots of easy, level, walks to attractive viewpoints, waterfalls or historic features.

History abounds at every turn. Old mining villages, now rural havens, forest tracks which once carried Roman soldiers, attractive lakes. And there's a different kind of heritage too - two fine abbeys, country house estates and country parks, all equally welcoming to visitors.

What makes this area so special is that you don't need a car to thoroughly enjoy this beautiful corner of Wales. An excellent bus network, much of it operating seven days a week links Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot with the Valleys and a range of bargain day out tickets - and free travel for holders of Welsh concessionary passes - makes it cheaper than the car with minimal impact on the environment.



afan forest park walks & hidden wonders



Richard Burton Trail: Pontrhydyfen to Cwmafan

The world famous actor was born and spent his early years in Pontrhydyfen; discover some of the places that were important to him along this walk packed with history. Starting at Rhyslyn, you traverse a viaduct (former aqueduct), follow two of the former mineral railway alignments towards Tonmawr then down to Cwmafan; moderate walking with some steps and rough surfaces; 3 miles/4.8 kilometres.

- www.visitnpt.co.uk/richardburton
- Leaflets at Afan Forest visitor or tourist information centres
- Pontrhydyfen Oakwood (Rhyslyn ¼ mile) and Cwmafan Community Centre (adjacent)

Trails from Rhyslyn

There are two Trails starting from the Rhyslyn car park. Highlight of the Penrhys Trail is the spectacular view of the Afan Valley. Though starting level on the forest road and level along the hilltop, there is a steep climb to the top and a steep descent down; moderate walking 3.5 miles/5 kilometres.

The Rhyslyn Trail is shorter and lower down on the mountainside and level most of the way along woodland paths and forest roads; moderate walking 2.5 miles/4 kilometres.

- www.forestry.gov.uk/afanforestpark
- Leaflets at tourist information centres
- Pontrhydyfen Oakwood (Rhyslyn ¼ mile)

Afan Forest Visitor Centre Trails

There are two Trails starting from Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre. The River and Railway Walk takes you on the level route of the former South Wales Mineral railway along the banks of the River Afan, returning along a forest road; there is a short, steep climb to the forest road at the far end of the walk. Moderate walking 3 miles/4.8 kilometres.



GETTING TO AFAN FOREST PARK BY BUS

WEEKDAYS: From Swansea (change buses at Port Talbot); from Neath and Port Talbot direct to Afan Forest Park (every hour daytime).

SUNDAYS: From Swansea (change buses at Neath); from Neath direct to Afan Forest Park (up to every hour daytime). Need help planning your journey visit: www.travelinecymru.info or call: 0871 200 22 33

Glyncorrwg Ridgeway Walk

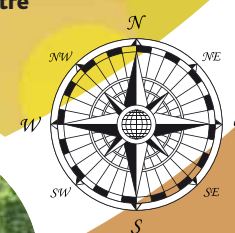
This is one of a series of walks in the valley promoted by Glyncorrwg Ponds Visitor Centre. Starting with a steep climb through larch forest you soon have fine views over the Afan Valley before dropping down to the village and following a former mineral railway alignment back to the visitor centre. Moderate/strenuous walking; 3½ miles/5 kilometres, allow 2 hours. Optional to continue along the former railway trail to Cymmer; easy level walking 3 miles/4.8 kilometres, allow 1½ hours.

- www.afanforestpark.co.uk
- Leaflets at Glyncorrwg Ponds visitor centre
- Glyncorrwg Bridge St (Ponds Visitor Centre ¼ mile)

Afan's Hidden Wonder: Kanji Woodland Garden

A short walk of ¾ mile/1.2 kilometres from Oakwood bus stop and you're in a delightful woodland world with Kanji characters symbolising the bond between this and another 'Afan Forest' in Japan; created by a native of Neath now a Japanese citizen, it is a haven of peace and tranquillity.

- Leaflets at Afan Forest visitor centre
- Pontrhydyfen Oakwood



walks & waterfalls in the valleys

Melincourt Falls

Just a short distance from the main road at Melincourt, this spectacular 80 foot high waterfall is reached through one of the most diverse woodlands in the Vale of Neath; you walk through broad leaved woodland of oak, birch, wild cherry, rowan and alder; and twenty species of fern are found in its humid atmosphere. Moderate walking, ½ mile/0.8 kilometre.

www.visitnpt.co.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Melincourt Falls (adjacent)

Scwd Gwladus, Pontneddfechan

Your walk starts at the Pontwalby terminus of the bus (except on Sundays when the bus goes to Pontneddfechan). The first 1 mile/1.6 kilometres, is a pleasant walk along the River Neath to the village. It is then another 1¼ miles/2 kilometres along the gorge of the Nedd Fechan tributary to the confluence of the River Pyrdin from which it is a short walk on to the beautiful Scwd Gwladus (The Lady Falls). Easy to moderate walking, allow 1¼ hours each way (45 minutes each way from Pontneddfechan).

www.visitnpt.co.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Pontwalby Bridge, weekdays

Pontneddfechan Angel Inn (Sundays)

Neath Canal Walks

Easily the best way to appreciate the quiet charm of the Vale of Neath is by walking the towpaths of the Neath Canal. Clyne to Aberdulais Falls is a delightful walk along the well-wooded towpath of the Neath Canal to a fascinating destination at Aberdulais with its canal basin (where goods were transhipped to the Tennant Canal) and unique skew bridge. From here, it's a short walk to the Aberdulais Falls National Trust Visitor Centre and adjacent tea rooms. Easy, level walking on canal towpaths; 2¼ miles, 3.5 kilometres, allow 1½ hours.

www.baytrans.org.uk/nptwalks07_neathcanal.html

Refer to OS Explorer Map 165 between grid references 800007 and 773994

Clyne Cyd Terrace (adjacent) returning from Aberdulais Falls

Resolven to Pentreclwydau along the upper reaches of the Neath Canal where you can enjoy a pleasant walk alongside the Rheola Estate and excellent views up and down the beautiful Vale of Neath. Easy, level walking on canal towpaths; 5 miles, 8 kilometres there and back, allow 2½ hours.

www.baytrans.org.uk/nptwalks08_neathcanal2.html

refer to OS Explorer Map 166 between grid references 826032 and 862055

Resolven John St (2 minutes walk)

Swansea Canal Walk:

Pontardawe to Godre'r Graig

The Swansea Valley is at its most beautiful and tranquil along the canal, well separated from the main road through the valley. The canal is in the ownership of British Waterways for first part of the walk; from Ynysmeudwy, it is part of a linear nature reserve managed by Neath Port Talbot Council. Easy, level walking; 5 miles/8 kilometres there and back, allow 2 hours.

www.baytrans.org.uk/nptwalks10_swansea.html

refer to OS Explorer Map 165 between grid references 722040 and 752065

Pontardawe Jubilee (5 minutes walk)

Cwm Dyffryn Walk: Goytre to Bryn

Just a short distance from the hustle and bustle of Port Talbot is a very pleasant, level walk through a deep wooded valley followed by a short stretch of open countryside with mountain views. Easy, level walking on minor roads or tracks, 3½ miles/5.5 kilometres, allow 2 hours.

www.baytrans.org.uk/nptwalk_01goytre

refer to OS Explorer Map 165 between grid references 787897 and 818920

Goytre terminus (adjacent) return from Bryn Royal Oak



walks & hidden wonders in the valleys



Cwm Du Glen, Pontardawe

Hidden from, but very close to, the town centre, this walk is an absolute delight with its deep wooded ravine and cascading waterfalls. The walking can be quite wet underfoot and the path is steep in places. Up to 2½ miles/4 kilometres, easy to moderate on footpaths and minor roads with a short ascent and descent; allow 1½ hours depending on route taken.

www.visitnpt.co.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Pontardawe Jubilee (5-10 minutes walk)

Cefn Coed Colliery Museum

The museum tells the story of coal mining at Cefn Coed pit, once the deepest anthracite mine in the world; it was one of the most dangerous mines in Wales, gaining the nickname 'The Slaughterhouse'. The story of the thousands of men who worked at Cefn Coed and at other pits in the anthracite coalmines of South West Wales is told through words, pictures and artefacts throughout the museum.

www.visitnpt.co.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Cefn Coed (adjacent)

Dulais Valley Heritage Trail

From Romans and Celtic saints to farmers and colliers, the Dulais Valley has a rich and varied heritage. This is celebrated in three fascinating trails in the valley, all easily accessed by bus with interpretive information at selected bus stops. There are village trails for Crynant, Seven Sisters and Banwen/Onllwyn giving a fascinating insight into the history and character of these villages. A Heritage Trail leaflet is available at tourist information centres or downloading from www.dulaisvalley.org.uk/heritagetrail

www.dulaisvalley.org.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

There are bus stops close to each trail

Aberdulais National Trust Industrial Heritage site

The site is set in a steep gorge; witness the power of water and its impact on industry. An early water-powered tin works was the last industry on this site; today the waters of the River Dulais are used to make Aberdulais self-sufficient in environmentally friendly energy, with its waterwheel - the largest in Europe generating electricity.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Aberdulais Falls (adjacent)

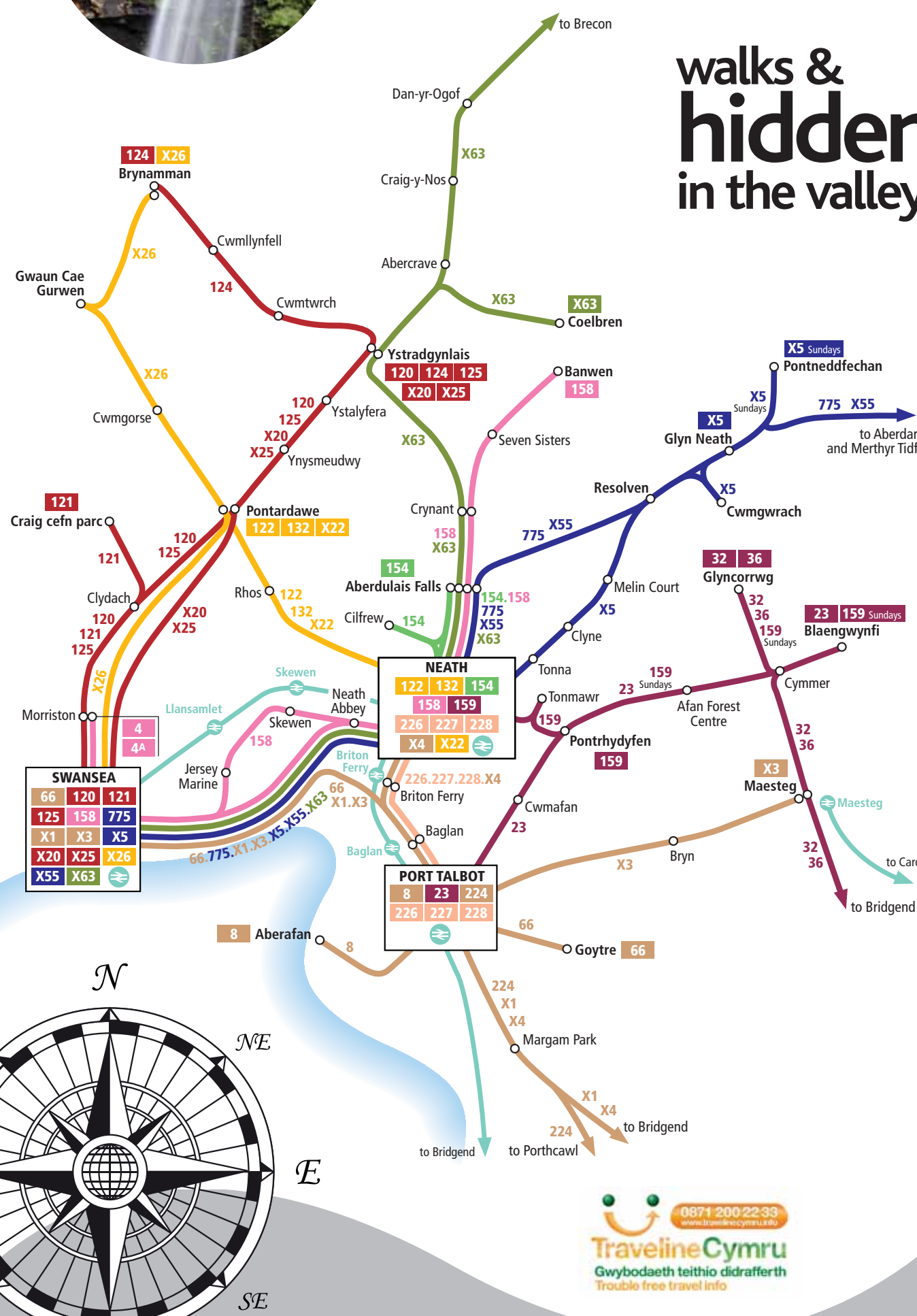
Aberdulais Canal Basin

Industrial archaeology at its best; see the former transhipment point for goods between the Neath Canal (from the Vale of Neath) and the Tennant Canal (onwards to Swansea). A historic feature is the skew bridge permitting horse drawn barges to continue unimpeded over the canal junction.

www.neath-tennant-canals.org.uk

Leaflet at tourist information centre

Aberdulais Falls (5-10 minutes walk)



GETTING TO VALLEYS WALKS & HIDDEN WONDERS BY BUS

WEEKDAYS: Direct buses from Swansea and Neath to all walks; from Port Talbot, change at Neath for Neath & Swansea Valley walks (at least every hour daytime).

SUNDAYS: From Swansea and Neath to Vale of Neath and Swansea Valleys only.



Need help planning your journey visit: www.travelinecymru.info or call: 0871 200 22 33

Photos courtesy of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Colin Speckman and BayTrans.