

FRIENDS OF BORTH-Y-GEST

JANUARY 2013 UPDATE

Annwyl Cyfeillion/Dear Friends

Hello from Borth-y-Gest where it is definitely Winter this month. We have had ice, snow, occasional sunshine and torrential rain. But snowdrops are out, daffodils are poking their shoots through the waterlogged ground and days are getting longer – Spring isn't far away.

There are a few things to tell you, and one of them in particular is very important to everybody who lives in or visits Borth-y-Gest. First let me start with an event that is important for the wider area of Porthmadog and which takes place tomorrow, Wednesday 30th January.

Breuddwydion Bro Porthmadog - Dreams for Porthmadog Area

Wednesday 30th January, 7pm in Porthmadog Canolfan

The Sustainable Gwynedd Group, backed by Gwynedd Council and Bangor University, is holding a public meeting – a cuppa and a chat, they say – to start discussions about aspirations for the future of our area. Sustainable Gwynedd have been the catalysts behind a number of successful ventures in the county over the last few years, not least being the Local Produce Market held once a month in the Canolfan.

Do support this initiative – and have a think about how YOU would like to see the area develop. There are posters around the town and on the B-y-G noticeboard – you can see an on-line version on the U3A Community Page here:

<http://www.porthmadogu3a.org.uk/page32.html>

Now the item of real importance to Borth-y-Gest:

Parking Charges in Borth-y-Gest Car Park

Gwynedd Council has written to the Friends of Borth-y-Gest stating their intention to make an Order authorising them to charge for parking on our Car Park, and to restrict parking hours. This follows absolute assurances only three months ago, when the new No Overnight Parking signs went up, that there was no intention to follow up by making it Pay & Display.

Payment for parking facilities is common these days, of course, but the Friends of Borth-y-Gest feel that the charges and restrictions would bring huge problems for the village. There are two main reasons for this: The majority of houses in the village have no 'off-road' parking as they are in terraces on narrow roads; the village is a very attractive 'honeypot' for visitors throughout the year, with a huge influx of cars on many days of the year.

These are the problems which we can foresee:

1. Visitors, like car drivers everywhere, will avoid paying if they can by parking in the side roads – thus blocking access for residents to park outside, or even near, their own houses.
2. Some residents do not have any parking available to them other than the car park, so they will be very disadvantaged by the restriction in parking hours.
3. Our very small number of businesses – the café, the shop and the restaurant – all draw their customers mainly from the car park. Charging will inevitably affect the viability of these businesses.
4. We have an active Church and Chapel [St Cyngar's and Bethel], neither of which has its own car park and are therefore dependent on the village car park for their congregations, who come from a wide area, to use. The viability of these groups will also be badly affected.
5. Introduction of Pay & Display will require even more signs, machines, white lines etc. in a relatively unspoilt area.

People have until **Thursday 14th February** to object to the proposals and the Friends' Committee would appreciate it if readers of this Update would add their voice to the many who have already objected. Feel free to use and adapt the words above if you wish.

Please send emails or letters to:

eMail: Colinjones@gwynedd.gov.uk

or letter to:

Dafydd Wyn Williams
Senior Manager – Transportation and Street Care Service
Regulatory Department
Swyddfa'r Cyngor, CAERNARFON Gwynedd LL55 1SH

We had thought of holding an Open Meeting to discuss this, but at this stage that probably wouldn't be productive [other than allowing attendees to blow off steam and repeat their various concerns to each other]. If, in spite of the many protests, the scheme continues then we will arrange a meeting for the Council to explain why and for us to decide our next steps. In the meantime – please write those letters and emails!

Dog Control Orders – Borth-y-Gest Beach

In the last update I mentioned that the Council was extending the consultation period for the beach in Borth-y-Gest bay, threatened with becoming a 'dog exclusion' zone from April to September each year. This consultation finished on 24th December, but I have not yet heard what the decision is. I will put an item on the website and in the next Update when we find out.

Beach Clean – Black Rock Sands

Friday 8th February, 10am – 12 noon

Here's a chance to 'get involved' in looking after our area. The winter storms [and there have been some big ones!] have deposited lots of sea-carried plastic bottles, bags & crates along Black Rock Sands, particularly the Black Rock end of the beach. Porthmadog Rotary Club and the Friends of Borth-y-Gest are organising a clean up, in conjunction with Gwynedd Council Maritime Unit and other organisations.

As in previous years, we can make a very positive impact on this environment for relatively little effort. Litter-pickers, gloves and black bags will be provided

Please join in if you can. Meet on the beach at the far access road.

Tree Planting

We have 105 saplings from the Woodland Trust to be planted in our Plantation before the Spring. However, the boundary between the Plantation and the agricultural land on the west side is not stock proof and too far gone for simple repairs, so the planting is delayed until a contractor repairs the wall and replaces the fence.

Open Gardens Day - Sunday 19th May 2013

Following on from the very successful Borth-y-Gest Opens Gardens Day last summer, plans are already underway to hold another one this year on **Sunday 19th May 2013**. Please make a note of the date and do get in touch with the Secretary of the Friends of Borth y Gest Open Gardens Committee if you would like to open your garden or help on the day: Cathy Woodhead tel: 01766 512115 or email cathy.woodhead@btinternet.com.

FINALLY

Did you know.....

For general interest, I thought I would finish each Update with a [perhaps] little known fact about Borth-y-Gest and area. This time I thought I would mention the Freshwater Wells. Did you know that there are three freshwater wells around the village?

1. Below the road leading towards the Lookout, near St Cyngar's. Recently exposed after the Friends re-opened the footpath here.
2. On the opposite [Porthmadog] side of Borth-y-Gest bay, hidden amongst the rushes. It can be muddy here – watch your footing if you go exploring.
3. In the wood near to the bay end of the footpath leading to the Children's Sports Field. This is near the path and not fenced off other than by brambles, but it is on private land.

I don't know whether the wells were used for drinking & cooking, or just for washing – if anybody knows the history, do let me know.

As ever, this Update and details of events, documents relating to the Parking Charge proposal etc. can be found on our website: www.friendsofborthygest.com

David Medcalf
Secretary – the Friends of Borth-y-Gest
Tel: 01766 512115
eMail: medcalf959@btinternet.com