



Conwy Connections Bulletin

Enhancing RSPB Conwy for people and nature

It's been a while since our last bulletin and things are changing rapidly on our reserve. We've had a busy spell of paper work, experienced a few technical hitches and some periods of intense nail-biting anticipation!

Last month however, the project stepped up a gear. Part of the reserve behind the Visitor Centre is unrecognisable. Five years in the planning, and our 'village square', known as 'Y Maes,' is well and truly under way.

Updates

Solar thermal installation

Despite the terrible winter weather, we now have hot water heated by the sun, every day! We're already noticing a difference in our electricity bills, which means more money for wildlife. A win-win situation!

Observatory

We're constructing a new building, with the working title of the 'Observatory'. It will be a fantastic indoor space, built into the bank with the lagoon right in front of it. It's going to be a great place to watch wildlife, and we'll use it for events throughout the year.

It's by no means a run-of-the mill design. This very special, green construction will be built out of straw bales, rendered with clay on the inside and lime on the outside.

We awarded the tender to a company called Greenbuilt last month. Work will start in April and will be completed by the end of June. Pray for dry weather!

The contractors are working during weekdays only. The Visitor Centre, Coffee Shop, hides and paths beyond Y Maes site are open as usual. So please, don't let the diggers and the yellow hats put you off! It's safe to come and have a peek!



Image of Coffee Shop and Observatory, by Alan Gray

Car park

A section of the car park was vastly improved over the freezing winter weeks. Many people have worked very hard for years in order to achieve this, and a big thank you has to go out to them.

Y Ganol viewpoint

Our reserve warden, Sarah, has been supervising the construction of a new viewpoint on the Ganol trail. J.D Jones Contractors LTD Gwaenysgor, Rhyl have been awarded the contract. It will be completed at the end of March. Once the reed screen has grown, we will open this new area to the public. The viewpoint will provide an excellent vista across the lagoons, and you'll be able to have a closer views of nesting and roosting birds.





Y Maes as it was

Y Maes

Our centrepiece is well underway and we are all bursting with excitement! In February, work started on transforming the empty brown-field land near the Visitor Centre and the Coffee Shop into a new and exciting landscaped area.

Y Maes will act as the village square of the reserve, and will give visitors the chance to explore, play, and meet up with friends - one day an events hub, the next a space to relax and unwind.

The contract was awarded to landscape contractors, Wright Landscapes Limited, based in Flintshire. The work is due to be finished by end of March 2013. Wherever possible, materials have been sourced locally. Paths, surfaces and walls are made of local Llanddulas stone and the paved areas are built with Carreg Môn paving brick.





Michaela Strachan and Chris Packham, eat your hearts out!

We are delighted to announce our two young Conwy Connections wildlife presenters: Peter Jenkins and Efa Fitzgerald. They will be appearing in the short films. A final film showcase will be shown in our Conwy Connections launch, on 30 and 31 August 2013.

For the 'social media savvies' amongst you, look out for a series of short films, following the progression of the redevelopments. They will be uploaded to our Facebook and Twitter sites. This contract was awarded to Tape Community Music and Film, Colwyn Bay.

www.tapemusicandfilm.co.uk



Tegi

The soil removed from the bank to create room for the new observatory was piled near "Y Maes" in three big 5ft high by 10ft wide piles. Charlie, one of the staff members, noticed that it looked like a dragon.

Hours later, Gwyn the contractor from Y Bala, was lugging huge rocks around the site, and 'Tegi' was born!

Tegi will be open for children and adults alike to enjoy in the early summer.

The Wildlife Explorers group here are grass-seeding Tegi.

A ceramic artwork for our events space

We're extremely lucky to be working with a local artist, Sue King, who'll be creating an attractive piece of art for the centre of the event space, which forms a part of Y Maes. Sue is holding a ceramic workshop with a group of young people from the Back Stage Youth Group, Old Colwyn this month. The work created by the young people will be used to create the final artwork. Sue is kindly volunteering her time to finish the artwork, which will be set into the ground. A big thank you goes out to Sue and the Back Stage Youth Group. More on this in the next bulletin.



Roundabout Artwork

The art panel have chosen a sculpture by artist Giovanni Jacovelli based in Dolgarrog. The planning application for this sculpture was submitted in January. Keep your fingers crossed! More in the next bulletin.

Tal y Fan hide mural

Richard Hackett, a local artist from Colwyn Bay has been awarded the contract of painting a new mural for our popular Tal y Fan hide. A new, impressive floor covering will also be installed. You'll have to come visit us to see what it is!



Events coming up...

Easter Egg Hunt

Can you help us find the eggs that the Easter Bunny has hidden around the reserve? Wrap up warm and let's go and hunt for them! Suitable for children aged 3 to 8.

Sunday 31st March,
11am - 12pm and 2pm - 3pm

Price: Wildlife Explorers £4, non-members £6. For credit card bookings, please phone the reserve or book at the Visitor Centre. Booking essential.



Breathing Space Walk

A brand new series of four walks (spring, summer, autumn and winter), focussing on using the natural environment of the reserve as the means to relax. The walk will incorporate some simple breathing and meditation exercises. No experience necessary.

Spring session:
Sunday 12th May,

11am - 1pm,

Summer session: 23rd June,

11am - 1pm

Price: RSPB members £2, non-members £4. For credit card bookings, please phone the reserve or book at the Visitor Centre. Booking essential.

check out our website for more events information.

Conwy Farmer's Market

Make your food shopping a much more personal experience and support your local producers.

Last Wednesday of every month, 9am - 1pm.

Price: Free (usual charges apply for entry to the nature reserve trails).

RSPB Cymru would like to thank those whose donations support RSPB Conwy nature reserve and visitor facilities, including The Crown Estate, Cemlyn Jones Trust, Environment Wales, Conwy Town Council and RSPB Conwy Support Group.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654



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