



A NICE PLACE TO BE

BRYN TIP LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

The village of Bryn is lucky enough to have its own Nature Reserve! The Reserve is popular with the residents of Bryn and visitors from further afield who come to walk their dogs, ride horses on the bridle way or take a gentle stroll whilst enjoying the wildlife and views of the surrounding countryside. The site has been used all year round and is also the starting point for the Bryn Heritage walk.

This Reserve is home to hundreds of species of wildlife including flowers, fungi, invertebrates, birds, reptiles and mammals. The site



was declared a Local Nature Reserve in order to protect the wildlife and preserve the landscape for people to enjoy long into the future.

CONSERVATION GRAZING

Over the last few years, the Countryside & Wildlife Team of the Local Authority have been working with contractors, and occasionally volunteers, to reduce the amount of invasive scrub on the site. This initial intensive management has allowed the grasses and flowering plants to flourish in those areas. However, unless the scrub is regularly managed it will become dense and eventually take over the grassland, making the site a lot less attractive to walk through. Similarly, the grassland is becoming rank and tussock and unless it is managed sensitively, much of the special wildlife will be lost.

Using contractors and staff is not a sustainable long term approach for managing the Nature Reserve, even less so with the current and proposed budget cuts that the Local Authority is faced with.

Conservation grazing is a more traditional, sustainable and less labour-intensive way of getting the grassland into good condition and keeping the scrub under control. Using livestock to graze the site will control the spread of Bracken and scrub and will help to improve the quality of the grassland habitats.



Conservation grazing is usually undertaken by native breeds of Cattle, Sheep or Ponies. Highland cattle have been chosen for the Reserve because they are hardy grazers; they will eat a wide range of vegetation unpalatable to most cattle and they are light on their feet, reducing the risk of poaching to the ground in wet conditions.



Since the beginning of this year, a local farmer has been grazing a small number of Highland cattle on the Reserve. Other breeds of cattle will also be used from time to time when the Highland Cattle need to return to the farm for husbandry requirements.

Thanks to grant funding, secured by the Local Authority, a new cattle handling pen was installed earlier this year, enabling more cows to be grazed on the site.

It is too early to say if the cows have had a noticeable effect on the vegetation structure. Detailed botanical surveys will be undertaken this summer in order to monitor the effects of the grazing.

The site will remain open and accessible during grazing periods. However, it is important to remember that dogs should be kept under control at all times (whether the cows are present or not) in order to protect wildlife, especially ground nesting birds such as Skylarks. For the same reasons, horse riders and cyclists should also remain on the bridle path. There will be an information sign up at the site entrance with contact numbers for enquiries relating to the grazing/stock.

Since the site has been brought into active conservation management, the Skylarks have returned, large flocks of Linnet can be heard twittering in the Gorse and the Dark Green Fritillaries have become an annual spectacle. With the help of wildlife charities such as Buglife, together with wildlife



enthusiasts, local volunteers and support from Council Members, much has been achieved, and with continued support the site will remain a jewel in the Afan valley, a haven for wildlife and a place for people to enjoy, long into the future.

If you would like to be involved in managing the site, or have any queries or comments please contact:

Wendy Larcombe on 01639 686169 or email biodiversity@npt.gov.uk

GRAZIER CONTACT DETAILS: MR ROB WILLIAMS 07989537508