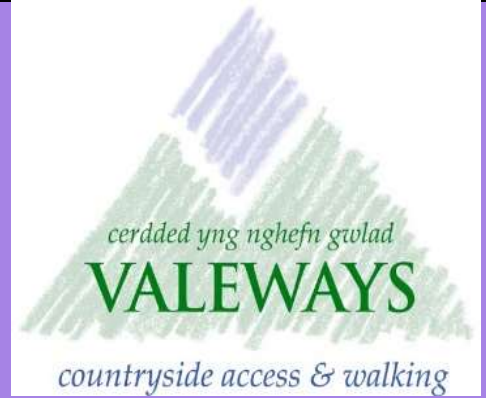




*Countryside Access and  
Walking*

# VALEWAYS

*Cerdded yng nghefn gwlad*



December 2022

## Valeways Autumn News



With a varied programme of walks over the last few months one thing has been a constant – it seems to have been a good year for mushrooms and toadstools. Several of our walkers harvested mushrooms to take home and eat and some even ate them as they walked along. Thankfully they have all re-joined us following their feast!

The head gardener at Clyne Gardens, in Swansea, recently held a fungus and woodland walk where he demonstrated

breaking open a Boletus mushroom to show how it turned blue on contact with air. We learned that fungi play an important role in keeping our soils healthy.



## Welcome three new Trustees

### Norma Clark

"Hello everyone, I'm Norma Clark and very recently, celebrated my 70th birthday. Originally from Berkshire, but having lived in Dorset for 35 years, I moved to Barry in November 2019. My eldest son and family live close by, although my youngest son and grandson are still in Dorset.

Finding Valeways online, I began following a few of the self-guided walks during the first lockdown in 2020, then joined the led walks when they resumed later in the year. I have thoroughly enjoyed discovering this area with Valeways, keeping active, having fun and making new friends along the way."



## **Rebecca Exley**

“Most Valeways supporters will know of me as I have been involved for some 10 years now, as a co-opted trustee, employed as the Volunteer Co-ordinator and as a walk leader. I have become a trustee to ensure Valeways maintains strong links with the Vale Council and Walkers are Welcome but no doubt I will be involved in more than that!”



## **Sarah Stockford**



My name is Sarah Stockford. I retired from teaching in North Wales in 2021 and moved to Llantwit Major to be closer to my family. During lockdown I realised the true benefits of waking as a means of exercise both physically and mentally. I have enjoyed walks with the stroller groups at different locations and now look forward to working with my fellow trustees to continue the work of the Valeways walking groups.

## **Walk and Clear – Any volunteers keen to start a Thursday Group?**

As you are no doubt aware an ever growing number of Valeways volunteers head out every Tuesday to help keep the footpath network clear and well way marked. Formerly sessions also took place on a Thursday morning, which were popular for those who were unable to commit to a Tuesday. If you are able to make a Thursday, or if you know of anyone who might be interested please let Rebecca know.

## **Huw's Havests**

2022 has been another successful year for Huw in his garden and allotment. Despite the challenges of the very hot, dry spell he was still able to grow a good selection of flowers, vegetables, salads and fruit.

Many walks were characterised by Huw opening the boot of his car and people eagerly waiting to see what was on offer.





As well as his own produce he also had donations of homemade jams, marmalade and chutneys from Valeways supporters Marion and Maureen.

Mrs Marco's café at Porthkerry Park was also happy to have a basket of his produce on display and sales were very good.

Over £700 will be donated to Valeways to help cover printing costs of the updated walk leaflets in the future.

Many thanks to all who have supported this venture during the year.

## **Babs and Jan**

At the Cosmeston and Well Being Strollers Christmas lunch on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 Valeways said thank you to two of its favourite walk leaders Barbara Williams and Janice Barratt (more commonly known as Babs and Jan) who have decided to stand down as walk leaders for Valeways.



Jan joined Valeways as a walker in November 2009 and Babs followed shortly after in July 2010. In the winter of 2012 Babs and Jan started leading walks as a team on the main programme of Valeway walks and from then until the end of 2021 they led many and varied walks in the Vale. Some of their highlights were the:

Hensol walk to see the magnificent displays of Lilies on the lake.

The Llantwit Blue Plaque Walk.

Walks in and around Duffryn, with all its history and scenic beauty.

The walks were always gentle paced with plenty of time to chat and enjoy the views and take in the atmosphere of the area.

In 2014 Babs started leading the Cosmeston Strollers and continued to do so until the summer of 2022 when due to an unfortunate accident, unconnected to walk leading, she needed to stand down.

Babs and Jan will be a difficult act to follow and Valeways is extremely grateful for the time and effort they put in to Valeways walks. We wish them well and hope to see them on Valeways events and walks in the future.



## Focus on Strollers walks...



### **The Barry Coffee Shop Walkers invite you to join the strollers Walk .**

Mike Edwards, Walk Leader reports “We meet every other Wednesday at 10.30 am at the Bron-Y-Mar car Park, Cold Knap for an hour’s walk. There are no steps or stiles, and within 5 minutes of walking we have excellent views of the Bristol Channel and the pleasant beaches of Watch Tower Bay and the Pebble Beach, plus the Parade Gardens.

The importance of Strollers walks is the social element. Once we get going our members are chatting away to each other and new members are always made to feel welcome”. Mike is proud to be one of the three experienced Walk Leaders who take part in The Knap Strollers, one of Valeways first health walks, ending with a well-earned coffee or tea at Romilly’s Café, where there is always a warm welcome.

### **A new Strollers walk planned for Wenvoe**

Kate Weston, a Valeways walk leader and a Wenvoe resident in the 1970s, is planning to launch an occasional series of 'strollers' walks in the village of Wenvoe in 2023.

The trial run (date tbc) will start and finish at the Wenvoe Community Hub at Wenvoe Library. It will follow a gentle route around the village, with no stiles or steep slopes and will last around 45 minutes. The Community Hub will be open for refreshments at the end of the walk.



If sufficient interest is generated, future walks are planned into the surrounding area with the same emphasis on up-to-one-hour walks on firm ground, without steep slopes or steps and finishing at a coffee shop or similar for a cuppa and a chat.

## **Valways AGM**

Many Friends, walkers, and supporters attended this year’s AGM on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November at the Community Enterprise Centre, Skomer Road, Barry. A summary of progress and activities over the year was provided by Chair of Trustees, Peter Weston’s report:

**Introduction.** This AGM covers the period between October 2021 and October 2022, so we’re back on our usual schedule, post-pandemic.

As I reported last year, Valeways continues to look to the future with confidence. We are lucky to have competent (volunteer) management in all areas, as well as sufficient numbers of willing volunteers.

All the key areas of Valeways' activities continue to prosper, several major projects have been completed and others are still in progress.

Here are the highlights:

**Led Walking.** Carolyn Gully has continued her expert management of a full programme, while Paul Hawkins has overseen an expansion in the number of Walk Leaders, with associated training. Our walk leaders offered the full range of walks following the pandemic restrictions, attracting larger numbers of walkers.

We have gained 3 new walk leaders Gwenda Fitzpatrick who has restarted the bilingual walks, Shelia Vaquerizo who has added another long walk option to our programme and Owen Leach who has stepped up from helping Mike run his strollers to run and organise his own 2 boot walks. Owen has also indicated he will take over the Cosmeston Strollers should Babs decide to stand down.

**Walk and Clear.** This core area of Valeways' activities has become increasingly popular and Peter Jones and his team continue the good work with the Tuesday working parties and close liaison with Vale of Glamorgan PROW.

**Walking Festival.** The concentrated efforts of a team including Rebecca Exley, Alan Simmonds and Paul Hawkins have delivered another successful Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival in September 2022 and look forward to continuing using the early part of September in 2023.

### **Projects.**

The 'IT Renewal project' successfully launched two new websites last summer; the main Valeways website (<https://www.valeways.org.uk/>) and the Walking Festival website with improved design and content, with enhanced security. Work continues establishing the associated online Document Management System.

The Heritage Lottery project was completed and the final report submitted securing the significant grant (£8,600).

Friends of Valeways was taken on by Lynne Frugtniet and Barbara Green who organised a successful 'Walk and Piano Recital' event in April.

Two Strong Communities grant applications were submitted and claims made to help fund the IT Renewal project and pay for waymarkers.

### **Other Activities**

Promotion- Valeways had stands at the Vale Show and the Romilly Park Dog Show to demonstrate our activities. As a result a number of new walkers were recruited. We are also working closely with Cowbridge Walkers are Welcome and Rebecca attended the national get together in Hampshire to promote our activities.

10 Days in May - a number of our walk leaders acted as back markers for the Vale Council's festival in May. The event was aimed to promote the county via social media and press articles.

Weatherman Walking - 20 Valeways volunteers headed to the Salmon Leaps ahead of Derek Brockway's arrival with the production crew, to be filmed clearing the footpath. Derek interviewed Rebecca about the work of Valeways and Dave talked about the walk route. The programme is to be aired in Spring 2023.

**Management.** The trustees continue to act as the management team and worked effectively to stabilise the charity's main activities and deliver on the key projects.

Following her co-option as Minute Secretary in 2021 and her acceptance as a trustee at last year's AGM, Angharad Hills will now be appointed Secretary for the charity, following the retirement of Peter Cornell.

David Phillips has announced his own retirement after many years' service as a trustee, but will hopefully continue to lead walks.

I'm also happy to announce that our recent appeal for new Trustees to come forward has met with a positive response. Three volunteers joined our October trustees' meeting and have the opportunity to be approved as trustees today in this meeting.

I'd like to thank all those who have contributed so much time and effort towards ensuring that Valeways has once again survived all the threats to its existence and has emerged as strong and healthy as ever.

Finally, I know I don't need to remind that we live in and share the delights of the Vale of Glamorgan and that Valeways continues, after 26 years, to be an essential part of all this.

Peter Weston, Chair

On a recent visit to Pembrokeshire I visited a friend of my Mum and asked if I could take a photo of a lovey wall hanging in her hall. They are such an artistic and talented family it should have been no surprise to learn that her daughter in law Tyna, had created this tapestry work of art.

With these words in mind, best wishes to all Valeways volunteers and walkers.

Here's to 2023.

