



Gower Ambassadors

Feasibility Study and Final Report

May 2018

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1. EVALUATION OF THE 'PILOT PROJECT'

In this section a summary of the client brief is provided together with an overview of the consultancy work undertaken in addressing the brief, and an explanation of how this report is set out and structured.

1.1 Client brief

The objectives of the work were set out in the *client brief* as follows:

- *Evaluate and report on the impact, benefits, and the efficacy of the delivery model used for the Gower pilot scheme.*
- *Conduct a study into rolling out an Ambassador programme across the whole of Gower and the wider RDP areas.*
- *Engage a range of individuals and organisations to measure need / demand and likely success.*
- *Make recommendations and develop an action plan for the further delivery and development of an ambassador scheme/s across the RDP area that is sustainable in the longer term.*

1.2 Components of the delivery model employed

The consultants recruited to deliver the Pilot Project were Gareth Kiddie of GKA and Ruth Taylor-Davies of Letha Consultancy. The consultants brought with them extensive previous experience of delivering Community Ambassador Schemes as evidenced in their tender submission. This experience was used to frame the exact approach in close cooperation with the client through attendance and presentation of proposals at a series of meetings with the client's representative, Helen Grey, as well as with the wider 'Steering Group'.

As a result of these meetings and in line with the brief for the whole programme the design of the delivery model was established and the following three key components were identified:

- Ambassador recruitment
- Ambassador training
- Ambassador communication and networking
- Ambassador activities
- Ambassador project branding and promotion

The activities for each of these key components, as well as the outputs and outcomes of these activities, are outlined below:

1.2.1 Ambassador recruitment

The client's brief indicated that 3 x 2 day training courses should be undertaken with a minimum of 10 participants per course – 30 prospective Ambassadors to be recruited from across Gower.

An initial list of potential organisations through which Ambassadors for the Pilot Project might be recruited was presented by the client and this was built on by the consultants to form a 'target' list as follows:

Community Organisations

All those organisations with a strong interest and pride in their communities and / or particular places of environmental, heritage and tourism interest.

- Community Councils
- Community based organisations
- Walking groups
- Environmental and heritage organisations
- Other voluntary organisations and charities

Private Sector Businesses

Tourism businesses including most especially; accommodation providers, catering establishments and visitor attractions.

- Activity providers
- Retail outlets
- Places to eat & drink
- Local food producers
- Accommodation providers

Public Sector Organisations:

All those organisations with a vested interest in supporting the growth of sustainable tourism on the Gower.

- City and County of Swansea
- Natural Resources Wales
- Cadw
- Wales Coast Path

The recruitment process was rooted in trying to attract Ambassadors drawn from a good mix of the kinds of community, voluntary, charitable, private and public sector organisations listed above. The methods used for recruitment were varied but included personal contact with named individuals via email, phone and face-to-face contact as appropriate.

A promotional 'Flyer' (See Appendix 1) was drawn up to provide information about the dates of the training and this was emailed to all those on the list. Organisations with online and other platforms for promoting the opportunity were also targeted for support (for

example, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services advertised the opportunity to their membership via their online Newsletter) and a press release was issued which generated coverage in the local press and in the Swansea Leader.

1.2.2 Ambassador training

Three two-day training courses were designed by the consultants and undertaken as follows:

Day One:	Oxwich & Penrice Community Hall	Tuesday 20th June (9am - 4pm)
	Reynoldston Village Hall	Wednesday 21st June (10am - 5pm)
	Penclwadd Community Centre	Thursday 22nd June (9am - 4pm)
Day Two:	Oxwich & Penrice Community Hall	Tuesday 27th June (9am - 4pm)
	Reynoldston Village Hall	Wednesday 28th June (10am - 5pm)
	Penclwadd Community Centre	Thursday 29th June (9am - 4pm)

The training was very popular and it was agreed that an additional course would be run to accommodate the demand. This was held on

Day One:	Oxwich & Penrice Community Hall	Wednesday 27th Sept (9am - 4pm)
Day Two:	Penclwadd Community Centre	Tuesday 11th October (9am - 4pm)

The basic itinerary for the two days was as follows...

Day One:

- *Sharing the knowledge of Gower 'in the room'*
- *Thinking about the role of a 'Community Tourism Ambassador'*
- *Understanding more about typical visitors to Gower*
- *Getting to grips with the practicalities of providing for visitors in a 'real life' situation*

Day Two:

- *Looking after visitors and providing them with a warm welcome!*
- *Getting around by public transport*
- *Putting it all together and doing Gower proud!*
- *Building an 'Ambassadorial Team' and thinking about the way forward*

A 'Tool Kit' that included course notes and other useful resources was produced and supplied to each prospective Ambassador attending the course (See Appendix 2).

In total 55 people took part representing: Local residents, Community Councils, Local tourism businesses, Local community organisations, Voluntary organisations & charities, Public sector organisations. Some sample photos of the training are shown below:

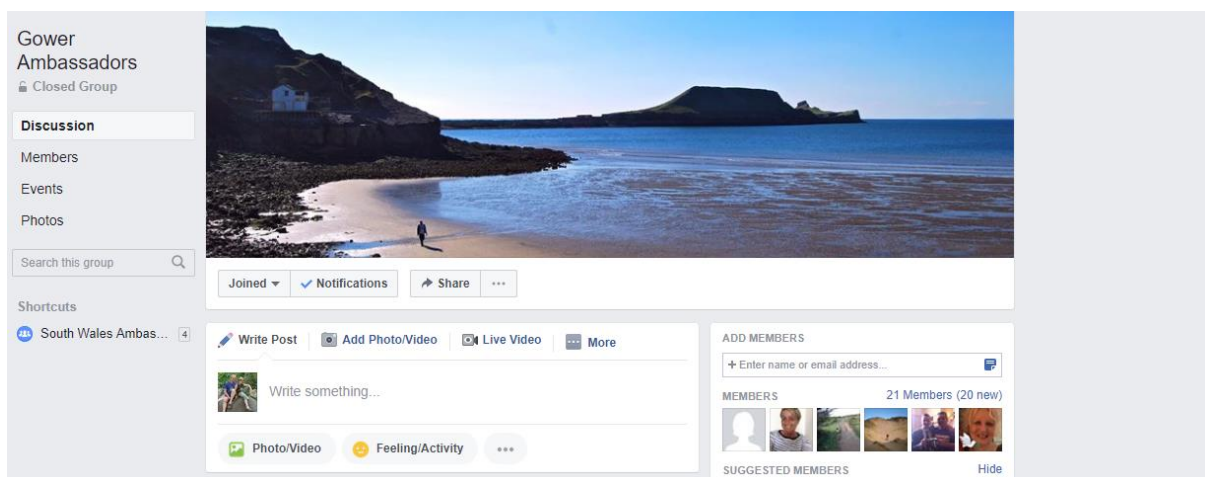


Training in progress (left) and certificate presentation (right) at Reynoldston – 21st & 28th June

1.2.3 Ambassador, communication and networking

The way in which the consultants set out to ensure successful ongoing communication with and between the Ambassadors was via; email, the establishment of an online discussion platform (Closed Facebook Group), periodic networking meetings - some of which featuring 'Familiarisation Visits' to Gower attractions – as well as regular email updates throughout the course of the Pilot Project.

Gower Ambassadors Closed Facebook Group



The Facebook Group is ongoing and now has 44 members all of whom are trained Ambassadors. All members are encouraged to post up activities that might be of interest to other Gower Ambassadors. The administration of the Group is facilitated by one of the Ambassadors themselves.

Ambassador networking meetings

During the Pilot Project the consultants set up quarterly networking meetings for Gower Ambassadors, these were held on:

- **July 12th 2017** – Networking Meeting + Familiarisation Visit conducted by Roy Church including guided tour of the Gower Heritage Centre and walk to Three Cliffs Bay / Pennard Castle. 13 Ambassadors took part.



Roy Church leading walk and tour of Gower Heritage Centre

- **Familiarisation Visits x 3 – September 25th, October 1st & 4th 2017** – These were undertaken in conjunction with Tourism Swansea Bay (Roy Church – Gower Heritage Centre) and featured mini-bus tours for Ambassadors to the following locations. 38 Ambassadors took part:

- Giant's Grave / Catshole Cave / Parc-le-Breos
- Blue Pool / Weobley Castle
- Perriswood / Stout Hall / King Arthur Pub



Ambassadors at Perriswood and Weobley Castle

- **Xmas Social 12th December 2017** – This was hosted by trained Gower Ambassadors (Gower Tours) and featured a walk along the beach at Port Eynon ending with a talk given by the RNLI at their Horton base and followed by a ‘Hog Roast’ reception at the Gower Sports and Social Club. 21 Ambassadors took part.



Ambassadors on their Xmas Social walk & talk

- **Network & Planning Meeting 21st February 2018** – Hosted by Tourism Swansea Bay the meeting was used as an opportunity to plan for the year ahead. 7 Ambassadors attended.

1.2.4 Ambassador activities

The brief set out the aim of the project in this respect as follows: *‘Trial and evaluate attendance at main Gower events e.g. Gower Show, major National Trust events, Gower Macmillan walk, as well as more ‘casual’ functions, such as busy days at popular locations, and including those identified by ambassadors themselves.’*

The consultants were and remain conscious of the fact that all of those recruited were being done so on an entirely **voluntary** basis and set out therefore to establish an approach that would be appealing without being dictatorial and therefore off-putting to the volunteers.

The relevant section in the Training Manual (attached in Appendix 2 – p.31) nevertheless sets out the expectations of Ambassadors on completion of their training as follows:

What’s expected of a Gower Community Tourism Ambassador? The following are things that we have set as the bare minimum...

- Attendance and participation in the two day training course
- Attendance on at least two of the follow up ‘Familiarisation Visits’
- Active participation in Ambassador Activities at Gower Events (where this is possible for the individual).
- Active participation in promoting the project and continued networking to share ideas via the internet.
- Active development of Ambassadorial activity to suit your particular circumstances.

The consultants set out to engage with organisers of Gower Events and were successful in enabling attendance at the Gower Show held on 6th August 2017. Attendance was facilitated by Steve Heard, an existing Ambassador training in the cohort prior to the Pilot Project and the Chief Horse Steward at the Show. The Ambassadors were engaged in helping as volunteer stewards in the 'Main Ring' as well as being able to promote both the Ambassador programme itself and Gower in general, to those attending the Show. 5 Ambassadors volunteered to assist at the Gower Show.



Steve Heard (left) explains the Ambassadorial duties Kathy Atkins Bowdler (Gower Show Horse Secretary) with Gower Ambassadors Mike, Sarah, Geoff and Dean.

The consultants also engaged with a number of events organisers in the run up to the summer events being staged on Gower and developed good relationships with the organiser of the Gower Chilli Festival and Gower Triathlon. One event that Gower Ambassadors were due to attend and support, the 'Step Back into the Neolithic' event organised by Gower Unearthed due to take place on 28th July was unfortunately cancelled because of the weather.

This year the Ambassadors were invited to take part in the Gower Walking Festival and the consultants facilitated for this to happen. The result was that 4 Ambassadors acted as 'back markers' on 6 of the walks organised as part of the Festival.

There is a sense that the numbers participating in and supporting events has been disappointing. However, it is important to remember that all volunteer initiatives require continuing support, coordination and a good degree of patience in getting them established. Evidence of just how challenging the establishment of a successful Ambassador Scheme is, is presented in Section 2.3 page 33. These are still early days for this initiative and despite the perception that engagement and involvement is lower than hoped there are some really good people doing really good things. This in itself provides a platform on which to build.

1.2.5 Ambassador project branding and promotion

The consultants consulted both Ambassadors and key stakeholders regarding the development of a brand and identity for the project and after looking into a range of different potential options it was decided that the branding should be kept simple and based on the existing Gower AONB logo. The consultants engaged Girl & Boy Design Studio to come up with a design which became as follows:



Gower Ambassadors logo based on a simple development of the Gower AONB logo

The consultants also engaged the Ambassadors themselves in helping to come up with a design for T-Shirts using the logo as the starting point.



Gower Ambassadors engaged in a T-Shirt design workshop at the networking event held in Gower Heritage Centre on July 12th 2017

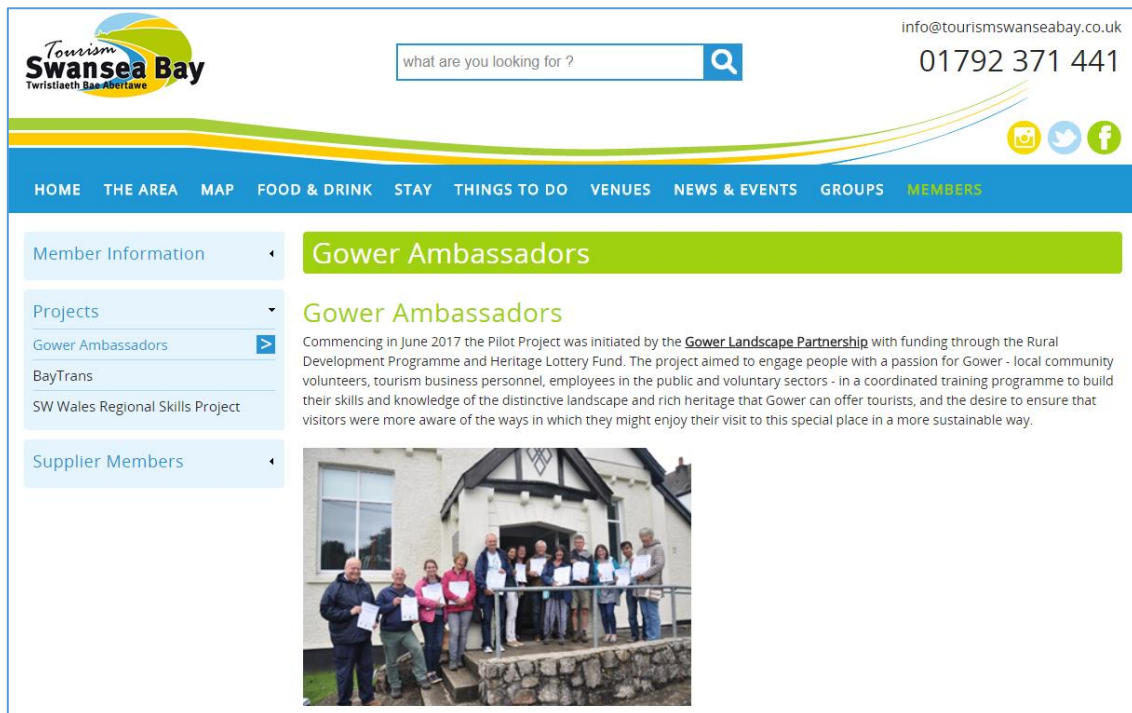
The finalised design was used as the basis for printed T-Shirts worn at the Gower Show:



Having trialled the T-Shirts the feedback from the Ambassadors was that it might in fact be better to have fleeces and caps! Especially as during the course of the Show the weather got colder and the T-Shirts were covered up!! The consultants therefore simplified the design and ordered 50 fleeces & caps as per below.



The consultants also sought to promote the Gower Ambassador project in the press. A short film has just been produced by one of the trained Ambassadors (Caroline Thomas of Gower Films) and a new page on the Tourism Swansea Bay website dedicated to promoting and providing information about the Gower Ambassadors has been set up (See below). The project has also regularly been promoted via social media.



Gower Ambassadors as featured on the Tourism Swansea Bay website <http://tourismswanseabay.co.uk>

View the video below for more information about Gower Ambassadors:

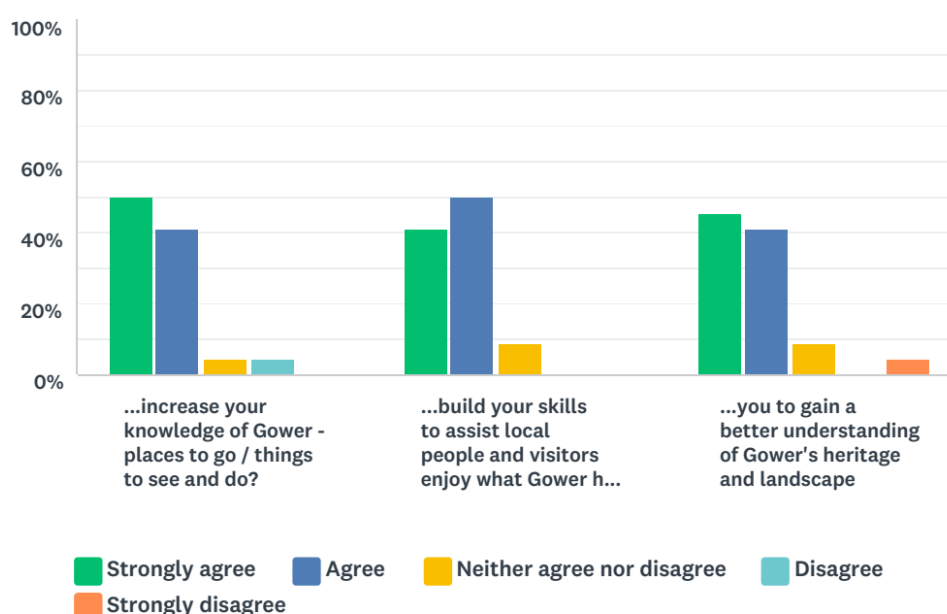


Gower Ambassadors film - also on TSB website

1.3 Results of consultations with ambassadors

A key part of the evaluation of the Pilot Project was the consultation that the consultants undertook with Ambassadors trained in the first phase of training. This was achieved by issuing a short questionnaire in July 2017 via email using the 'Survey Monkey' platform to collect responses. 25 Ambassadors (just less than 60%) responded. A summary of the results is provided below:

Q1 Reflecting back on the two day Ambassador Training (and any of the Familiarisation Visits) you have attended - do you think you have benefited? Have the opportunities afforded you helped...



ARE THERE ANY OTHER TRAINING NEEDS YOU HAVE? ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT THE TRAINING OR FAMILIARISATION VISITS?

I think that the course could have been condensed into one day, a lot of the information seemed common sense to me.

A 'compendium' of facilities available to visitors would be useful--not just those signed up to the ambassador scheme but anything that could add to the experience

Keep up the great work

Visit to North Gower really interesting

Would like them to continue as they are very informative. Obviously, not everyone can get to all of them...which would be ideal.

Get to know people and places in Gower more

I liked the variety of talks, and the cross-section of the community that attended the training I did. Coming from South Gower, I am still very lacking in knowledge about the North side, but this will broaden over the coming months, at least I hope it will.

Q2 Bearing in mind your answer to the above, have you had the opportunity to utilise the knowledge and / or skills you have gained?

	DAILY	ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	ON THE ODD OCCASION	NOT AS YET	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Yes - I have used the knowledge and skills I gained in my work-place	5.00% 1	35.00% 7	25.00% 5	25.00% 5	10.00% 2	20	3.00
Yes - I have used the knowledge and skills I gained in a voluntary capacity	0.00% 0	14.29% 3	28.57% 6	47.62% 10	9.52% 2	21	3.52

IF YOU HAVE USED THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THE TRAINING AND / OR THE FAMILIARISATION VISITS PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE, THIS WILL HELP US UNDERSTAND BETTER WHAT IMPACT THE PROGRAMME HAS HAD TO DATE.

Gower show

Trying to listen more when people are speaking and asking them more questions rather than trying to tell my story

At the moment, I have passed on much of the information to my local friends. It's surprising how little many of them know or are aware of...even when living on Gower.

Telling others about Gower Ambassadors- in particular the new team bringing back the Gower Walking Festival. I thought that there may be many ways the Ambassadors could both help and benefit from this next year.

I have taken people for walks & been more knowledgeable about what we have seen I have taken 3 lots of people to Parc Le breos for lunch & told them the history of it I have followed up recommended web-sites and books

Doing B&B, I have frequent contact with visitors to the area.

Based in a visitor information point in Gower so regularly get enquiries and I feel better informed to deal with them. Tourists have asked me about some of the places I've visited e.g King Arthur Hotels new Self Catering Accommodation and having been there and seen it I can sell it / describe it better to them and be more helpful.

Q3 Following the completion of the training do you feel as though you are part of an 'Ambassadorial Team' for Gower?

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Yes I feel part of an Ambassadorial Team for Gower	13.64% 3	59.09% 13	22.73% 5	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	22	2.18

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WOULD HELP YOU FEEL MORE A PART OF AN AMBASSADORIAL TEAM?

Regular updates and meetings

Maybe more interaction with others thourhly enjoyed day at Gower Show and sorry to miss social as would have been good to catch up

Occasional practical get-togethers. Skill share?

Mabe suggest that, in small groups, we meet at each others` houses and we take the Ambassadors on small tours of our localities...and provide tea/coffee or go to a local cafe or pub for refreshments.

More chances to get together but then, perhaps, that's up to us to organise!

To finish the training. I wasn't able to do day 2

But need to build on this as we only came together for a short time and didn't meet the other groups

I am looking to get involved, when I can.!!!

Periodic outings with other Ambassadors has been good.

Regular get togethers

Q4 We are currently organising an Xmas-time networking event and at this we will be planning for next year's Ambassador activities. We have some suggestions below. What would you like to see happen / be involved with going forward?

	VERY USEFUL - WOULD LOOK TO ATTEND / TAKE PART AS TIME ALLOWS	USEFUL - WOULD HOPE TO ATTEND / TAKE PART NOW AND AGAIN	NOT REALLY THAT USEFUL - PROBABLY WOULDN'T LOOK TO ATTEND / TAKE PART	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Networking meetings (twice a year)	63.64% 14	36.36% 8	0.00% 0	22	1.36
Familiarisation visits (demand led)	54.55% 12	40.91% 9	4.55% 1	22	1.50
Attendance at events in an ambassadorial capacity (E.g. Gower Show)	27.27% 6	63.64% 14	9.09% 2	22	1.82
Continuing as an Ambassador within your own time / community	45.45% 10	54.55% 12	0.00% 0	22	1.55

ARE THERE ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE AMBASSADORS GETTING INVOLVED WITH? WHAT GOWER EVENTS DO YOU THINK WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN AMBASSADOR PRESENCE?

Possibly manning a 'pop up' tourist info facility in the high season. If the walking festival gets off the ground it would be an ideal event in which to get involved. A list of events designed to attract visitors from out of county, especially those lasting a couple of days or more would be useful

Rambling events?

Possibly offer services to local hotels, caravan parks on a specific , planned day...to promote Gower Ambassadors. Would have to have maps/leaflets etc?

Gower Walking Festival

Films/talks about Gower & Gower history Talks by local authors/artists from Gower or about Gower Links with the University about Flora/ Fauna/wildlife/ botany/ geology/ geography/ history of Gower I would love to run factually based walks but would need to build a better knowledge base

Q5 We are still working on raising the profile of the Gower Ambassadors and are aiming to establish a public facing web presence as well as building the 'brand'. Is there anything else you think we should be doing to help more firmly establish the Gower Ambassadors going forward?

RESPONSES

Not sure

n/a

Flags and Signs when attending events

Whatever happened to those T shirts?

T shirts or something with the Logo on?

Needs debate, maybe in a small group setting

To establish a development group to explore future opportunities etc

I am a dinosaur when it comes to social media, however I do have a mobile and e mail naturally, so I cannot add much on this issue.

Public facing social media presence - managed by ambassadors Attendance at business networking events to raise awareness

OK

Q6 How would you like to see your role as a Gower Ambassador develop in the future?

RESPONSES

Not sure

Strong connections with all businesses on Gower and build on the current knowledge base of the area

Try to get more involved as time allows

Get involved in activities which encourage visitors to explore and respond to Gower in a creative way, involving drawing and other art forms

Being asked to attend events...wearing Ambassador T Shirt and with an Ambassador's Map(a specially printed one for our use..or a few).

I would like to help out at events. However Health issues at the moment are restricting.

I would happily volunteer once or twice a week I would like a network to develop where providers could help one another to build knowledge, & confidence in how to develop their own service or project. Also where people could access what others are providing

Be part of a network Support local events Explore the role and sustainable options

Somehow helping with the National Trust when needed on a voluntary basis. Having the odd days with a ranger perhaps.!!

Becoming more useful.

Happy with the way it is - perhaps sign posting to other relevant free training that compliments the ambassador training.

OK

1.3.1 'Pilot Project' Lessons Learnt

The consultants reviewed the results of the feedback from Gower Ambassadors gathered in the above survey and established '**8 Key Lessons**' for the programme moving forward. These were presented back to the Ambassadors at the networking event held on as being as follows:

1. Need for a better understanding of who an Ambassador is and what they do – suggested that a simple 'mission statement' and 'job description' is produced.
2. Need identified for coordination and ongoing management of Ambassadors beyond the end of the Pilot Project.
3. Need to continue to provide Ambassadors with good opportunities to 'strut their stuff' by engaging with Event Organisers – E.g. Gower Show, Chilli Festival, Gower Heritage Centre, Gower Unearthed.
4. Need for some further creative thinking around familiarisation visits / networking events – E.g. 'Sunset Tours', incorporation of fun / engaging activities e.g Foraging, bread-making, litter picks etc.

5. Need to continue to promote the Gower Ambassadors going forward, such as branded clothing, promotional video, a dedicated website page (on Tourism Swansea Bay website).
6. Need to help Ambassadors understand and relay to visitors 'sustainability' messages so as to ease pressure on 'honey pots' and encourage visitors to 'look after' Gower.
7. Need to be able to offer Ambassadors incentives & rewards – such as free entry to attractions, events, free parking and entry into 'Tourism Awards'.
8. Need to widen the net and be more inclusive and find ways to involve more organisations e.g. More Community Councils, Churches, W.I. U3A, more tourism businesses e.g. Pubs, campsites, youth hostels, bunkhouses, commoners & farmers, University / Gower College students, Outdoor activity providers, clubs & enthusiasts, PCSO's, Taxi Drivers, Transport Providers.

1.4 Current status of the Pilot Project

The consultants effectively completed the main part of their engagement in the project in January 2018 and in February a meeting was organised to effectively hand-over the co-ordination role to Tourism Swansea Bay.

At the meeting the forward plan for the year ahead was discussed along with a commitment to attend / support at least two events – The Gower Walking Festival in June and The Gower Show in August. It was strongly suggested by the consultant that attended the meeting that a key aspect of support going forward should be the maintenance of periodic 'fam visits' and a Christmas social.

2. POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION

The section sets out the potential for expanding the Pilot Project with due consideration given to the characteristics of the wider geographical area in which expansion might take place, feedback from some of the potential key players in that area, lessons that might be learned from other Ambassador schemes and consideration of the need to ensure that any proposed expansion is financially viable and sustainable.

2.1 Desk based research

The Pilot Project covered the RDP Eligible Electoral wards on Gower including: Bishopston, Fairwood, Gower, Penclawdd and Pennard. The reach of the project in terms of Ambassador recruitment also included people living or working in the following RDP Host Wards: Dunvant, Killay North, Killay South, Newton and Oystermouth, as well as the RDP Service Centre Ward of Gowerton.

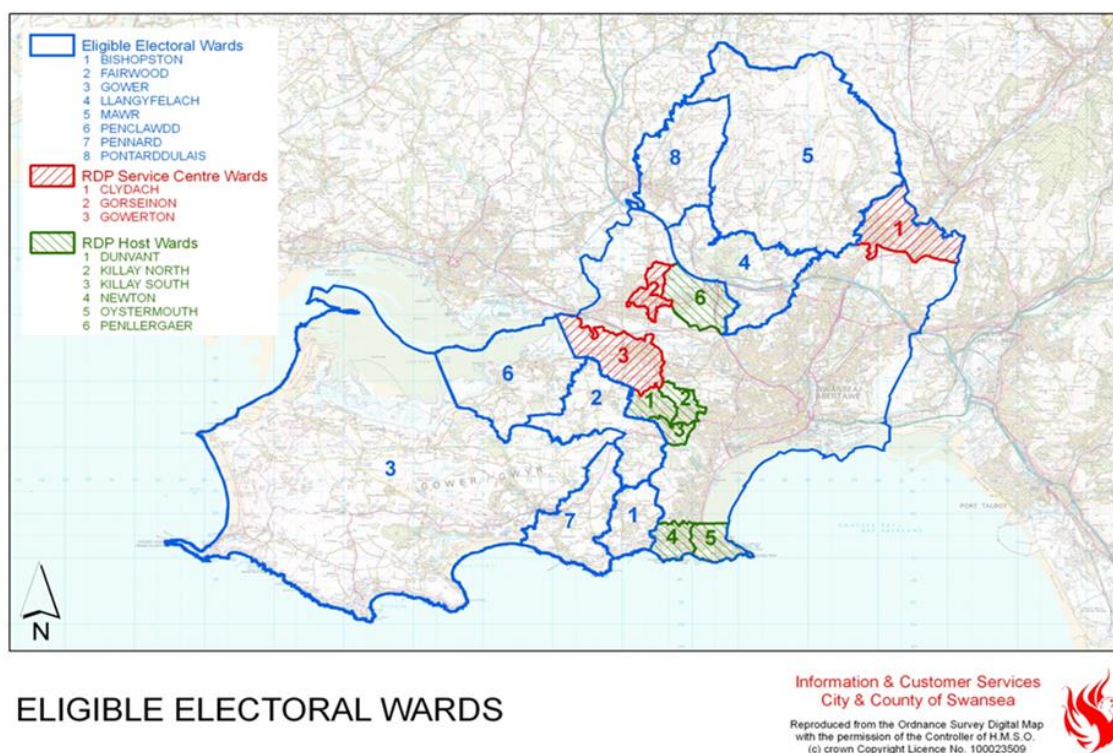


Figure 2.1 – RDP - Rural Wards in the City and County of Swansea area

Extension of the project into the other RDP areas within the City and County of Swansea would necessarily mean targeting the development of the project in the following Eligible Electoral Wards; Pontarddulais, Mawr, Llangyfelach, as well as the Service Centre Wards of Gorseinon and Clydach and the Host Ward of Penllergaer.

Visit Swansea Bay

Visit Swansea Bay have identified the rural upland area of the City and County as a destination in their own right and describe them as follows:

*'There's plenty of charm in the peaceful countryside of **Rural Swansea**. Mawr and the **Lliw Valley** are amongst the favourites. Mawr is one of the oldest communities in Wales and offers fascinating areas to explore (even if we do say so ourselves!)*



*Many peaceful walks will welcome you, whether it's a short stroll or a longer walk around the pretty **Lliw Reservoir**. Find yourself at one with nature and spot some great birds and wildlife while you're at it. Head to **Penllergare Valley Woods** to find the waterfall – but be warned, you might not want to leave. The landscapes in this woodland were designed in the 1800s by a local landowner and are currently being restored to their former glory.*



*If you're feeling up for a challenge, grab your boots and head up to **Penlle'r Castell**. Holding the title for the **highest point in Swansea**, it offers quite the view. Bringing a camera comes highly recommended too! From here you can make a start on **The Gower Way**, a 35 mile walking route across the Peninsula from east to west.*

*If you're not keen on walking then swap boots for wheels and follow the **National Cycle Routes** through the area – what a great way to explore! Rural Swansea is a long way from the hustle and bustle of city life, and that's the beauty of it. Escape to the countryside if it's peace and quiet you're after.'*

Extracted from [Visit Swansea Bay](#) website



Figure 2.3 – Route of the Gower Way from Worm’s Head to Penlle’r Castell – courtesy [‘My Life Outside’](#)

Ward by ward assessment of opportunities in Rural Swansea area:

Pontardulais

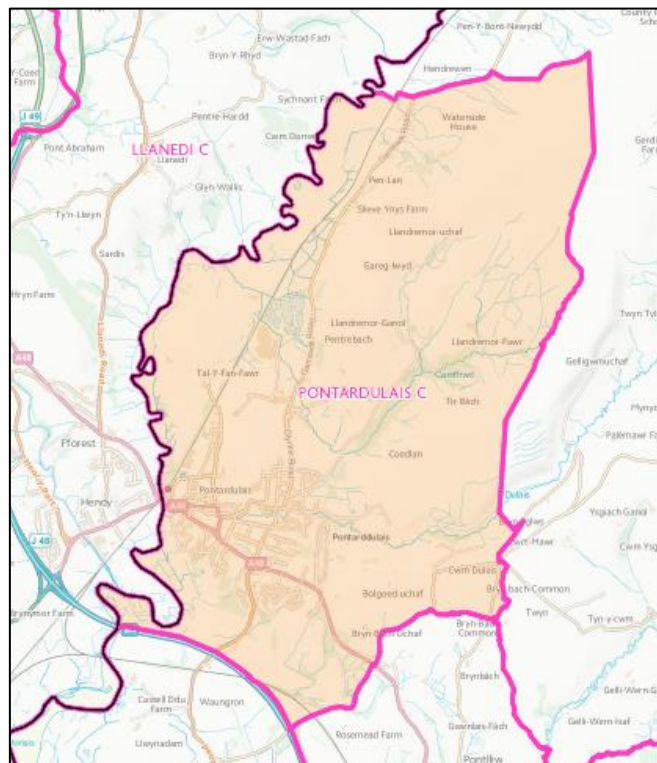


Figure 2.4 – Pontardulais Ward

Assets & links:

- Small rural villages – Craig Cefn Parc, Felindre, Garnswllt
- [Upper and Lower Lliw Reservoirs](#) – with café / fishery / wheelchair accessible route
- [Walking trails](#) – culmination of [Gower Way northern section](#) (Gowerton to Penlle'r Castell), Cwm Ysgiach Walk, [Cwmcerdinen Walk](#)
- Trails in this area well used by local Ramblers and walking groups.
- [Mawr Community Council](#)

Llangyfelach

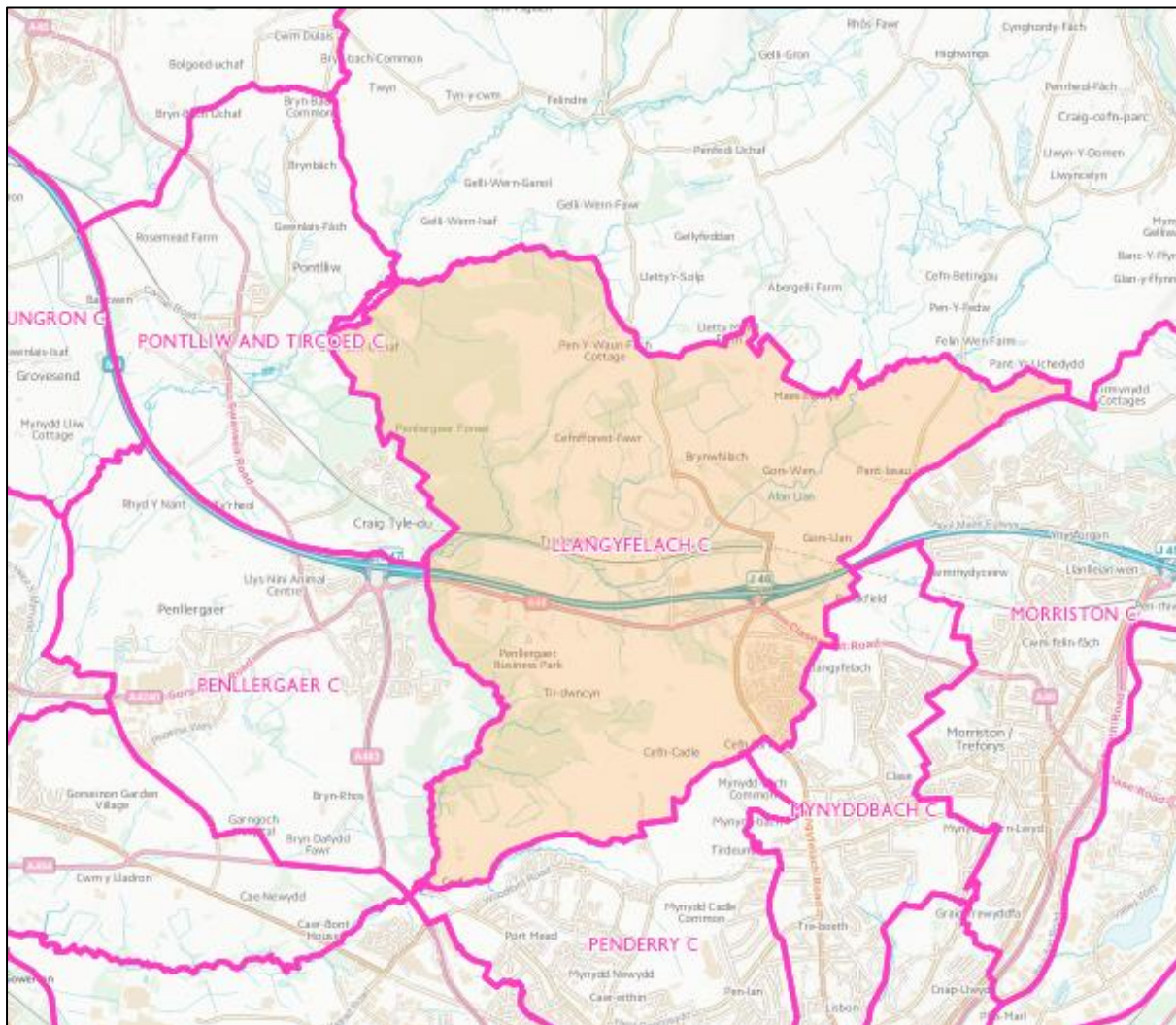


Figure 2.6 – Llangyfelach Ward

Assets & links:

- [Penllergaer Forest](#) – owned & managed by NRW
- [The Calon Lan Centre](#) (Mynyddbach Chapel - home and final resting place of Daniel James the famous Welsh Bard who wrote Calon Lan) – N.B. Just in the ward of Penderry.
- [Llangyfelach Community Council](#)

Gorseinon

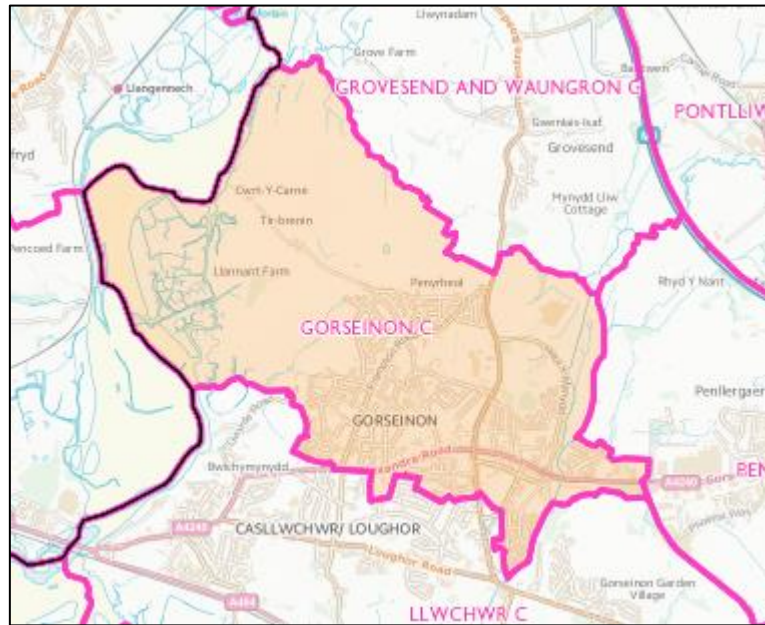


Figure 2.7 – Gorseinon Ward

Assets & links:

- [Gorseinon & District History Archive](#)
- [Gorseinon Town Council](#) and [Facebook Pages](#)

Clydach

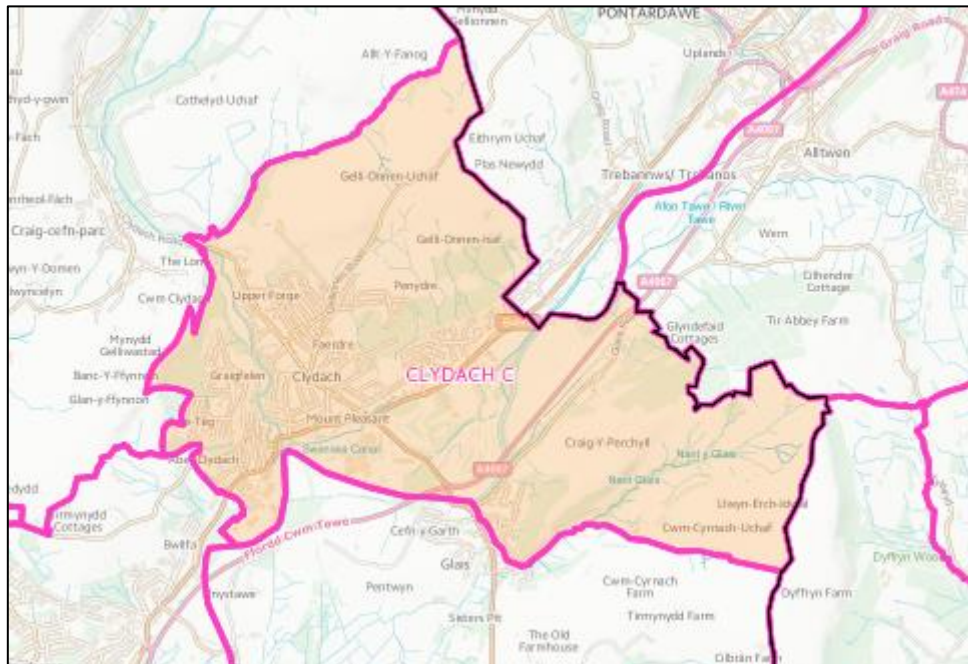


Figure 2.8 – Clydach Ward

Assets & links:

- Industrial heritage – ‘The Mond’ and Swansea Canal – [Swansea Canal Society](#)
- [Forge Fach](#) and nearby waterfall.
- [Clydach Heritage Centre](#) – Volunteers from the Centre previously trained by the consultants as ‘Community Tourism Ambassadors’ under the Valleys Regional Park Ambassadors programme.
- [Clydach Community Council](#)

Penllergare

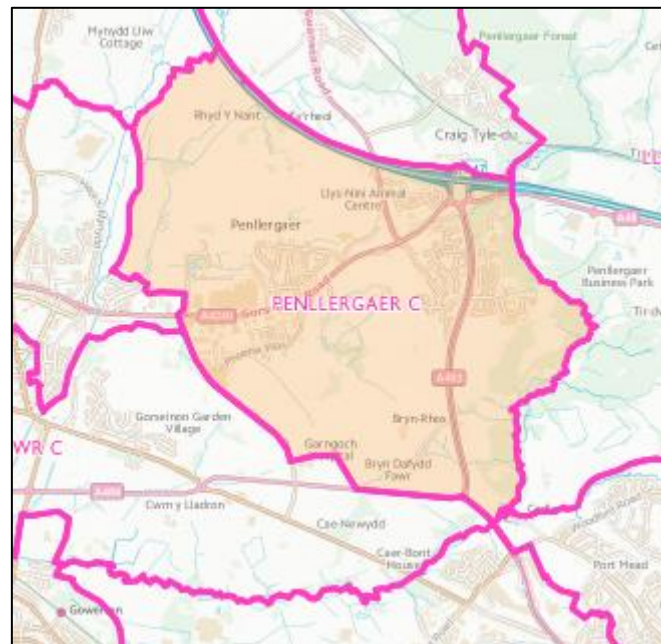


Figure 2.9 – Penllergare Ward

- [Penllergare Valley Woods](#) – Major attraction and destination being developed by award winning charity. Attracts local people and day visitors from further afield. Strong & active volunteer network. Already acting in ‘ambassadorial’ capacity.
- [Llys Nini Animal Centre](#)
- [Penllergare Community Council](#)

Transport connections

Rural Swansea is well served with transport links. The M4 effectively splits the Gower peninsula off from the Rural Swansea upland areas but offers three junctions from which to branch off Junctions 46, 47 & 48 – Junction 48 has a Motorway Service Station and is very close to Penllergare Valley Woods one of the area’s emerging key attractions.

The [Heart of Wales Line](#) also skirts the western edge of the Rural Swansea area as it makes its way along the River Loughor valley, stopping at Pantyffynnon, Pontardulais, Llangennech, Bynea, Llanelli and Gowerton, before terminating at Swansea.

A search on the Traveline Cymru [Journey Planner](#) indicates that a trip by bus from Swansea to Pontardulais would take around 45 minutes and to Pontardulais would take around 55 minutes.

The National Cycle Network does not connect directly to the area although [Route 43](#) runs up the Afan Valley to the east with the closest point to divert being at the village of Vardre.

Other destinations nearby

Aside from the other destinations listed by Visit Swansea Bay namely;

- [Swansea](#) – badged as ‘Wales’ Waterfront City’ and boasting; The Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea Museum, National Waterfront Museum – as well as five parks & gardens, shopping & Swansea Market and LC2.
- [Mumbles](#) – ‘Cosmopolitan’ Mumbles, with its independent boutiques and quirky galleries, promenade walks, Victorian Pier, Lighthouse, Oystermouth Castle and world class ice-cream!
- [Afan and the Vale of Neath](#) – The Afan Valley has some of the best mountain bike trails world-wide and labelled ‘Waterfall Country’ The Neath Valley has some of Wales’ finest waterfalls, including the one at the site of the former Aberdulais Tin Works now looked after by the National Trust.

Rural Swansea is flanked all sides by existing strong tourism offers. To the west by [Llanelli](#) and the wider rural [Carmarthenshire](#) area and to the north by the [Brecon Beacons National Park](#). To the west and north is the emerging ‘destination’ of the [Valleys Regional Park](#) - which cuts across and actually includes the Rural Swansea area.

2.2 Feedback from potential participants in an expanded programme

Feedback from potential participants in an expanded programme into the Rural Swansea area was gained through sending a link to an online ‘Survey Monkey’ questionnaire. The link was sent to all of the clerks to the Community and Town Councils in the area together with representatives of local attractions.

Despite two reminders only 3 of the 13 organisations canvassed completed the survey – The Penllergare Trust, Pontarddulais Partnership, Canolfan Y Bont and The Clydach Heritage Centre. The quality and insight of the answers given is nevertheless useful.

The questions asked and the feedback received from those that responded was as follows:

Q1. Have you or your business / organisation previously been involved in a Community Tourism Ambassador Programme?

- One out of the three respondents had previously been involved. The Clydach Heritage Centre in the Valleys Regional Park Ambassadors Scheme (2011-12).

Q2. Do you think that extending the Gower Ambassador Pilot Project to cover the Rural Swansea area is a good idea?

All three respondents replied 'Yes' – two provided further commentary as follows:

'In Pontarddulais we have focused on tourism for a number of years and know that walking groups come here to get guidance re the Rebecca Riots, visit the stones we have put in place at appropriate places and walk on the surrounding common land. Having upgraded the footpath on the marsh and doing up the cemetery (the church now being located at St Fagans) individuals walk this area passing through. Oedbach Park. We are working on a World War I exhibition in the institute prior to further exhibition work on local industry, religion, award winning town bands & choirs.'

'The Lordship of Gower extends north of Swansea to Penllercastell. The visitor potential for this area has hardly been tapped, quite a different experience from peninsular Gower. An Ambassador group, working together to promote this area, would be of great benefit.'

Q3. If you have answered 'yes' to the above question please tell us about the key organisations and businesses we might involve in your area.

All three respondents replied and the following answers were given:

- *The Penllergare Trust*
- *Town Council, Canolfan Y Bont Community Centre, Carnival Committee, Pontarddulais Town Band, Pontarddulais Male Voice Choir, Tesco.*
- *Local Community Councils (Clydach and Mawr), Clydach Heritage Centre, Clydach Historical Society. Possibly Pontardawe Visitor and Heritage Centre, Swansea Valley History Society. Swansea Valley tourism organisations. Swansea Canal Society. Chambers of Commerce? Commercial ventures e.g. cafes and public houses.*

Q4. Do you think that some of the people in your organisation would be interested in undertaking training to become a Community Tourism Ambassador if this were provided free of charge?

- Two of the organisations – Penllergare Heritage Trust and the Clydach Heritage Centre replied 'yes' and the Pontarddulais Partnership, Canolfan Y Bont said they'd need to ask their membership.

Q5. What benefits do you think a scheme of this nature might bring to your organisation / your community?

- Wider knowledge, being part of a network.
- Pontarddulais is an active integrated community that is committed to remaining a viable sport and business centre that has something to offer the public to ensure sustainability.
- Providing a consistent approach to welcoming visitors to the Centre and promoting other attractions in the area.

Q6. We think that extending the Gower Ambassador initiative into Rural Swansea will be assisted by building on the work undertaken by The Gower Society in establishing The Gower Way walking route. What other attractions and facilities local to you might we think about promoting through an Ambassador Scheme such as this?

- Penllergare Valley Woods.
- Rebecca Riots, Industrial Heritage, Religion, local home skills such as quilting, access to the Heart of Wales Railway line, Walking, Music, Fishing.
- Local walks in the Clydach and Mawr area. Linked with cultural information e.g. local chapels, farms, mines, stone circles and ancient monuments.

Q7. Would your organisation be interested / willing to attend an initial introductory meeting to find out more about the initiative from existing trained Community Tourism Ambassadors from the Gower Pilot area?

- All three organisations responded 'yes' to this question.

Q8. Are there any other comments you would like to make about this proposal?

- Need to respect the existing brands / identity of those organisations involved if joint / materials or clothing provided.
- There is a need to consider facilities for children and young people.
- Swansea Council started a similar initiative to promote rural Gower a few years ago but it seems to have died. We would hope that a follow up would be more long lived and fruitful.

2.3 Lessons learnt from other Tourism Ambassador Schemes

Originally involved in the Valley Regional Park Community Tourism Ambassador Scheme the consultants have gone on to deliver training and other support for Ambassador Schemes in; The Valleys, Monmouthshire, Newport, Pembrokeshire and the Brecon Beacons National Park.

It is probably fair to say that the work undertaken across these programmes has not only helped to kick-start a whole range of geographically diverse Ambassador schemes, but has also helped to shape Visit Wales' own engagement with Ambassador schemes, which has been based around setting guidelines & standards and in some instances providing grant aid.

Ruth went on to initiate a networking meeting of South Wales Ambassador Schemes which was hosted by Vale of Glamorgan Council Tourism in Barry on 23rd May 2018. During a round-table discussion aimed at identifying the present status of the schemes the consultant was able to learn of some of the key success factors within each of these schemes. A brief summary of the key points is provided below:

Valleys Regional Park

- One of the consultants - Ruth Taylor-Davies played a key role in the development of the Community Tourism Ambassador concept for The Valleys Regional Park undertaking a Feasibility Study entitled 'Finding a Way Forward' in 2009.
- Using the study as the basis for a major funding bid Valleys Regional Park were then able to employ three Community Tourism Officers across the central, eastern and western areas of The Valleys.
- Between February 2011 and April 2014 a total of 284 people within Valleys Regional Park (VRP) area completed the Ambassador Training programme including an 'Our Place' workshop run by Ruth Taylor-Davies and Gareth Kiddie. This training was supplemented by other courses including 'World Host' and the dedicated support that the Community Tourism Officers could provide.
- At the end of the VRP funding period a feasibility study was undertaken to assess the potential for establishing a wholly self-sufficient Ambassador scheme that generated income through trading (mostly by offering Ambassador training) and a new social enterprise was set up called Ambassador Training Wales.
- However, despite a much wider geographical remit the company was dissolved in March 2018, and although the reasons for the failure are unclear it is presumed that insufficient income was generated to cover core costs.
- Ruth Taylor-Davies has since worked on a project called 'The Valleys that Changed the World' - a partnership of more than 70 organisations led by Torfaen Council and aimed at finding new ways of telling the story of the South Wales Valleys, and their importance to global history.

- On the back of this but acting in an entirely voluntary capacity Ruth has established a networking platform for Ambassadors across South Wales using Facebook – this can be accessed via the following link – [South Wales Ambassadors](#).
- There are currently 140 Ambassadors ‘on the list’ of which around 90% are local to the Valleys.
- Recently South Wales Ambassadors were engaged by Ruth to volunteer to assist on the [Man Engine](#) Tour.

Vale of Glamorgan

- Set up 5 years ago [Vale Ambassadors](#) is still active
- 50+ trained Ambassadors – but smaller core group of dedicated individuals.
- 50/50 split between people from the community and tourism businesses.
- Management of the Ambassadors went over to the Vale Tourism Association on a trial basis but it didn’t work out, the Ambassadors were then taken back in as a management function of the Vale’s Tourism Team and they remain with a Tourism Officer acting as their coordinator and point of contact which is working well.
- Ambassadors continue to undertake a range of ambassadorial activities e.g.
 - Leading / supporting walks in the Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival
 - Manning a stand at the Vale Show
 - Use of one of the beach huts on Barry Island for displays / point of contact & info for visitors to the Island
 - Supporting an archaeological dig locally
- Success factors:
 - Lots of familiarisation visits – undertaken on the basis that the host funds the visit.
 - Training that takes place over a couple of years rather than as a ‘one off’
 - Tourism Officer being in regular contact – felt that without this ‘linch-pin’ the scheme would fail. Modest input of 1-2 hours per week.
 - An Xmas social every year.

Bridgend

- Some parts of Bridgend (Betws / Garw Valley and Llangynwyd / Llynfi Valley) were covered by the Valleys Regional Park initiated scheme in 2013.
- Dedicated Bridgend scheme set up by Bridgend County Borough Council as a joint initiative with the Vale of Glamorgan Council a few years ago, but now in abeyance.
- Revived at the time of the Urdd Eisteddfod in 2017 with a second cohort of Welsh speaking Ambassadors trained up.
- Taken on by the Tourism Association but the Tourism Association itself has since folded.
- No time for coordination by Tourism Officer in context of shrinking budgets for tourism development and support in the Bridgend area.

Monmouthshire and Newport

- Although initiated separately by Monmouthshire County Council and the City and County of Newport Council these Ambassador schemes have recently been working together through a project that has engaged the Ambassadors in social media training leading to a [Facebook](#) Campaign.
- Kevin Ford (MCC) and Ruth Waycott (freelance consultant) were able to report back on some of the positives & negatives of the schemes as follows:
 - Monthly training sessions based on fam visits worked well.
 - Many of the participants don't use social media!
 - Ambassadors felt that they weren't being engaged sufficiently – only called for supporting at the Food Festival and Eisteddfod.
- Despite the above the Closed Facebook Group that serves as the primary networking platform for all those that were trained remains a very active and ongoing discussion forum enabling trained Ambassadors to swap notes and information on forthcoming events / attractions etc.

Cardiff

- Faye Tanner was able to report that a small but strong group of Ambassadors were active in and around Cardiff City Centre and at big events being stages at for example, The Principality Stadium.
- Many students engaged – students that have gone on to apply for jobs in the tourism industry.

Brecon Beacons National Park

- Whilst not present at the meeting the work of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) was acknowledged.
- BBNPA operate a core Ambassador programme that is coordinated and managed by their Tourism Development Officer. The scheme boasts over 150 active Ambassadors mostly drawn from tourism businesses operating within the Park.
- BBNPA has established a range of additional 'themed' training programmes for Ambassadors that have included – 'Dark Skies', 'Geopark' and 'Mountain & Moorland' awareness raising.

Carmarthenshire

- Also not present at the meeting but noted was another Ambassador scheme funded through RDP this initiative successfully trained over 60 Ambassadors but has largely been in abeyance since the funding ended in 2014.
- The Carmarthenshire Tourism Association who were instrumental in managing and developing the scheme have since undertaken further training and events such as 'event organiser' training, but report that it has been a struggle to keep the momentum going

as tourism businesses are reluctant to spend money on unsubsidised training programmes.

The meeting was a positive step forward in meeting the challenge of providing ongoing support and encouragement to existing Ambassador schemes. Some of the key issues and opportunities common to all Ambassador schemes were identified and recorded¹ as follows:

- All schemes have a natural drop-off, but a core of interested Ambassadors remains.
- Some Ambassadors use the skills in their work so not all ambassadors see it as a volunteering opportunity, i.e. just because they can't help at events doesn't mean they aren't using their Ambassadorial training.
- Most said that the Ambassadors need a central contact point to help them function most effectively. Julie offers this function in the Vale – the only real cost is her time.
- Keeping Ambassadors engaged/ongoing training/meeting a few times a year helps them to bond and to keep their interest.
- Fam visits were great for upskilling Ambassadors re product
- It was felt that from experience, Ambassadors want real tasks, to feel valued and to have a higher profile.
- It was suggested that students might be a ripe recruitment ground for any future schemes.
- The potential role of Ambassadors as events stewards was raised as an opportunity.
- It was felt that there should be clearer guidelines on how the public can interface with Ambassadors in a planned way.

2.4 Financial viability and sustainability

In each case to date the intention in setting out to establish a Community Tourism Ambassador Scheme has very much been to establish something that is at the very minimum 'long-lasting' and ideally 'self-sustaining' in the long-term.

However, the evidence of the financial viability and sustainability of the Ambassador Programmes established in South Wales to date is one that clearly shows that without grant aid and / or ongoing officer time input these kinds of programmes tend to wither and die despite the best efforts on behalf of the coordinators.

The most successful schemes appear to be those that remain supported by a paid 'Tourism Officer' working within a public authority – The Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority being the 'best' examples.

The experience of delivering the Gower Pilot Project has in itself demonstrated just how difficult it is to establish a scheme that will stand the test of time. Attempts by the consultants to encourage 'volunteers' to step up and act in a coordination / point of contact role have foundered – despite positive early signs and no small degree of enthusiasm on

¹ Edited version of the meeting notes.

behalf of those that have put themselves forward – and this is likely to remain the case as ‘enlightened self-interest’ within the field of tourism / pride in the community is not high up there when it comes to volunteering – there being far more ‘important’ issues for people to dedicate their hard won spare time to when push comes to shove!

That is not to say that it can’t be achieved, but that within the constraints of time-limited funding and the absence of an active input and support from a public authority the ‘Gower Pilot’ faces an uphill battle.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Key conclusions

The following are the key conclusions the consultants have come to as a result of the delivery of the Gower Ambassadors Pilot Project and the subsequent investigations into the opportunities to build on and expand the scheme:

Looking back at the Gower Pilot...

- Ambassador recruitment worked well and attracted the desired diverse range of prospective Ambassadors drawn from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors as well as other interested individuals.
- The training was well received, met its stated objectives and attained excellent feedback from course participants. The post-training familiarisation visits were also much appreciated by those that attended and well conducted by Tourism Swansea Bay.
- An ongoing networking platform has been established via the 'Gower Ambassadors Closed Facebook Group' with a membership currently running at 44 individuals. Despite this not all Ambassadors use Facebook and are therefore missing out on some of the networking activity.
- Ambassador attendance at events (the Gower Show in particular) was not great and the coordination time required was significant. Those that attended, however, got a lot out of their involvement and indicated that they would do so again to represent Gower Ambassadors at future organised events.
- A strong brand and identity has now been established based on the Gower AONB logo. The new blue coloured fleeces and caps have been received well and some of the Ambassadors are wearing them at the Gower Walking Festival which is underway at the time of writing.
- It is felt amongst existing Ambassadors that the promotion and publicity of the scheme and what Ambassadors do could be significantly stepped up. The film that has just been created might help in this respect, but more concerted and ongoing effort to keep the Ambassador profile high will be required.
- Post-training some Ambassadors felt that their role was still not clear. It could be the case that the initial promotion of the project raised expectations and gave the impression that Ambassadors would be 'called upon' more often and that they would be more actively engaged in attending events etc. However, there is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that other Ambassadors are indeed acting in an ambassadorial capacity as part of their 'day jobs' and are happy in their role.
- The plan to encourage Ambassadors to step-up and self-coordinate their own activities did not materialise. Despite several attempts to put a framework in place upon which Ambassadors might build, there has not been the take up of the volunteer roles that might make this happen. There could be several underlying reasons for this, but one of the key factors could simply be that the coordination of a group of very diverse

individuals is not something that holds enough of a 'draw' in comparison with other more active and practical volunteering roles.

Looking forward to a potential expansion of the Gower Ambassador Scheme...

- Despite there only being three responses to the survey for the expansion of the project into the Rural Swansea area, the clear feedback was that such a scheme would be welcomed and valued.
- The 'ancient' link between what we know today as the Gower Peninsula and Rural Swansea has long since been recognised by the Gower Society and is manifest in their development of the Gower Way Walking Route.
- 'Peaceful' and 'charming' Rural Swansea could indeed be seen to act as foil to the 'busyness' of Gower, but away from the coast these rural uplands are also effectively in competition on all sides with; rural Carmarthenshire, the Brecon Beacons and The Valleys with their strong industrial heritage offer.
- Rural Swansea does have a good tourism offer, but building on certain attractions, such as Penllergare Valley Woods and identifying strongly with The Gower Way Walking Route will be key.
- There are excellent transport links for visitors looking to explore Rural Swansea including access via the Heart of Wales Railway which could be a unique selling point in some market sectors.
- Lessons from Ambassador Schemes elsewhere need to be taken into account as it is very clear that most of them falter if there is no coordination and ongoing support from a public body.
- It is also clear, however, that a core group of trained Ambassadors are likely to remain engaged and that they actually require little in the way of inputs to keep them motivated and 'on board'.
- The most recent attempts to ensure the continuation of the existing Ambassador Schemes across the region gives hope that further investment in them will be worthwhile.

3.2 Main recommendations

The consultants would urge caution in proceeding to expand the Gower Ambassador scheme into Rural Swansea unless and until ongoing support in terms of a coordination function is firmly in place. The coordination might nevertheless be 'light touch' following the example of the Vale of Glamorgan. The other features that might go to make a successful scheme going forward are as follows:

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Don't try to do too much and ensure that prospective Ambassadors know that they are in it to help 'a little here and there' rather than as a full on volunteering role.

- Recruitment and training undertaken in the same way as the Pilot, but with a stronger emphasis on making clear what the role of the Ambassador is – and what it is not!
 - Organise ongoing quarterly networking events undertaken as ‘familiarisation visits’ – and within an expanded scheme targeting a visit to Penllergare Valley Woods, Clydach Heritage Centre and a walk along the northern stretch of The Gower Way to kick things off.
 - Keep building the engagement with Events Organisers and establish key events as regulars in the Ambassador calendar.
 - Make an effort to ensure that there are regular email circulars and posts on the Facebook Group to keep Ambassadors engaged.
 - Build the suite of promotional material and other paraphernalia so that the Ambassadors’ identity is strengthened and their profile raised.
 - Organise an annual Xmas Do a way of keeping the social aspect going.
-

Appendices

This is Gower



Community Tourism Ambassador Workbook and Training Manual



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This is Gower

Training Day 1

- 9.00 *Arrive & Coffee*
- 9.30 **Welcome and introduction to Day 1**
'Our Gower' Postcards – Trainer presentation
Gower Trivial Pursuit - Quick Quiz
Getting to know you – Round robin participant introductions
- 11.00 *Coffee break*
- 11.15 **Quick on the draw** – Mini-workshop exercise
Think you know Gower? – Workshop exercise
- 12.30 *Lunch & networking*
- 1.15 **Who are our visitors?** – Trainer presentation
Travel Agents – Workshop exercise
Host attractions – Outdoor workshop exercise in the vicinity of the training venue
Round-up – A look forward to day two and homework!
- 4.00 *End & depart*

This is Gower

Training Day 2

- 9.00 Arrive & Coffee
- 9.30 **Welcome and introduction to Day 2**
You're Welcome! – Trainer presentation and workshop activity
- 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.15 **Ambassadors in Action** – Presentation and workshop to enable participants to put forward their own ideas
- 12.00 **Getting around by public transport** – Presentation by Traveline Cymru
- 12.30 Lunch & networking
- 1.15 **Radio places to go** – Workshop activity
Quick quiz
What happens next? – Trainer led Q&A
- 3.45 **Presentation ceremony** – Certificates & group photo
- 4.00 End & depart

Welcome aboard!

Welcome aboard our 'This is Gower' Community Tourism Ambassador Training Programme. We are setting out to engage people from the Gower area in becoming Community Tourism Ambassadors. What are Community Tourism Ambassadors? We like to think of them as being the 'people on the ground' – people that are passionate about the Gower Peninsula and who are willing & able to spend time providing a warm welcome to visitors, sharing with them their knowledge of their local area.

*Why are we doing this? Tourism is a very important part of our local economy. Within the City and County of Swansea area in 2016 there were around **4.59M visitors, spending 7.9M visitor days, contributing some £400M each year and sustaining over 5,764 fte jobs**¹. We know that Gower plays a key role in the area's tourism offer and we know too that visitors to the Peninsula come to see our top attractions - but are they missing out on some of our lesser known 'hidden gems'? Can we encourage them to explore more and stay longer? If we can succeed in doing this we will be able to grow our tourism 'offer' and spread the benefits more widely across the County.*

What will you gain from taking part in the training? We think there are several real benefits as follows:

¹ STEAM – Tourism Statistics for 2016

- 1. Gaining knowledge** – We'll share with you as much as we know about tourism opportunities on Gower and you can tell us what we don't already know!
- 2. Networking** – You'll have the opportunity to meet other like-minded people and swap notes with tourism professionals.
- 3. Putting your place / project on the map** – this is your opportunity to let other people know what you are contributing to Gower's tourism offer.
- 4. Building your skills** – In particular we will be challenging you to think from the perspective of your visitor – putting yourself in their shoes.
- 5. Camaraderie** – Over time we'd like to think that we will engender a shared sense of a common purpose. A willingness to work together - to help each other out – even more so than now.

What is expected of a Community Tourism Ambassador? The main role is to take the knowledge you will have gained from participating in the training and use it to provide visitors (and local people) with information & guidance that improves their experience of visiting the area. As the project progresses we will also be setting up opportunities for Ambassadors to more actively network with each other, attend and support Gower tourism events, and establish their own mini 'Embassies' where there are opportunities to undertake more proactive visitor facing activities.

We sincerely hope you enjoy the two days with us!!

Ruth & Gareth

Getting to know you

Now you know a little bit about us, it's time we got to know a little bit about you! In a couple of minutes we'll ask you to introduce yourself. As well as telling us your **name** and which **business** or **organisation** you represent (if applicable), we'd like you to tell us about...

- ❖ **Your favourite place** – one place on Gower you would take a visitor –
Where is that place? Why take them there? What is so special about that place?

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- ❖ **What in particular you would like to gain from attending the course?**

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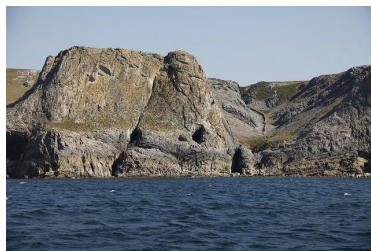
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Throughout this pack are some popular Gower landmarks. Can you guess what and where they are? See how many you get right - no cheating!! (Answers on page 40)



1



2



3

This is Gower

The 'This is Gower' Community Tourism Ambassador Training Programme has been initiated by the City and County of Swansea, on behalf of the **Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP)**.

GLP has been successful in securing £1.3M from the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Landscape Partnership programme, and additional funding and support from: Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-13 (which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development); Natural Resources Wales; and National Trust. The Partnership has a core team of 3 staff, employed and supported by City and County of Swansea.

The GLP **Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP)** highlights the creation of 'a network of Gower heritage and landscape ambassadors, introducing and explaining features of interest and the value of Gower's heritage and landscape to visiting audiences'. The **Gower Community Tourism Ambassador Project** is being piloted on Gower with a view to the programme being rolled out to other rural areas around Swansea.



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Quick on the draw!

What does a Community Tourism Ambassador look like? We'd like you to tell us what you think...

- ❖ **In your groups draw a cartoon of a community tourism ambassador.**
- ❖ **Your cartoon character should have all of the qualities and features of a great tourism ambassador for Gower.**
- ❖ **And they should be shown 'strutting their stuff' at an iconic Gower location / event.**
- ❖ **Be prepared to describe your community tourism ambassador to the other groups...**

Our Gower Community Tourism Ambassador

Think you know Gower?



Do you know all about what Gower has to offer? Are you familiar with the **'usual suspects'** – the classic / iconic place to go on Gower? Can you tell us about some of those **'hidden gems'** that only someone from the area would know about? Using the aide memoir below, your group's challenge is to prove that it is indeed all right here! Work through the lists and see how many places (that are interesting to see or visit) and / or things (that are fun to do) you can think of in your area and list them overleaf.



4



5



6

Interesting to see or visit...

- ❖ Panoramic views (be precise – looking towards X / from Y)
- ❖ Heritage & visitor attractions
- ❖ Local history museums
- ❖ Local churches
- ❖ Sites of natural interest
- ❖ Parks & gardens
- ❖ Places linked with famous people
- ❖ Places of myth & legend
- ❖ Streetscape / architecture
- ❖ Environmental Art & Sculpture
- ❖ Other...

Fun to do...

- ❖ Going to the beach
- ❖ Outdoor activities²
- ❖ Galleries / Art & craft fairs
- ❖ Farmers' markets / food festivals
- ❖ Community events
- ❖ Music & folk festivals
- ❖ Storytelling events
- ❖ Eating at cafes & restaurants
- ❖ Going to local pubs
- ❖ Other...

² For Example - Walking, Cycling, Mountain Biking, Fishing, Horse Riding & Pony-Trekking, Golf, Bird / Nature-Watching, Climbing, Caving, Canoeing / Kayaking, Free-Flight, Coastering, Sailing & Power-boating, Surfing & stand-up paddle-boarding, Windsurfing & kitesurfing.

Who are our visitors?

We know a fair bit about the motivations & habits of the people that come to visit Wales (and the Gower area in particular) from the various visitor surveys that have been undertaken. We have looked at the most important of these surveys³ and drawn out some of the key statistics that we think are useful to bear in mind. Of course there is the old adage '*lies, damned lies and statistics*', but in summary we can establish the following:

- ❖ Where visitors come from – In 2015 there was a **50/50 split between Welsh residents and those coming from outside Wales.**
- ❖ **There has been an increase in day visitors** (31% in 2012 to 40% in 2015) **to the area**; so around 60% of visitors are staying in the area.
- ❖ **Spend per head from visitors:**
 - Overnight spend equates to £39 per person per day
 - Day spend equates to £22 per person
- ❖ **69% of visitors interviewed in the area, came from the ABC1 socio-economic group** – significantly higher than the UK population (55%).
- ❖ **There has been a drop in the number of people taking part in activities in the area** (32% did not take part in any activities in 2012, this rose to 57% in 2015)
- ❖ **Visiting the coast / beach is the most frequently mentioned specific reason for visiting the area**, featuring in one in five (20%) trips. This is closely followed by scenery / landscape (15% of trips) and Visiting Friends and Relatives (14%)
- ❖ **The best markets for Swansea County are:**

³ Wales Visitor Survey 2016, Swansea 2015 Visitor Survey and GB Tourist Statistics-January-December-2016

- Affluent 'Empty Nesters' aged 45+ years
- Affluent early retired couples aged 45+ years
- Younger affluent professionals aged 25 - 45 years
- Mid income families with children
- Businesses and groups

- ❖ **Visitors come back for more** – 85% of visitors have visited before.
- ❖ **Over half of staying visitors to the County, stay on Gower.**

What visitors to Wales said about their information requirements?

- ❖ **Most visitors use both online and offline sources – but they play different roles.** Online sources are generally more important pre-trip because they are used for following up pre-conceived ideas of where to go. Offline sources are generally more important during a trip. Leaflets & brochures and word of mouth recommendations from local people are particularly important in influencing where visitors go and what they do. This is borne out in the research conducted in this area.

- ❖ **'I would recommend a visit to Swansea Bay, there's lots of interesting things, museum, hotels are excellent, close to the sea and eating out was very good'** - An extremely high proportion (93%) of staying visitors say they would 'definitely' recommend Wales to a friend or relative. Local research suggests that this rises to 97% in the Swansea area, while the same % felt the offer met or exceeded their expectations.



7



8



9

Your visitors are here!

Don't deny it! You've always wanted to be a travel agent...well now's your big chance! Your group task is to establish your 'travel agency' and then give it a snazzy name (locally inspired of course) - the cheesier the better...

You're set up now and your first customers have just been in touch. Who are they? Well, let's introduce them...

- ❖ **The Cheritons** – mum, dad & two children.
- ❖ **The Parkmills** – a professional couple.
- ❖ **The Hortons** – a retired couple.
- ❖ **The Croftys** – mum, dad, three children and a dog (woof!)

Your task is to meet the needs of your customers as their enquiries come in.

You will be looking to:

1. Provide them with flexible daily itineraries for their visit, including wet weather options.
2. Give them a range of options for eating out and overnight accommodation.

The Cheritons

The Cheritons live in the South East of England now, but both Rhiannon and her husband Arthur, hail from Swansea originally. Their children are Branwen (18) and Taliesin (15). They're a lovely family, very concerned with the environment.

The Cheritons are your typical 'Active Family Explorers'. They all enjoy their outdoor pursuits, especially those that bring them in close contact with the coastal landscape, its wildlife and most especially its birdlife & sea-life.

The Cheritons plan is to spend a five day break on Gower in the run up to Easter – avoiding the bank holiday rush! They want to do some walking (of course) and perhaps visit a couple of wildlife reserves. They don't mind where they stay but are happiest when they can find a 'camping barn' or some other 'alternative' type of accommodation in a great landscape location.

The family like doing things together – especially arty stuff! When they go 'into town' Rhiannon loves to look for local craft shops. Arthur's a great cook, but he's off duty, so a couple of meals out at decent cafes / restaurants with local produce on the menu is what they hope will make their Gower adventure their greatest yet!



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The Parkmills

Cerys and Tom Parkmill live and work in central London. They are a well-paid, busy & professional couple both in their late twenties. Cerys' mother is from Cardiff and like a good daughter Cerys is a frequent visitor home - but for the next trip, Cerys decides that they will carve out some time just for themselves – a romantic, early autumn, long weekend is what she has in mind!

Fair do's, Cerys and Tom are super fit. Coasteering, surfing, wind-surfing, kayaking etc. are all on their 'hit list', but they don't want to be bogged down with all the gear, so hiring equipment & getting instruction is the name of their game.

In the evenings Cerys knows that Tom will be looking for contemporary cuisine and authentic local entertainment – a night in a decent pub with a good band would be ideal.

Cerys fancies staying somewhere near the coast with great views, and whilst she is happy to go for a self-catering option, it really has to be something with first class facilities. Can you make the Parkmills' Gower weekend a high octane high class adventure?



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The Hortons

Gilbert and Gwenllian Horton are from Pennsylvania in the US of A. They are a couple that are very much enjoying the benefits that retirement has brought them – not least the ability to travel the world. Gilbert's been encouraging Gwenllian to trace her Welsh roots (her grandparents hailed from somewhere near Gowerton) and as a result they've decided to come back to her 'home'.

Gwenllian loves ancient history, visiting churches, gardens & places of historic interest. Gilbert simply loves Welsh medieval Castles and is keen to learn about the local traditions and culture of the places they visit. They both love walking, but they aren't as mobile as they used to be and will seek 'easy access' routes where possible. They've hired a car and love the freedom of touring the countryside and relaxing & staying in traditional British country pubs / hotels. In the evenings they like to dine in style and will seek out the very best of what their destination has to offer.

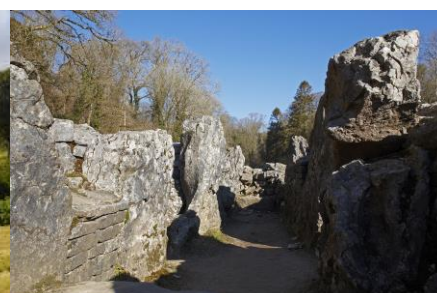
The Hortons are planning a winter break with at least two weeks in Wales, three days of which are to be spent on Gower. Can you make their whistle-stop tour one that excites and delights?



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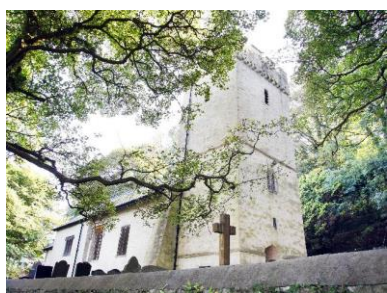
The Croftys

Watch out the Croftys are on their way! With caravan in tow and a car piled high with every conceivable electrical device, Gareth and Jenny Crofty set off from their home in Barry with one simple hope... that the weather stays fair and they can get down the beach!

James (aged 12) is already arguing with his brother Ben (aged 10) and they are both annoying their older sister Belle (aged 14). Poppy the dog starts to howl and they realise they need to pull in quick...happy days...

Mum runs a tight ship. She knows their holiday budget will need to stretch over the week and she wants to keep something back for some real treats. Once they've got the caravan on the pitch they're all set. Sunny and it's off to the beach, overcast and it's an attraction – simples!

Dad's keen to go off with the boys to do 'man things' (well that's his excuse), but when she drops them off, mum knows she can spend some quality time with Belle – now what shall we do eh? Food is straightforward. Picnics, barbeques and fish & chip suppers eaten on the beach. Gower really is glorious isn't it?



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Gower on the ground!

OK - so now you've got to know your visitors, yes you've guessed it you get to become them! (well for a short while at least). We'd like you, in your 'family' groups, to try out the host attraction and in doing so to really get into your visitors' shoes. Start from your arrival point and undertake a visit. Then from your 'family's' perspective think about the following...

- ❖ **Getting there and arriving...**
- ❖ **The welcome you receive...**
- ❖ **Availability of information about the place... (especially where the café & conveniences are)**
- ❖ **Finding your way around...**
- ❖ **Things to see & do...**
- ❖ **Leaving...would you come back again?**

At the end of your visit be prepared to provide some feedback to the other groups. Identify three things you liked about your visit and three things you think could be improved...

We liked...	Could be improved...
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3.	3.

You're welcome!

Being a 'welcoming' host is crucial. Make or break. The way you are with your visitors has the capacity to turn a good holiday into a truly memorable one. What we will look at in this session ...

- ❖ **What could possibly go wrong?**
- ❖ **Welcome: The basics**
- ❖ **What kind of skills do you need 'front of house'?**
- ❖ **Planning what to say**
- ❖ **It's the way I tell them! Delivering information**
- ❖ **We are not all born presenters.**
- ❖ **The big 5**

Creating a Welcome: What could possibly go wrong?

In pairs, discuss times when you've had a good welcome at an attraction or other facility. What did the 'welcomer' do right? Now take some time to discuss times when you've had less than great experiences – what didn't the 'welcomer' do?



Good welcome

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Present your findings back to the group as a series of bullet points.

Welcome: The basics

- ❖ **Drop everything!** Your conversation with Marjorie or Burt can continue later on – this is your one chance to make a great lasting impression on your guests.
- ❖ **Wear a smile** :)
- ❖ **Say 'hello'**
- ❖ **Seem pleased to see them!**
- ❖ **If appropriate, offer a handshake** (but be culturally aware)
- ❖ **Ask about them** – 'Have you come far?' 'Are you interested in any particular aspect of the site/area/event?' 'Do, you have family links' etc.
- ❖ **Then listen!!!**
- ❖ **Then tell them about your place/event/facilities** but majoring on what is important to them - you have the potential to be the best source of information/piece of interpretation your visitor comes across.
- ❖ **Provide an informed welcome** think about disabled visitors and other visitors who may have requirements above and beyond what a local person might need. We will look at this in more detail and we have included the information presented in the Appendix of this toolkit.

A useful verbal communication checklist is included on the next page. This will be handy for you to refer to from time to time, just as a refresher.

Verbal Communication Checklist

- Use plain English.
- Speak clearly and slowly. Keep your message simple.
- At the start of a conversation, introduce yourself to the customer.
- Where appropriate ask your customer “How can I help?”
- Listen first and then respond to your customer.
- Don't finish your customer's sentences.
- Speak directly to your customer.
- If you don't understand what your customer has said, politely ask your customer to repeat the information.
- Make sure your customer understands what you've said.
- Finish the conversation by saying thank you and good-bye.
- Be aware of the importance of your non-verbal communication.

From Visit England Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement
<https://www.visitbritain.org/providing-access-all>

Plan ahead

Planning what we have to say can help us immensely. Knowing our 'stuff' and how we want to put it across can help improve our confidence and more importantly will improve how we put it across to visitors.

As an Ambassador, be sure to research where you are going to be and what is going on (events etc.) so that you can be the best help possible to the visitor.



It's the way I tell them! Delivering information...

Ruth is going to tell you a story!

In pairs...

- ❖ Can you think of things she is doing wrong?
- ❖ Was the story clear to understand and enjoyable to listen to?
- ❖ How did she react to her audience throughout?
- ❖ What could she do to improve her presentation?

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Ok, so that was a bit of fun, but hopefully it gets the point across – we need to ensure that when we talk to people we use language that is clear, jargon free, and entertaining. We also need to vary our tone and if possible include a little humour where appropriate.

Dealing with Seemingly Difficult People

As an Ambassador, you will generally be at the 'happy' end of things. However, sometimes trainee Ambassadors are concerned that they may meet the infrequent angry person! What should you do?

A person's difficult behaviour often masks, or results from, some level of difficulty with hearing, mental health, understanding or cultural norms. Some useful tips for dealing with them include:

- ❖ Listening carefully to them and taking their concerns seriously
- ❖ Reassuring them by letting them know you have heard what they said and have understood their feelings and concerns. Try and find common ground you can agree on.
- ❖ If they appear confrontational or aggressive or repeat themselves, tell them you have understood and repeat their words back to them so that it is clear that you have heard them fully
- ❖ They may not understand what you can/cannot do in your role. If you feel that you need to pass their issue on/up to someone else, please make sure the visitor understands why you are doing so.
- ❖ If you are referring the issue on, make sure that you provide as much information as possible, so that the visitor does not need to explain their situation again.

Adapted from Visit England Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement <https://www.visitbritain.org/providing-access-all>

The BIG Five

Let's draw up your 5 top tips for being the perfect host to a visitor...

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Thank you for listening and for taking part : -)

Ambassadors in Action!

What's expected of a Gower Community Tourism Ambassador? The following are things that we have set as the bare minimum...

- ❖ **Attendance and participation in the two day training course**
- ❖ **Attendance on at least two of the follow up 'Familiarisation Visits'**
- ❖ **Active participation in Ambassador Activities at Gower Events (where this is possible for the individual).**
- ❖ **Active participation in promoting the project and continued networking to share ideas via the internet.**
- ❖ **Active development of Ambassadorial activity to suit your particular circumstances.**

The project we are engaged in is a 'Pilot' which if successful will be rolled out to the other rural areas around Swansea. We are also conducting feasibility investigations into what will help make the project a success. A key success factor will be in establishing something that is **self-sustaining in the longer term.**

To achieve this we will need your help. The funding for the project is time limited and we need to make the most of the opportunity whilst the funding is in place to establish a robust and reliable structure that will stand the test of time. The question is therefore two-fold:

- ❖ **What would help get the 'Gower Ambassadors' up and running over and above what has already been put in place?**
- ❖ **What other ideas do you have for Ambassadors going forward?**

Radio places to go!

This is it. The last workshop. It's an opportunity for you to draw on your existing experience and everything that you've learned in the last two days...

Your challenge is to work in pairs to develop a script for a **2 minute (absolute max!)** radio interview about places to go on the Gower Peninsula. Take it in turns to be the interviewer and interviewee. Work on developing your questions first and then your answers. Be prepared to hold your interviews in front of a 'live' audience (just your fellow workshop participants). For the live run decide who's going to be in which role and then go for it.... three, two, one... we're live and 'This is Gower'...

Questions:

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Gower Trivial Pursuits

History

1. *How old is the 'Red Lady'? Where was 'she' buried? Who found 'her'?*
2. *Where can you find 'Arthur's Stone'? What is the most likely reason for the stone being there? How did it get there according to legend?*
3. *Whose nation's troops were stationed on Gower during WWII? What were they getting up to on Oxwich Beach?*

Geography

4. *Gower was the first AONB in the UK but what does this acronym stand for? When was Gower designated an AONB? And why?*
5. *What's 'vile' about Rhossili? We all know 'Worm's Head' don't we - but why's it called 'Worm's Head'?*
6. *'Cefn Bryn' is the spine of the Gower Peninsula, but what's it mostly made of? What's the name of the Walking Route that goes along its ridge?*

Art & literature

7. *Where can you find the oldest piece of rock art in Britain? What animal does the cave painting depict? Roughly how old is this artwork?*
8. *What famous Welsh poet and playwright called the area 'Loveliest Gower'?*
9. *What is Gower Festival? Where does it take place? When does it start and finish this year?*

Science & Nature

10. *Where's the ruined building in the photo below? What was its purpose?*



11. *What shellfish is Penclawdd famous for? What is the name of the rough sieve used to collect them? What are the two 'grades' of these shellfish?*

12. *What's the name of the protected area between Port Eynon and Rhossili? What two organisations own & manage the land?*

Sport & Leisure

13. *What long distance walking route winds its way around the coast of Gower? How many miles is the stretch between Mumbles and Crofty?*

14. *Where is Gower's surfing hotspot? What are 'Sumpters, Boilers and Pete's'?*

15. *Described as a 'classic trail for keen cyclists' what's the name of the 44 mile circular route around Gower?*

Entertainment

16. *Where would you find bluegrass in September on Gower?*

17. *What beach based family activity might you participate in between the 24th and 28th July 2017?*

18. *Slightly 'off-piste' but what would be on many people's itinerary for the 1st and 2nd of July 2017?*

Quiz: Answer Sheet

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Benchmark your answers against those of the quizmaster, but not until after the quiz! (See page 41 of this Toolkit)

Resources & References

Useful websites:

- ❖ **This is Gower:** <http://www.thisisgower.co.uk>
- ❖ **Visit Swansea Bay:** <https://www.visitswanseabay.com>
- ❖ **Tourism Swansea Bay:** <http://tourismswanseabay.co.uk>
- ❖ **National Trust:** <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out/regionwales/gower>
- ❖ **Natural Resources Wales:** <https://naturalresources.wales>
- ❖ **Events guide:** <http://www.enjoyswanseabay.com>
- ❖ **Visit Wales:** <http://www.visitwales.com>
- ❖ **Public Transport:** <http://www.swanseabaywithoutacar.com>
- ❖ **Traveline Cymru:** <http://www.traveline.cymru>

Gower lingo:

Did you know Gower has its own language? Want to find out more? Here's a useful starting point: <http://www.thisisgower.co.uk/learn/gower-life/gower-dialect/gower-dialect-history>

You can also look up these publications:

- ❖ **Collins, J. (1849)** 'A List of Words from the Gower Dialect of Glamorganshire', Proceedings of the Philological Society, Volume IV, Number 87 (June, 1849), 222-3.
- ❖ **Davies, J. D. (1877-94)** A History of West Gower, Glamorganshire Parts I-IV (Swansea: The Cambrian).
- ❖ **Ellis, A. J. (1882)** 'On the Delimitation of the English and Welsh Languages', Transactions of the Philological Society, Volume 19 (1882-4, 1885), 5-40. Read before the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 24th May 1882, and in abstract before the Philological Society, 2nd June 1882.

- ❖ **Ellis, A. J. (1889)** On Early English Pronunciation, with especial reference to Shakespeare and Chaucer, Part V: Existing Dialectal As Compared With West Saxon Pronunciation (London: Trübner & Co.).
- ❖ **Hamon, I. (1697)** 'The Old English of West Gower, which is now out of use'. MS Carte 108 (Collections for Wales) at the Bodleian Library, folios 21-30. Reproduced in 'Edward Lhuyd and Some of his Glamorgan Correspondents: A View of Gower in the 1690s', by F. V. Emery, The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, Session 1965, Part I, 59-114.
- ❖ **Parry, D. R. (ed.) (1977)** The Survey of Anglo-Welsh Dialects, Volume 1: The South-East (Swansea: privately published by the editor).
- ❖ **Penhallurick, R. (1982)** 'Two Gower Accents: A Phonological Comparison of Penclawdd and Reynoldston', Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, Part LXXXII, Volume XV (1982), 29-41.
- ❖ **Upton, C. (1970)** Studies in the Linguistic Geography of Pembrokeshire and the Gower Peninsula (University College of Swansea, unpublished MA dissertation). Saundersfoot Bay - <http://www.visitsaundersfootbay.com>

Answers to picture quiz:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. St. Andrew's Church , Penrice | 12. King Arthur's Stone |
| 2. Paviland Cave | 13. Surfers at Llangennith |
| 3. Pennard Castle | 14. King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston |
| 4. Penclawdd | 15. The Church of St.Rhidian, Llanrhidian |
| 5. Whiteford Lighthouse | 16. The Great Tor |
| 6. Oxwich Castle | 17. Penrice Castle |
| 7. Three Cliffs Bay | 18. Parc le Breos Burial Chamber |
| 8. Weobley Castle | 19. St Illtyd's Church, Oxwich |
| 9. Rhossili Bay | 20. The Salthouse, Port Eynon |
| 10. Pwll Du Beach | 21. Beacon, Rhossili Down. |
| 11. Gower Heritage Centre | |

Answers to 'Gower Trivial Pursuits':

1. 34,000 years / Paviland Cave (between Port Eynon & Rhossili) / Revd William Buckland.
2. Cefn Bryn / Glacial deposition / King Arthur found a pebble in his shoe and threw it across the Burry Estuary, where it landed on Cefn Bryn.
3. United States of America / Practicising for D-day landings.
4. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty / 1956 / Classic limestone coast and the variety of its natural habitats.
5. 'Vile' is the name for a medieval field strip system at Rhossili / The name comes from the Norse word 'Wurme', meaning dragon or serpent.
6. Old Red Sandstone / The Gower Way.
7. Cat Hole Cave near Lunnon (Parkmill) / A Reindeer / 14,000 years.
8. Dylan Thomas.
9. Classical music festival / Churches across Gower / 1st – 15th July.
10. Port Eynon / It's a 'Salthouse' where they made salt by evaporating seawater.
11. Cockles / A Riddle / 'Boiling' cockles are the smaller ones cooked locally, while 'Shell' cockles are sold alive locally, or sent to more distant markets.
12. Gower Coast National Nature Reserve / National Trust and Natural Resources Wales.
13. Wales Coast Path / 38 miles.
14. Llangennith / Limestone Reefs between Rhossili and Port Eynon that create good surf.
15. The Gower Circuit.
16. The Gower Heritage Centre is host to the Gower Bluegrass Festival 8th – 10th Sept.
17. Beach Sculpture Festival.
18. Wales Airshow.

Other credits:

The 'This is Gower' two day training course has been developed to meet Visit Wales standards and is being delivered by:

- ❖ Ruth Taylor-Davies - Letha Consultancy lethaconsultancy@gmail.com
- ❖ Gareth Kiddie – GKA - gareth@gka.org.uk

This is Gower



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government