

Wenallt Wild Camp

Wenallt Wild Camp provides direct access to open spaces within the county borough of Neath Port Talbot. Despite having only been open for a relatively short period (56 days in 2021 + 28 days in 2022) our site has received 10/10 reviews on Pitch Up

<https://www.pitchup.com/campsites/Wales/South-Wales/Glamorgan/Neath/wenallt-wild-camp/>

Here are a few of the many glowing reviews:

- *"Beautiful peaceful eco-friendly experience"*
- *"Lovely spot with great views and easy access to walks"*
- *"Brilliant site, lovely people and stunning views. Highly recommend!"*
- *"Excellent site with clean facilities and friendly staff"*
- *"Brilliant place to camp, liked it so much stayed an extra night !"*
- *"A perfectly equipped small wild camp site in an idyllic setting"*
- *"Would recommend this site to both novice and experienced campers."*

Wenallt Wild Camp has also received national acclaim:

Wales on Line article: Eve Rowlands: 22nd June 2022

The 20 best campsites in Wales as chosen by the holidaymakers themselves:

"Planning on going camping this year in Wales? Look no further, as we look at the top customer-rated campsites.

As summer approaches, make use of Wales' beautiful scenery. Grab your tent and go camping in nature.

The beautiful beaches, the stunning coastal walks, the pubs, the grub, the quaint picture-perfect seaside towns - the list could go on as to why Wales is a favourite place for camping spots. Staycations have become more and more popular during the past few years (domestic camping and caravanning trips have increased by 71%) mainly due to the pandemic.

But even before travel restrictions became a thing, so many people opted for a holiday here in the UK over a sunny destination abroad and with so many gorgeous locations on our doorstep it's easy to understand why.

*With summer just around the corner, it's that time of year when people go camping crazy. UK-based online campsite and holiday park booking website **Pitchup.com***

<https://www.pitchup.com/> has now revealed the top 20 customer-rated campsites in Wales that you simply must try. Happy camping!

Mid Wales

*Glangwidi Glamping, Powys
10/10*

*Pwlllyn Farm Camping, Powys
9.9/10*

*Black Mountain View Caravan Park, Powys
9.9/10*

*Wild Meadow Camping, Ceredigion
9.9/10*

*Sychpwl Centre, Llandrinio
9.9/10*

North Wales

Moel Famau View, Flintshire

10/10

Clwydian Holidays, Denbighshire

10/10

Maes Tywyn Campsite, Isle of Anglesey

9.9/10

Bryn Ednyfed Caravan Site, Isle of Anglesey

9.9/10

Maes Carafanau Llanbenwch Caravan Park, Denbighshire

9.9/10

South Wales

Wenallt Wild Camp, Glamorgan

10/10

Surrounded by mountains and lush natural woodlands, Wenallt Wild Camp is a peaceful family-run spot in the scenic Neath Valley. Set just a short distance from the river Neath in a convenient location within a mile of convenience stores, a pub and a country park, there's a lot to like about this site, which sits on the edge of the village of Tonna. Facilities include toilets and showers and a covered communal barbecue area, dining table and firepit. Dogs (on leads) are allowed. You can pitch your own tent or stay in the rustic shepherd's hut. Prices start at £25 per night for five people.

Parc Y Deri Farm, Monmouthshire

9.9/10

Dare Valley Country Park, RCT

9.7/10

Brynglas Retreat, Glamorgan

9.7/10

Cae Glas Camping, Glamorgan

9.4/10

West Wales

Eco Caerhys Camping, Pembrokeshire

10/10

Moon Dance Glamping and Camping, Pembrokeshire

10/10

Quarry Park Camping, Pembrokeshire

10/10

Fron Rafel, Carmarthenshire

9.9/10

Quarry Lodge Camping, Carmarthenshire

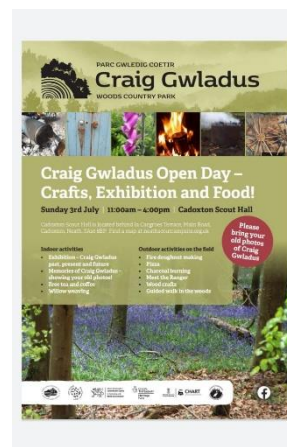
9.8/10"

We are very proud of what we have achieved as a family in such a short period of time.

We established Wenallt Wild Camp to:

A. Provide an affordable holiday destination for people wanting to holiday in the UK.

- We have welcomed visitors from near (Tonna; Skewen; Port Talbot ...); across south Wales; and further afield (Norfolk; Hastings; the Netherlands; Uruguay ...).
- Working with Pitchup (Pitchup was set up in 2009 and works with 2000 sites in the UK) we are able to offer a good quality, affordable, and safe experience.
- Camping is a low-cost holiday option. It is also an excellent form of ‘green social prescribing’ supporting physical and mental health.
- The lure of the countryside and a greater demand for ‘simple pleasures’ activities were rekindled during lockdown. At the nearby Craig Gwladys Country Park in Aberdulais for instance visitors can take part in an array of opportunities (well-being focussed activities / crafts in proximity to nature):
 - 4th July 2022 - Local schools learn about charcoal making, nature journals and general fun!
 - 19th August 2022 – Bee Walk training - Join Dr Richard Comont from Bumblebee Conservation Trust and learn how to identify and record bumblebees.
 - 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th August and 2nd September 2022 - Free Family Woodland sessions (ages 3-12).



<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Craig-Gwladys-314371098763357/>

B. Make good use of unproductive land.

- The site we wish to develop is not good or versatile agricultural land. The land scores poorly – at best it would be graded as Grade 4 – poor quality (Grades 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, and 5: Agricultural Land Classification Scale).
- The area around the shepherd’s huts for example is less than an acre. It is too small to sustain a horse for any length of time (one horse requires one and a half acres).
- While the other part of the site can easily accommodate 12 tent pitches it could only be used by a small flock of sheep for a period of three weeks before needing to be rested.
- Wenallt Wild Camp helps connect people with the countryside and educate future generations. It has allowed us to link with other enterprises. The fact that everything is off grid (e.g. access to wi-fi) is a key component of our success.
- A link to the Countryside Code is included on all Pitchup confirmation bookings’ pages: *“Please follow the Countryside Code - Respect Protect Enjoy”*.

C. Allow our family to diversify and help protect our futures as farmers in the Neath Valley.

- We have farmed Wenallt Farm since 1982 and are well aware of the importance of business resilience and sustainability.
- Wenallt Wild Camp will help support our future and that of our children. At the same time as safeguarding the environment, it will provide us with much needed resilience.

Wenallt Wild Camp has been designed sympathetically using locally sourced materials and our own skills and ingenuity. It has been hand built to an impressive level.

We have taken care to provide a beautiful site.

We have also taken time to understand what Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the Welsh Government have been looking to achieve in relation to health; well-being; mental health; and family cohesiveness. We would therefore like to refer you to the following documents:

1. The Neath Port Talbot We Want (Well-being Plan 2018-2023)

“we also have much to be proud of: Our woodlands, coastal areas, valley communities, parks and other natural assets provides significant opportunities to improve and support health and well-being.” <http://www.nptpsb.org.uk/downloads/Well-being%20Plan.pdf>

The Neath Port Talbot We Want – Our Vision for Neath Port Talbot:

“We want Neath Port Talbot to be a vibrant and healthy place where people have an equal chance to get on in life - a place where people want to live, learn, work, invest and visit for many generations to come.”

The Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan was developed to meet statutory duties contained in the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. The Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It sets seven well-being goals developed from an extensive national conversation carried out by the Welsh Government. One of these goals is:

“A healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.”

The Healthier Well-being Goal contained within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 describes Wales as:

“A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood”

Social well-being can be broken down into 5 sub-themes: Health; Lifestyle; Safety; Social care; and Housing. The most important factors for social well-being are having a good network of family and friends; being active or keeping fit (being healthy); and being happy or content.

The factors that would most improve social well-being are having more time to spend on activities; being with family and friends; and having access to affordable activities. There are many tourism opportunities associated with the natural environment. Accessible natural spaces provide the opportunity for getting people active in the outdoors. They encourage ageing well.

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Objective 5: Value our green infrastructure and the contribution it makes to our Well-being The Seven National Wellbeing Goals:

A prosperous Wales: Green spaces are a vital component of a low carbon society, providing the natural resources on which we all depend for our quality of life. Green and Blue spaces can attract tourism and investment to the area.

A resilient Wales: Green infrastructure is critical in helping us and our surroundings adapt and respond to the future challenges we face, by increasing resilience of our ecosystems. Green infrastructure helps us feel more connected to the natural world and can encourage us to live more sustainable lifestyles.

A healthier Wales: Areas with more accessible green space are associated with better mental and physical health.

A more equal Wales: Evidence shows that socioeconomic inequalities in health may be narrower in places with better access to green spaces, compared to those with poorer access.

A Wales of cohesive communities: Green spaces for socialising, interaction and events enhances community cohesion and social ties, especially in disadvantaged communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: Green spaces are an important component of connection to place and personal identity.

A globally responsible Wales: By looking after our environment and the range of natural resources, we also respect the global environment.

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What the Well-being Assessment told us:

- *“A significant part of Neath Port Talbot is made up of woodland (approximately 30%);*
- *The high quality natural environment is also a significant attraction for visitors. In 2015, 2 million tourists visited the County Borough, drawn to natural assets like trail centres for*

mountain biking, Aberavon seafront, Margam Park and 'Waterfall Country'. These assets generated £110 million towards the local economy and increased local jobs by 8.4%. (STEAM report 2015)"

Wenallt Wild Camp can also help play a part in delivering **Neath Port Talbot Council's Corporate Vision: "Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations."**

2. <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1550>

"In delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the Council is seeking to ensure that countryside access provision in Neath Port Talbot provides the best opportunity possible for residents and visitors to enjoy the benefits it provides. The Plan outlines a number of objectives to be delivered, including maintenance and improvement of the rights of way network, promoting and supporting access to the countryside in general, maintaining records and information on the network, and ensuring that access provision meets the needs of all users."

"The new Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Neath Port Talbot outlines the Council's vision and commitments to protecting, maintaining and improving this resource into the future. Whilst the quality and accessibility of the physical resource remains at the core of the revised Plan, we also believe passionately that our countryside should serve the needs of all people for recreation, health and well-being, therefore will also be focusing our efforts on maximising the number and range of people who are able to enjoy the benefits of our natural environment."

Councillor Annette Wingrave (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainable Development)

3. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2020-2030) March 2020

https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/13237/final_rowip-march-2020.pdf

5.1 National Survey for Wales (2016-2017) Page 26 onwards

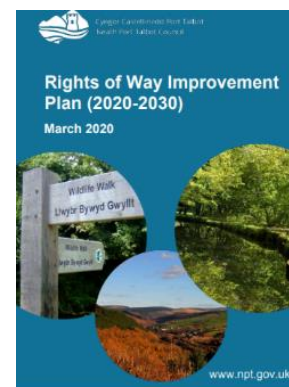
5.1.1 "NRW undertook a nationwide survey on outdoor recreation between 2016 and 2017 and the Council considers the findings to be relevant to Neath Port Talbot. Respondents included people reporting relatively low participation in outdoor recreation, with 81% of adults living in Wales taking part in one or more activity at least once in the last 12 months. However, only a minority of people (18%) were 'frequent' participants, based on those who reported 20 or more visits to the outdoors in the last 4 weeks."

5.1.2 There were some differences in the demographics of people visiting the countryside, with a higher proportion of men than women, more people living in rural areas than those in urban areas and a decrease in visits with an increase in age.

5.1.3 Walking was by far the most common activity, at 72% of all adults, followed by picnicking (31%) or taking children to the playground (31%). Local parks are clearly an important resource, as these are the most frequently visited locations (30%), followed by the beach or coast (19%) and woodland / forest (14%). Also of note, 47% of adults typically travel less than a mile to visit the outdoors, demonstrating the importance of 'doorstep' opportunities in outdoor recreation.

Motivation and Barriers

5.1.4 The reasons for visiting sites seem to be different for each location. People visiting the beach or coast do so for fresh air, relaxation and good weather, whilst visits to the hills are more motivated by health and exercise. Not surprisingly, visits to parks are usually to spend time with the family or entertain children.



5.2.5 In terms of motivation for visiting the countryside, 40% of people cited health and well-being, with dog walking / leisure in general, motivating approximately 20% each. Of leisure, these were generally a combination of horse riding, walking, fishing and photography. A smaller proportion of people (13%) cited family activity as their reason.

6.0.6 There have been a number of policy and legislative changes since the first ROWIP was published and these will need to be considered in identifying what needs to be done over the next 10 years. Most significantly, the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act' requires the Council to take a holistic and sustainable approach to all activities and the Council should be meeting the needs of our future generations through implementation of this Plan.

6.1 Benefits of Public Rights of Way

6.1.1 The PROW network along with wider access provision, provides notable benefits for:
Health

6.1.2 DEFRA published an evidence statement in 2017 that outlined the benefits between health and the natural environment. The statement recognised the role that access to the natural environment had for well-being, particularly so for mental health.

6.1.3 The cited benefits included reductions in stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression, together with evidence that these benefits may be most significant for marginalised groups. Socio-economic inequality in mental well-being has been shown to be 40% narrower among those who report good access to green / recreational areas, compared with those with poorer access.

6.1.4 The report reinforces the concept that PROW, and other access to the countryside / natural environment, play a significant role in improving health and well-being, whilst providing opportunities to reduce the impacts of socio-economic inequalities through greater equality of access to green space.

6.1.5 'Green Infrastructure' is recognised as delivering multiple benefits for both urban and rural residents, and opportunities should be taken to integrate access provision into the delivery of green infrastructure, working collaboratively with partners and colleagues across the Council.

Open Space / Recreation

6.1.6 Given that transport and mobility may be more limited for some members of our communities, urban and semi-urban networks and parks will play an important role in the provision of access for health, well-being and recreation.

6.1.7 Although not traditionally seen as a means to access the countryside, their role in supporting more active lifestyles and enjoyment of the natural environment is significant, either as destinations in their own right, or as stepping stones to accessing more rural locations.

6.1.8 The more focused provision of facilities and surfaced paths offers greater access opportunities to a much wider range of the public, who may not be able to access more remote locations. Consequently, opportunities should be taken to improve access to, or encourage use of, urban green space, alongside the wider countryside.

Tourism

6.1.10 PROW also plays a key factor in economic development, in particular by supporting the growth of the tourism economy. PROW create opportunities for connecting visitors to rural and urban areas and enables access to natural assets such as waterfalls and other key routes such as mountain bike trails.

6.1.11 In future, visitors will be looking for 'undiscovered' places to visit in addition to existing, well-maintained, high profile routes so investment is crucial in maintaining and creating visitor interest in our area.

4. https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/5401/neath_port_talbot_cycle_map.pdf?v=20180717181057
Rural Cycle Network – National Cycle Routes 46 and 47 Site Wenallt Wild Camp sits immediately above Route 46 and immediately below Route 47.

5. <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4651/gnollparkwalkbiodiversity.pdf?v=20190807141135>
Wenallt Wild Camp is close to many wildlife and waterfall walks e.g. Gnoll Wildlife Walks
6. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf>
7. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/what-sort-of-countryside-summary.pdf>