Welcome to the 2013 Christmas Newsletter. Time seems to have flown this year and as Christmas arrives it is a time to reflect on our challenges and achievements. Apart from the usual RCC business - keeping an eye on local planning applications, footpaths and highways, and commenting on the Swansea Council policies and initiatives - the most significant item we dealt with this year was the proposal for the Atlantic Array Wind Farm. The sheer volume of information that was sent out by the developer (and other supporting and opposing groups) was frankly overwhelming. The Rhossili Working Group, and in particular Carl Johnson, accepted the challenge and spent many months analysing the information looking for inconsistencies which helped us all to formulate informed and pertinent comment. It was great news for Rhossili when the developer withdrew their interest in developing the wind farm and I think we can be proud of the part we played in protecting our iconic seascapes for future generations.

This year saw RCC increase its IT presence. We introduced an email service, to supplement the information on our notice boards, to make community members aware of local events, issues and services. Along with all community councils in Wales, we also received a grant to update the
RCC website from the Welsh Government. We are currently working with Selina Taylor to produce a more detailed, village specific, web-site which we hope to launch in the New Year.

The marking of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was completed this year with the planting of six infill trees at Kimley Moor to replace those lost since the original planting to celebrate the Queen’s Coronation in 1953.

Caroline Johns on stood down as Clerk to the Council. I would like to use this opportunity thank her both personally and on behalf of the Council Members for her efforts on behalf of the Community Council over the past few years. Clerk of the Council is a lynch pin position and Caroline was excellent in this role and her experience and drive will be missed. If you are interested in becoming the Clerk, informal enquiries regarding the role can be made to any Councillor. The post will be advertised shortly (by email and on our noticeboards) giving details of the application process. If possible we aim to fill the position by the start of the New Year.

Rhossili Community Council meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 7.15pm in Rhossili Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend, and to raise matters of interest in the community. Contact details of all the councillors can be found on the RCC website: www.gowercc.org.uk. Please feel free to contact any councillor if you think there are issues (both beneficial or challenging) that you feel the council should be aware of and/or consider.

Finally, many thanks to all the contributors to the Newsletter and we hope that you find it interesting and informative. Once again this year we have included a section to send seasonal good wishes at the end of this newsletter. I and the Council Members would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Steve Walmsley
Chair, Rhossili Community Council
www.rhossili.org.uk
www.rhossilibunkhouse.com

RH OSSILI VILLAGE HALL AND BUNKHOUSE

The popularity of the bunkhouse accommodation has led to increased income for another year. A sign of the quality of the accommodation and service provided is demonstrated by the Visit Wales 4-star Bunkhouse grading being awarded again this year.

The success of the Bunkhouse has enabled the Trustees to carry out further improvements and the major work carried out this year was the repainting of the main hall and showers. We also discovered that the roof space above the office and store was not insulated, and this was rectified last January, so apologies to Jo who has always said it was a cold place to work in the winter! The front door lock has been changed to allow easier access and the new system has proved popular with all users.

Hall hire costs will remain at the same level for another year. We have been able to repay the development loan earlier than expected and have started to build up a ‘cash reserve’ to ensure that we have funds available for any emergency repairs etc.

As anticipated last year, we have formed a company (limited by guarantee) to operate the Bunkhouse, in order to reduce the financial risk to the Hall and ensure that any tax liability is met appropriately. The company’s name is Rhossili Bunkhouse Limited and the Directors of the company are: Village Hall Trustees (Judith Harry, Jeff Higgins [Company Secretary], Rob Symberlist) and an independent ‘external’ director (Mike Williams). The company will work in synchronisation with the Hall Trustees, and all profits will be donated to the Village Hall.

We are always looking for new ideas on how the Village Hall can be used by the community at large. If you have any suggestions about the facilities we offer we would like to hear from you. Please feel free to approach the trustees with any suggestions and they will be considered and acted on wherever possible. If we cannot meet suggested needs immediately, we will bear them in mind and try to incorporate them in future Village Hall developments. Examples of groups that use the hall include: Keep Fit (with Belly
As Chair, I would like to thank the Trustees, past and present, for their help and continued commitment to making the Village Hall a success. Sadly, this year saw the passing of one of the Village Hall’s staunchest supporters, Dudley Thomas, who served as a trustee for many years. He was always ready to help with arranging events and maintenance of the Hall. He and his ‘work crew’ put in many hours supporting the Village Hall without looking for any recognition or reward. Even after he stood down as trustee he continued to help with arrangements and the setting out the hall for all events. He is missed.

A particular mention should go to Linda Bartlett who stood down this year and we would like to record our appreciation for all the effort she put in during her time as a trustee. I would also like to commend the efforts of the Social Committee and congratulate them on putting on wide variety of interesting events. A recent innovation is the events email alert that was introduced to advertise our events to a wider audience. This appears to be working well so, if you do not get the alerts, please let us know and we would be glad to add you to the email list.

We are also blessed with having a dedicated support team so we would like to extend to them our thanks for: the management and administrative skills of Jo Higgins; the commitment of the ‘meeters & greeters’ and; the flexibility and consistent level of professionalism shown by the cleaning team.

The current Trustees are: Pauline Bevan, Mary Beynon, Gill Evans, John Furneaux, Judith Harry, Jeff Higgins, Vicky James, Marion Potts, Rob Symberlist, Jenny Venables, Sarah & Steve Walmsley.

Thanks to you all for your support throughout 2013 and we look forward to seeing you at the Hall in 2014.

Steve Walmsley, Chair of Trustees

VILLAGE HALL SOCIAL EVENTS

Well, 2013 has seen some excellent, well attended events. ‘Sancho Panza’ was a sell out, the Hemiola Choir much enjoyed, as was the Auvergnian Evening complete with bagpipes, accordions and flute which had most of us dancing. Roger Button excelled himself with a Quiz Night and we hope that the year ends with some good Carol Singing around the village.

2014 marks 100 years since the birth of Dylan Thomas and to mark this we have two events planned. On 14th March there will be a reading of ‘Under Milk Wood’ (see separate notice.) Do put your names forward! On 26th May Lighthouse Theatre returns to the village hall to perform ‘Reminiscences of Childhood’ which is a production adapted from the works of Thomas. On 22nd June Mari Hayman will be leading a ‘Water Colour Painting Day’.

We have other events in the pipeline but without specific dates:

A Flower Arranging Demonstration by Daphne Furneaux in November A wine-tasting evening, a Photographic Competition organised by Mark Button, Another Quiz night, and an Old Time Music Hall.

Have you any other ideas?

We are a very small, busy committee and we could do with some new members. Do contact Vicki James 390 480 or Gill Evans 390 527.

Now here’s a suggestion from a member of the village: What do you think about setting up a sort of ‘Pool of Skills’ for the village? Someone could offer to put up a shelf in return for babysitting etc.

We would need someone to volunteer to organise this if it proved to be a popular idea. Again...let us KNOW.

Happy Christmas!

Gill Evans
Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee
UNDER MILK WOOD
AT RHOSILI VILLAGE HALL

2014, the centenary of Dylan’s birth. I thought it would be great to do a reading of *Under Milk Wood* in the Hall.

The parts are for ANYONE who would like to be involved. This is NOT meant to be a professional type performance.

My idea is that we will practise during Jan, Feb and early March and then hold a ‘performance cabaret style evening’ in the hall on Friday 14th March, open to anyone who would risk coming to listen in.

I guess we will serve something like bangers and mash and everyone would bring their own ‘tipple’.

Good idea? Want to be in it? Please let me know, by email as soon as possible. Don’t be shy! revevgm@gmail.com or ring me 390 527 - Gill Evans.

If you are not volunteering can you help by lending us a copy of Under Milk Wood?

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YOUTH CLUB

Rhossili Youth Club has now been running for fourteen years and the young people (y.p.) and youth workers are still enjoying themselves. We have been very fortunate to have been able to keep the youth club going after this time last year we thought we were going to be closed.

Our catchment area has increased due to the introduction of a mini bus that picks up y.p. in Upper Killay and then from all our local villages. The numbers have risen to over thirty on the register and they have all integrated well. They have good relationships that they enjoy during youth club sessions and often meet during holidays, weekends, etc.

We have continued working with the y.p. to help them achieve more Youth University points in life skills, cooking, arts, team building, etc. They have entered more competitions and quizzes with other youth clubs in Swansea. We had a great summer and were able to spend many of the sessions going on walks and having fun on the beaches, playing games, making beach art, a barbecue and lots more. There has been a residential trip to Borfa during the summer holidays, where they went surfing. They have been on other outdoor activities to Blue Pool coasteering and Pembrey undertaking photography in nature course.

This year we were again invited to take part in the Christmas parade in Swansea, they all dressed up as Disney characters and rode on an open top bus. We went to Gorseinon Youth Club for a Christmas party with other rural youth clubs and Winter Wonderland for our end of term trip.

The youth workers have been on a lot of training on Drug Awareness, CEOP (child exploitation and online protection) training, Anti Bullying, First Aid, Health and Hygiene, Restorative Practice, etc. Joshua has also passed his Level 3 in Youth and Community Work.

Even though the bus has brought more (y.p.) to our youth club we still need a lot more to attend as we are still under the threat of closure. Please come along as it is a great place to gain new experiences, socialise and gain qualifications.

If you would like any more information, please do not hesitate in contacting us or just come along and join in the fun.

Jo, Josh & Charlotte Higgins
Tel: 01792 390712

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WEDNESDAY CLUB

This year’s Wednesday Club saw the return of some popular speakers, starting with Mr Martin Price giving us an informative and interesting talk on ‘The Plague of 1665’.

In October we hastily re-arranged our programme and The Revd Gill Evans moved her talk forward to tell us about her visit to Iona – a beautiful and fascinating place.

Capt D C Jones revisited us in November to complete his talk on ‘The Fall of the Berlin Wall’. Now what you would expect from the title but rather how he searched for the remaining family members of the German officer Capt Hartenstein who, together with his crew, helped the survivors
of the sunken ship ‘The Quebec City’ to escape and make their way to the west coast of Africa. At that time Capt Jones, who was one of the survivors, was an Officer Cadet only 19 years old.

There was no meeting in December as everyone found it difficult to fit in all their other commitments so we started the New Year with Daphne Furneaux giving us ‘The Inside Story of Chelsea Flower Show’. She brought along wonderful photographs and gave a lively and entertaining talk much enjoyed by everyone.

In February Mr H Mortimer returned to tell us about the interesting life of Ivor Novello and even played us some of the popular music he wrote and that most of the audience remembered.

Mrs Mary Minty returned in March to keep us entertained with her ‘Child’s View of the Cinema’ and of course many of us shared her memories. But then, sadly and unexpectedly, the following day Dudley Thomas died after a short illness. His passing shocked everyone and he has left a big hole in our community. He was cremated in April and it felt like the whole of the village and beyond (because of his many varied interests throughout his life) turned out to say their goodbyes.

With the consent of June and her family we went ahead with our April meeting and everyone that attended that day stood and remembered Dudley as a much loved member of our group.

Mr Bruce Lervy, another of our returnees, then gave us a fascinating talk on ‘The Fasting Girl of Wales’, and in May we welcomed a new speaker: Mrs Melanie Davies, who spoke of her struggle to come to terms with becoming a paraplegic at the age of 15, overcoming breast cancer, and winning a medal for Wales in athletics. She is a wonderfully positive lady who has now set up her own rehabilitation charity.

Our final meeting of the year was our annual outing in June and we went to Dyffryn House and Gardens, a property recently taken over by the National Trust of Wales. The weather was good and we had a great time.

Sadly this was to be our last meeting of the Webnesday Club as our numbers had been declining for some time, and so, after further discussion with June and the remaining organisers, we took the decision not to continue.

It was Dudley’s wish that in the event of the Club’s closure, any funds accumulated over the years should be donated to the Air Ambulance so they were very grateful to receive £425.

On behalf of all those who have helped to run the Wednesday Club, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their support throughout its existence.

Linda Bartlett
Wednesday Club

VILLAGE SECURITY

From a police point of view despite the good weather and increase in visitors we saw no real change in crime patterns.

We are having problems at the moment with quad bikes being stolen across Gower. It appears that the thieves are doing their homework first targeting out of the way locations. I would ask that residents keep an eye out for any suspicious persons or vehicles particularly at evening time and report (non emergency number 101 emergency 999).

In order to deal with anti social behaviour we continued our weekend joint patrols as part of ‘Gower Safe’ with the National Trust and CCW which again played a part in the reduction of this type of behaviour.

Through working with site owners and rural watch coordinators we were provided with valuable information which resulted in two males being convicted of a number of burglaries and receiving terms of imprisonment.

We also recently opened the new police station in Reynoldston. The station on the main road finally closed its doors last week and we are now based in the new building at the Fire and Rescue station in Reynoldston. Although not staffed on a 24hr basis if officers are at the premises they will deal with any queries from the public.

Pc Phil Davies
Reynoldston Police Station
Mobile 07805301600
WI UPDATE

Well, we’re a motley crew who meet on the third Tuesday evening of the month. In accordance with the ethos of the WI, meetings are varied. During the past year we’ve had fun doing African drumming, we’ve learned about diabetes and we were all tested. Other talks included Marine Conservation and Wales Air Ambulance. There was a Members’ evening, New Age Kurling and a free fish and chips supper which followed the AGM. In August our President invited us all to her home for the Annual Garden Party. This was much enjoyed.

A group of keen outdoor enthusiasts walked the entire coast line of Gower over a period of time and the Gower Way is the next on the list. As we are celebrating 90 years of the Glamorgan Federation other walks across the county have taken place, adding up to 90 miles. There was a trip to London with a visit to the Houses of Parliament and another to Adam Henson’s Farm in Gloucestershire. The Carol Concert in St David’s Hall Cardiff will have members in the choir as well as in the audience. A very popular recent ‘extra’ is the once a month ‘Ladies who like to lunch’. Various restaurants have been visited and food enjoyed!

Membership is now at around 45. All women are welcome, so do come along and ‘taste’ an evening!

Contacts: President Chris Williams 390 282
Marian Potts 390 473
Gill Evans
Llandewi with Knelston WI

“ANYONE WHO HAD A HEART”

How often do you tell your son
“I’ll do it in a minute”
And afterwards they tell the truth
And always drop you in it.

It was Christmas time in Gower,
With its own delightful charm
And the village folk were busy
On a local turkey farm.

Feathering and dressing turkeys
For the Christmas table
And the young boy of the family
Was tying on the labels.

He loved to help at Christmas time,
Looked forward to the date
And always hoped the next turkey
Would be a heavyweight.

Now on the farm they had a stag
Called Sid, a real bounder
And they all hoped and prayed that he
Would be a thirty pounder.

They dressed and feathered poor old Sid
And put him on the scale
But twenty nine and three quarter
Was all they could retail.

“Don’t worry son” his father said,
Trying to look so smart,
“I’ll soon make up a quarter pound
I’ll add another heart”!

“Now don’t you breathe a word of this
To anyone around
’Cause what we’ve done to Sid is wrong,
To make him thirty pound”.

So when his grandfather came in,
With a buyer for the turkey,
The boy was so excited that
He spoke so bold and perky
And blurted out what they had done,
His father was spellbound,
“We’ve put another heart in Sid
And made him thirty pound”.

His father digged him in the ribs
But the cat was out the bag,
The buyer chuckled to himself
About this heavy stag.

And so his son had let him down,
You’d want no T.V. sleuth.
To find the owner of that heart
The boy had told the truth.

Extract from “Gower Poem, From Bard to Verse”
by John Beynon.
RHOSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2013

RHOSILI COASTGUARD

The team has had another busy year. Up to the end of November we have responded to 60 Callouts. This is slightly down on previous years, which is a little surprising given the good weather we enjoyed this summer. We attended some very serious incidents which unfortunately involved 3 fatalities, these incidents are not easy for the team to deal with especially for the newer members, however on the plus side the team were involved in the rescue of a student on the cliffs in front of the Hotel, who had tried to climb the cliff from the beach in bare feet as well! This is what we train for in all weather and gives the team tremendous satisfaction, especially when the rescue helicopter is above, and is not required!

Josh Higgins has now joined the team, it took us years to get Jeff to join, he was quickly followed Zach it now seems a Higgins is joining every year! Watch out Jo you are next! On a serious note hopefully it's the start of another long family tradition serving HM Coastguard.

Alison Carey has also joined the team, Alison has previously served on the Oxwich team, and also works in the Operations room at Swansea, she is a welcome addition to the team. Truda has been the only female member on the team for many years, and when dealing with certain incidents it’s been essential to have a female team member on scene.

By the time this news letter is printed the annual “silly willy” award will have taken place in the Worms Head Hotel on Sunday 15th December. The Short’s very kindly put on a buffet for the team. Our illustrious leader, Darren Powell, will again have been mentioned in dispatches! Although not up for the award himself, I am told he left his car in the wrong place during a cliff rescue (see above) as a colleagues car rolled down from in front of the station causing considerable damage!

The team enjoyed a weekend in Devon at the Hartland Quay Hotel, which is run by a member of the local Coastguard team, the team went to RAF Chivenor while their partners went shopping and walking. This is the second year running we have visited, all enjoyed so hopefully it will become an annual outing.

In last year’s news I said Forth and Clyde rescue centres had closed, Great Yarmouth has been added to the list, and next year Brixham, Portland and Solent will close. Swansea will close in March 2015, with a transition date of January 2015. All future Coastguard jobs have been advertised with interviews taking place early next year.

There will be 1 or 2 vacancies arising in the Rhossili team so if anyone is interested please let us know. You can guarantee you will be doing something worthwhile helping those in trouble, as well as joining a good team who enjoy plenty of social events!

And finally I want to say a big thank you to the team for putting on a buffet and a few drinks! to mark my 40 years service, and to all the ex-team members who took time out to attend. The pocket watch provided by the Rhossili Gallery from the team is fantastic! I look forward to many more years in the team with you all….Thank you.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the team.

Steve Jones
HM Coastguard

NCI COASTWATCH

WORM’S HEAD STATION – NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION

It's not bad to be compared to the Royal Navy, if only in an analogy, especially if it is one made by a Vice Admiral (now C.E.O. of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency). He was pointing out how the R.N.'s niche capacity in the Cold War was in support of the U.S. Navy and was straining a bit to compare it with NCI's relation to H.M Coastguard.

We know our place: we are there to fill an undeniable gap in coverage of risks to public safety on land and sea by keeping watch and reporting to the Coastguard anything untoward.

Which with the number of visitors is inevitable. Walkers, climbers, coasteerers, surfers and tourists pass by and many call in the Lookout for
information, to report worries or just to chat and use our optics for looking at birds, seals or the view. As we are on the Welsh Coastal Path and have Rhossili Bay (Britain’s Best Beach, No.3 in Europe and somewhere in the world’s Top Ten) - and as it was an unusually good summer - visitor numbers have soared to half a million or so.

Our most potentially exciting incident was the Lobster Pot Affair, where a sleek and sinister motorboat with dark shades swept in and lifted a couple of lobster pots – were they nicking local fishermen’s pots or had they maybe Stuff stashed below the buoys? Neither in the event but it needed investigation. There were the usual ‘will they/won’t they?’ late causeway crossings which are so difficult to call, sometimes sorted out by use of the megaphone but often needing intervention by the Rhossili Cliff Rescue Coastguards and the Horton lifeboat. Thanks to the National Trust there is now a notice out on the Worm giving the telephone number of the Lookout, which we hope will encourage uncertain walkers to check crossing times with us if they missed our sign at the top of the path down; and the difficulty of not knowing what is going on out of sight beyond the Worm is sometimes solved by communication with the Sea Serpent, the Gower Coast Adventures boat. There are always injuries, gashed legs and twisted ankles, needing rescue by helicopter. But the most rewarding incident from our point of view was a boat with engine failure in danger of drifting on to the Worm, putting into practice our chart training in relation to tidal sets and drifts, weather, sea states and wind direction. This developed into an exciting rescue with Horton ILB holding the vessel off until the Mumbles All-Weather Lifeboat arrive to take it in tow.

We have taken part in the usual range of events and meetings including the rain-affected Gower Show – always a pleasure but so discouraging for those who spend the whole year preparing. We have been visited at the Lookout by a lovely lady Lord Mayor and a lady with a donkey. And we welcomed the Welsh Guards on their Walk on Wales, honouring their fallen comrades.

In between times we watch, record, marvel at the range of weather and sea conditions – what a place to work! - and look forward to visitors.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to one and all.

Audrey Frank
Station Manager,
National Coastwatch Institution Worms Head

**RECYCLING BAGS AVAILABLE**

Don’t forget that you can collect new supplies of recycling bags from Pitton Cross Caravan Park if you run short. You can collect pink, green and food bags from the shop daily between 10am and 4pm. This service is in addition to the kerbside replenishment service already provided by Swansea Council.

**BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE: WORM’S HEAD HOTEL**

2013 has been a year of surprises for both residents and business on our Peninsula, incessant media reporting of financial gloom in a faltering economy has continued unrelentingly; a long arduous winter under a constant looming cloud of inevitability concerning what WAS the impending green light to develop the Atlantic Array; to the almost overnight transformation in the weather from the longest winter and spring I can remember, to a scorching July. I do not believe any of us really expected the sun to appear at all, let alone stay with us through the School Holidays and beyond. Indeed for the majority if not all the businesses and cottage industries throughout Gower this seasonal change proved to be our salvation and a most welcome boost to the local economy that has been stagnating for a number of years now.

This exceptional summer and autumn trading period we have seen record numbers pass through our doors and strong demand for bed spaces within the hotel which has been a great relief given the trend of recent years where last minute cancellations in the high season months
due to unfavourable weather were very common. I believe that our success is owed, to a certain extent, to the continued Media attention Rhossili has received this past year with the accolade of Britains Best Beach by Trip Advisor and of course musical artists Mumford & Sons decision to feature Rhossili and Gower as the backdrop to their music video for hit song “Lover of the Light”.

The installation of Fibre Optic Broadband Infrastructure within Rhossili has been a great relief to the management of my business and a welcome surprise to my regular hotel guests. It still amuses me to run speed test and see “30 mbps” flash up on my screen in Rhossili!! Undoubtedly it has been an excellent addition to our service offering, shame we cannot follow this up with equally good mobile phone coverage too!

These past few weeks we find our trading season has come to its annual and abrupt halt yet the winter blues have been lifted with the welcome news that there will be no Atlantic Array at least for the foreseeable future. I take my hat off to members of our community who have worked tirelessly in lobbying against the proposal.

With all these positives in a six month period I personally am becoming more optimistic for what the future holds!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

Adrian Short, Worm’s Head Hotel
Winter – 5 December 2013

ATLANTIC ARRAY UPDATE

Demise of the Atlantic Array……or is it?

Well, the hydra that was the Atlantic Array is slain at birth. On 26th November, RWE announced it was formally withdrawing its application to build a £4bn giant windfarm comprising up to 240 turbines, up to 220m high, covering an area of 200sq km between Gower and Lundy, North Devon.

The official reason given is that sea-bed conditions were more difficult than anticipated, and the current financial investment climate is uncertain.

We may never know the true reason, but there were a few other serious hurdles for the developer to negotiate.

RWE submitted its application on 14th June. One week later, the Infringement Unit of the Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission began legal proceedings against the UK Government in respect of the UK’s failure to nominate conservation areas in UK waters for the harbour porpoise, a species protected in the European Habitats Directive 1992. This action followed complaints to the EC from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Porthcawl Environmental Trust (PET). In September, the EC sent PET an update on their complaint: the Outer Bristol Channel is specifically mentioned, and the letter goes on to say that the delay in nominating conservation areas has allowed potentially damaging activities to be considered, such as wind farms. A subsequent untested legal opinion has suggested that it would not be unlawful for the application to continue, but it would be unlawful for the Planning Inspectorate to recommend consent, and it would be unlawful for the Secretary of State to grant development consent. ……!

Tied up with this is the issue pursued by the Rhossili Working Group. In 2006, another German energy company, E.On, wanted to build a wind farm at Scarweather Sands off Porthcawl – the meteorological mast can still be seen from the M4. However, one of their environmental studies, Pierpoint 2008a, identified the location as a breeding and nursery site of the harbour porpoise, a protected species. E.On withdrew, citing unfavourable seabed conditions, but they have steadfastly refused to publish this report. RWE, however, quoted extensively from the report in their Environmental Statement for the Atlantic Array but were not able to produce it for public scrutiny. It is possible that RWE did not have permission to use this report. In their Environmental Statement for the Atlantic Array but were not able to produce it for public scrutiny. It is possible that RWE did not have permission to use this report in the first place, creating a possible challenge to the legitimacy of their application.

There was huge public objection to this proposal. The previous highest total of responses for a wind farm proposal was 212 for Rampion off Beachy Head, of which half were for and half against. The Atlantic Array generated 1775 responses – only 43 were in favour.
The Woolacombe group, Atlantic Disarray, first identified the inadequacies in RWE’s tourism survey, a requirement set by the Planning Inspectorate. We followed this up by identifying inadequacies relating to Rhossili and Gower – you might have signed Steve’s tourism comment form. Last November, RWE had to admit they no longer relied on their commissioned survey.

Many potential judicial reviews were being lined up. There were many inadequacies in RWE’s pre-application documentation which had not been properly assessed. And the whole of the Welsh electorate was excluded from part of the formal planning process. Investors would have been looking at a long and stony path forward.

In Ilfracombe, Steve Crowther and Slay the Array led the vocal and political protest, pointing out that this would be the despoliation of much valued scenic beauty, and the destruction of the UK’s only Marine Conservation Zone of Lundy.

Closer to home, City and Council of Swansea voted overwhelmingly to raise objections to the proposals, as did North Devon Council and, after a revolt by the public, Torridge Council in Bideford and Barnstaple.

Many individuals have worked tirelessly to fight these proposals. Steve C-K must be the best researcher ever, as well as garnering over 1000 signatures and comments; Gordon opened up many local political channels and provided a link with The Gower Society who with the Community Council underwrote many costs - Gordon was also the first person anywhere to get a whisper of the Array’s demise on 28th October; Steve J was tenacious in challenging the bloated claims of expected power production from the Array; Lynda devised the literature to inform the public and Steve (CK) did superb graphics; Mike presented the business case and liaised with our MP’s and AM’s; Jenny worked on the Aarhus Convention; Mark, although joining late, provided new insights into legal and local authority process. Caroline, at the same time as wrestling with Broadband implementation, provided the stern counterbalance to our many exuberances, tirelessly proof-read, and then spent hours creating the best website challenging the Array, which gathered a following of thousands.

One of the biggest tributes must go to Brian and PET in Porthcawl who first alerted us to the unseen issues of porpoise and the EC. It was his insistent phone calls to the clerk of the community council, who passed him across the table to the working group, that began this roller-coaster of discovery.

Also a huge tribute to Alan Rayner in Devon, who has provided encouragement and a wealth of information on both specific issues and procedure in twenty bulletins, each one providing a monthly digest of the current state of play as well as in-depth reports and articles on a multitude of topics.

Thus the 10th best beach location in the world – Rhossili Beach - (Tripadvisor poll) and 11th best seascape view in the world – Rhossili Beach and Worms Head - (Jacob’s Creek poll) have been saved, for the moment.

Today has come news that Regen SW want to resurrect the proposals for the wind farm. They are probably going to have to start afresh – Crown Estate have reportedly removed the Bristol Channel Zone from their Round 3 locations, and Regen will have to commission new studies and research. But we need to continue to be vigilant.

Going forward, one of the best ways to protect our valued seascape and environment is to keep on pushing for Conservation status for the Bristol Channel – it is a most wonderful wilderness area surrounded by the best coastline and countryside in the world.

Carl Johnson
Rhossili Working Group
11th December 2013

GOWER BROADBAND

Better Broadband for Rhossili (BroadBand or not BroadBand - the penultimate chapter)

It’s easy to forget how awful broadband used to be in Rhossili before April this year. Those days are now but a faint memory, at least for those who took advantage of the Welsh Government Grant and signed up for Spectrum Internet’s service.
After three years of intense community engagement, planning, negotiating and communicating, Gower Broadband Community Group achieved its aim of helping to bring about improvements to the communications infrastructure. This has delivered "Fibre to the Cabinet" in Rhossili and four other coastal villages within the Gower Exchange area. Gower Broadband Community Group could not have achieved this without the help of its network of enthusiastic community volunteers. The group also gratefully acknowledges the City & County of Swansea's financial support towards the project administration, and the Welsh Government's grant support for the project infrastructure.

Spectrum Internet recently announced its intention not to upgrade the three remaining cabinets including the one at Scurlage. This has meant that residents between Pitton and Scurlage have not been able to benefit from the availability of Better Broadband. However, the Welsh Government’s Superfast Cymru project, being delivered by BT, appears to be preparing to fill the gaps left by Spectrum Internet. The Gower Broadband Community Group anticipates that these areas should be able to access Superfast Broadband in 2014.

The communications infrastructure in Rhossili is now one step closer to the ultimate goal: “Fibre to the Home”, which will enable everyone to benefit fully from Superfast Broadband.

We wish you a Happy (and Superfast) New Year!

Rob Symberlist & Caroline Johnson
Gower Broadband Community Group

ST ILLTYD’S WALK – 68 miles

St Illtyd’s Walk connects Pembrey Country Park with Margam Park through a network of footpaths and rights of way, sadly much of the way marking has disappeared over the years and it has become difficult to follow. The route traverses the four major rivers of the region:- the Llwcwr, Tawe, Neath and Afan and their valleys, with remnants of the huge industrial heritage of the area; coal mining, quarrying, tramways, railways, canals and forestry even a cannon ball foundry from the Napoleonic Wars. The walk is quite demanding both in terms of navigation and terrain 12260 ft of ascent and a maximum altitude of 1568 ft resulting in stunning views to the Brecon Beacons, the Gower Peninsula and the North Devon coastline.

Using G. Colin Davies’ invaluable guide book and the various O.S Maps, Helen Griffiths, Tony Sanger and Roger Button started this walk back in 2011 but weather, health and other commitments meant that finishing the walk was like it wasn’t going to happen until now July 2013. The walk was completed in 8 sections using either two cars or where possible local buses. One of the ‘highlights’ if you could describe them as being so was the views of the next hilltops over the approaching river valley, knowing that coming up would be a long descent followed inevitably by another lengthy often steep climb before repeating the process again.

The warm welcome received and the interest shown in the walk by the good people at Margam Abbey Church provided a fitting end to the trek.

Maybe with a lot of enthusiasm and good will the route can be re-way marked for its 20th anniversary in 2014 that many others can enjoy the pleasure and the challenge of walking this delightful part of South Wales.

Roger Button

NATIONAL TRUST

It has been a pretty good year all in all. The better weather brought more tourists to Rhossili and subsequently the shop and visitor centre have done well. The money taken at the shop does not get absorbed back into the National Trust as a whole but is spent directly on Gower and will help us massively to achieve our conservation work in 2014. The increase in visitors disappointingly resulted in an increase in litter left on the footpaths and beach. We have continued to do our regular litter picks with the local team, which during the summer are weekly but slightly less frequently at other times. In 2014 we have also
been fortunate to have received enormous help collecting the litter from a number of large volunteer groups including from schools and colleges.

The Gower HLF project is now set to start work in the Rhossili area within the next few weeks. A large pot of Lottery money has been set aside to repair the Vile boundary wall, including trying to re-learn the skills necessary to build a ‘Gower’ wall and to create and improve hay meadows in the area full of wildflowers and invertebrates. The HLF office will be based in the National Trust building at South Pilton Green Farm.

The fields along the Warren and alongside the surf shop have a new tenant for 2013/14 — Ieuan Jones. He has a 1 year agreement which allows sheep grazing during the autumn winter and cutting hay in summer. This new grazing/cropping regime will hopefully sit nicely alongside the HLF scheme and produce flower rich meadows in the near future.

Early spring yet again saw a frustrating amount of un-consented burns on Rhossili Down and cliffs. We have been working with the Welsh Government since Spring to try to prevent this happening again. The Welsh Government are committed to following up un-consented burns with fines in 2014.

Alan Kearsley-Evans
National Trust Property Manager

EPISTLE FROM PITTON CHAPEL

At Pitton Chapel this year we have been sorry to part with dearly loved friends and members, Dudley Thomas, Gwen Llewellyn-Jones and Tom Edwards. Each of them remembered with a great deal of love and affection. It has been a privilege, a comfort and a joy to come together with their families to celebrate their lives in different ways, and an honour to have known each of them.

We celebrated the marriage of Colin Everett to Isobel on a beautiful Saturday afternoon in late May. We try and encourage the Bride and Groom to support local businesses when they are planning their ‘big day’, and so we were delighted that Daphne Furneaux provided flowers, and Mark Button the photographs for the occasion.

In May we also celebrated with our friends from Horton the bi-centenary of their chapel, founded on land given by the Tucker family in 1813. A certain minister was dressed as John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement, and rode on horseback from Oxwich to Horton. A brief open air service was held at Oxwich Green and the afternoon culminated in an open-air service at Horton, followed by a celebration buffet in the village hall.

Recently we have said farewell to a long standing resident of the village and member of the Chapel, Mrs. Doreen Leighton, who has moved to live in sheltered accommodation with Methodist Homes in Exmouth, and to be nearer her family.

Our ecumenical ‘Messy Church’ has held some successful sessions in Rhossili, Port Eynon and Horton this year, with many local children enjoying the games, sticking, painting, story time and general chaos for a couple of hours on a Saturday afternoon! In recent weeks the ‘Messy Church’ teams and others drawn from Methodist Chapels and Church in Wales congregations have come together for the “Stable Trail”, an interactive Nativity centred upon Reynoldston Village. Over 180 children and 400 adults were guided through six live ‘scenes’ including an Angel Factory, Herod’s Palace, the College of the Wise Men, the fields above Bethlehem and the Inn and Stable.

“Messy Church” dates for the coming months, on Saturdays from 3 pm to 5pm are:

Oxwich: 8th February
Horton: 5th April
Port Eynon 14th June.

And we look to Christmas, the coming of Christ, ‘Immanuel’ meaning ‘God with us’. We pray that God will indeed be with us, through reconciliation to one another and to God through the gift of Jesus who gave his life that all may live. May God bless you and your family and those whom you love.

Please do join us if you are able, for the following Christmas celebrations:
Carol Service (with St. Mary’s) at 7pm on Thursday 19th December, at Pitton Chapel.

Christmas Celebration for All, at 9:45am on Christmas Day at Pitton Chapel.

Rev. Andy Walker
28 Linkside Drive Southgate Swansea SA3 2BR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
A note of thanks to Jim Harford of Print Partnership, who provides a great printing service to so many people on Gower. His company always demonstrates professionalism and quick turnaround – meaning that this newsletter will find its way to our doorsteps before Christmas.

RHOSSILI CHURCH
St. Mary’s, Rhossili

Three of the landmarks during the year were the centenary service held in appreciation of Edgar Evans and his contribution to the Royal Navy, the United Carol Service with the Methodist Church, and Helen Sinclair’s striking bronze crucifix moulded from Rhossili Bay driftwood, which was hung in Brecon Cathedral.

The pointing of the exterior of the Church and of the drainage runs is now complete, and further work on interior decoration will be undertaken when finance becomes available.

A part of our Christian witness is the welcome ministry we extend to visitors from near and far as the church remains open each day until approximately five p.m. This arrangement is extremely popular with visitors, and is reflected in the increased number visiting the Church.

The congregation is now used to the new service schedule, with all but one service per month being at 9.45am. The exception is the second Sunday of each month, when a joint Benefice service of all six churches is celebrated at 10.30am in rotation around the six Churches of the Benefice.

Christmas services this year include the Church and Chapel Carol Concert in Pitton Chapel on Thursday 19th December at 7pm, and the traditional midnight mass in St. Mary’s at 11.30pm on December 24th, preceded by carols from 11pm.

RECOGNISING RESIDENTS

STEVE JONES
40 YEARS LONG SERVICE AWARD

In 1973, Stephen Jones followed in the footsteps of his father and joined Rhossili Coastguard. During the following 40 years he has attended hundreds if not thousands of call outs, held the position of Station Officer for 10 years and received a commendation for bravery. In May this year it was with great pride that the Rhossili team marked these 40 years of service with a small presentation at the Coastguard Station. Steve is one of the longest serving Voluntary Coastguards in the country. This kind of service to the community and visitors of Rhossili is an achievement that may never be matched in our lifetime or the future. As current Station Officer I would like to thank Steve for the many times he has allowed me to draw on his wealth of experience and knowledge as both an auxiliary and full time Coastguard. The team hopes to share many more years of service (and post call out pints!) with him in the future.

Darren Powell, Station Officer, Rhossili

TOM FISHER
SWANSEA ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

10 year old Tom attends Knelston Primary School, is a member of Young Gower Farmers Club and is the young guardian of the Countryside Connections Gower Tree Sparrow project.
The Gower Tree Sparrow Project is supported by Swansea Council’s nature conservation team and Countryside Connections, funded by the Regional Development Fund and aims to fight to save the Tree Sparrow, which is one of the fastest declining birds.

Knelston Primary School pupils and local volunteers have been helping to keep bird feeders topped up in an attempt to help the tiny pocket of Tree Sparrows on the peninsula in an effort to try to help save these rare birds in the area.

After school Tom cycles across farm fields to one of the bird feeding stations to ensure the birds are kept fed throughout cold weather; he does this every day, school days and weekends, come rain or shine.

On 17 October 2013 ten young people and one group were each awarded a special ‘High 5’ by Swans star Leon Britton at a ceremony at the Liberty Stadium in an event organised by Swansea Council.

Each winner received a cash prize and a special prize designed around their personal interests, their needs and what they want to achieve in the future. Tom won ‘The Environmental Award’ for youngsters aged up to 13 years’.

The ‘High 5’ Awards are run by Swansea Council and sponsored by Gower College Swansea. They are supported by Swansea City Football Club, The Rotary Club of Swansea and The Wave. ‘High 5’ awards aim to recognise and celebrate young people’s achievements in the hope that this will enable them to set a good example to others.

More than 130 young people were nominated for a High 5 this year so Tom was up against some fierce competition from others in the Swansea Area where all entrants have the environment at heart.

To convey how much this award means to Tom it is probably best expressed by the winner himself.

“The award night was amazing, meeting Leon Britten was a dream come true. I opened the gold envelope on the evening the individual prizes were out of this world. The banana boat trip I felt excited because I’ve always seen the banana boat whilst fishing locally and I’ve never been on it. After the photographs were taken I couldn’t wait to say thank you to my sponsor and ask my mum if she could find out where they were sitting. I met Steve and Pam Norman from Stenor and thanked them in person and had my mum take a photo of us. My mum and dad spoke to them for some time and found out they had a lot in common and knew Gower well especially where we lived they talked about boat fishing and environment issues of Gower. I know the trip won’t be until next summer but intend to send them a thank you card after the event. It would be nice to have a photo in the evening post as well to promote the ‘High 5’ awards so that all that know me can see what I have won and achieved.

The match game was thrilling as well meeting Leon and photo taken fab. An experience I’ll never forget going to a premier league game and seeing all those expensive cars in the car park especially the red Ferrari and the Maserati!! I made sure my sister Alison took a photo of me standing by that car!! (red Ferrari)

The firework display we are looking forward to as well as a family event and the Mexican meal in Wind St is something else we need to do as a family by the end of November!!

The chocolate fountain was the "icing on the cake" my brother and I although we were the last to get to the awards and we were the last to leave we continued to "polish off " the remnants on that display. It so happened that the lady who sponsored the fountain was sitting on our table she looked delighted that we had chocolate all over our face and continued to help ourselves throughout the awards night.

A night I will never forget it was awesome!!”

But what of a proud mum, Nicky Rees?

“Leon Britton is an inspirational ambassador for the young people’s ‘High 5’ awards - a very special person to give his own time and meet the winners in person. Prizes are appropriate for Tom’s age group and Tom was delighted with the match tickets and the fact that Dan and Alison could go too to experience the atmosphere. A photo and autograph with Leon Britton completed the evening.

The chocolate fountain was absolutely appropriate for Tom and Dan who have a sweet tooth and big appetite and where ever they go are like Gannets!!
I would like to thank all the sponsors especially Steve and Pam Norman (Stenor) it’s something we always wanted to experience but the cost of all of us to go is too expensive but I will pay extra for us to go as a family. Tom and Dan have always gone boat fishing with their dad from Fall Bay or Port Eynon. Dad Steve has been a keen fisherman all his life so knows the Gower coast well so the banana boat trip is an extremely different experience to what he’s used to / a fast ribbed boat!!

We are looking forward to the firework display, none of us have been before the last time I went was 40 years ago.

We have never eaten Mexican food before and look forward to trying it out.

Swansea Building Society £5.00 to open account a bit disappointing for Tom because of access to the building society but we intend to go to Mumbles branch when we can because we don’t go to Swansea very often. Cash prize special treat.

After November there is nothing to keep promoting ‘High 5’ awards until next year until the banana boat trip when perhaps you could use as an advert for next years awards.

Winning such fitting prizes for Thomas is encouraging. Tom will try new activities, new experiences, be more confident & independent and encourage him to exceed his own expectations. Everyone that knows Tom is delighted with his achievements and knows that he will grow to be a young responsible man, always willing to help out with practical tasks and in whatever he does in life. As parents we are very proud of Thomas.”

Nicky Rees, mum

If you would like to volunteer or if you spot a Tree Sparrow, call 01792 636874.

Season’s Greetings

“To all our friends in Rhossili, wishing you all a Happy Christmas and an enjoyable and fulfilling New Year” - from Sarah and Steve Walmsley

“Wishing all our friends, neighbours and members of Rhossili Oil Consortium a very Merry Christmas and Happy 2014.”

Dave and Barbara Powell.

“A very Happy Christmas to all friends in the village and may the New Year be a peaceful and healthful one! “

Gill Evans

June wishes everyone in Rhossili, “a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and will be sending a donation to Coastwatch.”
“Seasonal Greetings to everyone in Rhossili.”
from **Nigel and Vicki James** and family.

“Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all our friends and neighbours.”
**From Linda and Ray Bartlett**

“Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everybody in the village.”
**From Chris and Dai Cann**

“Wishing all my friends and neighbours a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.”
**Vi Baker**

**Steven, Lesley and family** at Rhossili Gallery would like to send our,
“Season’s Greetings to all in Rhossili Community. Wishing you all Good Health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year. (A donation will be made to the Welsh Air Ambulance)”

**Karen and Eaton Tarrant** of The Homestead send, “Best Wishes for Xmas and the New Year to all our friends and neighbours in Rhossili (donation in lieu of cards has been made to the RNLI)”

“To friends and acquaintances old and new, a joyous Christmas and every best wishes for 2014.”
**Roger & Eira Button**

**Jo, Josh and Charlotte** would like to wish all the young people old and new from Rhossili Youth Club, “a fun, happy and healthy, Christmas and New Year xxx”

“A very healthy and happy Christmas and New Year to all our friends, neighbours and animals”
with love from **Jo, Jeff, Gerry, Charlotte, Josh, Ben, Zak and Willow xxxx**