



Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 29 June 2020

Clyne Valley Country Park

Clyne Valley Country Park - on the western fringe of the city - is one of the largest contiguous areas of land in the stewardship of Swansea Council (c.300+ha). Clyne Valley has multiple special features and assets, and is an area easily accessible to much of the city's population.

Clyne Valley became a Country Park in the late 1970s, following Council acquisition of the area and following the recommendations of a strategic planning study in 1978. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1968 gives local authorities the power to provide Country Parks for the purposes of 'providing, or improving, opportunities for the enjoyment of the countryside by the public'.

Clyne Valley Country Park (CVCP) is also a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), with significant areas of the following habitats:

- Broadleaved woodland (including areas of ancient woodland)
- Semi-natural grasslands that have not been agriculturally improved
- Permanent and ephemeral ponds
- Most of the Clyne River system and its tributaries

Wet woodland in the adjacent Killay Marsh Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is owned by Swansea Council but leased and managed by the Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales.

There is a huge range of species recorded in the area, including otter and a number of bat species roosting and foraging in the valley.

The western side of the Country Park is within the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). On the eastern side of the valley, an extensive area above Clyne River is an historic landfill where operations ceased in the 1970s; much of this has been colonised by Japanese Knotweed.

Industrial heritage and historical associations with the Vivian family are recognised by designations including:

- Clyne Castle Grade 1 Historic Park and Garden - which extends into the woodland north of Clyne Castle (Cadw has recently indicated that the Register entry may be extended considerably into the Country Park)

- Five Scheduled Monuments
- Two Listed Buildings
- Numerous features identified on the Historic Environment Register

Planning policy has maintained the provision of Clyne Valley as a Country Park since it was first proposed. The current Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP, adopted February 2019) includes a specific policy (TR4) for Clyne Valley Country Park. The LDP identifies the boundary to the Country Park and formalises Council policy relating to its use. Clyne Valley is also specifically acknowledged in the LDP as representing a strategically important green space and a key element of the County's Green Infrastructure network.

However, beyond these LDP policies, the Council has no identified management objectives or departmental responsibility for CVCP. There has been no review of Clyne Valley, the Country Park or the Council's strategy or objectives for the area since the 1978 planning study – more than 40 years ago. Management decisions are taken following separate departmental priorities and within budgetary constraints.

Management issues over recent months, including damage from third party activities during COVID-19 restrictions, have identified the need to improve the Council's overall approach to managing the Country Park. The Planning Policy and Natural Environment Section are starting to coordinate this (both internally and with stakeholders & local community organisations, with a view to developing a strategy for Members and senior management so there is a clear view on direction and responsibilities into the long term.

Chris Lindley
Gower AONB Team Leader
17 June 2020