

Forgotten Landscapes Operation with Gwent Police and other Agencies

Gwent Police work with partner agencies to protect Forgotten Landscapes of Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent

Crimes including fly-tipping, the illegal use of off road vehicles, vehicle and scrap metal thefts were targeted during a one day operation in Gwent.

On Sunday 24th June, Gwent Police joined forces with local councils in Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff as well as the Forestry Commission and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and charity Treadlightly! to enforce laws that protect the Blaenavon World Heritage Site and its surroundings.

The operation covered a large area of countryside from Brynmawr down to Abertillery and Cwmtillery over into Monmouthshire around Clydach and right down to the Blaenavon and Pontypool areas of Torfaen.

PC Rob Maddocks, who organised the operation, is seconded as Landscapes Crime Officer to specifically tackle problems in the project area following concerns raised by local residents and walkers about the illegal use of off road vehicles, fly tipping and grass fires.

He explained, 'My role is to raise awareness of landscape crime as well as tackling offenders. Many members of the public don't fully understand the law in relation to off road vehicles. The operation on Sunday was to educate members of public about the law and give them a chance to change their actions. Anyone found driving illegally in these areas in the future will be dealt with.'

On Sunday the operation had the following results;

- 6 Section 59 warnings – this means that if anyone is found riding or driving illegally again in the next 12 months, their vehicle will be seized
- 42 verbal warnings and educational leaflets given out
- 24 new fly tipping sites were identified and referred for clean up operations

PC Maddocks added, 'We will continue to carry out operations such as this on a regular basis to bring offenders to justice and improve the local area for residents and visitors to this beautiful part of the world.'

Duncan Green, Chairman of The Treadlightly Trust says, 'Multi agency working is key to reducing illegal off – roading and helping people understand how and where they can use their vehicles responsibly.'

Treadlightly! is a scheme run by The Treadlightly Trust charity that sets out to protect motorised recreational access opportunities through education, partnership working and conservation initiatives. For more information on the work of the charity, visit <http://www.treadlightly-uk.org/>

The Forgotten Landscapes Project is an ambitious landscape conservation scheme which aims to manage the natural and built environment of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site and its surroundings.

The Forgotten Landscapes Project, principally funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund is a unique landscape conservation scheme which aims to manage the natural and industrial heritage across three boroughs – Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent.

The project covers a 71 square KM area of countryside and is co-ordinated by Torfaen County Borough Council and receives the majority of its funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Through the project, a range of regeneration and conservation projects will be delivered including;

- Restoration of wetlands, grasslands and heather moorlands to provide habitat for the area's wildlife.
- Return of Welsh mountain ponies and traditional breeds of cattle to the common land.
- Conservation of archaeological features in the landscape
- Interpretation of the landscape and its stories through events, school trips and educational courses