

NM NEWPORT MATTERS

The official newspaper of Newport City Council

NEW LOOK WEBSITE

Visitors to Newport.gov.uk may have noticed some changes in the last few weeks.

Our new look website went live last month with updated features that will make it easier for users to find the information they need.

The site has been designed to be accessible, easy to navigate and content has been reviewed to make it more concise and easier to read.

As we continue work on the project, features such as an enhanced search, will make visiting our website even better.

Find out more about the project and further improvements on page 5.



NEWPORT TO RECOGNISE CARE LEAVER AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

Care leavers will be given greater recognition by Newport City Council when it is designing policies and services.

It follows a decision at January's council meeting to recognise care leavers (care experienced) as a protected characteristic.

'Care experienced' will be added to the list of protected characteristics on the council's next strategic equality plan, which is due to be published later this year.

The move will see the council take the specific needs of care leavers into account whenever it is taking decisions, and give the council greater autonomy to put in place policies and programmes which will promote improved outcomes for care leavers.

Prior to the meeting, a celebration was held at the Civic Centre for a number of care leavers who were presented with handmade quilts as part of the Quilts for Care Leavers project.



The care leavers also had a chance to speak to the leader and other elected members about their experiences.

Councillor Phil Hourahine, who was involved in bringing forward the motion to council, said "Many members across the council have heard from care leavers about the unique circumstances and challenges they face after leaving care.

"It is important that we recognise these challenges and use the levers available to us to help them as much as possible.

"I'm very pleased therefore that council unanimously backed this motion, becoming the first local authority in Wales to recognise care leavers in such a way."



SPREAD THE COST OF YOUR COUNCIL TAX

Did you know you can spread the cost of your council tax over 12 months?

The easiest way to do this is to set up a direct debit, and select the 12-month option.

Spreading your payments over the course of the year can make them easier to manage.

You can manage your council tax account online by registering for our online service.

This will allow you to set up and manage your direct debit, as well as keep track of your account information and payments.

newport.gov.uk/council-tax



COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25



Newport City Council's budget for 2024/25 sees investment in priority areas including schools and education, social care, highway maintenance and homelessness services.

In January, cabinet put forward a number of draft proposals including:

- £3million to help manage demand within adult and children's social care and provide support for some of our most vulnerable residents
- An extra £600,000 to support homelessness services and the demand for temporary accommodation
- Increased budget for schools recognising the pressure on schools, including funding for staff pay, increasing demand resulting from rising pupil numbers, and support for those with additional learning needs.

Around 1,400 responses to the public consultation were received and considered by cabinet ahead of them making their final

recommendations in February. During the period of the public consultation, there were also updates to some of the council's budget pressures and clarification regarding funding and grants that needed to be taken into consideration.

This included confirmation that Welsh government would receive additional funding from the UK government and in turn, councils will receive extra money. Newport will receive an additional £755k and an increase in social care specific grant funding.

As a result, cabinet were in a position to allocate just over £2 million extra to the areas identified as priorities, in addition to the investments put forward in January.

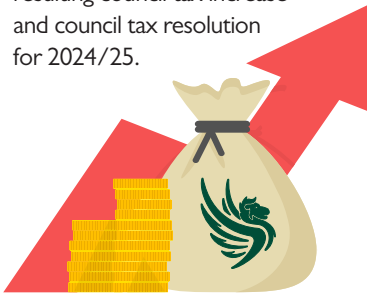
The discussions at the February cabinet meeting focussed on striking a balance between increasing funding in the highest priority areas, making essential savings, and ensuring residents continue to pay one of the lowest council tax rates in Wales and the UK.

The additional funding will be invested in the following areas:

- £700k for highways infrastructure and building maintenance
- £300k additional funding for our schools, targeting extra support for children with additional learning needs
- £160k for the social services safeguarding hub which supports families in crisis
- A further £150k for homelessness and temporary accommodation
- £595k to support long-term borrowing and the capital programme (projects, assets, facilities and investments)
- £145k to address the impact of a number of grant reductions

Council tax will increase by 8.5 per cent which represents a rise of £1.75 to £2.26 per week for those houses in Newport's most common bands. The council tax reduction scheme is also in place to continue to help those eligible for support.

Full council met at the end of February to review cabinet's final proposals and proposed council tax increase, and ratified the budget, resulting council tax increase and council tax resolution for 2024/25.



DIRECT TRAINS TO EBBW VALE LAUNCHED

For the first time in over sixty years, direct trains are running between Newport and Ebbw Vale.

It follows completion of work to double the capacity on the Ebbw Vale line, meaning two trains per hour now run on the line in each direction.

The work was funded by a £70m investment from Welsh Government, and carried out in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Network Rail, Transport for Wales, Caerphilly County Borough Council, and Newport City Council.

The investment now means much improved public transport links between Newport and the towns and communities along the Ebbw Vale line.



SAVING ENERGY EVENT

On Saturday 23 March, the council will be holding a one-day event at the Riverfront Theatre with tips on how you can save energy, money and the planet.

We will have information about opportunities for free energy efficiency upgrades which are available, as well as tips and tricks on how to save energy and money in your home.

We will also have games, information, free bike health checks, heat pump and solar panel demonstrations, and more!

If you are a business owner or run a community group, you'll also be able to speak to one of the team about the Net Zero Newport decarbonisation programme.

Entry is free, and the event runs from 10am-2pm.



PLANT SALES RETURNING THIS JUNE

Our popular plant sales will be returning in June, where we will have a range of plants available to buy.

Details about locations for the plant sales will be shared in the May edition of Newport Matters, and also on our website and social media channels.

Ahead of the sales, our nursery team are taking advance orders for hanging baskets.

If you would like to place an order for a basket, please email them at **grounds.general@newport.gov.uk**.



ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT FORMS KEY PART OF IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The council is currently working on a programme to improve play areas across the city.

For every play area which is included in the programme, we have sought feedback from local residents about what features they would like to see installed.

As part of the programme, we

have been working to install as much accessible play equipment as possible in these play areas.

One such piece of equipment is new wheelchair-accessible roundabouts. These roundabouts have already been installed in Ruperra Street, Tone Close, Humber Close and Darwin Drive play areas.

Inclusive swings and rocking chairs are also now a feature across a lot of our play areas, along with multiplay equipment sets which feature inclusive elements.

Communication and interactive boards have also been installed at some sites, such as Penny Crescent in Malpas and Ruperra Street in Pillgwenlly.

Communication boards are designed with inclusion in mind, making playgrounds more accessible to children with communication delays.

Commenting on the programme, Councillor Yvonne Forsey, cabinet member for climate change and biodiversity, said: "I'm delighted with the progress we have made so far in upgrading our play areas, particularly to install as much accessible play equipment as we can.

"It is important that we make sure our play areas are inclusive and open to everyone.

"We have listened to residents' feedback and suggestions, which has been invaluable during the design process for each park, and

I'm pleased that we have been able to incorporate a lot of their ideas into the finished products!"

To have a look at which play areas we have completed work in, and view any upcoming consultations, visit **newport.gov.uk/parks**



'FORTY YEARS ON' EXHIBITION



The latest exhibition at Newport Museum and Art Gallery opened last month.

'Forty Years On' showcases a diverse range of work from 36 former graduates of the Newport College of Art.

The exhibition looks at how training at the college and life in Newport enriched and shaped the graduates' lives over the past forty years.

Each artist has submitted a piece of work which represents what they are about, what they have done, and what they are still doing with their lives.

The exhibition is running until Saturday 3 June.

The Newport Museum and Art Gallery is open from Tuesday-Saturday, and entry is free of charge.

NEWPORT SHIP 2024 VISITOR SEASON



The Newport Ship Centre opens for its 2024 visitor season on Friday 22 March.

Visitors to the centre can learn all about the story of the ship, from what we know about its construction and life, to its discovery in the banks of the River Usk back in 2002, and the mission to preserve and reassemble its many pieces.

The Ship Centre will be open from 10.30am-4pm on Fridays and Saturdays throughout the visitor season, which runs from 22 March to Saturday 2 November.

Entry to the centre is free, with donations to the project greatly appreciated!

HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL MAKES VISIT TO NEWPORT CULTURAL ICONS



Two of Newport's cultural icons, the Newport Medieval Ship and the Newport Transporter Bridge, were in the spotlight last month after receiving a visit from HRH The Princess Royal.

Her Royal Highness received a warm welcome at both sites from staff and volunteers, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Gwent, Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE, Councillor Trevor Watkins, Mayor of Newport, the council's chief executive and senior officers, and Councillor Jane Mudd, leader of the council and cabinet member for economic growth and strategic investment.

At the Newport Ship centre, Her Royal Highness was given a tour of the works, from the initial excavation through to the current day, as well as future plans. Her Royal Highness also became the first person to sign the centre's

brand-new visitor book.

Students and professors from Cardiff University were on hand to talk about some of the artefacts that were found during the excavations, and how these have been conserved.

Her Royal Highness was also able to step back in time to experience what life was like on the ship, thanks to a virtual reality headset which the project team has developed in conjunction with researchers at Swansea University.

Her Royal Highness has a keen interest in engineering, so naturally a visit to the city's engineering icon, the Newport Transporter Bridge, was a must.

The Princess Royal heard about the history of Newport's most famous landmark, how it operates, before hearing from

principal contractor VolkerLaser about the restoration work they are carrying out.

Her Royal Highness then met with volunteers and members of the Friends of Newport Transporter Bridge, before meeting with staff and students from Coleg Gwent.

The students, who are on an illustration course at the college, have been involved with the project as part of our community engagement programme, and it is their illustrations which can be found on the hoardings outside the visitor centre.



GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR CULTURAL, HERITAGE AND SPORTS PROJECTS

A new programme of grant schemes for Newport-based cultural, heritage and sports projects is now open.

The grants are open to charities, community groups and social enterprises, to help fund a range of projects.

The heritage scheme will provide

funding for cultural, historic and heritage groups to run their own projects.

The cultural scheme will fund local cultural and creative groups to deliver community event and activities.

And the grassroots sports scheme will provide funding for local sports teams, leagues and organisations.

Funding for the programme has come from the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the

UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.

The council has partnered with whatimpact.com, a social value matchmaking platform,

to deliver the programme.

Organisations interested in submitting a bid can find more information about the scheme by visiting whatimpact.com/newport-grants



CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Community connectors and the community engagement workers have now joined together in one team to offer support to residents of all ages.

Community connectors work with individuals, groups and organisations across the city to help residents who maybe experiencing isolation.

They provide information and advice about available support, help people to find local activities and meet more people in the community.

From 1 April last year until the end of December, the connectors helped more than 4,000 people and more than 1,200 joined a group of some sort.

Community engagement workers delivered many activities including:

- Schools healthy eating programme which provides food and fun sessions at youth and play events.
- Family Christmas fun including a visit from Santa to Pill; ice

- skating at the Celtic Manor and toy boxes for families.
- Older residents received Christmas parcels in partnership with Homestead.
- Giving advice at a temporary housing event.

External grant funding was used for a flexible respite service that enabled unpaid carers to take a short break from their caring role. Only launched in the summer, the scheme benefited more than 20 local families in just a few months.

More than 120 people attended a Carers Rights Day event towards the end of last year when staff spoke to many unpaid carers as well as other professionals.

For more information you can contact our community connectors by email community.connectors@newport.gov.uk or by calling **01633 235650** between 9am and 5pm, Mondays to Fridays.

newport.gov.uk/communityconnectors



LIVE WISE, BE WISE

Council staff and partners will be holding regular drop-in sessions at venues across the city to give advice on budgeting, managing utility bills, rent and much more.

Most sessions, which are funded by the UK government's

Shared Prosperity Fund, take place 4pm-6pm.

Email costofliving@newport.gov.uk for further information on venues and times; visit newport.gov.uk/support or call **01633 656656**.



YOUTH AWARD SUCCESS

Congratulations to our Refugee and Asylum Seeker Youth Group who were finalists in the Youth Work Awards.

The group was nominated for the **“demonstrating excellence in partnership planning and delivery at a local level”** category.

A Welsh government initiative, the awards are an opportunity to recognise the diverse and crucial role youth work plays in communities, fostering growth and supporting well-being.

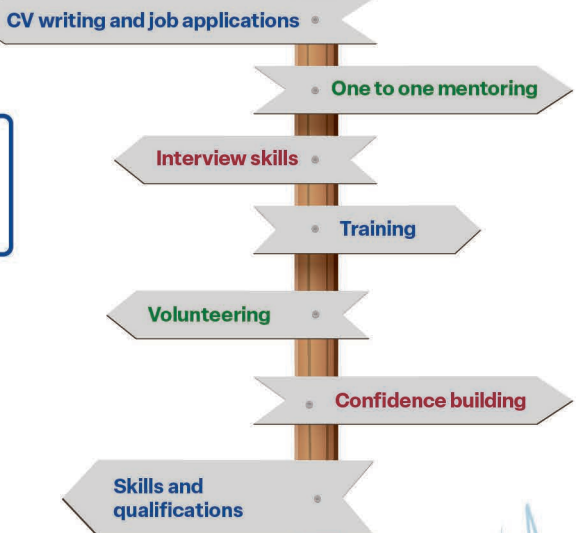
They highlight the exceptional talent and dedication of youth workers across Wales.



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SUPPORT TO FIND WORK?

Communities for Work Plus is a Welsh government funded programme.

“Communities for Work Plus provides specialist support and mentoring helping you to find work.”



cfwplus@newport.gov.uk
07581 011462
newport.gov.uk/employmentsupport



YOUR VOICE. YOUR DECISION.

A lasting power of attorney (LPA) gives you a voice and protects your decisions.

They are helpful for everyone over the age of 18.

This legal document makes it easier for the people you trust to support you when you need it most.

It means you keep control of certain decisions by choosing who you want to make them if you lose the power to make certain decisions.

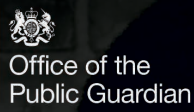
This could be temporary to help manage finances during a short hospital stay, or for longer-term decisions about your health and care.

The Office of the Public Guardian is responsible for registering lasting powers of attorney.

Once in place, the people you trust can quickly and easily step in.

Registering an LPA is probably easier and cheaper than you think and, depending on your circumstances, there may not even be a charge.

To find out more visit powerofattorney.campaign.gov.uk



#YourVoiceYourDecision

HAVE YOUR SAY

In May, people around the UK can vote for the person they would like to represent them as the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

In Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen and Monmouthshire people will be voting for the Gwent PCC.

And, although a date had not been announced at the time of going to press, there will be a general election for the next UK government by January 2025.

For both these elections, voters will be legally required to show photo identification (ID) if they visit a polling station to cast their ballot.

Acceptable forms of ID include passport, driving licence (including provisional), blue badge and some concessionary travel cards.

You will only need to show one form of photo ID, but it needs to be the original version and not a photocopy.

The name on your ID must be the same name you used to register to vote.

It can be expired, as long as the photograph still looks like you do now.

If you don't have an acceptable form of photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a voter authority certificate, online or through your local electoral registration office.

To find out more, go to electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID, call the helpline on **0800 328 0280** or contact the council's election team on **01633 210744**.

It is also important to ensure that you registered to vote. It takes just five minutes online at gov.uk/register-to-vote

You can cast your ballot in the PCC election if you are a registered UK, Irish, Commonwealth or European Union elector, aged over 18 on polling day.

Registered UK, Irish, and Commonwealth electors, over 18 years of age on polling day, may vote in the general election.

At both the PCC and general elections, you can choose to vote in person, by post, or by proxy.

For voting by post, you can now apply online and you need to reapply for a postal vote every three years.

For voting by proxy, there are limits to how many people you can act as a proxy for and you can apply online for some types of proxy vote.

The deadline to apply for a postal vote for the elections on Thursday 2 May is **5pm on Wednesday 17 April**.

VOTER ID
YOUR VOTE MATTERS
You will now need to show **photo ID** at polling stations to vote in some elections

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL
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YOUR VOTE MATTERS
DON'T LOSE IT

DON'T FORGET YOUR PHOTO ID

HAVE YOUR SAY!

VOTE

VOTER ID

Expired ID is ok as long as the photo still looks like you. If you don't have an accepted form of Voter ID, you can apply for a **FREE VOTER AUTHORITY CERTIFICATE** at electoralcommission.org.uk/voter-id

FREE VOTER ID HELPLINE: 0800 328 0280
NEWPORT ID HELPLINE: 01633 210744

IMPROVING OUR DIGITAL FRONT DOOR

Over the last few months we have been working behind the scenes to improve the council website.

With over 4,000 pages of content, the old site wasn't very easy to use and needed improvements to make it accessible for everyone.

Last month we launched our new look site with phase one of the project including a new homepage, newsroom and some of our most visited services including waste and recycling, and benefits and support.

Over the coming months we will continue to transfer all content over to the new site which will mean even more improvements.

The main features of the new site include a modern design, accessible features, better navigation, re-written content so it's easier to understand, and removal of all outdated content so it's easier to find what you need. We've also focused on Welsh language and you can now also access the site at www.casnewydd.gov.uk.

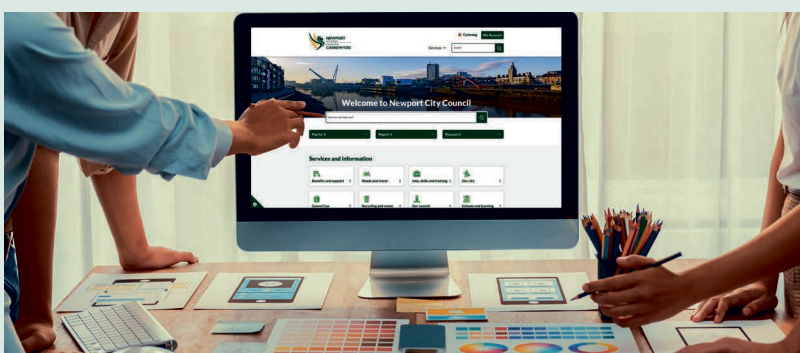
As we move more content over, you will also see the search function improve even more. We've gone for a top rate search as we know that's where many people head when they visit the site.

The new site is also fully responsive meaning it will work well on any device – very important as we know over two thirds of visitors use a mobile phone or tablet.

Please bear with us as we complete the move to the new site – it means a mix of old and new for a little while, but the end result will be a vastly improved digital front door to the council.

We've also carried out user research and testing as part of the project with people with specific needs, different age groups and an amazing group of local volunteers.

There's still much to do, so if you would like to get involved and help us with our future improvements visit newport.gov.uk to sign up.



PLANS TO IMPROVE TREDEGAR PARK TAKE NEXT STEP FORWARD

Newport City Council's plans to improve Tredegar Park have taken a major step forward after it agreed to buy the freehold of the park land from its owner.

The council currently leases the land for the purposes of providing playing fields and a recreation area for the city.

The lease comes with a number of restrictive conditions attached, and purchasing the freehold will give the council greater autonomy in developing the park in line with the wishes of Newport residents.

Last summer, the council carried out extensive consultation with residents regarding what improvements they would like us to make to the leisure offer in the park.

Response to the survey was good, with just under 850 responses received. They reflected a strong community interest in enhancing the park's recreational offer.

Based on the outcome of the consultation, a number of recurring elements were identified and have been put forward as part of the proposed investment.

The council is now looking at how it can deliver these elements as part of the overall package of investment into the park, as well as the revenue costs associated with operating and maintaining these elements over the long term.

Capital funding for the project will come from Newport's allocation of the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund, under the 'communities and place' priority.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.



KEEPING YOU ENTERTAINED OVER THE EASTER HOLIDAYS



There's plenty of free, fun and inclusive activities during the Easter holidays for children of all ages and their families.

Full details will be made available on the council's website newport.gov.uk/play

You can also find out other activities taking place across the city during the Easter holidays and beyond by visiting Newport's new what's on website at whatsoncityofnewport.co.uk or scan the QR code.



GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION



Garden waste collections have now restarted for spring. We will be collecting garden waste from your orange bin every three weeks.

Here is a reminder of some of the things we are able to collect: grass, leaves and most weeds, plants and flowers, garden fruit, shrub cuttings and hedge clippings, small branches and twigs, bedding from rabbits, guinea pigs, small herbivore pets, as long as it's clean and free from animal faeces (that is, 'animal poo').

Here is what we're not able to collect: soil, turf, logs, stones or rubble, invasive weeds, such as Japanese knotweed or ragwort, animal faeces (that is, 'animal poo'), any garden furniture, whether plastic or wooden, such as garden chairs, any hard plastic items, such as pots or trays, any soft plastic items, such as compost or topsoil bags, tyres, polystyrene, cardboard, DIY waste.

To find out when your next collection day is, or to order replacement bins visit newport.gov.uk/waste



NEW PROGRAMME TO HELP BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS GO GREEN



Newport City Council has launched a new programme to help businesses and community groups to decarbonise.

The Net Zero Newport Decarbonisation Programme provides free energy-saving advice and grant funding to help local organisations reduce their energy costs and carbon emissions.

The free advice and match-funded grants up to £30,000 are available to local businesses and community groups with buildings in the Newport area.

The programme is designed to help organisations to:

- establish baseline carbon emissions
- implement emission reduction plans
- actively fund projects aligned with sustainability objectives.

The programme aims to help stimulate growth in Newport's low carbon economy and support the city's journey to net zero by 2050 by investing in local businesses and community groups, people and skills.

The programme will offer the following:

- FREE technical advice - on-site technical support to explore your low carbon project ideas and opportunities.
- FREE decarbonisation plan, identifying opportunities for organisations to reduce carbon emissions through energy saving and renewable energy measures
- The fund, to provide grants towards project implementation. Grants are available up to 50 per cent of the total eligible project costs, up to a maximum grant of £30,000.

For more information on the programme, email netzero@newport.gov.uk.

The programme has been funded by the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025.

The fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

For more information, visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus

JOIN OUR CLIMATE NETWORKS

To better engage with the work already happening in Newport, and to support current and future projects, the council has created two new networks: the climate champions network, and the Newport environment network.

The climate champions network is an overarching network which covers all action related to climate change, such as circular economy activities, active travel, and renewable energy.

The Newport environment network aims to maintain, improve, and make the best use of green spaces across Newport while promoting and facilitating safety, accessibility, and wellbeing.

The networks welcome members from the public, third and private sectors in Newport alongside individuals and volunteers interested in positive climate action!

The networks meet quarterly in a combination of online and in person meetings and aim to provide a space for networking and joint working opportunities.

They also involve guest speakers and workshops, as well as a space to raise concerns and suggestions, share news, funding opportunities, projects, and events.

Everyone is welcome! For more information or to join, email netzero@newport.gov.uk

TRADE WASTE SERVICE



From April 2024, workplace recycling laws in Wales are changing.

It will become law for all businesses, charities and public sector organisations to sort their waste for recycling.

Newport City Council has developed a new commercial trade waste offer which is fully compliant with the new regulations.

Working in partnership with local recycling outlets, we have a wide range of options for big, medium, and small businesses.

Our service is competitively priced, with no hidden charges and no VAT.

If you are looking for a commercial collection service, look no further!

For more information and a free quote, contact us at trade.waste@newport.gov.uk, or call 01633 210 567.



ABP NEWPORT WALES MARATHON RETURNING TO THE CITY STREETS

The ABP Newport Wales Marathon will be returning to the city streets next month.

The event, which this year will include a half marathon race alongside the existing marathon, 10k and junior races, takes place on Sunday 28 April.

As well as a new route, this year also sees the introduction of a refreshed course, which now starts with a loop around the city centre, as well as taking in the

Newport International Sports Village and an additional lap of the Wetlands area around Goldcliff.

For more information about the route, and what will be happening on the day, visit the race website.

newportwalesmarathon.co.uk

