

Community Profile – Abergwynfi and Blaengwynfi

Version 6 – will be updated and reviewed next on 29.05.20

The villages of Abergwynfi and Blaengwynfi are increasingly being regarded as one community, Gwynfi. They form the rural ward of Blaengwynfi. They lie approximately 11 miles from both the County towns of Port Talbot and Neath.



Aerial view of Gwynfi looking down the valley

The latest population figures are 1,338 inhabitants, this is an 11% drop since 2011 Census and Gwynfi have seen the biggest population drop of all villages in the Afan Valley.

Gwynfi (like Glyncoed) has a younger population that average with high numbers of under 16 (21%). 10.2% of people have qualifications of Level 4 or above, as compared to NPT (20.8%) and Wales (29.7%).

The twin villages lay in the North east of the Afan Valley, within forested hills, with some farmland. These former mining villages have limited facilities, and very poor transport links. There are several small businesses, including a small factory that recycles waste products into industrial briquettes. Most villagers must look beyond the village for work, difficult without personal

transport (only 40% have cars). There is a football team, a bowls team, and a very successful boxing club, which is one of a number of clubs and activities that run out of the local community run community centre.

An unusual feature of the village is the former rail tunnel to the Rhondda Valley, the third longest in Wales, which is in the process of been restored as a cycle path. It is hoped that this will be of benefit to the; local tourist industry. The Afan Valley is located in beautiful scenery surrounded by hills and vast areas of woodland. Natural Resources Wales manages the forestry that borders the village, it houses lots of walking and cycling trails including a cycle route along the Valley floor which forms part of the Afan Valley Cycle Route.

Although Gwynfi is at the very far reaches of the Afan Valley, it is very close to the Rhondda Valley and you can drive directly from Gwynfi to Treorchy (Rhondda Fawr) in 10-15 minutes over the Bwlch Mountain Road. There are limited facilities for children and young people, though perhaps more than some of the nearby communities, and the



Aerial view looking up the Bwlch from Gwynfi

remote locality and poor transport hampers all aspects of life. There is no remaining local authority owned or run facilities except for small children's play park which is need of upgrade and has a community group attached to it with views to take over or upgrade.



PyC Awards

1	Population	1338 (was 1495 at UK Census 2011) The population of Gwynfi is estimated now at 1338 down from 1495 in 2001.																											
2	Demographics	0-17 years 280 18-64 years 771 65+ years 287 (Source Census 2011 via Stats Wales)																											
3	Deprivation Ranking (WIMD)	<p>WIMD 2014 (where 1 is most deprived and 1909 is least)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>WIMD</th> <th>Income</th> <th>Employment</th> <th>Health</th> <th>Education</th> <th>Access to Services</th> <th>Community Safety</th> <th>Physical Environment</th> <th>Housing</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>177</td> <td>223</td> <td>138</td> <td>172</td> <td>116</td> <td>348</td> <td>1,027</td> <td>1,899</td> <td>1,020</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WIMD	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Access to Services	Community Safety	Physical Environment	Housing	177	223	138	172	116	348	1,027	1,899	1,020									
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177	223	138	172	116	348	1,027	1,899	1,020																					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% of children are living in poverty compared with 20% across Wales • 1% of households have no central heating which is less than the Welsh average of 2% • Overall crime rate is lower than the Welsh average • 36% of people have a limiting long-term illness compared with 23% across Wales • 43% of people have no qualifications compared with 26% across Wales • 39% of households have no car which is the same as the Welsh average • 0% of people live in a flood risk area compared with 41% across Wales • 97.3% of people are White British compared with the Welsh average of 93% • 85.1% of the population cannot speak Welsh which is lower than the Welsh average of 73% • Of people out of work, 14.2% are receiving incapacity benefits • 39.6% are living in poverty which is higher than the Welsh average of 20.8% • 70.3% of pensioners have no vehicle • 13.5% of the population are providing unpaid care, which higher than the Welsh average of 12.1% • The air quality score is 22 																											

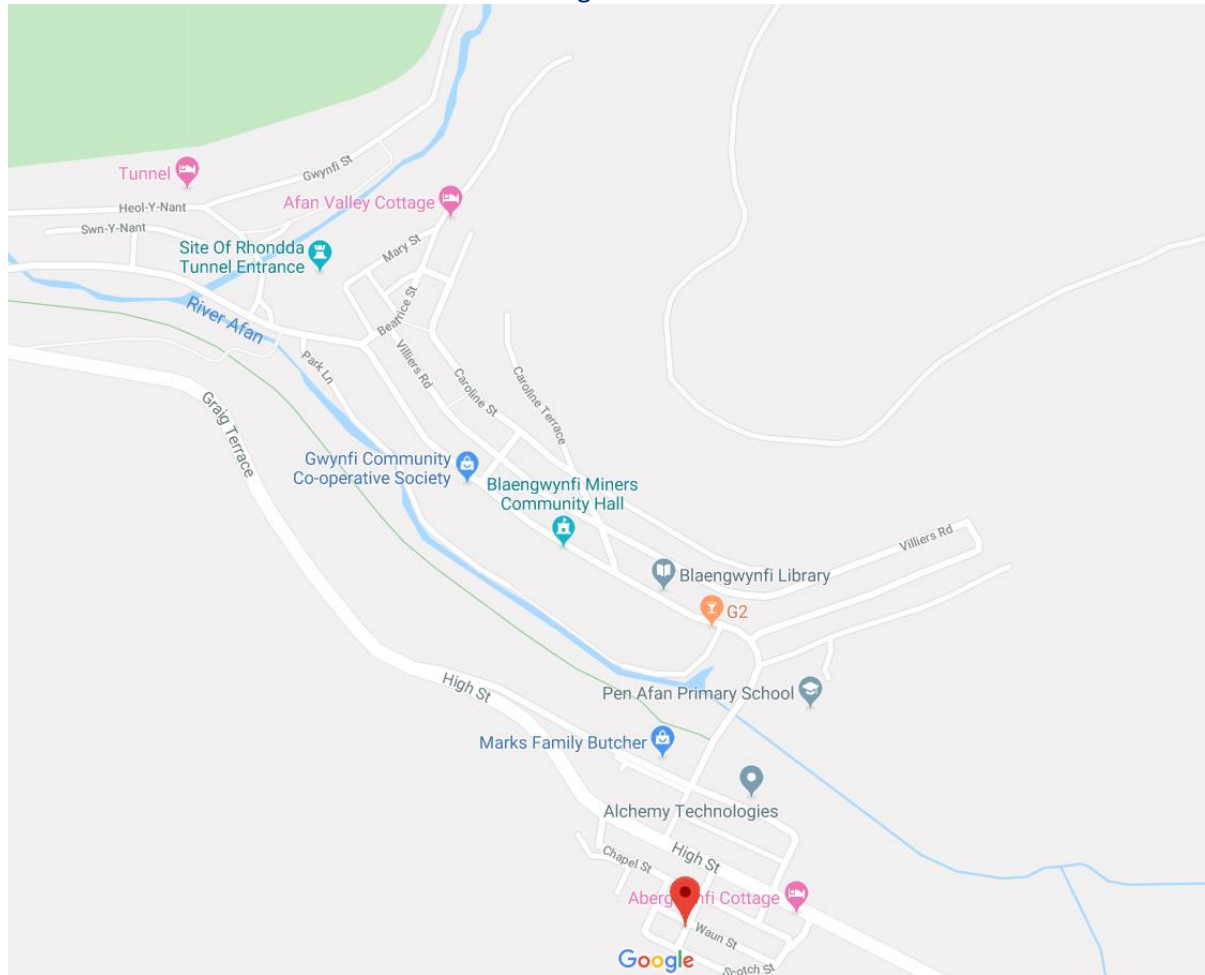
4	Employment & Local Economy (where do people work)	<p>58% of population is working age but only 26% of people aged 16-74 are in full-time employment compared with 36% across Wales and of the 58% working age population, only 51% are economically active.</p> <p>The largest employment sector is Health and Social work followed by manufacturing and retail.</p> <p>26.3% are in full-time employment (267) compared with 35% across Wales/12.1% are in part-time employment (123) and 3.2% of people are self-employed (33). 49.0% of population are economically inactive which is about the Welsh average.</p> <p>Most people commute to employment in Neath, Port Talbot, Swansea and Cardiff.</p> <p>In order of the most popular jobs according to UK census (2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Health and Social Work (19% of working people) · Manufacturing (15% of working people) · Retail (14% of working population)
5	Active Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynfi Miners Community Hall (GMCH) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clydfan Pensioners ○ Gwynfi Boxing Club ○ Gwynfi Youth Club ○ Blaengwynfi Library Reading Group ○ Community Cinema ○ Gwynfi Tots • Gwynfi Affiliated Sports Project (GASP) • Gwynfi Bowls Club • SNS (Sunday Night Syndicate) • Gwynfi Park Minders • Rhondda Tunnel Society • Presbyterian Chapel • Gwynfi United FC • Afan Valley FC • Gwynfi Athletics Social Club
6	Schools – primary, secondary, Welsh, special needs, nurseries	<p>In area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penafan Primary School - (Estyn Rating 2011 – adequate) ages 3-11. Part of the Federated Primary schools of the Upper Afan Valley / 81 pupils and 17 nursery pupils

	<p>(including Cylchoedd Meithrin), childcare providers – number of pupils in each, current Estyn ratings</p>	<p>Closest Welsh Language Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, Maesteg - (Welsh medium aged 3-11) – 5.8 miles from Gwynfi. Estyn rating (2016) – Good 306 pupils • Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd - (Welsh medium aged 11-18) – 8.1 miles from Gwynfi. Estyn rating (2015) – Good- 607 pupils with 110 in sixth form. <p>Closest English Language Secondary School</p> <p>The only secondary school in the (Cymmer Afan Comprehensive) closed down in 2019 after a campaign to save it by all local people was lost. This has had a major impact on the valley. The site will be demolished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maesteg Comprehensive (5.8 miles from Gwynfi) (English medium aged 11-18). Estyn rating (2019) – Standards – Adequate and needs improvement; Wellbeing and attitude to learning – Adequate and needs improvement; teaching and learning experiences – Adequate and needs improvement; Care, Support and guidance – Good; Leadership and management – Adequate and needs improvement. 1,036 pupils. • Ysgol Cwm Brombil, Margam (14.1 miles from Gwynfi) opened in November 2018, (English medium aged 3-16) no Estyn report available. <p>Closest Special educational school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ysgol Hendrefelin Neath (aged 5 – 16) – 11.1 miles from Gwynfi • Ysgol Maes Y Coed Neath (aged 2-19) – 10.9 miles from Gwynfi <p>Closest Childcare providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynfi Tots – provide flying start playgroup
7	<p>Leisure facilities and activities for Children & Young People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Club (Based at GMCH) • Boxing Club (Based at GMCH) • Afan Valley FC • There are parties/event held for key dates through the year e.g. Easter, Halloween and Christmas. • Saturday morning activity club (Based at GMCH) • Cinema screenings (Based at GMCH)

8	Transport Connections	<p>240 households have no cars and there is no train line in the valley. Travel time to key services are in line with the Welsh average on the whole, however they have to travel a long way to reach a bank or petrol station (out of the Valley).</p> <p>Travel Times to Key Services</p> <p>Post Office – 10 mins Library – 15 mins GP – 11 mins Pharmacy – 12 mins Primary School – 14 mins Secondary School – 52 mins Food Shop – 11 mins Leisure Centre – 97 mins</p> <p>Roads</p> <p>The road system is heavily influenced by the Valley’s topography. Junctions in some locations are difficult, while bridges able to carry heavy vehicles dictate bus and lorry routes.</p> <p>Although Gwynfi is at the very far reaches of the Afan Valley (10.04 miles up from the start of the Afan Valley), it is very close to the Rhondda Valley and you can drive directly from Gwynfi to Treorchy (Rhondda Fawr) in 10 -15 minutes over the Bwlch Mountain Road, by travelling over the Bwlch Mountain Road you can also reach Bridgend. There is also access over the Croeserw Mountain road to Maesteg and this is a 15-minute drive from Gwynfi.</p> <p>Rail</p> <p>There is no rail line in the Afan Valley, the closest train station is Maesteg (5.88 miles / 14-minute drive away in Llynfi Valley) or Neath (11.28 miles / 26-minute drive away in Neath Valley). Treorchy train station in Rhondda Valley is only a 15-minute drive away and 8.51 miles but there is no public transport connecting Afan and Rhondda Valleys.</p> <p>Buses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transport provision is poor. There is a weekday bus to Neath College (for students only) in the morning, and back in the evening. • There is a 2 hourly service Monday to Saturday, 6 into and 5 out of the village a day. Travel to Neath requires changing buses at the lower Afan Valley village of Pontrhydyfen.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both buses are provided by First Cymru.
9	Health Provision (GP practices, hospitals, clinics, other services)	<p>In area</p> <p>There is a GP at the Health Centre in Gwynfi - part of the Afan Valley Group Practice with Glynccorwg.</p> <p>Closest hospitals</p> <p>Hospitals are Neath Port Talbot, Singleton, Morriston and Princess of Wales Bridgend.</p> <p>Dentists and opticians</p> <p>None in area, closest are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cymmer Dental Clinic in Cymmer Health Centre. Opticians are in Maesteg, Port Talbot or Neath. <p>The average life expectancy is in line with the Welsh average at 78, but Healthy life expectancy is 62 years of age compared with 65 across NPT and 68 across Wales.</p>
10	External services brought into the area	Nothing at present.
11	Community Facilities (with postcodes) Include pharmacies, libraries and petrol stations Main buildings Sports facilities & Clubs Playgrounds Playing fields Heritage sites allotments	<p>The key main buildings are:</p> <p>Gwynfi Miners Community Hall / Gwynfi Athletic Social Club / The G2 and The Tunnel Hotel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacy (SA13 3TA) Gwynfi Miners Community Hall (GMCH) (SA13 3TE) - This hosts a number of services: Library (Based at the Community Run Hall) Gym (Based at the Community Run Hall) Community Cinema (Based at the Community Run Hall) GP Referral Programme Car Repair Garage (SA13 3YW) Bowls Club, Green and Clubhouse (SA13 3UL) Gwynfi United Football Ground (SA13 3TS)

- No Petrol Station – nearest is in Maesteg or Port Talbot



11a Parks & green spaces (and Green Flag Awards where applicable)

As well as a play park (concreted) and bowls green, there is a walking / cycling path that starts at one end of village runs through village next to river Afan and then continues as a flat path surrounded by green space all the way down the Afan Valley. In addition to that there are several forestry walks that start near Tunnel Hotel managed by NRW that then link up to the mountain bike trails.

	<p>Footpaths and Active Travel networks</p>	<p>Footpaths and Bike Trails – Part of the Afan Valley Forest Park Network</p> <p>There is also a large football field nestled in the corner of the village surrounded by mountain.</p> 
<p>12</p>	<p>Places of worship (description, denomination, how buildings used)</p>	<p>46.8% identify as having no religion which is in line with the Welsh average. 43.5% of remaining people (590) identify as Christian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaengwynfi Presbyterian Chapel (Villiers Road SA13 3SY)
<p>13</p>	<p>Local businesses & shops</p>	<p>Essential Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Shop • Pharmacy • Small Local Co-operative Supermarket. Includes the Post Office. <p>Health, Beauty and Fashion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynfi Barbers

		<p>Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese takeaway • Butcher <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alchemy Technologies SA13 3YL - http://alchemytech.co.uk/about/
14	Tourism facilities (including tourism websites)	The valley is well known in Mountain Biking circles, and the village sits on several of the trails that run throughout the valley, and footpaths from the Afan Forest park at Afan Argoed. The planned reopening of the Rhondda Tunnel (which would be second longest cycle tunnel in the world connecting Blaengwynfi to Blaencwm in the Rhondda Valley) should increase this. There are a couple of B&Bs and a small hotel in the villages.
15	Leisure premises, pubs, clubs etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2 Sports Bar. • Tunnel Hotel. • Gwynfi Athletic Social Club.
16	Derelict buildings and areas of land that are problematic or affect people's view of the community	<p>There are a number of empty houses (see below)</p> <p>There are 54 vacant dwellings – 8% compared with Welsh average of 6%.</p>
17	Housing – current and planned? Who	<p>Make up of Properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached – 22 (3.3%) Welsh average = 27.7% • Semi-detached – 69 (10.3%) Welsh average = 31.0% • Terraced – 563 (83.9%) Welsh Average =27.8% • Purpose built flat – 11 (1.6%) Welsh average = 9.6% • Flats in converted house – 4 (0.6%) Welsh average = 2.4% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner occupied – 395 (64%) Welsh average = 67.8% • Social rented – 137 (22.2%) Welsh Average =16.5% • Private rented – 56 (9.1%) Welsh average = 12.7%

		<p>According to the 2011 census, there were 54 vacant dwellings. 8.0% of the housing stock. In recent years Tai Tarian Housing association have demolished some properties in the village.</p> <p>The average price for property in Blaengwynfi stood at £59,295 in August 2018 and 79% of properties were built between 1900-1939. Social Landlords in the area are Tai Tarian and Coastal Housing.</p>
18	Analysing all that – what are the main gaps in provision?	The area has limited facilities and employment, and transport provision is very poor. Access to secondary and further education will become more difficult following the closure of the valley secondary school, necessitating children travelling more than 11 miles to the schools either side of Port Talbot.
19	What’s likely to come up? What might change?	<p>The reopening of the tunnel and cycle path should increase tourism, and open links to the Rhondda Valley.</p> <p>Christmas Tree Group trying to organise village activities at Christmas.</p> <p>There is an active group trying to take over and improve children’s play area in the village.</p>
20	Community Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llynfi Afan Wind Farm – up to £5,000 • People’s Health Trust Local Conversation Small Grant Scheme – up to £2,499 • Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund
21	Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Jane Jones – Independent • AM – David Rees – Welsh Labour • MP – Stephen Kinnock – Labour • Council – NPT CBC – Labour • Town / Community Council – None

FUND AREA OF BENEFIT

The Fund's area of benefit covers the upper reaches of the Neath, Afan, Rhondda and Cynon Valleys – the main communities are shown on the map.



Applicants can be based outside this area – they need to explain clearly how their proposals will benefit people living in the Fund communities.

