



Talybont-on-Usk



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Introduction

This Sign Rationalisation Study was developed by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) and Talybont-on-Usk Tourism (ToUT) as part of its response to bring enterprise and community together as agents for change, making the area “friendly and buzzing with activity,” and to create a stable future for residents.

The Project falls within the Rural Alliances partner programme led by Brecon Beacons with 12 partners across Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France and the Netherlands. It is designed to address “the rapid demographic change in rural areas with a new alliance building concept that engages people of all ages, backgrounds and residential status to undertake joint actions and be their own agents for change”.

We were asked to produce a study report that would identify next steps for development, action plan and responsibilities, potential funding streams and prioritisation for ToUT.

The objectives to take note of in particular, from the Group’s perspective were to:

- ◆ direct visitors safely into the Village for the purpose of them to enjoy the area;
- ◆ to support local tourism businesses without inconveniencing residents or increasing unnecessary traffic by just passing through;
- ◆ direct traffic to the correct areas of the Village to avoid congestion;
- ◆ direct visitors to activities, facilities, walks etc in the village and surrounding area;
- ◆ create a good first and lasting impression on visitors;
- ◆ enhance the visitor experience and increase their knowledge of the area and wider Brecon Beacons National Park.

We were asked also to look at highway signage including white on brown signs, welcome signs, cycle and walk routes signs and other signs or interpretation in the area.

What we were asked to do

In the inception meeting held in July 2012, we agreed that to achieve the objectives, the Study report would need to include:

- ◆ A database comprising digitalised photographic and contextual information of all visitor signs within the area which will include brown and white signs, car park, directional signs highway signs on trunk roads and destination signage. It will be provided in XLS, PDF formats and be Google Earth compatible;
- ◆ A conditions mapping of all current signs;
- ◆ A map and analysis of routes and their relevant information/signage such as cycle routes, the canal, bridleways, public rights of way as well as tourism 'product' ie facilities, attractions, activities etc. which will be provided in relation to visitor signage as each sign is followed to the destination;
- ◆ Consideration of Highways and legal implications of design recommendations and proposals;
- ◆ A SWOT analysis;
- ◆ Recommendations for next steps;
- ◆ Potential funding to assist with further development.

The consultant team also considered it useful to add to previous profiling work undertaken in the area and to scan pre-visit information available on Websites to highlight the extent of information available to visitors prior to arriving in the area. This would be useful in assisting in the future direction of ToUT and in line with their aims "to develop the tourism potential of the Talybont-on-Usk area, strengthen its identity for visitors and identify priorities for action working together collaboratively".

"We love it here. Its not too far to travel but we feel we have had a day out. It's just so friendly and unspoiled".



Outputs we agreed to deliver

In producing the study our approach was to concentrate on:

(i) Highway signage including brown on white signs

- * Particularly from the A40 approach towards the Village which was seen as the main route for visitors.

(ii) Welcome Signage

- * Potential installation of a welcome sign at the riverbridge at River Usk;
- * T Junction Station Road/B4558;
- * Signs from Pencelli and Llangynydir directions;
- * Signs from the canal.

(iii) Cycle and Walk Routes

- * Signage from village to Talybont Reservoir, waterfalls, Taff Trail, cycle route 8
- * Henry Vaughan Garden/Walk;
- * Signs on canal by lift bridge indicating walking and cycling times;
- * Other signs – bird hide information, Village hall signage, parking directional signage, nature and wildlife signage.

Our first task was to read relevant studies: A Strategic and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Brecon Beacons produced in November 2011, The Talybont-on-Usk Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and the Talybont-on-Usk Tourism Transport Management Plan. We also reviewed minutes of Community and County Council meetings and information on the Brecon Beacons Tourism website to help us with direction and strategic context for the study.

We produced a list of key stakeholders to contact for information needed on signage and to keep them informed (Appendix 1). An online and paper-based visitor questionnaire/interview schedule (Appendix 2) helped us gauge visitor perceptions on the areas of investigation and was used in the survey visits during August 2012.

The signs audit was undertaken in six visits to the Village in July and August. This involved photographing the position, condition and information displayed on each highway and pedestrian sign, interpretation and other signage – including waymarker posts in and around the Village. Map 1 on page 5 provides an illustration.

We contacted the Trunk Roads Agency Mid and North Wales to find out about signage from A40 and the Highways Department of Powys County Council regarding B road signage. We also contacted the Community and County Councillors once we had some firm ideas, for their comments and support.

Visitor Survey

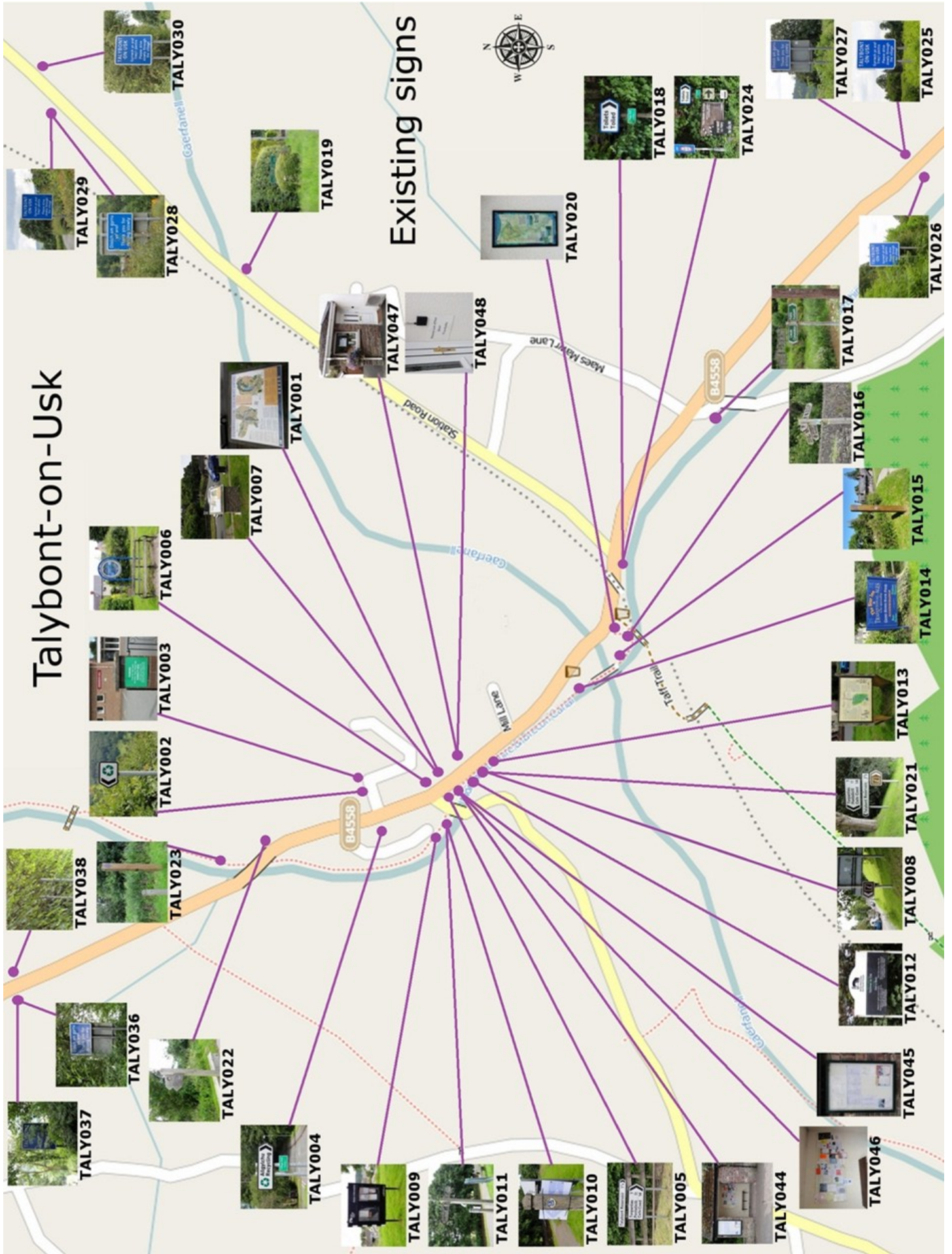
We interviewed 115 people as part of the visitor survey, asking them distance of travel and mode of transport to the Village, where they had parked if driving, the reason for their visit and the facilities or services used. We wanted to know their views on directional signage to the Village and other signs that would be useful to them when finding their way around. We also asked about information visitors had made use of such as the new visitor map, information leaflets from the Information Point, interpretation etc. and we also asked about what signs were missing that could be useful from both pre-visit and on arrival perspectives. We asked visitors to comment on whether or not they had received a welcome from people and businesses in Talybont-on-Usk. The Full visitor survey report is given as Appendix 3 but the summary of findings are provided below helped to form our conclusions and recommendations for the next stages.

Findings

- ◆ There was a broad range of distances travelled to the Village – the largest category with 21 parties travelling between 51 and 100 miles. Parties travelling less than 10 miles accounted for around 14% of visitors.
- ◆ All ages were targeted during the surveys to ensure a broad view across interests. We observed there to be a larger 30s and 40s category than over 50s (23%), teens (14%) and 20s (22%). More older people were observed during quieter weekdays than young groups.
- ◆ Of the 61 males and 54 females, couples and groups of between 3 and 10 (but mainly 4-6) were the predominant groupings interviewed.
- ◆ A Day trip was given as the reason for visiting by the largest number of respondents (27%) with weekend breaks, passing by and camping weekends being joint second responses (18%).
- ◆ Cars were the most used methods of getting to the Village (42.3%).
- ◆ The view of signage was mixed – 31% of respondents saying useful or very useful whilst the same percentage didn't know or used a sat nav. 19% found signage not very useful.
- ◆ Drivers indicated they parked on the road or in the White Hart car park – and were observed to be using pub facilities. Each group or individual interviewed was advised of Henderson Hall as the preferred place to park in the Village.
- ◆ Many respondents brought their own maps and information – certainly cyclist groups and canoeists were better prepared. The majority of those interviewed had not noticed additional information available and few had used the information point or map.
- ◆ Pubs, Canal, Café/Post Office/Shop were the top three facilities used by visitors
- ◆ Additional signage suggested by visitors included directional signage into the village, pedestrian signage along the canal, indicating cycling time/walking time between villages, Taff Trail and reservoir/ waterfalls signage.
- ◆ Visitors felt more pre-visit information was needed – particularly web-based information. Some difficulties had been experienced in finding B&B, campsite and hotel accommodation.
- ◆ Comments regarding the feel and welcome of visitors to the village were positive.

Talybont-on-Usk

Existing signs



MAP 1

Signs Audit

All signs were photographed and embedded into a database (Appendix 4) with their condition monitored and locations mapped. Some of the wooden waymarker signs along the canal appeared to be showing signs of age, certainly bases of posts had suffered from



regular strimming and were rotting because of damp conditions. Whilst the waymarker signs indicated direction to the Brinore Tram Road, and Taff Trail, they did not indicate distance.

Findings

Of the 81 signs audited in the area, most were in good condition. All signs were geo-tagged using a software called Picassa. Most can be seen from [Google Maps](#). Six road traffic and one cycle route signpost were not bilingual whereas the majority complied with Powys CC Welsh Language policy.

Visibility from the road was good for most of the signs except for the Talybont entry (talyo18) which was in fair condition, the road sign along Station Road, being broken and the two Highways village entry signs from the Pencelli direction where one is missing (Talyo38) and the other obscured by trees (Talyo37). There appeared, from the audit and from the visitors survey, not to be any directional or pedestrian signs requiring removal or were confusing to visitors. Comments from the Community Council in September indicated agreement that signage at the head of Station Road required streamlining; that an additional sign would be useful to indicate that buses should not use the draw bridge and a double-sided sign could be installed close to the draw bridge indicating distance to the reservoir. Certainly this final point is borne out from the visitor survey.



Walking the Trails and Towpath

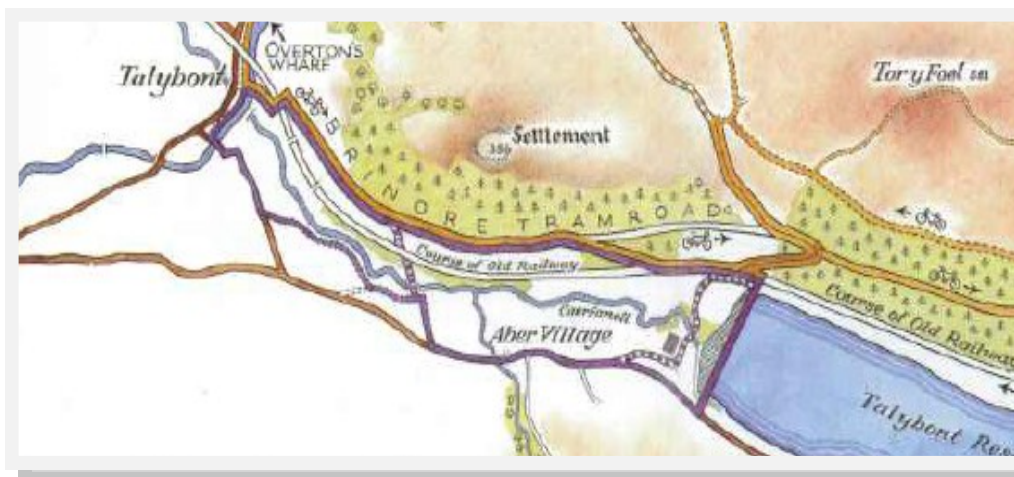
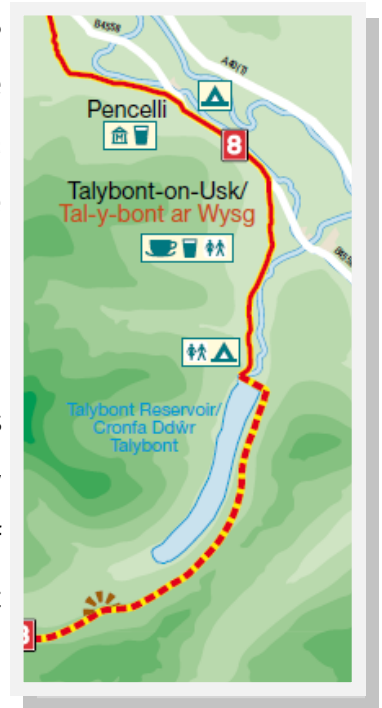
To take a visitor perspective of the main walks traversing the Village, the consultant team walked the main routes traversing the Village. We had been asked on several occasions about the direction to Taff Trail from the Village – indicating that there was some confusion as to whether or not it followed the canal towpath or not. We followed the information, interpretation and way markers to the Henry Vaughan Garden and then around the circular walk to check ease of use and whether there was need for vegetation or infrastructure improvements along the route. The Brinore Tram Road was also followed to the Reservoir.

Taff Trail

The Taff Trail, in its south east to north west journey to Brecon, travels off road on the east perimeter of the Talybont Reservoir and follows the unnamed B road into Canol Pentre before entering the Village from the draw bridge. The route continues along the B4558 out of the Village. During the survey, a number of visitors asked about its direction out of the Village and some were confused as to whether or not to use the Towpath for part of the journey.

Brinore Tram Road

The Tram Road runs for 8 miles between Talybont-on-Usk and Trefil. It is accessed from White Hart Bridge no 143. It was observed to be heavily bordered by bracken which narrowed the track to less than 1 metre in parts of the route towards the Reservoir. It is cobbled and uneven but the gradient fairly gentle for people with average walking abilities. It would not appear to be suitable for prams, pushchairs or wheelchairs. The Tram Road is overseen



By a Conservation Forum which was set up in 1999 and has a management plan in place to secure the long-term sustainability of biodiversity, landscape, culture and tourism potential of the area. More emphasis of the Brinore Tram Road could be beneficial to the Village.

Walking the Trails and Towpath

Monmouth to Brecon Canal towpath



This 35 mile long canal, managed by the Canal and River Trust, follows alongside the B4558 and through the Village, taking in the 142 Graig Las, 143 White Hart, 144 Talybont drawbridge and out to 145 Beniah Bridge. The walks are gentle and well trodden by walkers and cyclists. Visitors using longboats can stop within the Village to take on water and we understand the longboat hire companies provide plenty of information on all the villages along the canal to encourage them to use the facilities all villages offer.



Brecon Beacons National Park have produced an excellent map of the stretch from Brecon and observed to being used by visitors using the canal towpath.

The Canal and River Trust (Formerly British Waterways) is responsible for installation and maintenance of signage along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and one sign appeared to be dated and out of character for the area, although it is in keeping with the black and white theme of the Trust. The consultant team contacted various officers in the new Trust to discover that a re-branding exercise was being undertaken with existing signs expected to be re-vamped with new overlays. When asked about installation of initial design ideas we had developed, there appeared to be some general support for the idea and more information was requested. Additional information was also provided on new finger-post designs the Trust is installing. These do not address distances but are more durable than wooden posts. The Community Council felt there not to be a need for signage along the towpath and any signs would need to keep to a rural feel.

Findings

“What we could do with is information along the towpath that is similar to this [*Brecon Beacons map*]. It’s excellent especially with little ones who keep asking how far it is to the next stop”.



Several walkers we interviewed, referred to the lack of information along the tow path to tell them they had arrived in various villages. We know this to be true of Llanfrynach and possibly Pencelli. However, Talybont-on-Usk is clearly visible from the tow path. We would consider additional signage could be in terms of a welcome sign. The Community Council's view is that this is not a priority.

Henry Vaughan Walk



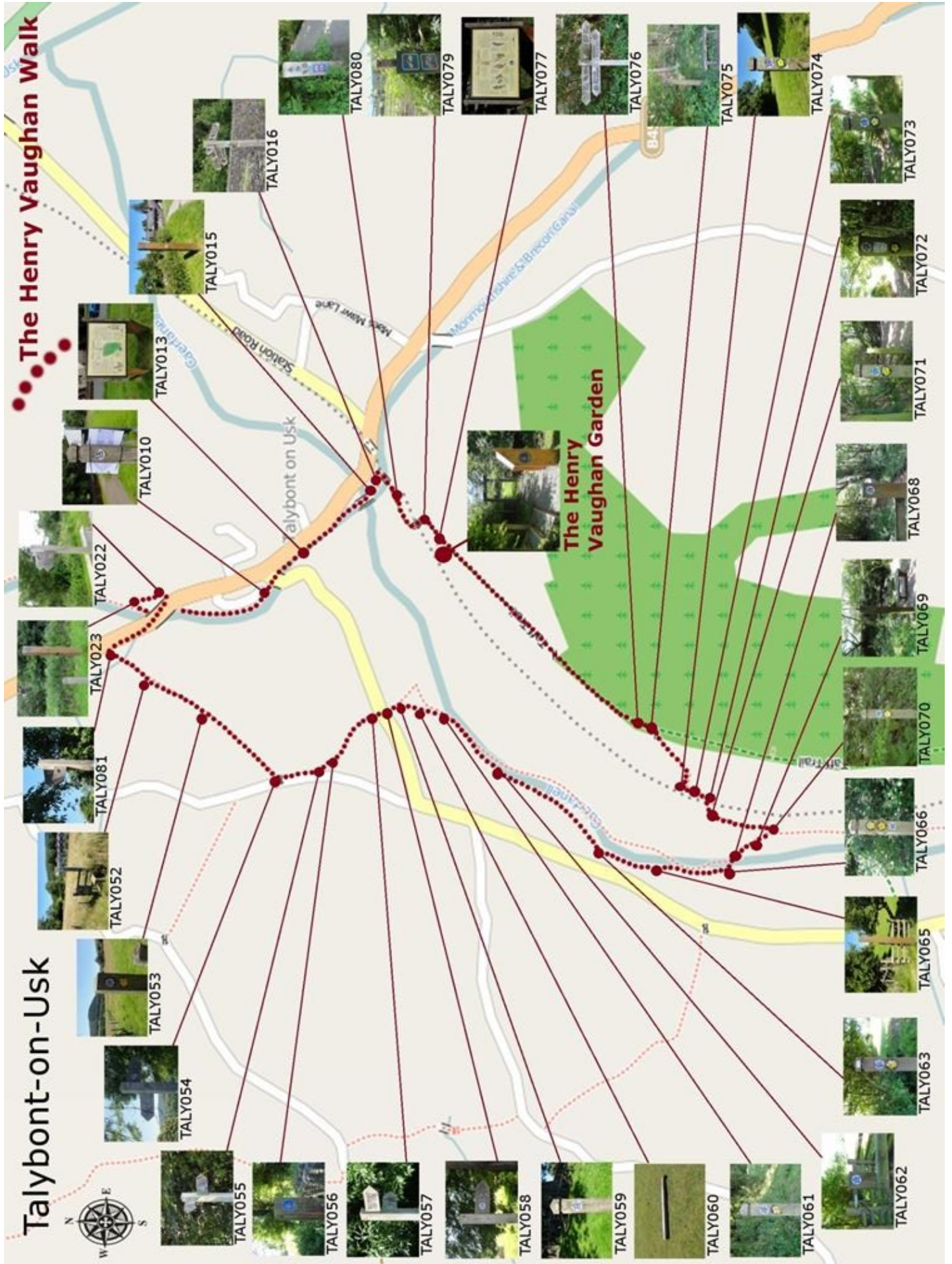
Henry Vaughan is one of Breconshire's famous sons. Born in 1622, he studied at Oxford and followed this with a poetic apprenticeship with the Inns of Court. He spent much of his life writing in Llansantffraid where he is now buried.



A walk has been dedicated to his memory. It is a gentle stroll of some 3.5 miles through the scenic, historic and poetic landscape of the Talybont Valley. (Map 2) The route is marked out with distinctive interpretation and waymarkers clearly representing 'the Swan of the Usk'. The route is easy to walk but does traverse farming land and some of this is muddy. The Henry Vaughan Garden is a quiet, reflective spot with benches and trees. It is only a short distance from the White Hart Bridge along the Canal but isn't signposted very well quite easily missed, especially if mountain biking or travelling from the reservoir back to the Village. Throughout the walk there appeared to be only one way-marking post damaged, having been uprooted, whilst the rest of the route was clearly signed. It appears that leaflets promoting the walk and the gardens are now out of print and perhaps something ToUT could take account of this when developing their marketing plan.

I walk'd the other day, to spend my hour,
 Into a field,
 Where I sometimes had seen the soil to yield
 A gallant flow'r;
 But winter now had ruffled all the bow'r
 And curious store
 I knew there heretofore.





MAP 2 Henry Vaughan Walk

Talybont Reservoir

Following the Brinore Tramroad to the Reservoir is a treat, enhanced by interpretation and it being a quiet off-road incline not too far a distance from the Village. It can be rewarded with a hot or cold snack and drinks at the Dan y Wenallt National Park Study Centre which is open until 5pm most days. Noticeably at this venue, there is plenty of information about attractions in and around the Brecon Beacons but nothing was available about Talybont-on-Usk. Some of those interviewed in the visitor survey were unaware of what was available in Talybont-on-Usk.



Findings

A 'Friends' or volunteers group has come together to concern themselves with improvements to the environment and biodiversity of the Reservoir. They indicated to us the clutter of poor signage at the far end of the road over the dam. Some of it installed by the Forestry Commission. They suggested signage was required to reduce off-roading taking place in the hills above. They were also concerned about the warning signs by the Pump House being an eyesore and supported ToUT for additional signage from A40 to bring visitors to the Reservoir. Map 3 illustrates the current signage and interpretation for visitors around the Reservoir.

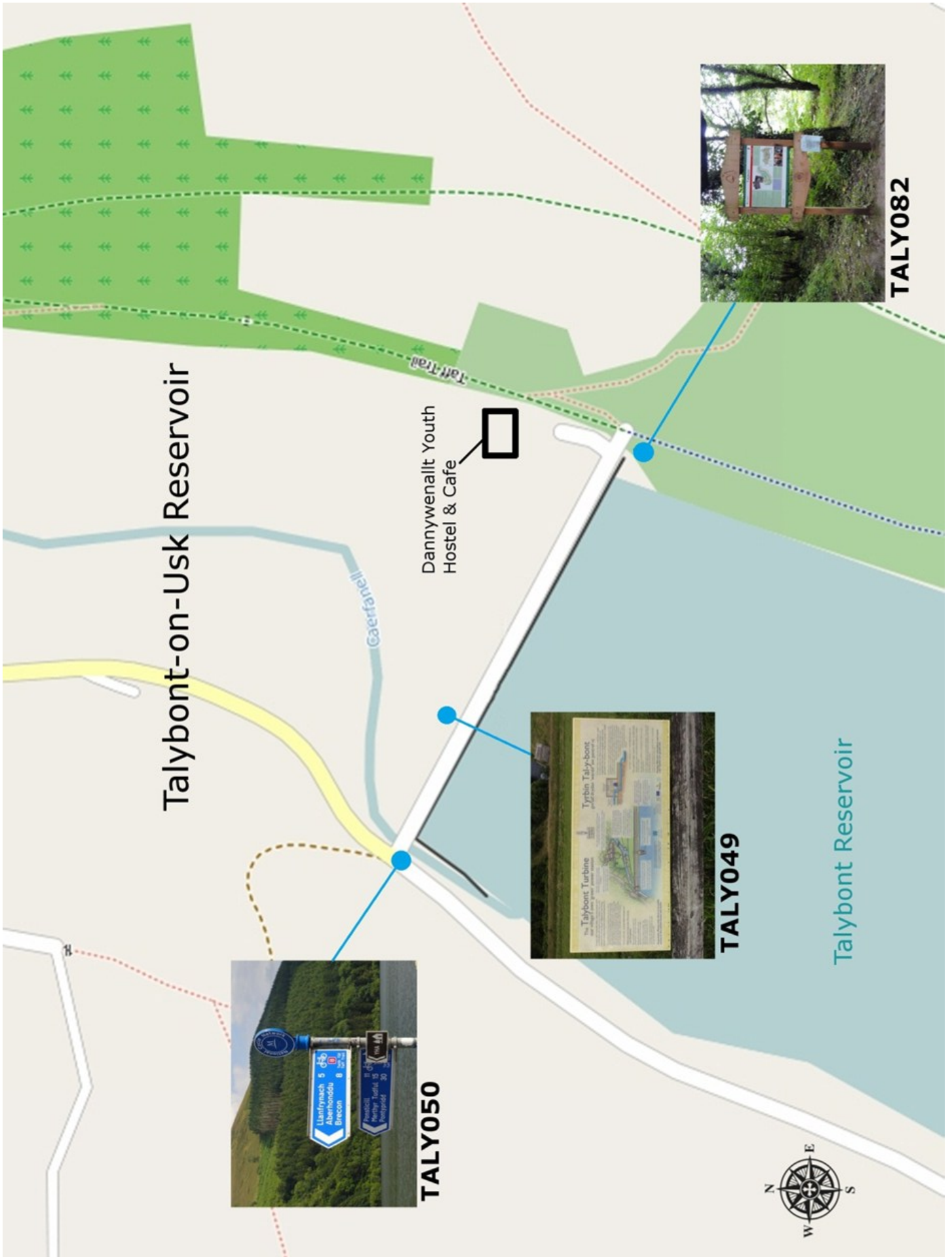
The Blaen-y-Gwyn Waterfalls are close to Talybont-on-Usk but not properly signposted or promoted locally, though visitors have a general idea they are somewhere near the reservoir. Signage from the Reservoir indicates the proximity of waterfalls but can easily be missed when following the road alongside the Reservoir which eventually leads to the County of Merthyr Tydfil. Talybont is home to a



Forestry Commission Field Station which provides technical survey work. The Centre could be a useful resource for all local groups in the area looking to monitor biodiversity, woodland and nature. Water is a significant resource in Talybont-on-Usk where, apart from the canal, the Caerfanell and Usk Rivers run

through the Village.





MAP 3 Reservoir Signage

Highways and Trunk Roads

Findings

The Talybont-on-Usk Tourism Group had specifically requested us to investigate the possibility of better signage from the A40. In our signs audit we counted four directional signs on the A40 north and south approaches to the Talybont-on-Usk turning. Whilst this has been considered insufficient locally, the Trunk Roads Mid and North Wales office consider there to be sufficient signage to direct drivers. They stated the purpose of signage not to be of promotion of facilities but for safe direction of vehicles. Whereas an argument exists that some lesser villages and attractions have been signposted along A Roads, the regulations and advice notes have recently changed which precludes any further signage from the A40 into the Talybont Village.

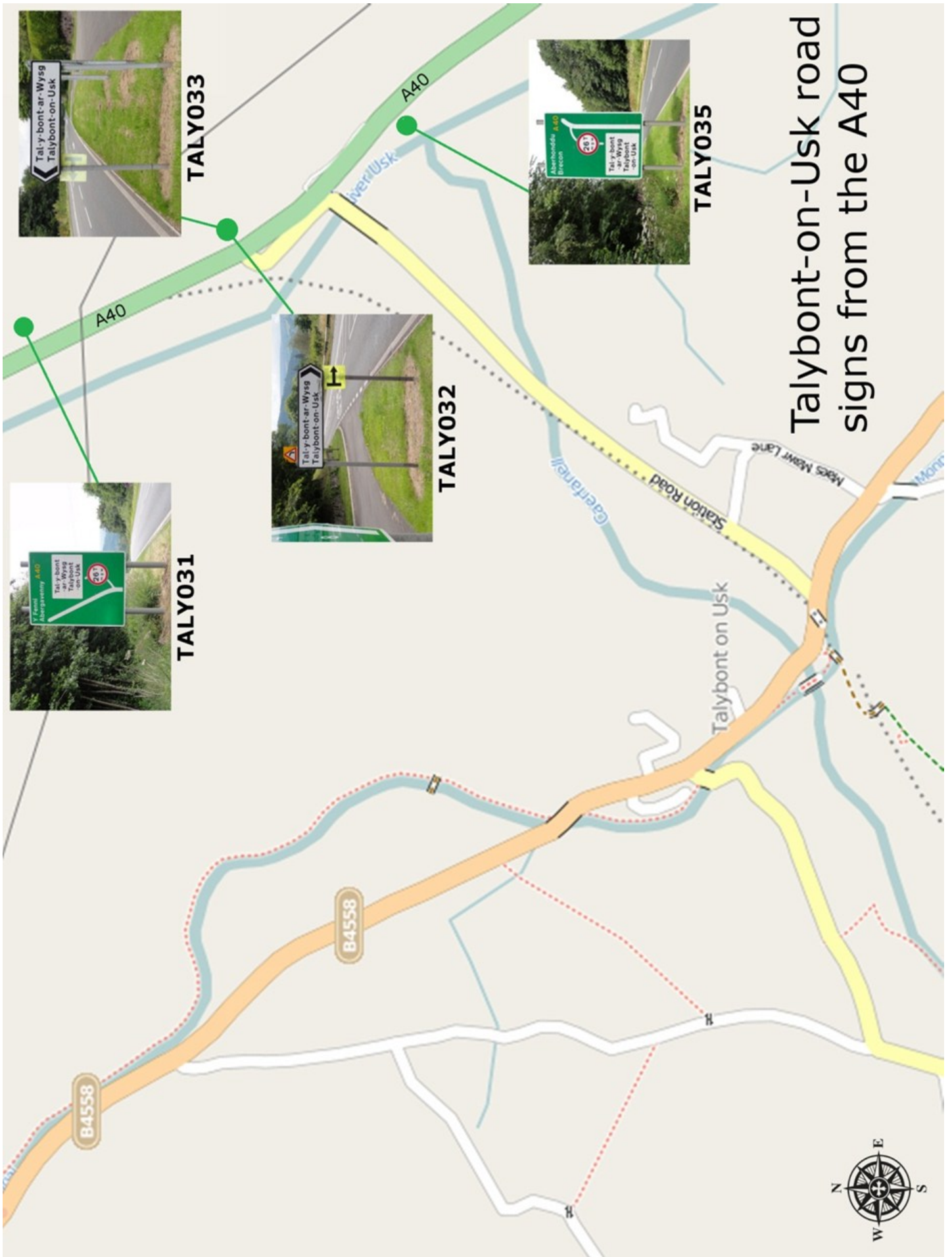
The signs audit did count four directional signs on the north and south approaches to the Talybont-on-Usk turning. These signs do not list any attractions or facilities that would normally be signposted using brown and white signage. In order for future brown on white signage to be considered the following criteria must be met:

- ◆ the attraction/facility must be recognised by Visit Wales and a letter of support available for inspection;
- ◆ appropriate licenses and accredited body recognition must support the attraction/facility;
- ◆ visitor numbers must be recorded (although there is no minimum qualifying number of visitors in Powys unlike other counties in Wales);
- ◆ signage can only be installed on trunk roads if there is sufficient and appropriate signage on adjacent local road networks;
- ◆ signage must be bilingual with Welsh above English;
- ◆ additional maps and leaflets must be available to promote the attraction/facility.

During the audit, we visited the pull-in along the A40, close to the Talybont-on-Usk turning and observed a large number of people stopping to use the facilities and picnic area. In this area is a BBNP map and information board and the consultant team considered it useful for promotional information to be made available in this area.



Comments from some visitors questioned the usefulness of additional signage: ... “What would be on offer if there were more visitors to the Village?” Another suggested the reason they came to the area was its unspoiled and natural look and feel. They considered more visitors would detract from the naturalness of the Village.



Talybont-on-Usk road signs from the A40

MAP 4 Trunk Road Signage

Bringing the information together we had collected, we set about designing some options that would address:

Directing visitors into the Village

Directing visitors to use formal rather than informal parking areas

Improving the sense of arrival

Directing visitors into the Village

The following option was proposed to the Community and County Councillors and an approach made to one member of the Village Hall Committee in regard to our solution:

A proposal to install Village Hall/Parking signage which would alleviate the issue of directional signs to the Village (making the assumption that a village hall may be in the village and therefore to follow the direction to take the visitor into the village). With an issue of on-road parking causing some distress at peak times, the suggestion of indicating formal parking in the Village Hall car park



may encourage some drivers to park there, particularly if they intend a long stay.

On that basis we are proposing (a black surrounded directional sign to the correct

angle on the existing post and indicating towards the junction.



This picture shows a mock-up of the junction with the Village Hall P sign installed on existing posts.

We suggested that an additional parking sign within the Village would be useful and would complement issues raised in the Tourist Transport Study which is being taken forward by the Community Council.



We proposed a double sided Village Hall/ Parking sign could replace the small green sign which would encourage drivers to use the village hall for parking instead of on-road.



We obtained costings for these signs from an independent sign writer, indicating the need to use black borders and for signs to follow BS standards as Highways indicated. The total costs for all signs were estimated to be £375 plus VAT.



We received support for the proposal from Cllr Liam Fitzgerald, Cllr Donna Darbyshire, Cllr Gareth Davies and Councillor Craig Burdon. Some observations in regard to the use of the Hall for events and wedding was raised and we responded that people could default to the road as had been observed during the Talybont Show.

We were informed by the Highways Department that they install all the County's signs through their Direct Services Office and therefore any installations would have to be made through that Department. Highways agreed to take the proposal forward and felt the need to incorporate the toilets sign with the village hall/parking sign at the Station Road T junction. All signs would be bilingual.

To ensure that this proposal, or a variation of it, was prioritised with Powys County Council, Cotyledon offered to contribute £500 towards the implementation and an approach made to Carol Williams to reduce the study budget to take this into account. This has been agreed and the signs orders were given to Powys County Council to process during the first week of September 2012 with an approximate timeframe of 6 weeks to complete design and installation.

Design Considerations



Improving the sense of arrival

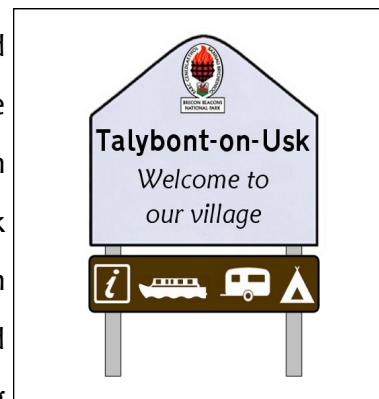
The sense of arrival from the A40 into the Village is currently a little vague. The visitor enters the village, passing two blue standard village entry signs and then passes (and usually misses) the green welcome sign along Station Road. Thereafter, the visitor faces a choice at the road junction. This is not the best presented aspect of the Village.

The consultant team, scoped out four example welcome sign designs based on observation and from visitor feedback. The village is known for walking, cycling and canal or waterways including the reservoir. The Talybont-on-Usk website includes this description as its strapline. Therefore designs based on these elements were chosen.

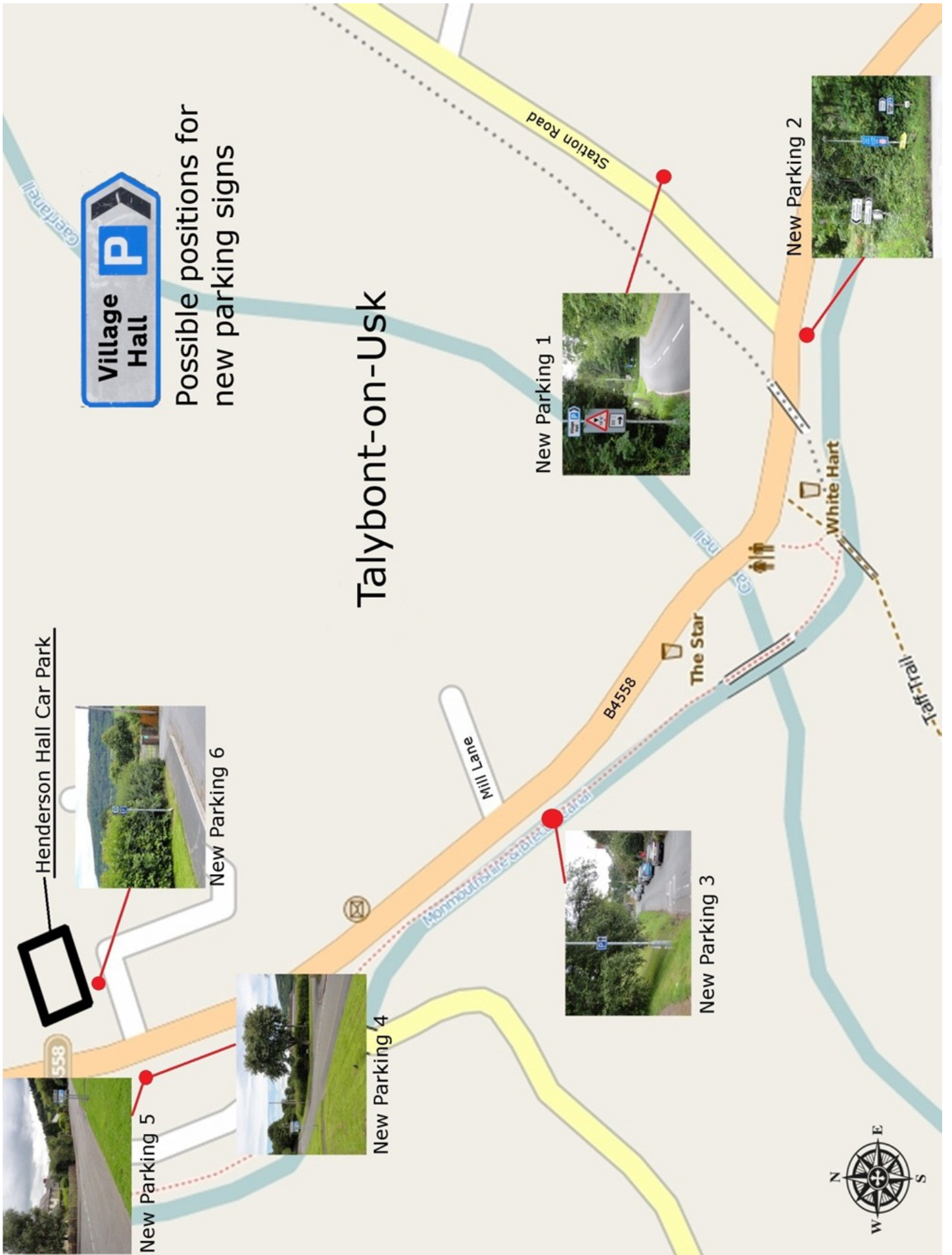
The Community Council received the drawings and questioned the use of the BBNP logo topping each design. They also felt Welcome to our village was 'twee' and recommended Welcome to Talybont-on-Usk with Croeso also included. Our choice of including nationally recognised (Brown and white) symbols would serve to address the move towards brown and white signs in the future and possibly could lead to signage off A40 for attractions. The rules on gateway signs allow for up to four symbols which are of relevance to the area. We think these could also link to food and drink, information, camping and canal. An alternative to camping could be reference to forestry and then additional directional signs could be installed pointing out of the village towards the Forestry, reservoir and waterfalls.

The costs for the sign – using existing posts are £235.00 plus VAT for the top part and £79 for the lower part with posts costing £55.00 each. This is from the independent source and the Council has not been approached in this regard.

Whilst the designs we have suggested are not bilingual, they are presented as ideas for further development in line with discussions on branding Talybont-on-Usk.



Design Considerations



MAP 5 New Road and Directional Signage

When we approached Cllr Gareth Davies who informally maintains the grass and planter in front of the existing welcome sign, he indicated that the Community Council were in the process of designing a planter to replace the existing one and that the land accommodating the sign and planter is owned by Powys County Council.

We consider the stone planter, a stone built circle of approximately 50cm tall, is still fit for purpose and that there are alternative shrubs which could be planted to replace the *Lonicera* which has grown out of proportion. These could include:

- ◆ Evergreen Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*) a subshrub growing 6 –to 12 inches tall and 1 to 3 feet wide. Abundant white flowers appear in deep green foliage in late spring or early summer.
- ◆ Autumn salvia (*Salvia greggii*) an evergreen subshrub of 1 foot high and 1 to 2 feet wide, with lavender, red, pink or yellow flowers that bloom from summer to autumn.
- ◆ French or Spanish lavender (*lavendula stoechas*) for midsummer to autumn blooms with a profusion of dark purple flowers among grey-green leaves.

There may be more locally sourced varieties that are considered more appropriate. However, it would seem to us that the stone planter still has a lifespan and that funding could be diverted towards the cost of replacement welcome sign or other promotional aspects for the Village.



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Possible new village entry and pedestrian signs

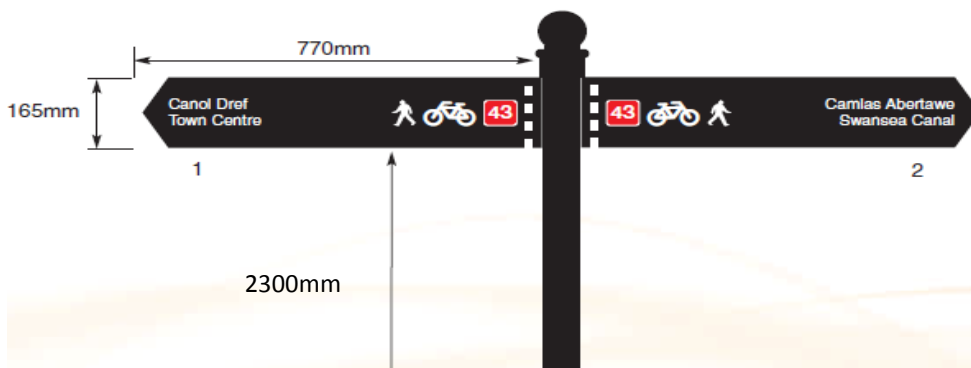
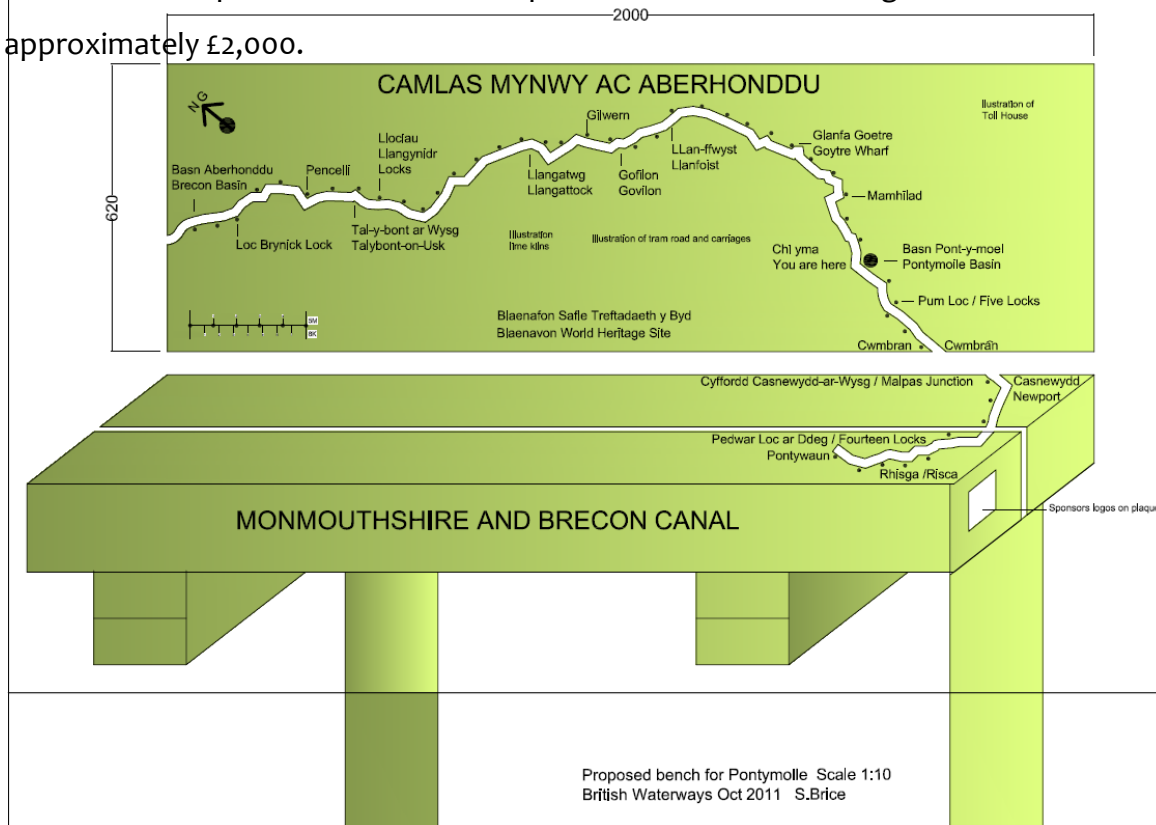


Map 5

Signage for walkers and cyclists on the towpath

The need for pedestrian signage along the towpath has been identified by visitors in the survey. Map 5 highlights potential locations for Welcome signs along the canal. These can be further discussed with the Canals and Rivers Trust since early indications are that there could be support for this—dependent upon positioning.

The Benches mentioned earlier for installation along the towpath would serve as additional interpretation and can be personalised for the Village and installed for approximately £2,000.



This design of fingerpost is being installed along the canals and rivers network. Our initial design suggestion was for blue pedestrian signage and would include distances by foot or on cycle. This alternative design and all ideas presented in this report need to take into consideration the branding exercise. The colour of signage and suite of street furniture needs to be consistent.

Design Considerations



What's On?

The T junction at the head of Station Road does not present the visitor with a favourable entry into the Village. The Village Hall/Parking and toilet sign proposal being taken forward by Powys CC and BBNP will



rationalise this to some extent but there is a need for businesses to be mindful of the overall presentation when displaying signs. Powys County Council has every right to remove all informal signs. There are, however, few good locations in the village to advertise events and activities in the area.

The consultant team has considered a design of a 'What's On display board similar to the one in Abergavenny shown here. This simple white board allows for six items of information to be slotted onto the board. The sign can be wall or post mounted and does not need to be any wider than 600mm (half the size shown). A range of signs could



use nationally recognised symbols to indicate particular events (such as cinema), attractions or facilities and should reduce the plethora of styles colours, media etc which contribute to clutter.

The ideal spot for the What's On board would be at the T Junction but personal safety issues could be raised by Highways in terms of changing information and there is insufficient space available on the bank or to the side of the directional signs to be installed. The Bridge sign would also obscure the view from Llangynydir approach.

Other suitable locations are:

1. Wall mounted on the White Hart Bus stop/toilets side wall (Currently housing an old style BBNP map)
2. Wall mounted on the Bus stop in the village on the opposite side to the Community Council information board
3. Post mounted on the green area adjacent to the Mountain Bike and map

There are limitations to each suggested location that must be considered. A 1000mm x 800mm board would fit on the White Hart bus stop/toilet wall if the BBNP map was placed onto the front of the bus stop. This would be highly visible to drivers coming into the Village from the A40 or B4558. BBNP may consider there to be a safety issue in placing the map to the front of the bus stop. Alternatively, a smaller sign could be situated alongside the BBNP map.



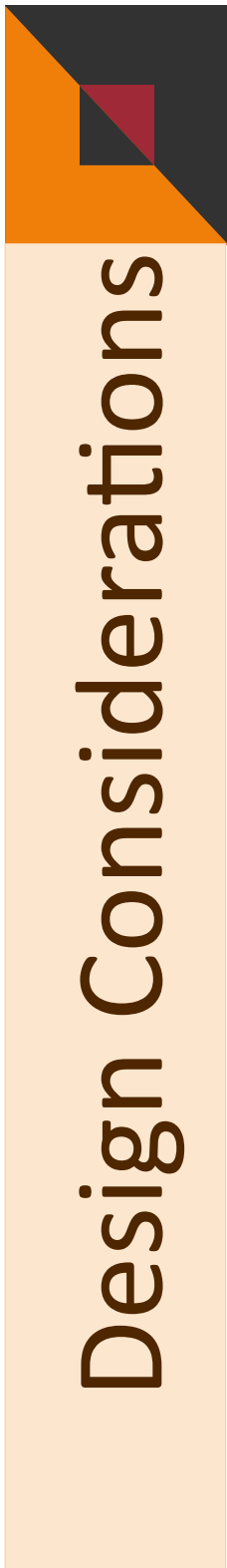
The village bus stop, opposite the shop/Post Office/café has informal community information within it and as this is a good local resource, it should remain available and not disturbed by a new What's On sign which can be added to the right hand side wall. If the downpipe on the bus stop—which was is in need of repair, could be moved to the side elevation, this would create more space for the board and be easier to use and see.

If the downpipe was moved to the side elevation of the bus stop, this would create more space for the board and be easier to use. However, for pedestrians and users of the bus, the signs would be quite visible but information would be less clear to see for drivers coming from the Pencelli direction.

A post mounted board would be useful if placed close to the Mountain Biking sign – although it would be useful to consider is similar design shape (tubular blue posts) to be in keeping or there is danger of a cluttered appearance. The angle for this is also important so that drivers using the bridge and coming from Pencelli will be able to see what is displayed.

Businesses could use the symbols in their promotional material or display on their premises and signs. This could reduce clutter and develop greater sign coherence through the Village. A few suggestions are provided above. The negative aspect of this What's On design is that slotted in signs could be removed too easily by vandals because they are not locked into position.

The What's on sign has been costed at: £296.00 excluding VAT by DMA Signs. This would be for 1200mm x 80mm dibond board with shaped top and ticket rails fabricated from dibond strips to take 6 x 1mm inserts, applied vinyl text to header and footer.



What is on offer in Talybont-on-Usk

Part of our work enabled us to look at the facilities available to visitors. Taking on board some of the comments during the survey, that there was not a lot of information available via websites and in particular some of the businesses did not have websites or presented only very limited ones with no available ebooking facility.

Our observations led us to find the following websites promoting the area:

- * [Www.talybontonusk.com](http://www.talybontonusk.com) A good website promoting and hyperlinking to local businesses ie Nigel Forster, Harry Chapman, Jo Hughes, Talybont Stores, Wye Valley Canoe Centre, Pencelli Canal Boat Hire, Brecon Beacons Canal Hire, The Star Inn, The Travellers Rest, The Usk Inn, Talybont Farm campsite, the White Hart, Talybont Energy. Each of the linked businesses could create a reciprocal link to the Talybontonusk.com site and promote local events together to maximise hits and to identify a wider offer for patrons of their service.
- * [Www.talybontstores.co.uk](http://www.talybontstores.co.uk), www.starinntalybont.co.uk, links to alybontonusk.com and Talybont.org– community council (page 4 in a Google search) but do not promote local events. [Www.talybontenergy.co.uk](http://www.talybontenergy.co.uk) links to the website but is buried and had the wrong date for the Talybont Show.
- * www.Creativephotographywales.com, www.travellersrestinn.co.uk, www.Uskinn.co.uk, www.breconbunkhouse.co.uk (White Hart Inn), www.talybontfarmcamping.co.uk have no link to Talybontonusk.com and do not promote local events

Other websites advertising, or having the potential to advertise activities and facilities in Talybont-on-Usk include:

www.exploremidwales.co.uk

www.breconbeacons.org - Talybont-on-Usk page—no link to Talybontonusk.com link is to visit our beacons.com.

www.breconbeaconstourism.co.uk not classed as a good website for information on Talybont-on-Usk—no local events.

www.visitourbeacons.com poor website no events information for Talybont-on-Usk

www.breconcottages.com

www.go4awalk.com

www.british-towns.net

www.ukcampsites.co.uk

www.traveline-cymru.info

www.travelbreconbeacons.info

www.powystrails.org.uk

www.mbwales.com

www.visitbreconbeacons.com

The purpose of highlighting websites that are linked or have the potential to link to the Talybontonusk.com site is to enhance the visitor experience by providing pre-visit information that is up to date, consistent, linked across the activities and gives a sense of coherence. From our survey we know visitors generally use more than one facility when visiting. The remit of the Tourism Group is to “work collaboratively” and “to make it easier for visitors to find their way around by providing good information”. In this regard we emailed a brief questionnaire to all the

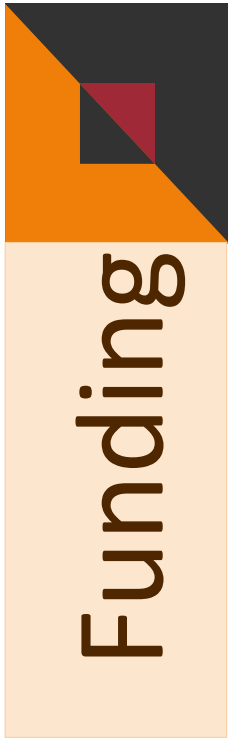
businesses in Talybont on Usk, asking them to identify ways in which they could support ToUT in promoting tourism and information on numbers of visitors and how they collect information. Our results were nil! One respondent provided limited information something close to their interest and refused to answer any further questions. Our interpretation of this result is that there is more work to be done to achieve collaborative working across the businesses because they do not appear to recognise the benefits of collective promotions—or they may not have the time. We believe this to be an important role for ToUT— members of which have businesses and could directly address.



Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clear aims of the Group which provide an offer to businesses and residents as well as visitors; ◆ Support of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority ◆ Signage is in general good order ◆ Talybont-on-Usk Website is a good start to developing the information hub necessary to promote the Village ◆ Knowledge of visitor perception of the area to draw on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A number of other active groups in the area is there sufficient collaborative working? ◆ Lack of consistent promotion of the village through local business websites or leaflets which could be available in Tourist Information Centres. ◆ Reliance on external funding—focus on larger scale, strategic issues rather than small, practical and achievable measures to make incremental improvements. ◆ No A40 signage currently and no chance of this from current regulatory guidance
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Links and collaborative funding bids could be developed with other active groups with complementary aims and objectives ◆ Opportunity to enhance image and profile of village based on walking wheels and water ◆ Local businesses can discuss and agree a level of mutual promotion of the area so that they are not seen to compete but offer a ‘whole package’. ◆ Could concentrate on small practical issues to enhance visitor experience as well as larger, more strategic. ◆ Walks, canal, presence of the Village ◆ Opportunity to build brown and white sign profile over the next couple of years to encourage formal signing from trunk and B roads. ◆ Branding required to develop consistency in signage and street furniture livery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of promotion of the Village externally through TICs ◆ Funding to realise ambitions ◆ Competing views and activities of active groups within limited financial resources

There is not an over-abundance of funding available to ToUT. Partly this is because of the type of activities ToUT is engaged in and that funding for Tourism is generally focused towards enterprises and businesses. Apart from general grant schemes which are open across the UK (ie BIG), there is often a need to provide match funding. In most cases there is heavy competition for grant funds and there appear to be tighter or more targeted approaches to funding.

Apart from Brecon Beacons, Glastonbury and the Community Council who have already assisted ToUT in this study and the transport study, we have identified a small list of funding we think ToUT could attract—dependent upon what activities they wish to progress. Signage would not be seen as a priority for funding and within the realms of statutory obligations. However, enhancing the sense of place, working with others on environmental or wildlife projects which could include interpretation and signage could be achieved and there are funding grants still available to encourage people to become involved with the community therefore activities to promote a collective response to developing leaflets or contributing to the Website could work.



Source	Programme	Criteria	£
Visit Wales	Tourism Investment Support Fund (TISS)	New and existing businesses to provide sense of place, increase	25% of funding up to £300k
www.wales.gov.uk/funding/fundgrantareas			
Environment Wales	Various pre-project, training, mgt and pro-	Various	£500 - £12k
www.environment-wales.org.uk			
BIG lottery	Awards for All	Supporting community activity	£500 - £5000
BIG Lottery	People & Communities	Revitalising communities; enhancing local environments, com-	£5001 - £1m
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk			
Powys County Council	Sustainable Tourism RDP Possibly advantages to linking with iSpeed and B2N	Sense of place, green tourism – essentially for businesses or social enterprises	£5k 70% funding match
www.tourism.powys.org/sense_of_place			
Powys	Community enablement fund		Up to £15k
www.community.grants@powys.gov.uk			



Conclusion

From our findings, visitors are generally very happy with Talybont-on-Usk as a place to visit. There is an appreciation of its natural and unspoiled nature and the type of activity they come to enjoy is around walking, cycling or using the waterways, be they the reservoir, canal or rivers.

There are some issues surrounding direction into the village from Station Road and then help needed to direct visitors to park off the main road but the only additional signage appears to be in terms of directing visitors off the canal tow path to the reservoir, Taff Trail, Brinore Tram Road, Henry Vaughan trail and gardens and to be able to show distances between the villages.

There would be merit in increasing the sense of arrival, into the Village. The branding study could help in further scoping out our initial ideas for the welcome and village entry signs—taking into account the activities people already do and to try to

harmonise with brands and signage already in the Village—such as MTB Brecon Beacons and the Canals and Rivers Trust. The welcome sign and planter needs some treatment—ie by having a larger sign and replacing the plants. ToUT could speak with the Community Council to see if other uses could be agreed for the money intended for the wooden replacement planter.

Signage from A40 cannot be contemplated at this time. However, increased use of the nationally recognised brown on white symbols could increase the coherence of signs, reduce clutter and lead to a supported and evidenced argument to Trunk Roads Agency to install brown on white signs. But this would require a consistent and collaborative effort from businesses which are those ultimately subscribing to and paying for the tourist signs. More information could be made available to visitors at the pull-in on A40.

A What's On or events board would serve to rationalise informal signing and de-clutter the popular advertising areas. It could also increase the use of brown and white symbols to increase coherence.

Pre-visit information is patchy for businesses and facilities in the area. Increased collaborative working simply through linked websites, joint newsletters or promotional material and joint bidding would be beneficial to both visitors and businesses. Groups such as the Friends of the Reservoir, the Brinore Tramway Conservation Forum and the group responsible for supporting the Henry Vaughan walk and gardens as well as the Community Council include members with shared interests, one of them being to promote Talybont-on-Usk and all it has to offer visitors.



Next Steps

Recommended Actions

- ◆ ToUT or Brecon Beacons to chase Powys County Council for their installation of directional signs from Station Road and towards Henderson Hall;
- ◆ Powys CC to replace Station Road signs and missing blue village entry sign;
- ◆ Scope funding available to enhance sense of place funding and embark on eg Awards for All bid with others to promote the area, obtaining funding for promotional materials;
- ◆ Communicate with Brinore Tram Road Conservation Forum to promote Brinore Tram Road and link with their tourism ideas;
- ◆ Contact David Morgan in Canals and Rivers Trust once decision made of type of welcome sign chosen and funding in place to install—discuss interpretation bench as an option for Talybont-on-Usk. Find out if installation of finger-posts is on the list of refurbishments in Talybont area;
- ◆ Connect with Henry Vaughan Walk and Gardens (Peter Seaman) to identify ways in which new promotional material can be developed that will benefit all groups and enhance the visitor offer;
- ◆ Connect with the Friends of the Reservoir volunteers group to identify whether joint lobbying of the Forestry Commission and others as well as joint funding bids could provide signage to the waterfalls and improve the natural environment;
- ◆ Connect with Dan y Wenallt to include information about the Village in their information centre;
- ◆ Connect with the Forestry Commission Field Station to identify whether there are events and activities which can be promoted by FCW and therefore benefit the Village;
- ◆ Identify funding to produce the What's On board, or make use of locally sourced materials to test the model (the Consultant team has a source of post product recycle which could be made into a temporary board and printed slotted banners);
- ◆ Identify with BBNP during their revamp of existing maps (on A40 and within the Village) if better locations can be found to accommodate additional promotional material);
- ◆ Using the chosen brand, encourage all businesses to link with the Talybontonusk.com website and encourage them to reciprocate by advertising village events. A ToUT member could be given responsibility for this activity and to link with wider TICs and websites..

Next Steps

Acknowledgements



Our thanks go to Carol Williams of BBNP and the Talybont-on-Usk Tourism Group for giving us the opportunity to undertake this work and for your kindness and patience whilst preparing the report. We have engaged with quite a number of people, not least the visitors who have such high regard for the Village but also the people and organisations listed below for their help, advice and encouragement:

- ◆ Community and County Councillors via Katy Tutt, Clerk to the Community Council, Katy Tutt Tel: 01873 810733 or Mob: 07968 737833
- ◆ David Morgan, Canals and Rivers Trust Mobile 07717730903
- ◆ Dean Williams Trunk Roads Agency North and Mid Wales Unit 7 Llys Onnen, Ffordd Yllyn, Parc Menai, Bangor Tel 01286 685186/180
- ◆ Jo Lancey and Ian Mills Powys CC Highways Department 0845 607 6060 01874 611277 joanne.lancey@powys.
- ◆ Peter Seaman of Brinore Tram Road and Friends of the Reservoir groups peter.seaman@btinternet.com
- ◆ DMA Signs for estimates and quotations for signs—contact: 07738 409909 P O Box 103 Pontypridd CF37 9DZ
- ◆ Road Signs Direct—signs costings Daniel in Sales@roadsignsdirect.co.uk
- ◆ Peter Jackson and Phil Jackson re car parking meters in Powys peter.jackson@powys.gov.uk; phil.jackson@powys.gov.uk; 01874 620574

Jan Walsh

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Cotyledon Community Interest Company Ltd

October 1st 2012