

Daffodil Days 2024

Newent and district business Club and Buses4Us would like to invite the council to partner with us in arranging events and publicity for this year's Daffodil Season

As we are sure you know, thousands of visitors flock to the "Golden Triangle " every year in March to see the wild Daffodils that are such an important part of our local heritage and ecology. It's a wonderful celebration of spring and a great way to get the visitor season started.

We've been talking to people involved with the Daffodil celebrations since the Daffodil Line was first planned and a number of challenges/opportunities have emerged.

- Most of the people who come to see the daffs come by car, which clogs up the lanes and somewhat spoils the natural environment they have come to enjoy.
- Very few visitors stop off in Newent
- Especially since COVID, those involved with organising the festivities are dropping out and it's proving difficult to find new recruits.

We'd like to start helping to address some of these issues, and although we are a bit late to go all singing and dancing this year, we have an opportunity to at least make a start.

This is what we have so far:

- Free minibus service from Newent to Kempley for the 16th/17th and Newent To Oxenhall/Shaw common 23/24
- Barn Dance at the United Reform Chapel Friday 22 March
- Newent Spring Fayre Sat 23rd March
- Guided Daffodil Walk from Newent to Dymock on Sunday 24th.
- Self-guided Daffodil Walk, commissioned, mapped, and written up, from Newent to Dymock promoted in thring Down the Line, with the potential for printed leaflets/a link from the council website, if you wish.
- Newent Treasure Trail devised by Tony at the Museum of Board games, which will lead visitors through the town. Printing of entry postcards paid for by the Business Club. Prize TBC.
- Newent in Bloom wild daffodil planting - sometime in the week 23 - 29 March.
- Business Premises to be Daff - decorated for the whole period.
- We are hoping the district council will agree to allocate free parking days on 16/23/30 March.
- See attached sheet for full draft calendar of events - we hope for more to come in.

The Daffodil events in the villages, mainly Dymock and Kempley, raise a lot of funds for village projects, so it is important that we support them and don't try to draw visitors away.

Our nearest neighbours at Oxenhall have now agreed to put on their first full Daffodil Weekend since COVID on the basis that we support them with some volunteers to service teas (some signed up already - more always welcome!).

Kempley are holding their weekend on 16/17 Dymock on the 30/31 and Newent and Oxenhall on the 23/24 with the plan being that the two events will feed into one another, with visitors either taking the shuttle bus, or the short walk along the canal between the two sites.

The Business Club are keen to “embrace the Daffodil” throughout the month and go with a “Springfest” or “Spring Fayre” event on Saturday the 23rd.

This could include:

- Stalls in the Memorial Hall
- Live music/dance etc under the market hall, with maybe more stalls.
- Talks and workshops in the United Reform church.

Emma from Ingrams will be leading on this for the Business Club. Buses4Us are happy to take the lead on publicity.

As I said at the beginning, we will need to start small this year, but hopefully, we can all get behind making a start on what could become a fabulous annual celebration of spring.

We would like the council to partner with us in these events, and invite councillors who are able to help with forward planning and/or organisation on the day to join our working group.

Finance

It is hoped that these events will be self-funding through sponsorship, grant funding, ticket sales (barn dance) and donations. However there will be a need to pre-pay for certain items and in the first year a safety net in case promised amounts fail to materialize.

To this end, Buses4Us have earmarked a £750 contingency fund which can be used for pre-payments, and to cover any shortfall, if needed.

We would like to request a matching £750 of earmarked contingency funding from the council.