

## BAILEY PARK

Bailey Park is in the heart of Abergavenny, an amphitheatre for the surrounding mountains. Splendid Victorian gates mark the entrance to an avenue of beech and oak trees of great age, home to bat and bird boxes and a playground for squirrels and bird life. Seasonal flowers bloom beneath them.

The Priory stream flows through the park with a mixture of aquatic plants, passing the bandstand and circular seat under the majestic horse chestnut trees. The park is home to many amazing flower beds and a sensory garden created by Friends of Bailey Park who have successfully received the prestigious Green Flag Award. The area offers peace and tranquillity for the community to sit and appreciate the surrounding beauty with plants encouraging butterflies, bees, and insects together with a bug hotel and nest boxes made by local school children.



## LAURIE JONES COMMUNITY ORCHARD



A mixed fruit orchard, planted with local and regional varieties of apple, pear, plum and other fruit trees with a soft fruit area. The grassland is managed as a hay-meadow, cut in late summer, and there is a small wildlife pond. The boundaries are formed by hedgerows of hazel, blackthorn, elder and wild rose with bramble.

In the spring look out for bumble bees as they feed on Dandelion and Lesser Celandine flowers. Holly Blue butterflies are around in April/May and again in August/September. The fruit trees and the soft fruit bushes flower in April/May with the blossom attracting a range of bees and other insects. Marsh Marigold and Yellow Flag Iris flowers in the pond.

In the summer look out for butterflies such as Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Large and Small Skippers, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma. Listen out too for the chirping of grasshoppers and crickets. Look for dragonflies and damselflies around the pond.

In autumn and winter many birds, including Song Thrush and Blackbird, are attracted to feed on fallen apples and on the rose hips, elderberries and sloes in the hedgerows.



## GAVENNY MEADOWS

Gavenny Meadow lies between the Old Ross Road and the River Gavenny. The southern end of the meadow is a copse of mature trees and scrub saplings with an underlayer of blackberry providing a rich habitat for woodland birds and small mammals.

The northern end of the Meadow is open grassland, with a hedge along the Old Ross Road providing another interesting habitat for nesting birds.

The River Gavenny cuts a steep sided channel through the Old Red Sandstone layers here in the meadow and the shaded steep



damp environment provides an ideal habitat for abundant growth of ferns, mosses and liverworts. Sit quietly by the river and you may see dippers and grey wagtails. There is also evidence that otters visit the river.

## SWAN MEADOWS

The west side of Swan Meadow is set out as an urban park. There is a small children's play area and the Gorsedd Stones with a paved path along the River Gavenny passing the weir that fed the leat to power the former mills in nearby Mill Street.

The meadow is dissected by the River Gavenny and the east side of the meadow is a semi natural habitat with areas of grassland and a variety of tree species. There is a well established slowworm colony on this side but they are secretive and can disappear into the undergrowth if disturbed. A wide variety of woodland birds nest here and wrens are often seen in the foliage around the riverbank.

## CASTLE MEADOWS



Castle Meadows is a wonderful 22 hectare green space, with a range of habitats; a large pond, 3 rivers, a large floodplain meadow, a small copse, a wetland and a network of reens. The floodplain meadow is rare, there are few left in the UK as many have been drained and the rivers canalised.

Here the meadow is rich in plant and animal life with over 90 different plant species.

The flooding of the meadow is important because it deposits silt which enriches the soil. The area is managed organically with Welsh Black cattle on the meadows for 6 months of the year. A hay crop is taken after the flowers have seeded. The large pond is fed by water from the nearby river Cibi and has a good range of pond life and is noted as an important site for dragonflies. If you are there at dusk you may see bats flying down from the Castle.

The small copse is an area under renovation with a bank of 100 trees to commemorate 100 years since World War 1, there is a stone memorial too. The river Usk flows along the edge of the meadows and the area is an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



# EXPLORING NATURE IN ABERGAVENNY



Kingfisher credit: Alex Lee

## LINDA VISTA GARDENS

@LindaVistaGdns 

Originally late Victorian terraced gardens, the Linda Vista Gardens are a delightful, restful place right in the heart of Abergavenny. Delights include fine and unusual trees, a play area for children, colour-themed radiating flower beds interspersed with ornamental grasses, a wild grass and flower bank, and a recently planted collection of trees chosen to give autumn colour,

Even more recently, the slope in front of Linda Vista house has been planted with pollinator-friendly shrubs.

The formal planting of bedding plants has been replaced by wild flowers.



Insect life is also encouraged by a bug hotel, a small butterfly garden, and piles of branches left in the edging borders. Additions of land to the original gardens have created several different zones, each with its own flora: woodland, bog garden, a small pond, rockery, grassy swards, copses.

Produced by Abergavenny Town Council in partnership with:  
Friends of Bailey Park  
Friends of Castle Meadows  
Friends of Laurie Jones Community Orchard, Friends of Bailey Park  
Friends of Linda Vista Gardens  
Supported by Heritage Fund and Welsh Government  
Map © www.pomegranatecreative.co.uk



# ABERGAVENNY - A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE.

Duration of walk: 1-2 hours

Difficulty: Easy terrain, no stiles

Just a few minutes away from Abergavenny town centre you will find unexpected wildlife havens. From river gorges to flood meadows, from community orchard to more formally laid out parks and gardens, why not spend some time exploring Abergavenny's wildlife gems.

To help you explore, this walk links the main greenspaces in Abergavenny with suggestions of other areas to explore if time permits. This walk will take about 1 hour if walking continuously at a brisk pace but allow for longer to give time to stop, look and listen. You may see a kingfisher, dipper, otter, slowworm, and emperor dragonfly.



Spotted in the Community Orchard the Gatekeeper (also known as the Hedge Brown) is often encountered where clumps of flowers grow in gateways and along hedgerows and field edges.

Look for a slow worm. Swan Meadow offers the ideal environment for this legless lizard.



The Community orchard is home to many trees including fruit trees. As well as all the blossom for nectar then the fruits offer sustenance for wildlife.



A regular visitor to Castle Meadows Pipistrelles are the commonest British bat, weighing around 5 grams (same as a 20p piece). A single pipistrelle can eat 3,000 tiny insects in just one night.

The walk starts at the Tourist Information Centre in the Town Hall and exits along the side of the Market.

- 1 When exiting Bailey Park by the historic gates, cross the road, turn left then right after 17 Hereford Road. At the end of the alley, go down the steps and cross Ross Road.
- 2 Do not walk over the bridge, take the path to the left through Gavenny Meadows. This is an out and back part of the walk. On the return, leave the same way that you entered but turn left and follow the road to a T-junction. Turn left and follow the pavement to the river bridge. You have the option of a path either side of the river Gavenny through Swan meadows, suggested path is down the far bank.
- 3 On exiting Swan Meadows, cross the road and head left turning down Mill Street (signed as a cycle route) and almost immediately left after October House. This lane rejoins the main road. Turn immediately into Mill Close then take the left fork down the gravel path. This leads you to Castle Meadows. 4
- Take some time to explore the meadows, then head for the wooden kissing gate below the Castle. Follow the path to the right up the steps and round to the Laurie Jones Community Orchard. 5
- Retrace the route back down the steps and explore the copse to your right exiting at the entrance. Fork left up the path with the Castle to your right. If you have time the Castle Grounds offers a pleasant detour. Keep to the pavement, noting the public pollinator friendly planting on your left. Note the public square called St Johns Square 6 on your right. After the Old Court house and opposite Tudor Gate surgery head through the small car park and down the path, at the bottom of the slope turn right and through the gates to Linda Vista Gardens. Explore the gardens and retrace your steps. Head back through St Johns Square exiting at the top right hand corner and taking first or second left back down towards the Tourist Information Centre. We hope you enjoyed your walk.

