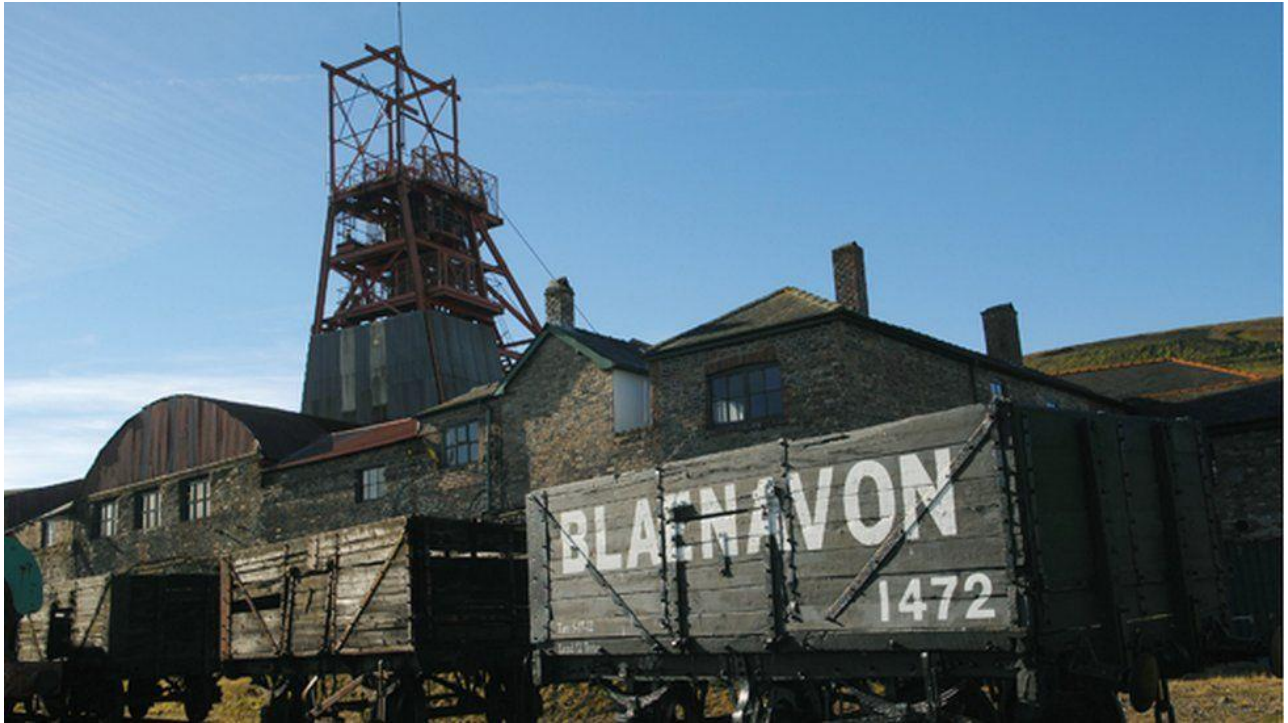


**Distinctiveness and Regeneration**

**BMPS4005**

**By Cameron Griffiths 2016486**



# Blaenavon

# Summary

In this essay I am going to be writing about the historical importance of Blaenavon and the key information about it. I am also going to be writing about the economic character. I will then be writing about what I think Blaenavon can do to regenerate the area and making it more attracting to tourists.

## **Contents page**

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Conclusion
- 3 – 5. Blaenavon
- 6 – 8. Regeneration plans
- 9. References

## **Introduction**

Blaenavon is a town on the hillside that is very well known for the “Big Pit” and its ironworks. I will be covering why Blaenavon's population has decreased, what is in Blaenavon, a conclusion, what the people of Blaenavon think of their area and then 4 regeneration plans on what I think would be good for Blaenavon.

## **Conclusion**

In this essay I have written about Blaenavon, the main points about Blaenavon is that it was and still is known for the “Big Pit” and it’s iron ore. I go on about how Blaenavon was before to how it is now. I also write about how Blaenavon still is known for the “Big Pit” now and has a museum that people can visit and then how has the closure of the “Big Pit” has affected the population in Blaenavon. I also write about what is there to do in Blaenavon for the younger generation now and why is there anti-social behavior there. I then go on and write about 4 different generation ideas I would do if I could regenerate Blaenavon area. These include a holiday park, a country park, an outdoor adventure park and a leisure center and why I think we need regeneration in Blaenavon.

## **Blaenavon**

Blaenavon is well known for its coalmining and ironworks as well as the “Big Pit”. It is in South Wales in a small town called Torfaen. The “Big pit” was a coal mine in the mountains of Blaenavon. Iron ore was found in the mountains in Blaenavon from at least 1675 and it had loads of iron ore. In 1788 there was a new ironworks built in Blaenavon by three men, the men were named Thomas Hill, Thomas Hopkins and Benjamin Pratt, with a lot of hard work they made Blaenavon the second biggest ironworks in Wales and by 1796 Blaenavon ironworks produced 5,400 tons of iron a year, this helped population grow very quickly with houses built next to the ironworks where the coal miners lived. In 1891 Blaenavon's population grew to 11,452, making it easier and better to make their own little town with schools, shops, chapels and much more. Coalmining was a very popular job that many people wanted, there were 250,00 people in Wales alone with a coalmining job. Blaenavon started to lose its purpose shortly after the second world war as it could not keep up with the change of economy, leaving the town with as little as 6,000 people, meaning they had lost just under half their population. Blaenavon coalmine have now opened up as a museum. In the museum you wear similar equipment to the coal miners, this includes the same work helmet, cap lamp, belt, battery and a self rescuer. During your 50 minute tour around the museum you will be guided by a coal miner and shown about how the coal was transported and how different coal was mined. The Big pit is a underground museum. Blaenavon was a highly successful town when the Big pit was there and it had many people living there as well as a lot of coal and iron. Once the coalmining and iron works stopped it quickly went from rich to poor leaving the town look empty and bare, with barely anyone living there, although the older people that live there do not want anything to change as they want to remember it for what it was known for.... “The Big Pit”. Some of Blaenavon

residents state that it could be quite isolating at times living in Blaenavon as it is such a quiet town with barely anything in there. The Big pit closed due to the low demand of coal and iron ore and a competition between the welsh and abroad. It

Page 3

was closed in 1980. The museum gets roughly 488200 visitors a year. Blaenavon is good as the level of full employed residents are high. It has a low level of air concentration and emissions. Three quarters of people living in Blaenavon have very good health and it is affordable to live in Blaenavon. Although there is a few good things about Blaenavon there is also a few bad things, such as it has a really high level of unemployed people aged between 16-24 and there is low educational attainment for ages between 18 and 19 going into higher education and the free school meal eligibility is higher, there are a lot of people living in Blaenavon that are not able to have access to a car or a van. The women are likely to have low-birth weight babies and the death rates are higher when you live in Blaenavon. Due to barely anything to do there is a higher rate of anti-social behavior. Majority of the households in Blaenavon are in the lowest council tax band, 85% of Blaenavon are and there is the lower level of welsh speakers that live in Blaenavon. Majority of Blaenavon is in a high risk of floods. As well as the Big pit museum there is also the Blaenavon ironworks museum this is one of Europe's best 18th century ironworks. It shows you how the iron works worked and the visitors can be shown the cottages were built for the key workers. Although there are museums for the younger generation there still isn't much to do for the younger generation this is why I think there is a high level of anti-social behavior in the town. I think it is a very good idea that there are the museums for other people to visit and for schools or colleges to learn about the history of the coal mining and iron works and how important it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was a high demand for coal and iron. But I still think they should have some things there for the younger generation of Blaenavon to do. The people of Blaenavon area would love a leisure center, the local authority should fund at least this for them that way the level of anti social behavior will probably lower, although there is a youth club that was funded by the "Big Lottery Fund" costing them £230,000 for the younger generation I think they will get bored or outgrow the youth club

eventually. The youth club offers work placements for youth undergraduates and volunteers as well as a café. The youth club is called

Page 4

the “Hub”. I don’t know how many people exactly attend the youth club but I know 54 people have checked in to the youth club on their Facebook page. The youth club is for people aged between 13 – 25. The amount of people that attend the club (70%) are all from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds. The club began in 2014.

Page 5

## Regeneration plans

If I was to be able to regenerate Blaenavon I would set up a holiday park with lodges to try attract more people to the area, I would have lodges for couples and then some for families too with a bathroom which would include a luxury bath and/or shower, a toilet and a sink. A living room/dining area in one, which would include a lovely sofa suitable for a family, a coffee table, a TV and an electric fire making it nice and cozy alongside a dining table and chairs. I would then have a kitchen with a cooker, microwave, kettle, mugs, toaster, canisters and a fridge with a small freezer and cutlery. The bedrooms would consist of a bed/beds a TV and fresh sheets for every visitor. Outside the lodge they will each have their own front garden which will consist of an outside fire with some chairs for those late summer nights and a BBQ which will be great for couples or families. There will be a park on site which would be great for children and also an entertainment club for both adults and children. In the club there will be a little bowling alley with a café inside that will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. The entertainment will be in the morning for breakfast club for the children, lunchtime for the children then the evening for children then between 8-11 for the adults. This will include stuff like arts and crafts, educational stuff and fun activities. There will also be a small arcade in the entertainment club with a bar, serving both soft and alcoholic drinks. In the middle of the lodges there will be a small pond with all types of different fish inside surrounded by rocks and an information board about the fish and Blaenavon town. The lodges will be run by solar panels making them more environmental friendly. I think having a holiday lodge park will be a great opportunity to try attract more people to Blaenavon town and will make the shops in Blaenavon more successful with more people visiting and buying.

My second regeneration would be a country park, which will include a park for both younger and older children and a walk path all along the park with different things to do all over the park. There would be a mini golf course for the visitors and there will also be fishing ponds along side duck ponds that you can ride a boat through the relaxing pond. On site there will be toilets and a café/ chip shop and picnic area for all the visitors. The walk path through the country park can also be used as a cycling path if visitors would prefer to cycle than walk. During summer, winter and spring there will be different activities held especially on the school holidays for the children, these will include activities such as a drive through cinema in the car park, historical and educational activities and a load of different shows, some with a chance to even meet the different animals/ birds there is.

My final regeneration would be an outdoor adventure park with loads of different activities to do. These would include a cycle track with different levels of hardness and jumps so for example the green track would be the easiest track with minor jumps and not many sharp corners then the yellow being a medium cycle path with the jumps being slightly harder and corners being slightly sharper then the red track will be the hardest of them all with extremely high jumps and extremely sharp corners. There will also be a quad bike track which will also include different stunts to do and different heights for the visitors to succeed. I will also include a rock climbing wall up the mountain with different levels easy, medium and hard, this will help people with their balance skills and climbing skills. There will be a zip line in place but to get up to the zip line you are to complete a few challenging obstacles that you will be faced with. As you walk into the entrance you will have the reception desk in which you show them the ticket you have bought or want to buy and you will be given a paper map to show you where things are in the park. Before you enter the park itself there are toilets to your right. The activities are set all throughout the park so they are not close together and easy to spot. As you come to the entrance of each activity there is a new reception desk for each different activity in which you will be handed the corrects appropriate gear to continue with the activities, such as a mountain stunt bike, helmet to fit your head, knee, elbow and chin pads with gloves, each bike will include a go pro on

the bike or helmet to make sure no one gets hurt or lost on their way. The same with the quad bikes, the bikes will be provided and so will the correct gear such as overalls, gloves, helmets. Knee and elbow pads and every quad or helmet will have a go pro on it. Then with the zip line the gear will be provided and there will be an instructor there with you while you face the challenging obstacles in the way. The gear includes a harness that goes around your waist and under your legs, this ensures you are secured tightly to the zip line above your head, you will also be provided with a helmet for safety too. On the park there will be a little fast food café for you to stop for a little lunch or just a drink, there is also a picnic area for you so if its sunny and you've bought your own food then you can stop here for a bit. There is also a duck pond near the picnic area where you can feed the ducks and in the summer there is an ice cream van too. As well as all these fun activities you can have the opportunity to walk on the walk path around the park. In the summer in the nights I would do something fun such as neon powder parties where the picnic area is or something with a stage and different fun things and different singers and dancers.

My last regeneration plan would be putting a leisure center in place for the older and younger generation which will include a swimming pool, one for toddlers and the younger generation then one for teenagers and the older generation and once or twice a week have swimming classes there. It will also have a gym which will be cheap for the residents of Blaenavon but standard price for the people that live outside Blaenavon. In the gym they will hold yoga classes, dance classes and 1 to 1 teaching classes for the gym. There will be a little café which will sell healthy eating snacks and drinks and a race track for those who would like to run and finally there will be a basketball and rugby/football pitch for those who would like to take part. I think all these ideas are an awesome way to bring the community together as well as attract people outside the community to come.

## References

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaenavon>
2. [http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic\\_landscape/blaenavon/english/Blaenavon\\_Features.htm](http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/blaenavon/english/Blaenavon_Features.htm)
3. <https://museum.wales/bigpit/tour/>
4. <https://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/Publications/Blaenavon-Story/Big-Pit.pdf>
5. <http://www.torfaenpublicservicesboard.co.uk/en/Documents/Assessment-of-Well-being/Part-2-Well-being-of-Blaenavon-and-its-communities.pdf>
6. <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/LeisureParksEvents/TourismTravel/ThingsToDo/BlaenavonIronworks.aspx>
7. <https://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/WorldHeritageSite/PressArea/NewsArticles/2016/07March-New-Youth-Hub-for-Blaenavon.aspx>
8. <https://www.hwbtorfaen.com/copy-of-projects-2>