

For brilliant beaches, you're better off here



Work starts to replace town's asphalt beach

IT may not be the most picturesque beach in the world but it's been a feature of a popular seaside town for decades.

Attracting sun bathers, dog walkers, people looking for somewhere to eat their fish and chips and children chasing waves, it has become woven into Portlincawl's fabric.

Now a £3m project has begun which will see the loss of the infamous "Tarmac beach".

Also known as the town beach and concrete beach, the asphalt was installed as a sea defence in 1984 to protect homes and businesses, including the Grand Pavilion.

Upgraded in 2005, it has now come to the end of its viable life.

Contractors are already on the beach and the lower promenade has now been closed as work begins to partially demolish it and replace it with a new terraced structure which will be surfaced in a sand colour, in line with the responses from a public consultation.

The Welsh Government has contributed £2.2m to the project, while Bridgend council will pay the rest.

Residents and visitors with questions will be able to put them forward at an information session in the Grand Pavilion on Tuesday, organised by contractor Alun Griffiths. It takes place from 3.30pm and 7pm.

> Rhossili Bay, Gower, is officially the top beach in Wales and is the third best in the UK in the Travellers' Choice Awards for Beaches

WALES is home to three of the UK's 10 best beaches – and Rhossili Bay in Gower is officially the top Welsh beach in 2018.

The beautiful sandy beach, last year named the best in Europe in another poll, has been given the latest accolade by the visitors themselves.

For it takes third place in the UK top 10 of the Travellers' Choice Awards for Beaches – announced today by TripAdvisor.

Topped by Bournemouth Beach in Dorset, the list also features two other Welsh beaches – the nearby Three Cliffs Bay in Gower (at number 8) and Barafundle Bay in Pembrokeshire, which is at number 10.

The largest expanse of white sand on the Gower Peninsula, Rhossili Bay stretches for three miles and it is this vast stretch of sand and towering cliffs which make it popular with surfers, paragliders and ramblers alike.

Described by The Independent as "the supermodel of British beaches" it has amassed a wealth of accolades over the years including the title of Britain's Best Beach for two years running and an award for being the best spot to have a picnic.

Three Cliffs and Barafundle Bay are also no strangers to awards. The former has sand dunes, salt marsh and, of course, the signature limestone cliffs that give it its name.

The latter was once one of Wales' best-kept secrets, jealously guarded by locals, but is now an award-winning travel hotspot and has been named among the world's top 12 beaches.

Robert Francis-Davies, Swansea's Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Major Projects, believes the latest awards for the Gower beaches will again spread the word about their beauty.

"People have been sharing their love of Gower for years and now they are

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doing it online and, importantly, globally. It's fantastic that such a relatively short stretch of coastline has collected two accolades in 2018, Wales' Year of the Sea.

"The awards will give our destination even wider recognition on a global platform used by millions of travellers. It also reinforces how lucky we are to have such world-class beaches on our doorstep here in Swansea Bay."

Hayley Coleman, for TripAdvisor, said: "Even with the lack of hot weather that the UK is known for, our beaches still stand up as some of the best rated in the world – and all right on our doorstep."

The other beaches to feature in the UK top 10 are: Luskentyre on the Isle of Harris, Scotland; Brighton Beach; Weymouth Beach, Dorset; St. Brelade's Bay Beach, Jersey; Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth, Dorset and Fistral Beach, Newquay, Cornwall.

In the world ranking, Grace Bay in Providenciales, the main island of Turks and Caicos in the Caribbean, takes the title of world's best beach. Seven miles in length, this beach has all the marks of a world class beach – turquoise water, powdery snow-white sand and glorious sunshine year-round.

And in Europe, La Concha Beach in San Sebastian comes out top. Located in the centre of the city, it boasts 1,500 metres of white sand.

Travellers' Choice Beaches award-winners were based on the quality and quantity of traveller reviews and ratings for beaches on TripAdvisor gathered over a 12-month period.

For the complete 2018 Travellers' Choice Beaches Awards winners visit www.tripadvisor.co.uk/TravellersChoice-Beaches

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