



**NEATH
PORT TALBOT**

The Dramatic Heart of Wales

INSPIRING EXPERIENCES FOR GROUP TRAVEL

www.dramaticheart.wales | [#dramaticheart](https://www.instagram.com/dramaticheart)

VALLEYS

COAST

WATERFALLS

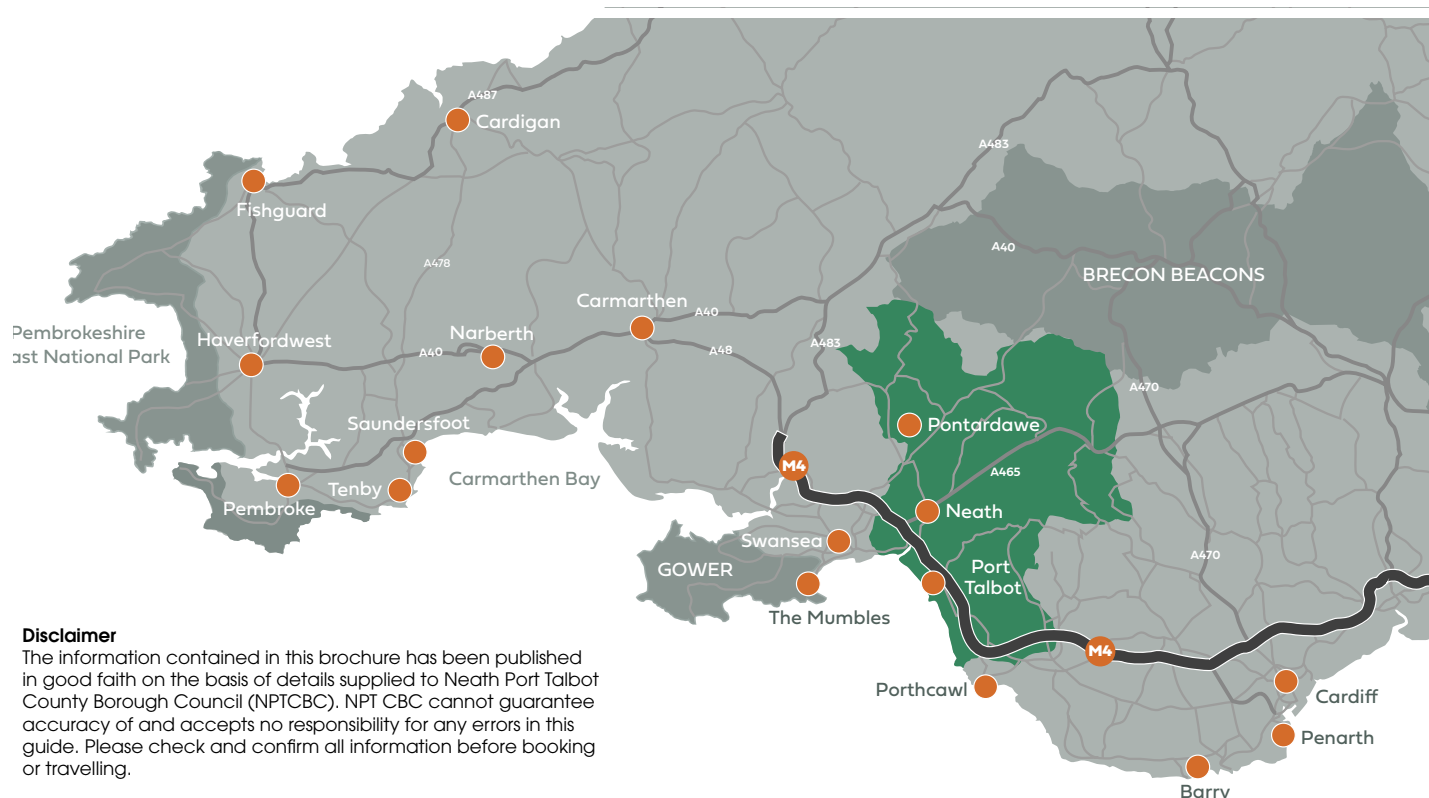
ADVENTURE

WILD, HONEST AND DRAMATICALLY WELSH

Be the first to discover the Dramatic Heart of Wales. A place of extreme diversity, where beauty and grit combine to create stunning backdrops for unforgettable experiences.

Nestled in the heart of South Wales, yet within easy reach of the South-East, the Midlands and the South-West, the Neath Port Talbot region features a vast adventure playground for outdoor activities, dramatic waterfalls, stunning valleys and a rich and creative cultural heritage, with something to appeal to every age group.

Whether you are looking to organise an awe-inspiring cultural tour, a high-octane outdoor adventure experience, or a tour which combines walking, waterfalls, history and folklore, the Dramatic Heart of Wales will provide a memorable backdrop.



Disclaimer

The information contained in this brochure has been published in good faith on the basis of details supplied to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC). NPT CBC cannot guarantee accuracy of and accepts no responsibility for any errors in this guide. Please check and confirm all information before booking or travelling.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

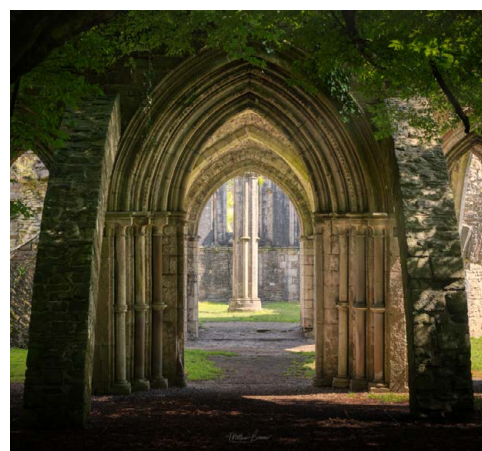
BE INSPIRED BY MARGAM COUNTRY PARK

Drink up the history of Margam Country Park which is home to the spectacular Grade 1 listed Margam Castle, a Victorian-gothic masterpiece whose magnificent entrance hall and staircase give a hint of the historic grandeur of the former Talbot estate. Today the grounds include 500 acres of stunning parkland, its own deer herd and gardens which include classic and modern plantings, tranquil lakes and iconic views across the region.



SOAK UP THE PAST AT MARGAM ABBEY CHURCH

Founded in 1147, Margam Abbey is the only Cistercian monastery in Wales whose nave is still intact and is used as a parish church. It is also surrounded by relics of its past glories, notably a 12-sided chapter house.



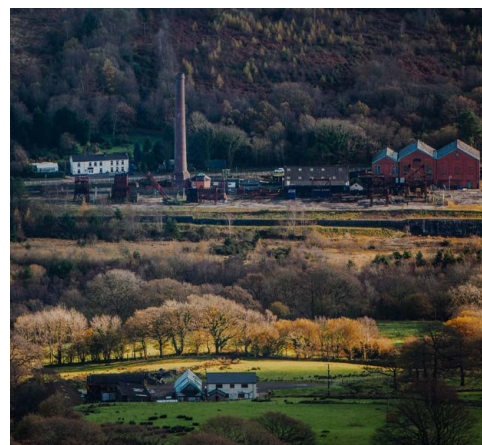
MEET AN EX-MINER AT THE SOUTH WALES MINERS MUSEUM

Located in the stunning Afan Valley and just six miles from Port Talbot, the South Wales Miners Museum is one of a number of attractions found within Afan Forest Park. Be carried back in time by this unique local museum which offers guided tours of both its indoor and outdoor exhibits from volunteer ex-miners who tell their own authentic stories of their former working lives. Experience all the exhibits including the blacksmith's shop, lamp room and engine house with a working, scale model steam train.



HIT THE SHOPS IN ONE OF OUR TOWN CENTRES

The towns of Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe offer a wide selection of unique shopping opportunities. From the many stalls within Neath Indoor Market, which dates back to 1837, to the independent gift, homeware and fashion shops in Pontardawe, retail therapy should be factored into a visit to the area.





HIRE A LOCAL STORYTELLER FOR EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Immerse your group in the tall tales of a dramatic region with the help of a highly engaging local storyteller, who will bring the history and culture of this creative region to life.

TAKE IN A PERFORMANCE

There are regular performances across the region's three theatres: The [Gwyn Hall](#) in Neath, the [Princess Royal Theatre](#) in Port Talbot and the [Pontardawe Arts Centre](#) in Pontardawe which is said by many to be haunted! For full details of what's on, visit their websites.

BROWSE A GALLERY

Art lovers will not be disappointed in the Dramatic Heart of Wales. Try the Oriel Lliw Gallery in the Pontardawe Arts Centre for a great range of contemporary art, with meeting rooms and catering also available. And don't miss the independent Queen Street Gallery in Neath which has a rolling programme of exciting contemporary exhibitions and workshops, from feltmaking to basketry.

EXPERIENCE A LOCAL FESTIVAL

Travelling in August? Why not take in the Pontardawe Festival which is a full-blown celebration of global music and dance, with street parades, food and craft markets. Or In October, Neath bustles with life with its own food and drink festival featuring the very best in quality Welsh produce.

All performances and events are subject to Welsh Government Covid-19 restrictions.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

MOUNTAIN BIKING IN AFAN FOREST PARK

There's no better place to enjoy a mountain biking experience than in Afan Valley, with brilliant trails to suit all abilities, from novice to advanced. Carved out of hillsides once surrounded by coal mining, the valley has been transformed into a bikers' haven with around 155km of trails. The friendly team at Afan Valley Bike Shed will happily provide bikes for groups and provide helpful tips and support throughout the experience. Or how about hiring an experienced local guide, like Campbell Coaching, to show you around?

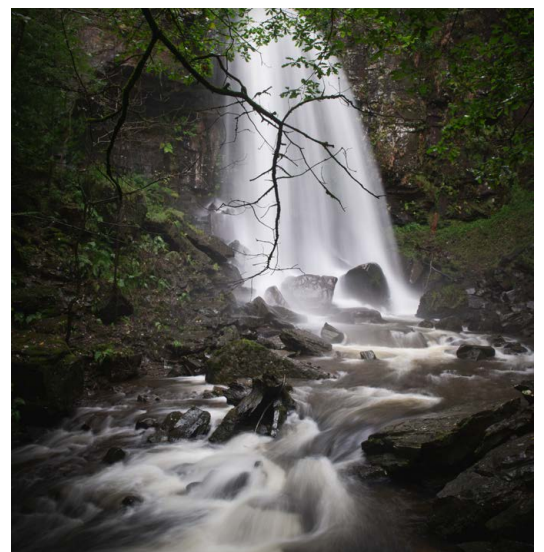
GORGE WALKING, ROCK CLIMBING, ABSEILING AND WATERSPORTS

An outstanding group challenge, gorge walking is one of the most popular activities offered by Adventure Britain. A vigorous day hiking through nature, leaping from high rock ledges and crawling behind waterfalls, will push you outside of your comfort zone and get you to reach goals that you never thought possible. Rock climbing and abseiling taster sessions can be designed for all abilities, providing participants with the skills and technique to conquer new heights. Or, if yours is a team of water babies, why not ride the waves at Aberavon Beach with the qualified instructors at Surf School Wales as your guides and suppliers of boards and wetsuits. Or for a more sedate activity try the world's fastest growing watersport: stand-up paddle boarding.

WALKING IN WATERFALL COUNTRY


More than 80% of the region is made up of deep valleys carved by fast-flowing rivers, with evidence of the area's industrial history dotted throughout the landscape. The region's many waterfalls provide the perfect opportunity to stop and capture some stunning photographs. Melincourt Falls, in the Neath Valley is a fantastic option for those interested in finding out more about the region's rich natural ecosystem. Why not combine the visit with a guided walk from local experts. And to further immerse yourself in culture, why not hire a talented local storyteller to bring local legends and folklore to life! The waterfalls are best visited in off-peak months outside of school holidays.

For a full list of walking routes, ranging from easy to difficult, see www.dramaticheart.wales/home/discover-our-area/activities/walking




PLACES TO STAY


Ideal for small groups


 **Afan Lodge** is like an Alpine ski chalet for mountain bikers, with stunning views across the Afan valley, full bike storage facilities, easy access to world-beating bike trails and walking, expert local advice and quality Welsh food, ales and ciders.

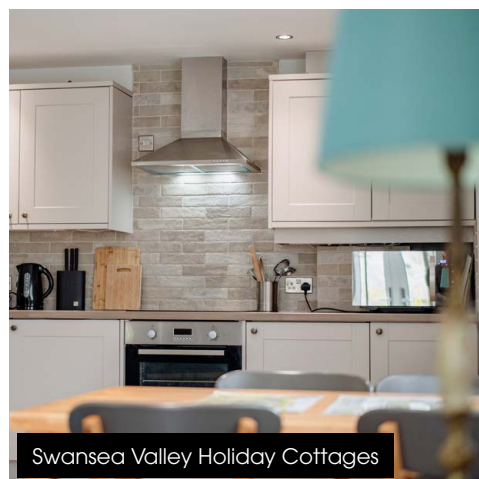
 **The FSC Margam Discovery Centre** is a low carbon footprint building designed by the Welsh School of Architects. It sits in the heart of Margam Park, which exhibits a wide range of natural habitats and wildlife, and is ideal for larger groups looking for a catered experience complete with games room, camp fire and room to roam with the deer.

 **Swansea Valley Holiday Cottages** is a collection of six adjacent cottages which sit on an idyllic working farm and sleep either four or six people each.

 **Willow Springs Campsite** is an eco-friendly campsite situated on the edge of the Afan Forest which features heated shepherds' and glamping huts ideal for groups looking for a more natural experience.

 **Ty'n Cellar Farm** is a Grade II listed, 4 star bed and breakfast. With six double rooms in The Barn and a collection of holiday cottages, Ty'n Cellar is the perfect base from which to explore Margam Country Park.

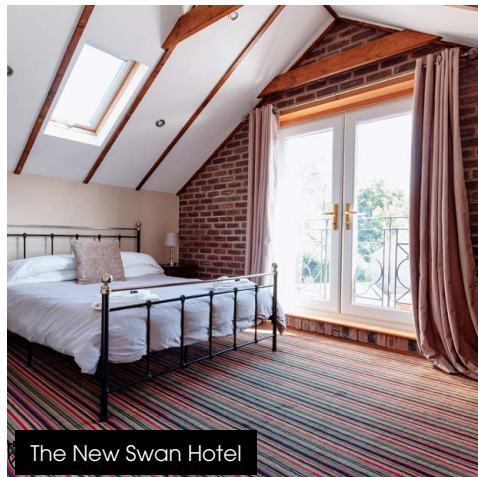
 **The New Swan Hotel** is a traditional pub in the village of Ystalyfera, which features excellent beer and pub food and makes an ideal base for adult groups.



Swansea Valley Holiday Cottages









Willow Springs Campsite

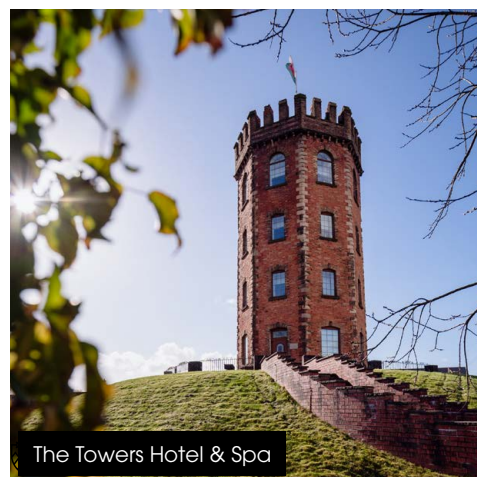


The New Swan Hotel

PLACES TO STAY

Ideal for larger groups and buses

-  **The Bluebell Hotel** is an award-winning 'urban boutique' located in the heart of the historic town of Neath, which sleeps up to 40 people.
-  **The Best Western Aberavon Beach Hotel** features a fully equipped conference centre and meeting rooms and its own leisure centre with heated pool, sauna and spa.
-  **The Towers Hotel & Spa** is a modern hotel which features a spa, indoor pool and gym and a restaurant which focusses on great local produce.
-  **Blancos Hotel** is a 63 room hotel which is ideally situated close to the M4 in central Neath Port Talbot and can accommodate conferences and meetings.
-  **The Holiday Inn Express** at Llandarcy offers 91 modern guest rooms with breakfast included.
-  **The Premier Inn, Baglan** is nestled on the outskirts of Neath Port Talbot and is a handy base for exploring the region.





EATING OUT

🛡️ The Brit Pub in Cwrmavon is an award-winning pub set in the lush Afan Valley which features a beer garden, open fire, real ales and home-cooked food and regularly hosts welsh themed evenings and live music.

🛡️ The Butcher's at Alltwen is a characterful food pub which features quality local meat and fish, plus European tapas, steak nights and afternoon tea by arrangement.

🛡️ La Casona, Skewen, features a warm Welsh welcome combined with the flavours of the Mediterranean.

🛡️ Mundos, in Port Talbot is a modern bar/restaurant which features brunch and tapas dishes sourced from many local suppliers, with live music every Saturday.

🛡️ Franco's Aberavon is a beach front restaurant which is famous for its fish and chips,, stunning views and sunset over Swansea Bay.

🛡️ The Ives, Neath, is a friendly local bar and restaurant.

🛡️ The Orangery in the grounds of Margam Park is a stunning historic venue for functions and afternoon teas. Private booking essential.



🛡️ The Meat & Greet Co Meatery, which has two locations in Neath and Banwen is a family run bar and grill.

🛡️ Forty Six, Neath, is an award-winning independent coffee house and eaterie.

🛡️ The Pontardawe Inn is good value local pub at the heart of the local community.

🛡️ The Grand Sultan at Margam is an award-winning curry house and is ideal for groups.

🛡️ The Front in Aberavon serves American-style burgers, sandwiches and salads and offers both dine-in and drive-thru options.

🛡️ Cinnamon Kitchen is one of Port Talbot's most popular Indian restaurants.



SUGGESTED CORPORATE TRAVEL ITINERARIES

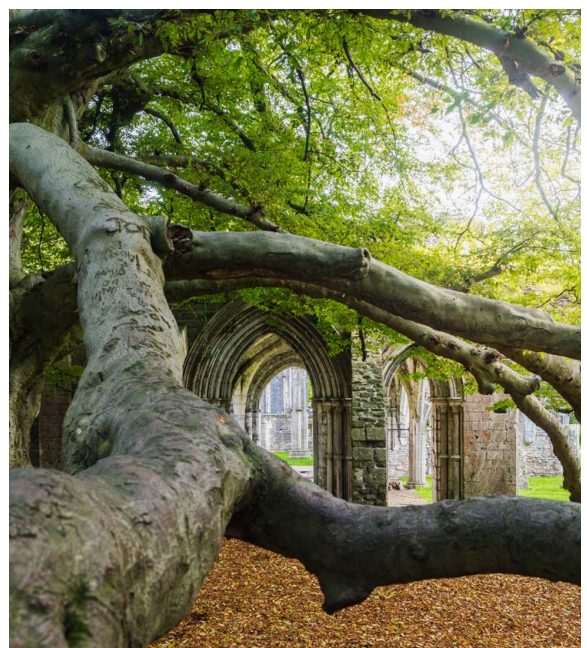
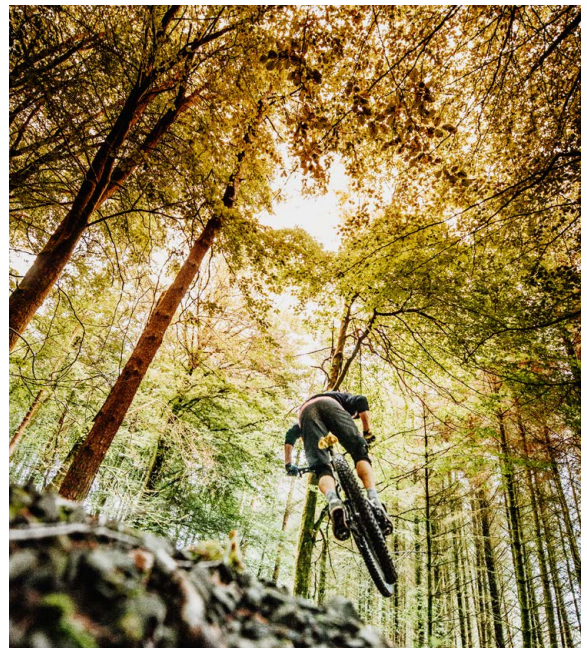
VALLEYS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EXPERIENCE

Small groups can stay off-the beaten track, enjoy local produce at its best at The Butcher's, at Alltwen, and The Brit Pub, Cwmavon, and spend days being challenged by gorge walking and mountain biking in the Afan Valley, with bespoke activities created by Adventure Britain.

MARGAM COUNTRY PARK HERITAGE TOUR

Unwind with a guided tour of Margam Castle, hold meetings and take tea in the 18th century Orangery and follow stunning walks through 500 acres of parkland. Lap up the culture with a theatrical tour of Margam Abbey and enjoy an evening of tall tales from a local storyteller. Move on to Neath and visit the Cistercian monastery known as Neath Abbey before visiting nearby Melincourt Waterfall.

For more inspiration you can find further itineraries and ideas at www.dramaticheart.wales





GETTING AROUND

BY CAR OR COACH:

The M4 motorway runs through the region, as does the A465. Both connect easily with the M50, M5 and M6, so it's easy to get here from London, the Midlands and the rest of the UK. You can get real-time traffic updates at [traffic.wales](https://www.traffic.wales)

BY AIR:

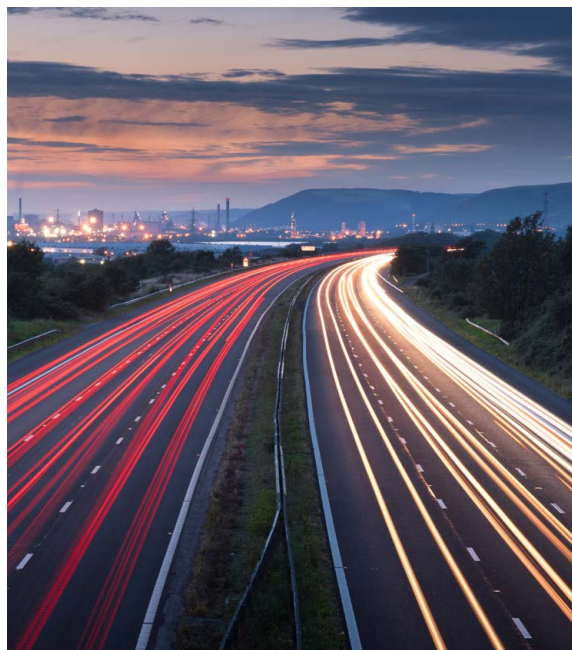
The county is within easy reach of Cardiff, Bristol, London, Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

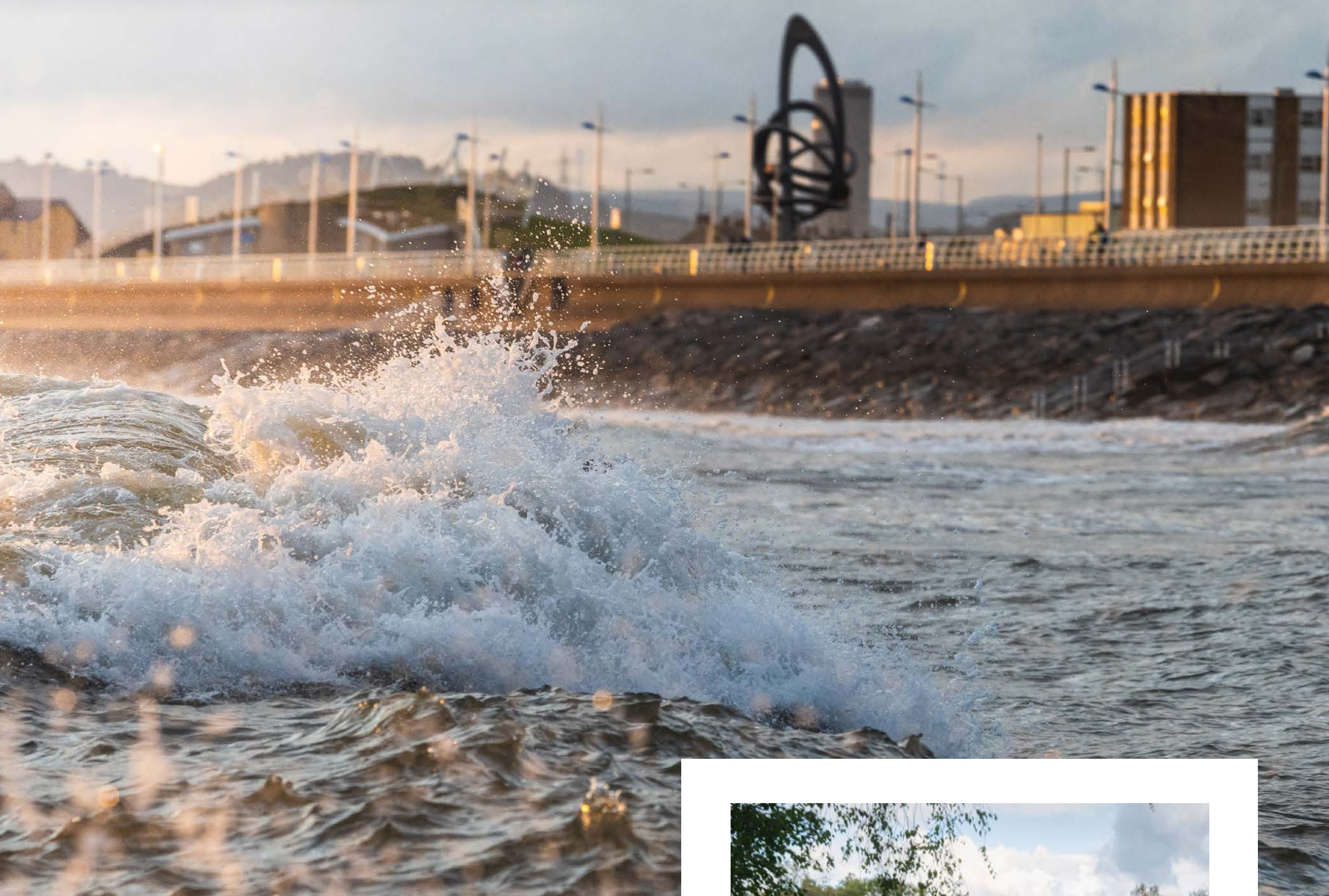
BY RAIL:

Neath and Port Talbot both have mainline stations which connect directly to London Paddington. All regions of the UK have frequent links either directly or with one easy interchange.

BY BUS:

for local buses which serve the area see [traveline.cymru](https://www.traveline.cymru)





HERE TO HELP

Here in the Dramatic Heart of Wales, we love to talk about our region and our people.

Our mission is to help you put together the best experience possible for your group.

Feel free to use us as an impartial but knowledgeable local resource.

Give us a call today and let's start planning your group visit to the Dramatic Heart of Wales.

Email **contact@dramaticheart.wales** or call **(01792) 460200** during office hours.

Tourism Team Dramatic Heart of Wales
Neath Port Talbot Council

