

# Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter

This newsletter covers street lighting, explains our decision on the precept for 2012/13, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Local Development Plan candidate sites, progress in our efforts to improve transport and 'highway' issues.

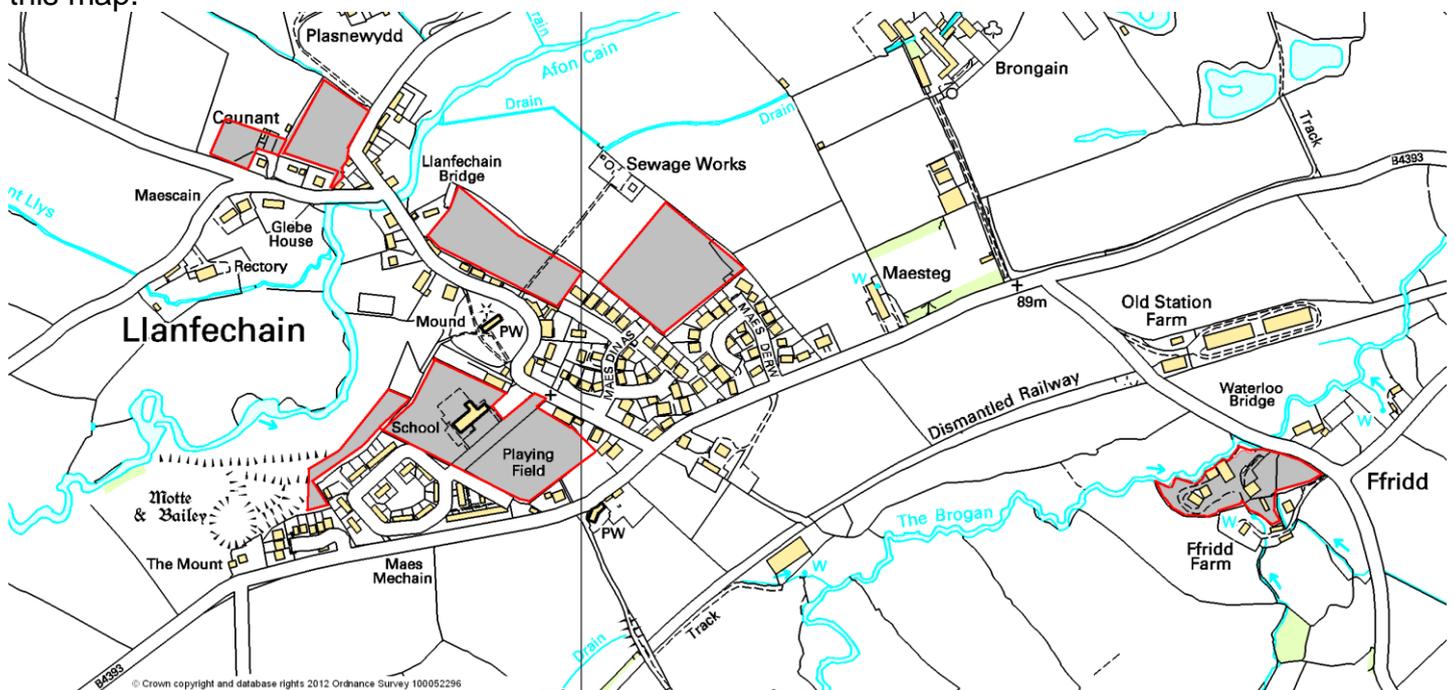
**Street Lighting.** In Late 2008 the Highways and Transportation Department of PCC turned off most of the street lights across Powys in order to save money. Llanfechain which originally had 44 all-night lights was left with 20 lights at no specified places. The LCC did a survey and recommended a different configuration which complied with the requirement that the lights be primarily for the benefit to the highway user i.e. road and pavement use, or for 'core areas'. PCC offered some part-night lights rather than all being all-night lights; this was agreed and Llanfechain relinquished 7 all-night lights to gain 12 part-night lights. The remaining all-night lights were used at junctions, the two dangerous bends, each estate retained one light to facilitate walking and one light was left for the 'sheltered' row of bungalows. Following representation by residents the Council agreed to pay for 5 extra lights; these were justified as helping with movement at night and included the light opposite the entrance to Garmon House as it was difficult navigating the pavement here when walking to events at the hall, pub etc. It was however noted that some residents felt the reduced lighting was welcome because of light intrusion, pollution and other environmental cost concerns.

At the December meeting it was suggested by our County Councilor that further lights might be put back on. On further investigation the PCC said that they were prepared to adjust the current lighting scheme but at no extra energy cost. The Community Council has therefore decided to retain the current configuration which is the best compromise with what is available but intends to press for better lighting. It is of note that PCC have started an LED project where they hope to put on about 3000 lights countywide. This is a 3 year project and they are doing the LED conversions in the same sequence as they did the switch off. They plan to meet the County Councillor for our area in August this year and will then explain how many LED 's we might get. They will then go to the Community Councils and gauge public opinion as to which lights to convert and hope to install them in Jan - March 2013. The Community Council thinks this is too late and intends to press for any improvement to be made before next winter. It is also passing individual requests/complaints to PCC to ensure they are aware of specific needs/views.

**The Council Budget.** At our January meeting a letter from PCC was introduced asking us to set the precept (that element of the Council Tax for use by the Community Council) for 2012/13. Because of a number of possible additional costs including the forthcoming election (potential cost is £1000+) the Council decided to raise the precept from £5,500 to £6,000; the charge for a Band D property will therefore rise from £21.12 to about £23. Currently about half the precept covers running costs at approximately £3000. We have put in place constraints on the amount used for running costs (wages, printing, insurance, rent etc.) and are looking at ways to further reduce this expenditure. A small amount has been used for publicity: £126 and £1,612 has been donated to community/village facilities and clubs. To ensure we are solvent, a statutory requirement, we have maintained a small surplus. It has been recent practice not to give donations to any organization e.g. Age Concern, outside the community unless that particular organization provides for a significant number of residents. In the future we are considering a more critical approach to budgeting rather than just accepting the previous precept level as the guiding factor in our deliberations.

**Queen's Diamond Jubilee.** The Memorial Hall Management Committee has volunteered to plan this event with other clubs etc of the village. This will include the decision on having a Beacon. The Council welcomes this initiative.

**The New Local Development Plan – an update.** Powys County Council has declared that eight 'Candidate Sites' have been submitted to the planners for consideration for change of land use to residential housing in the Llanfechain community area. A map showing the sites was posted on the village notice board in January and is also set out below (sites in grey). The Planners will now consider these sites against their 'Vision, Objectives and Strategy Policy'. Some sites may be rejected and the rest may come through to the final Draft LDP in April 2013 for public consultation. Candidate sites are NOT planning applications as such and no detail is given. Landowners / developers are hoping that the LDP will draw a new development boundary around the village to include all or some of their six sites, so allowing growth. The site at Bwlch y Ddole is not shown on this map.



Llanfechain Community Council has sent a letter to the planners requesting deletion of the proposal to change the village recreation field to residential use. The field is leased by LCC until 2033 and is designated a public recreational area in the current Unitary Development Plan (in force until 2016). The playing field is a valuable community resource and the Council considers the proposal for change of use to housing development both insulting and insensitive!

**Transport .** We recently wrote to the Tanat Valley Bus Company about problems on the bus route from Llansantffraid to Llanfyllin. Their reply expressed both understanding and concern but they did not think it practicable to enter the village for picking up or dropping off, as we had suggested. They were however supportive of the need for a paved step at the disembarkation point and we are now going to pursue this with PCC. We are also investigating the provision of bus shelters.

**PCC Street Care and Cleaning (previously: Highways).** Members of the Council met with the new Street Care and Cleaning team responsible for this area and did a drive round with them and Tegwyn Jones (County Councillor) to point out current problems including where signs were down, drains were blocked and road surfaces damaged. A positive relationship was established; the Council will be submitting a map indicating any problems on a fairly routine basis. If you note any street or cleaning difficulty let a councillor know.

Your Councillors are: Phil Williams 828931, Jacky Bradbury 829063, Brian Ellis 648202, Annette Prince 829020, Leigh Kellaway 828210, Steve Roberts 828380, & Peter Cannon 648777. The Clerk to the Council is Dianne Crecraft 828542.