

Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter

The New Council. As you will know, there was no election as fewer than eight people put themselves forward. Four councillors did not stand again, which leaves three: Brian Ellis, Leigh Kellaway and Phil Williams. We have heard that there are people considering standing for co-option and we would be delighted if they did. Anyone interested should contact the Clerk. We would like to note the significant efforts of the past Council and thank the former councillors for their contributions. And finally, we are delighted to welcome our new County Councillor, Gwynfor Thomas, Pontypentre.

Broadband Initiative. We hope you have seen the publicity for the eXwavia meeting in the village hall on Thursday 24th May and that you will try to attend. If this initiative comes to fruition it will be a significant benefit to many in the community - more people will be able to work from home and the school will have improved linkage, adding to its attraction as a place to send children. It is, however, for you as individuals to express any concerns and satisfy yourselves whether the eXwavia proposal is worth supporting. Whatever the outcome, the Council wishes to thank Anne Whitehouse and David Eyres for identifying and championing this initiative.

Local Development Plan Update. A document explaining the strategic approach for development and land use in Powys up to 2026 has been published: 'The Preferred Strategy Consultation Draft: Powys LDP 2016-2026'. Powys needs to accommodate 3,500 more dwellings by 2026, in addition to the 4,200 houses provided for in the current plan which runs until 2016. It also has to provide 42 hectares of employment land. Most of this development will take place in a broad central corridor following the main road network and river valleys running N. to S. through Welshpool and Newtown.

The Community Council was required to respond to the consultation by 30th April so it was discussed at our April meeting. The current Unitary Development Plan categorises Llanfechain as a 'small village', but the new plan re-designates it as a 'large village'. This is because it is considered to have seven public facilities - hall, school, shop, PO, pub, playing field, and bus service. All settlements designated 'towns', 'large villages' or 'villages' will be considered for an 11% growth in dwellings. Llanfechain could therefore be expected to have about 25 extra dwellings built during the period 2016-2026, if builders seek to build here and the land is available. The Community Council's consensus was that an 11% increase in development was acceptable and could even contribute to the wellbeing of the village and the sustainability of many of its facilities. Concern was, however, raised over the designation 'large village' – the Council believed that 'village' better reflected the character of Llanfechain. Whilst 'villages' can also expect a possible 11% growth, it was felt that being classed a 'village' rather than a 'large village' may help retain the character of our village in the future. The Council has thus appealed to get the designation reduced to 'village'.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee. You will have seen the publicity for the community's Jubilee festivities and we encourage you all to come along and enjoy yourselves. The organisers have worked hard to put together a fun day and we extend the community's thanks to them for this effort. As part of the commemoration the Council has purchased commemorative mugs to be given to all children under the age of 11 residing in the community or attending our School. These will be presented at the School on the afternoon of Thursday 31st May by Ken Price. There will also be a limited number of commemorative mugs available for purchase at the Community Jubilee celebrations on Tuesday 5th June.

Supporting our Church. The Church is a central feature of the village and there is a footpath which crosses the Churchyard. The Council has, therefore, decided to donate £200 for the year 2012/13 for the specific purpose of maintaining the Churchyard. We wish to extend the community's thanks to the volunteers who maintain the Churchyard as they do a fantastic job.

The Playing Field. As you may recall, our playing field was submitted by Powys CC as a 'candidate site' in the Powys Local Development Plan. To safeguard the field's status as a community resource, the Community Council is investigating whether we can put it 'in trust', through a National Playing Fields Association initiative. If accredited, our playing field will be protected from future development and may benefit from improvement grants and other support. We would, however, need a volunteer manager - the job shouldn't be onerous and it would contribute to the wellbeing of the community. If you would be interested in the role, please inform the Clerk

Membership of One Voice Wales. One Voice Wales is the principal organisation for community and town councils in Wales, representing the councils' interests to the Welsh Government. It also provides a range of high quality services, including training and advice on applicable law and on proper procedure. Llanfechain Community Council has been a member for several years and has valued the support given. Membership costs £64 and the Council has decided to continue its membership for 2012/13.

Message in a Bottle. A new scheme is being adopted by the Llanfyllin Medical Practice called 'Message in a Bottle'. It is specifically aimed at helping elderly people. The idea is that a bottle would be issued in which the patient can place all the details of their medication, allergies and other conditions. The bottle would then be kept in their fridge. The emergency services would all know of this arrangement, so if there was an emergency they could easily find this important information. The Council has given a donation of £50 to help establish this provision. At some time in the future we would value knowing how many in the community have joined this scheme.

Transport. Efforts to improve the bus provision continue. We hope that a site meeting will be held in the near future to determine the best location for a 'bus stop/set down' for those alighting from buses from Llansantffraid towards Llanfyllin.

Garden Waste. Is there a need for a garden waste recycling skip in Llanfechain? This has been asked before but getting agreement on where to put such a recycling skip has proved contentious. The Council understands that PCC has put an additional garden waste recycling skip in Llansantffraid to provide sufficient bin space for our community as well as that of Llansantffraid but this does require people to travel there with their garden waste. We also know that PCC can provide and collect garden waste in special orange bags but, unfortunately, these have to be purchased by individual households at a cost of £9.19 for a roll of nine if collected from the area office, or £10.72 if purchased over the phone by credit card and delivered to your door. If you feel strongly that the community should have its own garden waste recycling facility please write to the Clerk and if possible offer a site for the bin.

Support for our School. Under the agreement to keep the school open, the school governors have taken on responsibility for maintaining the school grounds. The outside of the school also needs repainting but there is no budget available for this. The Council anticipates a formal request to help pay for the upkeep of the grounds and for the repainting. It is important that the school is well maintained, showing that it is valued by the community and giving a positive image. Would you support a decision to help pay for the upkeep of the grounds and a one off contribution to the fund for the repainting of our school? Let us know what you think.

Your Councillors are: Phil Williams 828931, Brian Ellis 648202 & Leigh Kellaway 828210.
The Clerk to the Council is Dianne Crecraft 828542. **The next meeting is: Tuesday 19th June.**

