

Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter

The Council. Sue Chaloner, who has lived in the community for some thirteen years and is a governor for the Llanfyllin High School, has volunteered and been co-opted onto the Council. The Council now has four councillors. We would value further volunteers.

Housing Needs. In April, a 'community housing needs survey' was carried out by the independent Rural Housing Enabler on behalf of Llanfechain Community Council. Its purpose was to establish whether there were people of this community who wanted to remain in the area but feared they might not be able to because of house prices etc. The findings will have credibility with Powys County Council (PCC) planners and will help inform current and future housing development. If no provision is made to address local housing needs it may mean local people will be forced to leave the area. Affordable housing can be to rent or to buy at below open market values. Such homes can be developed by a Housing Association, a private developer; an organisation set up by local people or self-builders.

The survey questionnaire was sent to all 258 residential addresses in the community. 49% of those households completed and returned it, a percentage that is sufficient for the survey to hold credibility. The survey identified a need for between six and eight affordable houses and between eight and ten open market homes to meet local needs in the period 2012 to 2017. It is judged unlikely that all affordable housing needs will be met from existing stock because the affordable housing stock is limited in number and there is a low turnover, but using empty properties should be considered as well as new-build. The Rural Housing Enabler has advised that between two and six affordable homes should be constructed to supplement the current stock if local housing needs are to be met. His advice is that ideally the properties should be available as tenure neutral (an arrangement whereby you can rent or part/fully purchase over time) or a mix of tenures, to suit different needs.

We are aware that three households had registered on the Powys Housing Needs Register before the survey. Those who indicated in the survey that they would be seeking housing within the community but have not yet registered are encouraged to do so; it is not a commitment but will help to ensure efforts are made to satisfy this legitimate local need. More information is available on www.powyshousing.co.uk, or via Powys County Council 08450 552155 (ask for the Welshpool area office). The Community Council will be considering the next steps at its meeting on 4th September; if you have any points or concerns we would value them before that date. The full survey is available on the Community website.

Play Area Swing. You may have noticed that a child's swing has been removed from the play area as it was broken and considered dangerous. A replacement will cost £150 plus VAT and the Council will decide on this expenditure at the next meeting. Parents are asked to ensure the play equipment is respected; the swing could not have been broken by a child for whom it was meant!

Garden Waste. The Council received no additional demands or proposed location for a garden waste facility and therefore will not pursue this at this time but will note the need in the Local Development Plan.

Safety. We have been made aware that someone, not of the community, has been calling on older residents pretending to be collecting for charity and asking for bank details. If it happens to you report it to the Police immediately – it will help safeguard others. Can we also ask that members of this community respect the speed limits and park considerately so that others can pass; this is especially important if emergency services are called.

Patients Participation Group. The Group would like people to be aware of the following:

- Telephone Appointments: If you would prefer to talk to the doctor on the phone you can ask the receptionist for a telephone appointment and the Doctor will ring you back.
- Minor Injuries: Llanfyllin offers a minor injuries service between 8am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday. This is basically for minor falls, bumps, cuts and bruises.
- Self Check-in System at Llanfyllin Surgery: The system has been in place since 14th May; it allows patients to report their arrival for an appointment using the electronic unit rather than waiting to inform the receptionist. The system will not replace the receptionist; it is a tool to cut down the queues at the reception desk. It is easy to use and seems to be working well.
- Pharmacy Window in Llanfyllin Surgery: The Practice Manager said they recognised there was a problem with queuing. The Practice is looking at the whole layout of the reception area and would like to have people's ideas on how they would like it set up. Please remember that everyone must be able to have privacy when collecting their prescriptions and that it is very important that the dispenser is not rushed as things have to be double checked.
- Message in a Bottle Scheme: The PPG is still waiting for replies from other community councils before progressing this initiative.

If you have any suggestions that you would like 'the community representative' to make please telephone Jacky Bradbury on: 829063.

Consultations. The Council receives a number of consultations each month. These are sometimes complex, not always relevant, and most give little time for proper consideration - certainly too little time for the Council to garner the thoughts and concerns of the community. The Council is therefore normally obliged to rely on Councillors' opinions as the representatives of the community. This month we have had three such documents that were relevant to our community:

1. A review of Welshpool Town Centre Plan. They asked those in and who visit the town (us) for their opinion on the proposed town development including the 'one way system'. The Council did not provide a collective response but put copies of the survey in our shop so that you could respond individually if you wished.
2. A proposal for a more restrictive 'Home to School Transport Arrangement' in Powys that will adversely affect those from outside the Llanfyllin High School catchment area from attending the school. Our response was: 'While noting that that the proposed changes will have no direct impact on children from this community attending Llanfyllin High School, the changes will impact the provision of transport for pupils from outside the catchment area. This will adversely impact the numbers who might attend the school reducing diversity and numbers; such may consequently endanger the school's viability at some future date and this gives us cause for concern'.
3. A proposal for 'patients and communities in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales – Shaping your Travel and Transport'. This is a well presented and comprehensive document that proposes positive development in such areas as hospital parking and transport provision between hospitals. Due to time constraints Councillors have been asked to respond individually and to bring the document to the attention of those they know have either experience or knowledge of the current arrangement. Points that have been made by some individuals include: the inequity caused by distance from increasingly specialist hospitals with those furthest away having to pay more for fuel and having to spend greater time in travel; the need for such patients and visitors to have cheaper/free parking. If you want to make your own comments see:

http://www.sath.nhs.uk/Library/Documents/Future/Publications/travel_and_transport-web.pdf

Your Councillors are: Phil Williams 828931, Brian Ellis 648202, Leigh Kellaway 828210 & Sue Chaloner 648121. The Clerk to the Council is Dianne Crecraft 828542.

The next meeting is: Tuesday 4th September; there being no meeting in August.