

# Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter

## Support for our School

As anticipated, the school has made two requests for financial assistance from the Community. The first was for help with the costs of grass cutting, which the Council declined as it was too open-ended a commitment. The second was towards repainting the outside of the School. The Governors considered the dilapidated state unsightly and have been working with the Friends of the School to raise money for external redecoration, spread over three years. The Council questioned why the cost should fall on the Community and were informed that Powys County Council did not paint the exterior when it was responsible for maintenance, and the budget that has now been devolved to the School Governors is insufficient to cover this work. It has to be done by professional contractors due to the nature of the materials involved and unfortunately it is not appropriate for volunteers to help. It is the Council's view that the School is an important part of the village and Councillor Brian Ellis proposed the Council provide £500 for three years (total £1,500), which will be voted on at the next meeting. Do you agree with this intent and the sum proposed?

## Broadband

In our April/May Newsletter we noted the 'eXwavia Ltd.' initiative to promote broadband in the area. Since then 'Airband Ltd.' has also advertised here. In addition, responding to Government initiatives and promises, our AM Russell George has promoted the improvement in broadband and held a meeting which Rick Warburton attended on behalf of the Council. Whilst the Council cannot support any particular company it does wish to promote better broadband as this will enhance the attractiveness of living here, particularly for business people and young families. In this area BT provide copper cables which are used to provide broadband services and many suppliers (Talk-Talk, Sky etc.) use BT cables to provide their services. Elsewhere, fibre-optic cables are being introduced and the national average broadband speed is 8MB but Llanfechain and surrounding villages often get much less. The Government has provided BT with a grant with the aim of getting 90% of broadband users in the UK to 8MB over the next few years but it is uncertain if sufficient funding is available. You can run a free broadband speed test at: [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net). If you have less than 2Mb, it is recommended you contact your current supplier as there could be a fault on your connection and correcting this may improve your bandwidth. If that is insufficient, you may like to consider one of these alternatives:

- Satellite services, which can provide better speeds but can be expensive
- Wireless connections, which are currently available in the village from 'Airband Ltd.' and will shortly be available from 'eXwavia Ltd'. Both companies work closely with the Welsh Government to provide broadband services via a microwave link. The government has confirmed that as far as they can tell there is no health risk associated with microwave links.

The providers will want you to claim the £1000 grant to any broadband user with less than 2Mb which we understand is available up to March 2013 and possibly beyond, but there is no assurance that will happen. Both the above (and other) suppliers will be happy to advise. eXwavia has recently submitted applications on behalf of people in this area. Once installed, we understand the cost is around £20 per month but the supplier will need to provide the actual figures. And you may need an internet phone service if you don't keep your BT line. Rick Warburton (828869) is willing to give informal advice but in the end it is up to you.

## An Oak Tree

It has been suggested we purchase an oak tree as a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Memorial and plant it near the south west corner of the playing field, replacing one cut down earlier. Do you agree?

## Windfarms

The route for the pylons is now planned to pass very near Llansanffraid and may also be routed through Bwlch-y-Cibau. A focused effort is now underway in Llansanffraid led by the 'Llansanffraid Local Action Group Against Pylons & Wind Farms'. Llanfechain Community Council has expressed its full support but they would also value your support as individuals. The group is led by Digby Davies [Digbydavies@aol.com](mailto:Digbydavies@aol.com) ; it met on 3<sup>rd</sup> October to chart its strategy. An action group has also been formed in Bwlch-y-Cibau: the 'Bwlch & Peniarth Residents Against Windfarm Developments'. We need to be equally supportive of this group.

## Playing Field Gates

Before the summer recess, it was noticed that the gates had been removed from the footpath (FP17), which leads from the play area to the main road. Some residents were concerned that children could now run out onto the road and the Council felt that the gates' removal without consultation showed contempt. The PCC Rights of Way officer stated that the gates were not necessary, should not have been there and couldn't be used anyway as they were stuck open. The Council is investigating this further and to that end the Clerk has received a copy of the Definitive Map for the Footpaths, which includes the position of original stiles etc.

## Maize

The planting of maize on the land adjacent to Llanfechain has caused some residents concern. We have spoken to the farmer and he has given assurances that he will do his best during harvest to avoid the village centre as much as he can, will be prepared to keep the roads brushed, and will not work after 10pm. He has also now understood his responsibility to maintain the footpaths. We are grateful for this.

## Road Accidents

There have been a number of road accidents on the on the B4393 between the village and the bridge at Pont y Forwyn. Although we are not aware of any fatalities, there have been some injuries and the possibility that future accidents might involve innocent members of this community is troubling. These now frequent accidents damage the hedges which have to be repaired by the farmers who own the land either side of the road. It would appear that some drivers drive too fast for the road conditions. Some contend, and with reason, that if nothing is done it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt. In addition, members of the community have expressed concern at the number of drivers who ignore the 40mph speed limit on that part of the B4393 that runs through the village. The Council has represented these concerns to the Police and Highways Department who are now looking to improve the signage on the road. We are going to maintain pressure for further action to prevent accidents. If you hear of any accidents can you let the Clerk know so that we can continue to present evidence of this concern.

## Street Care and Cleaning

Your County Councillor asked for clarification on what the PCC Street Care and Cleaning department did within this Community area. They replied that they conduct 'gully cleaning' once a year but if there is a problem they will address that separately. They conduct 'trunk road' gully cleaning twice a year. Sweeping is done in urban areas about every three months depending on their work load. They have one 'gully cleaner' and one 'sweeper' in each of their Welshpool and Llanfyllin depots.

## A Memorial Gift.

Mr and Mrs J Owen (the Old Rectory) have generously donated a bench to the community to be set up near the children's play area in memory of their daughter Becca who died in a tragic accident in Mexico during her 'gap year' in 2005. The Community extends its very sincere thanks. A charity established in her name helps fund opportunities for young people to travel abroad and contributions can be made in the Community Shop or at [www.beccaowenfund.co.uk](http://www.beccaowenfund.co.uk)

Your Community Councillors are: Phil Williams 828931, Brian Ellis 648202, Leigh Kellaway 828210 & Sue Chaloner 648121. The Clerk to the Council is Dianne Crecraft 828542. Your County Councillor is Gwynfor Thomas: 828103 M:07952775402. **The next meeting is: Tuesday 6th Nov @ 7.30pm.**