

Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter

The Budget. The Council has the authority to set a tax (the precept) to be used to pay its costs and to promote the wellbeing of the community. This and the budget have to be decided in December of each year. Running costs last year were in the order of £3,100, donations to Community organisations was about £1,500 and we currently have a reserve of £4,500. It is incumbent on the Council to both reconcile and justify expenditure to you the Community. At the meeting on the 6th December we agreed to budget for running costs of about £3,000, support to Community organisations of about £2,000 and to reduce the reserve currently held to 3/5th of the annual precept. We decided to do this by reducing the precept from £6,000 to £5,500, so the retained reserve should be £3,300, leaving an excess reserve of about £1,200 to fund any additional requests or projects over and above the planned expenditure. In making this decision the Council was mindful that in addition to the normal requests for donations it had agreed to help fund the School painting and is considering the request for some additional money to support the Show. There may also be some charges relating to the playing field. All donations have to be formally requested, are discretionary and have to be agreed each year. The Council, on behalf of the Community, has to be convinced that any donation promotes the wellbeing of the Community or significant elements within it.

Support for our School. The cost of the repainting of the School will be £6,000 spread over three years and the Friends and Governors have raised around £3,500 to date. The School has opted out of the Powys County Council maintenance contract and it is considered unfair that only the Friends and Governors should bear this cost when the School represents an important element of the Community. The Council decided that the Community should invest £1,500 over three years (£500 a year) subject to the donation being sanctioned as still being necessary each year.

The Governors remit is to ensure the school runs according to its mandate with regard to education, access for all, child protection, staffing matters and fiscal responsibility, and to act as a "critical friend" to the head teacher. It is, in effect, to enable and encourage the best education possible for all children within the school and to maximise their potential through differentiated learning. The Governors have achieved a lot and, on behalf of the Community, the Council wishes to extend a 'thank you' to the Governors and Friends for all they and have done to maintain and improve the School.

Broadband. We are aware that some residents have claimed and been given a Welsh Government grant and are having wireless broadband installed. They report considerable improvement. We are also aware that from 2015 BT will be beginning a process to put in place improved land line broadband capacity across the whole of Wales.

An Oak Tree. Because Oak saplings have already been planted at the southern edge of the football field the Council has decided not to pursue the idea on a Memorial Tree.

Maize. The farmer concerned made every effort to limit the disruption etc. caused during harvesting. We are grateful to him. We have however registered a concern over the mud that appeared on the pavements along the B4393 and hopefully this will not recur next year. The Council did not believe it appropriate to make representation over the nature of the crop and its effect on the environment.

E-Library. Powys County Council are keen that the facility to download E-Books from public libraries in Powys is promoted. The facility is free.

Road Accidents. In the last Newsletter we noted that we had approached PCC Highway Department for better road signs and asked about speed restrictions. PCC said they will erect the necessary signs to warn of the dangerous road conditions as soon as possible. They will also arrange for traffic counters to be installed along the B4393 to see what the actual traffic speeds are through the village. Once this data is available, they will consider what action is appropriate. However, the request made for a reduction of the speed limit or the extent of the speed limit is not currently possible. There is a moratorium in place preventing the local highway authority reviewing/modifying speed limits on county highways unless funded by a third party. Having said this, there will come a time when this moratorium is wholly or partially lifted, after which they may review the speed limits through towns and villages to determine whether they comply with the guidance set out by the Welsh Government. They agree that there may be merit in considering a 30 mph speed limit along part of the B4393 through the village, but the guidance they have would not support the suggested extension of the 40 mph limit right out to Pont y Forwen bridge. Mindful of recent accidents, we will maintain pressure on them to act as soon as they can.

The Show. There has traditionally been a Village Show on August Bank holiday which has been an important - if not *the* important - event of the Llanfechain year. It costs around £8200 to put on a show (including about £3000 for tents), but this year's bad weather meant its income including grants was only about £4650 - the low turnout reducing not only gate takings (£1282) but the amount of money spent at the event. The Show Committee is considering options for next year including reducing the number of tents, laying on fundraising events and applying for grants. They have asked the community, via the Council, to increase its donation from £300 to £500 or more. Should we?

Originally the Show was an event that enabled the people of the community to come together and, in good spirit, compete over flowers and vegetables and to show and sell other talents and home-made goods. It was supported by some entertainment - mostly from the village - and its value was as a moment for community cohesion and mutual acknowledgement. In the modern guise it has increased the entertainment element and there are more outside vendors and displays and more outside visitors. This has changed its nature, reflecting the changing demands of society. But does the community still value the Show and why? Is it the right balance of local and outside involvement? Why do more people not attend? Notwithstanding these concerns, the community owes a considerable debt of gratitude to the Show Committee for all they have done in the past; they need to know that what they are doing is wanted and truly valued. What do you want? The Show Committee AGM is Tuesday 15th January. Tell them what you think!

Message in a Bottle. You may remember that the Community put £50 towards the Message in a Bottle scheme being adopted by the Llanfyllin Medical Practice. The idea is that you can place all the details of your medication, allergies and other conditions in the special bottle and leave it in your fridge. You should also put the Green Cross labels provided, one at the back of your front door and one on the fridge. The emergency services will know of this arrangement, so can easily find out what medication etc. you are on. It is aimed at helping elderly people. The bottles are available from the Community shop. Please advertise and help your neighbours, particularly those who are infirmed.

Street Lights. The roll out of new LED lights in this area is scheduled for Jan-May next year. The overall wattage available to the Community area will not be increased so choices will again have to be made; for every normal/old type light we should get two LED lights.

Christmas. The Council wishes to thank all who have helped the Council and the Community this year. This includes all who have helped with and delivered this newsletter, inspected the playing field, maintained our website, acted as representatives or given advice. And on behalf of the Community heartfelt thanks go to the Church and Parochial Church Council, the School, School Governors and its friends, the Memorial Hall Management Committee, all involved with the Shop, the Show Committee, and all the voluntary associations and clubs that help make this community. We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a spirited New Year.

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 8th Jan 13 @ 7.30pm.**