



## **Llangammarch Community Council**

### **Annual Report 2018-2019**

Llangammarch Community Council covers an area where the main focus is on the village of Llangammarch. It includes the hamlet of Cefn Gorwydd, over two miles to the west, the settlement of Tirabad, two and a half miles further on and the many outlying farms, all of which nestled into the north west escarpment of the Mynydd Epynt. The number of households is small – just over 260 with an electorate of around 460.

The start of the year continued in the solemn theme of the end of the last, with the community coming to terms with the loss of six lives in the Poityn fire tragedy in the previous October. Llangammarch Community Council and Llanwrtyd Town Council came together to set up a trust for the surviving three youngsters, taking three trustees from each council, together with two members of the family. After preliminary meetings the trust paperwork was prepared for the Charities Commission, the aim of the trust being to provide monies for the youngsters where needed, but primarily for them to have access to significant funding to support further education and training.

In May it became apparent that the BT fibre broadband build was not going to extend to Cefn Gorwydd and Tirabad. Tirabad had no broadband provision at all and very weak landline provision. It was decided that alternate possibilities were to be investigated and in the early summer Llangammarch Community Broadband began gathering the names of interested residents. There was sufficient interest to enable the project to move forward and in August, grants were applied for from Access Broadband Cymru. These were granted in September. At the time of writing the superfast wifi build is in its last phase. Not only will this connectivity meet a Powys County Council Wellbeing target but will also benefit the businesses, schoolchildren and students living locally. May also saw the completion of the council's possession of the playground in Llangammarch, Tan y Deri. Although handed over from Powys County Council with the play surface refurbished, the youngsters have made it clear that they would like a basketball hoop installed to replace some of the out-dated and worn play items.

Since 2008 there have been plans for a field near Cefn Llan on the outskirts of Llangammarch to be developed. The Local Development Plan 2011/2016 gives clear allocation for 16 dwellings. Plans for Cefn Llan had been submitted in few years ago for 31 dwellings. This was rejected at a meeting of Powys Planning Committee by a majority of one. 2018 saw a renewed submission for 25 dwellings. The council held a public meeting in April to allow residents' concerns to be heard. It was very clear from the well-attended meeting that keeping to the 16 dwellings as in the Local Development Plan, was acceptable, but that 25 dwellings were too many for a village the size of Llangammarch. There were also concerns about sewerage provision, road safety and lack of affordable housing. The Planning Application went before the Powys Planning Committee in May. This time the objections were upheld by a significant majority. The decision was based on the number of dwellings exceeding the Local Development Plan. This application has now gone to appeal at the Planning Inspectorate, but there is no date yet for the appeal to be examined.

September saw refurbishment of the noticeboards in Cefn Gorwydd and Tirabad, with replacement of the Perspex that had lost its transparency. The revitalised boards are now well used. Dealing with the large noticeboard in Llangammarch is proving to be more problematic and is an ongoing project.

During the spring and throughout the summer, residents came together to raise money for a memorial for those who died in the Poityn fire. Money was raised through donations and events and it was decided to provide a bench and arbour in the riverside gardens as a memorial. The bench, with its brass name-plates was dedicated and unveiled in October. Over a hundred and fifty members of the community and all of the bereaved family gathered together on a very wet Saturday to witness the dedication. The weather was awful and the river was so swollen, there was no way anybody, other than the men who brought the bench into the local hall, could be allowed into the Riverside Gardens. Following the dedication, some short speeches of thanks and not a few tears, everyone tucked into a huge buffet laid on by volunteers. The date for the unveiling was deliberately chosen before the one-year anniversary, to allow the family to deal with the anniversary in private. The only downside was the unwelcome return of the press and television, though, it must be said, in a less intrusive way than before.

A small piece of land in Tirabad had been held in trust by three local residents was donated into the care of the council after two trustees had passed away. The records at the Land Registry are being changed and the residents have asked the council to look at provision of a bench and play equipment.

November saw the launch of a survey sent to all residents asking what they would like the council to do or take up on their behalf with Powys County Council. The survey asked too, for support for a petition to grit the road to Tirabad in winter (even though this is a school bus route, it is not gritted). The response from the survey was good (over 20%) with over 90% supporting gritting the Tirabad road. Suggestions within the survey have also provided a wealth of information and ideas for the future. The two of the main issues repeatedly flagged up were the road gritting and speeding. Llangammarch Community Council has been asking Powys Highways for both to be dealt with for some time. Having survey numbers now, to back up further requests, the council is hopeful for some action on these issues. Other items were brought to the surface that no-one was aware of, but that are now being gradually dealt with. Even small tasks, like reporting payphones not working or their boxes in need of paint and repair have affected how people feel about their surroundings and immediate environment.

November also saw the arrival of a new defibrillator for Cefn Gorwydd, completing the trio to cover the whole area. Demonstrations and training have been carried out for residents. These are to be repeated annually or on request. At the council meeting in November the first three of several, new policies were adopted – Freedom of Information Policy, Risk Assessment Policy and Welsh Language Policy. The Small Grants Policy was adopted in January. The remaining policies will be adopted over the coming meetings.

Listening to other councils in England and Wales gave the idea to open a private contact and emailing provision for the residents. Some use social media but not many, mainly due to privacy concerns. For Tirabad the new group will be dependent on superfast wifi arriving in the settlement in a few weeks' time. The advantage of this provision is that it also gives residents the opportunity to let the council know when events or situations are needing attention, and for the council to be able to inform residents quickly about notices, events and passing on important information.

Looking forward into 2019-20 the council is making plans to reinstate the Community Summer Fayre and to continue to implement many of the suggestions made by residents in the recent survey. The adoption of further policies is planned and will include one for the Handling of Complaints and an Equal Opportunities Policy.