

## To Save You Waiting for Spring – WI Paints Daffs



Members of Llanfrynach and Cantref WI at the end of an evening's painting.

Llanfrynach and Cantref WI has just published its programme for 2014 with speakers, outings and an Any Questions Evening for the whole community. The WI meets on the first Wednesday of every month. Non-members always welcome to drop in for any meeting that takes their fancy. More information from President Susan Brook – find her contact details below or go to Organisations at [www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk)

## Charity Plant Fair

A Plant Fair will be held at Treberfydd, near Llangors on Sat 17th May from 10.30am to approx 3pm. The fair is in aid of Brecon Cathedral and SSAFA, a voluntary organisation, which provides advice and help to all people who are in, or retired from the 3 services. There will be stalls for annuals, perennials, shrubs, and vegetables. Also a cafe serving light lunches and a stall selling lavender products, creams etc made from lavender grown locally on a farm above Upper Chapel. The Beacons Nurseries, at Treberfydd was leased last year to Alison Sparshatt, who intends to concentrate on unusual perennials. She will have a stall on the day of the fair, within the nursery. Any contributions of plants would be very much appreciated. Contact Lorraine Lewis Tel 01874 65407.



## News From

Cantref Llanfrynach Llanhamlach Groesffordd  
Nant Ddu and Llechfaen

## Where We Belong – Ein Cynefin

[www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk)

## -----FEBRUARY 2014-----

### Not Driving but Drowning



#### Sailing along the A40 – And it got worse than this!

The extraordinary amount of rain recently has created some very scary and dangerous conditions on roads throughout the community. In particular the storms before Christmas caused serious disruption on the A40 in Llanhamlach. Between the Peterstone Court turning and the Old Ford Inn the drainage system was simply unable to cope on 23 Dec. Surface water flooded onto the highway from partially blocked streams and from the land above it, resulting in a small lake complete with a stalled Mercedes in the middle, restricting traffic to a single lane and making it impassable to low vehicles.

The blockages were cleared quickly by Powys County Council, which manages the A40 for the North & Mid Wales Trunk Roads Agency; but this was the second time recently that such a disruptive and dangerous situation has happened here – last time in 2012. The Community Council's view is that this situation on a major trunk road is not acceptable and is helping PCC and the Trunk Roads Agency to plan improvements. It understands that the Welsh Office (which funds trunk roads in Wales) has now agreed priority funding for comprehensive improvements to the highway drainage and that these should be carried out later this year.

Many smaller roads were badly affected including the lower end of the C96 road from Groesffordd to Llanfihangel Tal-y-Llyn, where outbuildings were flooded; several lanes in Cantref were also affected. Powys CC Land and Drainage is working to improve the management of the drainage at these and other sites in the area.

### But is it always right to look to the Council to sort it out?

One resident was out with her drain rods clearing culverts. Another, very senior citizen, moved mounds of leaves blocking drains. It was erratic but in many places members of the public were doing their best to keep the water off the roads.

Did they have to? Was it up to them? What responsibilities do we all have to clear a drain we see has been blocked by leaves and storm debris? What responsibilities do landowners and farmers have for keeping culverts on their land clear and to move mud and silt built up in gateways stopping the runoff of water from ditches and roads? And is it fair to blame the council, which is facing unprecedented weather events?

It can be a complicated issue but in general the landowner is responsible for maintenance of drains on their land. It's unrealistic to expect Powys CC to do everything. If the drain is a part of the road drainage system then that is Powys CC's responsibility. Otherwise, as the local Land Drainage authority, Powys CC has powers, but not duties to maintain drains.

PCC Land Drainage email is [land.drainage@powys.gov.uk](mailto:land.drainage@powys.gov.uk) phone 01597 826760

[www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?&id=13919&L=0](http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?&id=13919&L=0)

Leaflets explaining more about who is responsible for flooding and land drainage can be found on our community website [www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk)

### Bronwyn Fox is the New Council Clerk



From a very strong list of applicants Llanfrynach Community Council was pleased to appoint Bronwyn Fox as its new clerk. Bronwyn lives in Llanfrynach with her husband Steve. She is highly qualified in accounting and business management and has just set up a new B&B in the village.

### St David's Day

There will be a United Service for all six Churches of the Beacons Benefice to celebrate St. David's Day at 10am at Cantref Church on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2014

For information about regular services in the Beacons Benefice contact secretary Jackie Williams (see details below under Llanfrynach Hall) or visit [www.llanfrynach-community.org](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org) and go to Organisations and then Benefice.

### Film History

Does anyone have any 8mm film tucked away in a drawer, maybe unseen for many years? Sue Brook is on the hunt for old family or local film which shows a slice of life in a way which may be lost forever if we don't restore it and maybe even turn it into a local DVD. Contact Sue – details below.

### News from the Tŷ Bach

Police investigated the vandalism at Tŷ Bach Llanfrynach Loos but no-one was caught.

Powys County Council is planning to close more public conveniences and the Tŷ Bach team has been asked for and given advice to many communities about how the volunteer system works.

But there is now a question over whether public loos should attract business rates – at a cost to the Tŷ Bach of about £350 pa – which is a lot of pennies! Powys County council is now being asked once more to reconsider the whole issue.

### Members of Llanfrynach Community Council

#### CANTREF WARD

Mrs Michelle Davies 625454 [shldavies@aol.com](mailto:shldavies@aol.com) Mrs Susan Brook 610010 [sue@crofftau.co.uk](mailto:sue@crofftau.co.uk)

#### LLANFRYNACH WARD

Mr Charles de Winton 665493 [charles.dewinton@btinternet.com](mailto:charles.dewinton@btinternet.com) Ms Ruth Brown 665262 [ruth-brown@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ruth-brown@tiscali.co.uk)

Mr Stephen Williams 665776 [s.williams667@btinternet.com](mailto:s.williams667@btinternet.com)

#### LLANHAMLACH WARD

Mr. Tony Hamnett 665265 [tony@mhamnett.plus.com](mailto:tony@mhamnett.plus.com) Mr Bill Burrows 665301 [bill.burrows101@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.burrows101@btinternet.com)

Dr Mervyn Bramley 665267 [mervyn.bramley@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mervyn.bramley@blueyonder.co.uk) Mrs Norma Higginson 66578 [normahigginson@live.co.uk](mailto:normahigginson@live.co.uk)

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Bronwyn Fox [bronwyn.fox@llanfrynach-community.org.uk](mailto:bronwyn.fox@llanfrynach-community.org.uk) 665714

County Councillor : Mr Liam Fitzpatrick 665519 or 07715 536210 (mob) [cllr.liam.fitzpatrick@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.liam.fitzpatrick@powys.gov.uk)

For Groesffordd Village Hall: Mr Tony Hamnett 665265 [ahamnett@onetel.com](mailto:ahamnett@onetel.com)  
For Llanfrynach & Cantref Community Hall: Mrs Jackie Williams 665357 [jwilliams647@btinternet.com](mailto:jwilliams647@btinternet.com)

# The Powys Budget – Have Your Say!

Solomon would be hard put to answer some of the questions posed by Powys County Council at an event attended by Community Councillors and residents in which they were asked for input as to how to save £20 million off the Council budget this year. Music in Schools or Meals on Wheels? Care packages for the elderly or funding for Citizens Advice Centres? The list of potential cuts is an ethical minefield and as Welsh Government funding fell by £49 per person in Powys from 2013/14 to 2014/15 (a total of £6.6m) the chances of an increase in Council Tax as well as cuts in services are inevitable. A one per cent increase in council tax would yield additional income of £580,000 and a 5 per cent would yield £2.5 million, which is not a big dent when PCC is looking for £20 million. Dyfed Powys police have increased their budget (which is included in everyone's Council Tax bill) by 2.1% over last year. The Community Council's budget of £10,273 is also included in your Council Tax bill.

## Local Powys County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick (Independent) writes:

The current financial crisis affecting all Welsh Councils stems from 2008 and the global financial crisis. Whereas major cuts took place in England over the past 4 years, Wales was somewhat protected from the cuts due to the Welsh Assembly having devolved powers over how its budget is spent. Hens do have a tendency to come home to roost however, and whereas Councils have made minor cuts over the past 4 years, it is this year and in the subsequent 3 years that akin to any household budgets, the books have to be balanced and a council can only spend what it has. So in 2014 Powys must save £20m and in the next three years £40m – Cardiff incidentally must save over £100m. These cuts will affect not only jobs but all services and it is expected that, as this is the biggest cut in council funding in Welsh history, that as citizens we will all be affected in some way or another – whether we have children in schools, elderly parents or pay car parking charges in the county. The extent of these cuts has thrown Powys County Council into disarray, with three Cabinet Governments since December – and a fear of the Welsh Assembly appointing commissioners should a budget not be agreed on. Powys is unique in that as well as having three political parties – who wish to have no part in the Cabinet process and making these drastic decisions – it also has a number of independent groups who until December 2013, did not work closely together. The decision of the two leaders to try to unite into one group and hence create a stable government for Powys, led to a further debacle in January with another Cabinet being formed of three independent groups supported by the political parties – who didn't wish for cabinet positions or to be part of a government. The whole issue is strange to say the least – and that's from a County Councillor perspective!

From a local point of view I would urge residents to contact either myself or the Community Councillors with regard to their views on this budget and offer their opinion, as these cuts will affect us all. It is also important, that as your independent elected councillor, I can transmit your views to the Cabinet and vote appropriately on the Budget.

In a nutshell – these cuts will affect the elderly, libraries, schools, meals on wheels, care in the community, highways, jobs, public transport, toilets, grants and virtually every service the council provides – so it is important everyone's voice is heard. Full details and a budget questionnaire are available on the Powys website at [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk) and I and all the Community

## We Have a Plan!

Following the Community Consultation exercise last year, Cllr Tony Hamnett developed an Action Plan for the Community Council – a series of jobs to be done with progress to be reported back to each Community Council meeting. The full details of the plan are on the Community Council website – [www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk). But among the issues tackled so far:

**Refuse Collection:** Powys County Council has confirmed that new vehicles suitable for narrow access (down country lanes) have now been ordered and it is intended to introduce the new kerbside recycling service to the whole County between May – December 2014. A spokeswoman said, "We are currently redesigning collection routes for the new fleet and once this work is complete we will be able to produce a comprehensive list of when recycling services will be rolled out. This will be widely communicated to Council Members and the Public.

**Rights of Way:** A number of our rights of way are being allowed to become blocked, overgrown, or not reinstated following ploughing. The CC is aware of its responsibility and the responsibility of the landowners to keep rights of way open, however we do need the help and cooperation of residents to walk the paths regularly and report back to the CC. To this end a Footpaths Group of volunteers is being sought from each community to take exercise, walk their dogs or just enjoy a nice stroll through the countryside. So please contact your local Community Councillor and make a commitment of 2 or 3 walks a year.

**Repairs to PCC Roads:** Repairs have been carried out to the Square in Groesffordd and the road leading to Groesffordd Park. Also repairs and improvements to the drainage are being done to the lay-by opposite Cantref Church following damage by the torrential rain.

**Street Lighting:** PCC has been asked to do a complete survey of street lighting in Groesffordd and Llanfrynach because the lights are behaving very erratically, going on and off at odd hours according to no observable timetable. If residents notice anything odd about the behaviour of a street light near them – or would like a particular light switched on or off please contact a community councillor. Currently PCC has imposed a ration of only switching on half the lights in each community.

## Trickle-Down Cut Backs

It had to happen. From global financial meltdown to Llanfrynach Community Council – this year the impact of what started a long way away reached rural Wales and Community Councillors have had to come up with some imaginative ideas in preparing the annual budget. To start with the bottom line: the Community Council is requesting a budget of £10,273 for the coming year from Powys County Council. This would mean a miniscule rise – for instance, a band D council taxpayer will pay £30.79, an increase of £0.26 for 2014. Powys County Council will accept or reject this at its budget meeting later in February.

Councillors have allowed for an increase in line with inflation for most items in the annual budget and made some changes in its spending priorities.

Last year it was decided not to give either of the Community Halls a grant, as they are both being well used and have sufficient income. This will remain the case in 2014, though the Council will continue to pay the insurance bill for both halls.

The Community Council pays a variety of bills for local services such as grass cutting, public liability insurances, clerk's wages, councillor training etc. You can find a full itemised budget at our website [www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk](http://www.llanfrynach-community.org.uk)

## Community Grant Fund Launched

Historically the Community Council has given annual donations to a variety of charities such as Dial a Ride and the Brecon Advice Centre, which are of use to local residents. Money has also gone each year to support the upkeep of local churches, in particular the churchyards. The Council has decided to replace this practice by establishing a Community Grant Fund, to which all the previous recipients are invited to apply. Initially, for 2014, the fund will start at £500.

This Fund is intended for projects or groups, whose work will benefit the community. For instance a youth group might need kit or a lunch club for older people might need start up money; then there could be money for landscaping and planting where appropriate. The fund is aimed at supporting volunteer effort in the community and at giving new ventures a kick-start. If you have something in mind please contact your Community Councillor.

## Good News for Newts

Before the end of February residents of the barn development at Cefn Cantref are hoping to clean out the pond (home to the great crested newt), which has been invaded by extensive bulrushes and other plants, and to fell the willow trees on the side of the pond against the road. All the work to restore the pond is being done with the support of the Green Valleys Scheme and the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Group.

## GREEN SHOOTS PROMISE FRUITFUL YEARS TO COME

Good news for lovers of fruit – small community orchards have been planted in Groesffordd, Llanfrynach and Cantref – apples, pears, plums and damson trees have been provided by The Green Valleys Scheme and the Powys Community Nectar Tree Scheme. The planting of fruit trees will provide a nectar source in early spring for bees and other insects. In addition to raising awareness of the importance of pollinating insects, the scheme also aims to enhance local open spaces for the benefit of all and should provide local residents with free fruit for years to come.

Councillors in Groesffordd submitted a plan of the village showing proposed planting sites, but to their disappointment, some were rejected, as there were concerns over suitability, particularly on road verges. But five trees were collected and planted at Groesffordd Park early in December by the Councillors, Dave Higginson, Sylvia and George Letson. Sylvia's help in providing shortbread and a glass of port was particularly welcomed. Councillor Tony Hamnett reports, "It would appear that although we are not arboriculturists, we must have done a reasonable job, as the trees survived the winter gales. We hope that in the spring we will see a colourful display and by the autumn the fruits of our labour for all to enjoy."

Cantref's Community Orchard has been planted behind Cantref Church with trees provided by the Green Valley Scheme from Talybont-on-Usk. A huge chunk of land had become completely overgrown with impenetrable willow and brambles and was beginning to engulf the ancient yew trees. New resident Heather Hornung heroically cleared the ivy from the yews and much needed help came from the Probation Service's Community Pay Back Team, which worked hard over several visits to clear the site. Now snowdrops, which have not been seen in this part of the Churchyard for many years, have burst through just in time for the trees to be planted on one of the few dry mornings in January.



In the new Cantref Church Orchard, Robert Robins of the Probation Service, Gareth Ellis of the Green Valleys Scheme and Peter Tkaczyk a Cantref resident, who is also with the Probation Service, admire the newly planted trees and snowdrops.

In Llanfrynach a team of Councillors and residents planted trees, also provided by the Nectar Tree Scheme, in the playground. Colm Fitzpatrick made sure this one was well watered.

