

Cynlluniau Lle Ceredigion Place Plans

Llandysul Place Plan

2019



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



General Background

General background to the Town and the aspirations for the Plan

Llandysul is a Historic town nestled on the banks of the famous sewn and salmon river Teifi and goes back to pre-Norman times. It straddles the boundary of two Local Authorities with Pont-tyweli located in Carmarthenshire and Llandysul in Ceredigion Unitary Authorities. The area is served by three Community Council areas that converge at Llandysul, namely Llanfihangel and Llangeler in the Carmarthenshire and Llandysul in Ceredigion. It is one of a chain of market towns that runs the length of the Teifi Valley, with Cardigan to the South, Newcastle-Emlyn, Llandysul, Llanybydder, and Lampeter with Tregaron at the source of the Teifi in the north.

It is a traditional market town where agriculture continues to play a significant role in the areas economy. In past times, the hinterland made great use of the river as a trading route with woollen mills being a very prevalent employer in the area.

The Powerhouse, which has, as its current use, an Arts /community centre, historically generated electricity from turbines, based in the Teifi to supply Llandysul and Pont-tyweli area.

Until the “Beeching” period, it was served by a railway line, which aided the bringing in, and export of goods from the area. At the railhead a livestock market was conveniently located to maximise the opportunities that the railway brought. Regrettably, the livestock market has ceased due to change in agricultural practices and to make way for the Llandysul Bypass, which formed a part of the Ceredigion link road scheme.

We currently have a population base of circa two thousand inhabitants. We have witnessed a decline in the provision of services in the town over the years, both in the private and public sector and of note the demise of the four major banks that once operated from our high street. We are once again at a crossroads and face immense challenges in high street provision and undoubtedly, we will have to offer a service and products that are not easily sought in out of town outlets.

The Welsh language continues to flourish in this predominately Welsh speaking area of West Wales and in County terms has one of the highest Welsh speaking wards in Ceredigion.

One issue that became quite apparent throughout the consultation phase of the Place Plan process was that people were tired and fatigued with one questionnaire after another, with seemingly nothing apparent coming from the process.

People had a vision that development should cascade from this process, in as much, that in ten years’ time, they wanted to see a continuance of a community that was welcoming, made more of tourism, a flourishing high street with creation of employment in the area in order to retain our young people, better healthcare, retain

our green and open spaces with all its sporting activities. Develop further the walks and cycle paths in order to promote walking and activity type tourism.

Strategy for the future

Of the people who participated in the Questionnaire conversation day, many volunteer with or participate in at least one of the circa thirty plus local community clubs, groups, organisations, societies.

Most of the questionnaires were answered in English, although there is a strong Welsh language / culture tradition rooted in Llandysul.

Llandysul like most market towns has struggled to keep its unique identity and character as a consequence of recent changes in rural life and commerce due to urban focused policies. The closure of the Livestock market, the banks and the relocation of the Post Office out of the high street, have all contributed to a decrease of footfall in the town, hitting hard the old established local independent family run businesses and other outlets.

The bypass keeps through traffic away, the closure of one of the GP surgeries and the relocation of the schools to outside the town has reduced the daily presence of people in the heart of the community.

Austerity measures have hit the provision of a number of civic amenities, saved only by the dedicated efforts of many volunteers.

Generally, people find change difficult. The recent flooding of numerous homes and businesses in the Llandysul area demonstrated the tight knit resilient community that exists here. The impact of the floods compounded by the closure of so many enterprises has added to the feeling of despondency in a struggling market town.

People commented on the topography (on a hillside) and the challenges that this brings in the provision/access to services. Regular local transport provision could remedy this problem by integrating the two areas of the town.

Responses to the questionnaire highlighted the need for buildings to be upgraded. One comment was (Llandysul) has lost its heart and soul, been in decline over many years. It is perceived that the town being on the border of two County Authorities does not command the investment as one of Ceredigion's six service centres.

Respondents had many ideas and have a real affection for Llandysul, a "lovely parkland/ river", "A vibrant town in a beautiful setting". "Homely town", "A friendly town," "A good place to live, low crime rate." People commented on the need/ ability to drive, Llandysul is close to coast and well placed for accessing other facilities.

People wanted more shops, smarten- up high street properties, restore and renovate uncared- for buildings, better access for wheelchair users, brighten up the streetscape, to build upon the leisure facilities already provided; improve the leisure centre and create Llandysul a centre for outdoor (indoor) leisure activities, even make West Wales a National Park.

People want a high street with shops that cater for the everyday essentials, more artisan eating places similar to Cardigan, create a Pizza Tipi by the river. Develop the high street with shops that cater for today's requirements. Create a safe cycle path five miles out in every direction from the school, a boating lake, a Pitch and Put and a skateboard area. Respondents wanted to utilise unused buildings as digital hubs; to create many events that encourage interaction; to have a wide range of places of interest for visitors that come from all over, through e.g. their visits the Paddlers. To convert the Old Tabernacle Chapel to a day centre, create a car park on the High Street.

The vision for 2030 was "to think global, act local" to be "a colourful, vibrant community, rooted in self sustainability, environment and cultural tourism." "A thriving picturesque village oozing individuality/Welsh culture. "Llandysul to be a vibrant, dynamic, welcoming Welsh market town that both offers a full range of services and amenities for all its community members and surrounding communities AND is a destination place that supports the needs of all its visitors through championing its unique character and cultural heritage".

Implementation of these many aspirations cannot and will not happen overnight. It will take a considerable amount of planning, land assembly, identifying funding streams, getting projects into County Council capital expenditure profiles for example, completing applications for funding and so on.

There are many steps and even more consultation that will need to take place in progressing any scheme. These schemes will require prioritization in accordance with any potential funding avenues that become known during the progression of this community vision.

Individuals, organisations and collaborating groups will need to be identified and supported to carry through these potential schemes.

Focal Points:

Some areas in Llandysul are subject to a Conservation Preservation area status and an enveloping scheme would assist in retaining the architectural quality and merits of these premises. There are few buildings that are listed and one of these has commercial use. The need to strike a balance between modern day needs and requirements verses retaining historical value require a balanced and sympathetic approach to any planning application.

The Parish Church St Tysul has exciting plans to refurbish the main Tower, which renders part of the Church inoperative at this time, as well as to incorporate a mezzanine floor with support services that modern day churches demand.

We have many landmarks worthy of note in Llandysul, which includes the recreation grounds at Tirdref Fields, incorporating, a Bowling Green, Tennis Court, Picnic areas, Cricket ground and Football pitches. This enterprise include the provision of a pavilion, which contains changing rooms / showers, kitchen and amenity area and incorporating a circular walk alongside the River Teifi.

Adjacent to Tirdref Fields the Memorial Park and Children's Play area can be found which again provides valuable recreational opportunities. In recognition of the fallen, during the last two World Wars, the Community Council a while ago erected a masonry wall incorporating a Memorial Plaque with the names of the fallen inscribed. This provides, in particular, a reminder to all the young people that use the facility that they can enjoy this provision due to the bravery of those that fought for our freedom and our tomorrow.

The River Teifi, itself is a landmark and is well known for its salmon and sewin angling. Many from our community have represented Wales at various competitions. Llandysul Paddlers also make much use of the river and again this is a go getting club, which boast many Welsh and British Champions in white water kayaking and canoeing.

The former Llandysul Grammar School, which in more recent times became Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi is the home of a Historic Clock Tower. With the building of the new £30m Ysgol Bro Teifi with a through learning age of 3-19 the site of the former Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi is up for sale. At this time, it is unknown what will become of this cherished landmark.

High Street Improvement scheme:

There was considerable discussion made by Ceredigion County Council at the time of the creation of the Llandysul Bypass that the town and its narrow thoroughfare could benefit from a streetscape scheme. This was used as evidence in the Public Enquiry promoting the bypass. Nothing further has come from this viewpoint held by the County at that time. A scheme such as this would require professional support and input to develop proposal leading to further consultation.

The suggestion has been made during the consultation process that a Town Square feature would do much to enhance the feeling of wellbeing by providing a seated area for our residents and tourists alike. It could also provide a small area that could be used for country markets and other community events. One such location could be adjacent to the former Barclays bank and formerly part of the Gwasg Gomer site in town. It would necessitate a significant retaining wall in order to build it up to high

street level. One respondent to our consultation felt that most of what remains of the former Gomer site should be acquired and converted into town centre parking.

Llandysul would benefit from an enveloping scheme grant regime that would reinstate the roofs, chimneys, and frontages of both private and business premises. This could create a wonderful enhanced historical account of bygone Llandysul; in particular, of business premises that could attract tourism and help create niche business opportunities. The footways could also benefit from such scheme as well as street furniture and be incorporated to a high street Improvement scheme. Growing Mid Wales could be one avenue to pursue funding for such a proposal as well as the Town Improvement grant that is currently available for the three towns of Llandysul, Lampeter and Tregaron in Ceredigion.

Sustainable Travel and Accessibility:

Llandysul town built up from the side of the valley of the river Teifi means that there are some steep hills to be negotiated along certain highways and byways make access the shops on the high street difficult particularly for elders and citizens with mobility issues. People would like better wheelchair accessibility and a safe cycle path.

Having a car park at the bottom of a steep hill is an ongoing irritation as well as traders and residents parking their vehicles in the allotted parking spaces outside the shops and not adhering to the prescribed limited waiting times resulting in the diminishing of parking places for people.

Comments were made on making the “car parks free of charge to attract more people / shoppers to the town”, or “Residents and traders parking permits to use the car park for free” Other comments about electric charging points to be available in the car park.

Being a small rural market town linked by roads to other larger towns and cities, public transportation is a real issue and with twenty-five percent of Welsh families not having access to a car, regular bus services become a lifeline for accessing shops, banking services, visiting friends and family, and medical care. There were comments on the need for more regular, reliable, easier to use and reasonably priced public transport, “What transport?” being a very common comment. People feel cut off and isolated, they feel Bwcabus is not workable having to be booked in advance, and expensive for families with several children. People said that you should change the booking system, so you can book on that morning as plans change, and all too often, the buses are only half-full. “Public transport is not working”, and in the main is not available, it needs to be integrated, the bus system needs to get people to Llandysul as well as to get people out”. People cannot easily get to Pencader or Saron, to meet the hourly services that eventually end in Carmarthen.

With the school being moved out of the town to the outskirts, this has presented difficulties to many families. Praise was given to the Paddlers for ensuring a minibus service is provided from Bradford Square every morning to the school for the cost of a small donation. It was intimated that transport for all families could be arranged if/when needed.

If the train link from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen were developed, it would be imperative that Llandysul be part of that link.

Since the closure of the banks and the relocation of the post office, people are requesting a more comprehensive mobile banking service. People thought that there should be more cash points, e.g. located at places that draw large groups of people.

Improving the Natural Environment:

A scheme could be developed along the riverside footpath that leads from Llandysul Bridge to the quarry area at the end of the path. This would provide a lovely walk for residents and tourist alike. The thousands of Paddlers that converge on Llandysul throughout the year would benefit considerably from such a scheme, particularly in the winter season when the path is extensively used. Such a scheme would incorporate seating, works of art / sculptures, appropriate lighting, enhanced picnic / barbeque area, tarmacked / concrete surfacing of the footpath and the creation of a footbridge at the end of the path linking to the Half Moon public house car park, creating another attractive circular walk that link both County Authorities and would do much to provide healthy outdoor recreation to encourage healthier lifestyles and wellbeing.

A scheme such as this would require professional support and input to develop the proposal leading to further consultation.

The Memorial Park and Tirdref Fields is Llandysul's equivalent to a Village green. More could be done in making the parklands more attractive by for example incorporating flowerbeds and soft plantings, although we must not forget that volunteers manage this excellent community facility. The potential also exists at this location to provide a footbridge over the Teifi linking into a permissive footpath in the adjacent County, which would provide a circular walk that would benefit our community and visitors alike.

Similarly, a greenspace / parkland could be created on part of the former Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi playing fields to answer the needs of the residents of that area.

Place making – Promotion of the Welsh Language, culture and heritage:

Llandysul has one of the highest numbers of Welsh speakers of any electoral ward in Ceredigion. It is a traditional Welsh market town with a rich tapestry of Welsh Chapels and Churches, groups like Cylch Cinio Cymraeg, Cymrodorion, Merched y Wawr, and not forgetting of course Ysgol Bro Teifi providing Welsh Medium Education on the edge of town.

The Welsh Government has set itself a challenging target of getting one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Ceredigion as a County Council is playing its part by ensuring that it offers bilingual services, promotes, and encourages at every opportunity the chance to participate in Welsh language classes. Some of the job roles demand that the applicant has the ability to speak the Welsh language or commits to learning the language to an appropriate standard by a given time. Similarly many organisations in town have bilingual policies including Llandysul Community Council.

Some areas in Llandysul are subject to a Conservation Preservation area status and an enveloping scheme would assist in retaining the architectural quality and merits of these premises. There are few buildings that are listed and one of these has commercial use. The need to strike a balance between modern day needs and requirements verses retaining historical value require a balanced and sympathetic approach to any planning application.

The Parish Church St Tysul has exciting plans to refurbish the main Tower which renders part of the Church inoperative at this time as well as to incorporate a mezzanine floor with support services that modern day churches demand.

Health and Wellbeing:

In the main, there were more negative responses to this subject than any of the other headings contained in the questionnaire, due probably to, the enforced closure due to recruitment issues of one of the town's two GP practices.

Some respondents felt that the Llynfrân GP practice was under severe pressure and it felt as if it was going to crash at any time, complaints at the lack of parking provision, although this is being resolved as we write.

Many felt that Llandysul was being left behind and that the health service was totally inadequate. It was felt that Llandysul merited a new health centre that offered dentistry, optician and other clinical support services and also incorporating a good health educational element where people could learn to cook nourishing meals on a low budget, good health exercise rooms, and assistance with lifestyle health changes.

People felt that such a provision could be located on the former Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi School, or playing field sites. Some Llynfrân patients felt that their services had deteriorated as a consequence of the closure of Teifi surgery and others felt that it was now difficult to access services, particularly the elderly or those that did not have access to a car.

Some felt that care for our elderly citizens was poor.

Many were grateful to Hywel Dda Health Board for their rethink in terms of a provision of a Health Hub for Llandysul that was subject of another consultation exercise by the health authority, which should mean under their modernising agenda that health services would be available closer to home.

One commentator asked whether there would be a surgery in Llandysul in 2030, another felt that for an individual's wellbeing, that there should be more intergenerational activity supported by the provision of a lovely local minibus service to link the distinct population spread in the town and its hinterland.

Community Provision and Tourism:

Llandysul and Pont-tyveli are blessed with comprehensive community provision and tourism offer.

To the north of the town, we have the 3-19yr £30m Ysgol Bro Teifi School/ community campus with first class sports provision, which includes the home venue for Llandysul Ladies hockey team, large stage with good sound and light systems, and an auditorium that boasts rake retractable seating all capable of hosting large productions.

Moving towards the town and the old Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi site, we have the Calon Tysul community enterprise, which incorporates the town's swimming pool and leisure centre this provides an excellent community offer and supporting individual's health and wellbeing working alongside the Doctor referral scheme. It also provides valuable wet weather attraction to both our citizens and tourist alike.

Across the road on the site of the former primary school, the newly established Hyperbole theatre provides a venue for individuals that have a theatrical / musical leaning.

Moving to the valley floor, we have the excellent parkland and playing fields located at Tirdref fields. Here, sporting opportunity is provided with football, cricket and bowls on offer, catering for all age groups. There is also a permissive footpath running alongside the river Teifi that is extensively used. A children's play area managed by the Community Council is also well used by our citizens and visitors alike.

Further, downstream we have the impressive facilities of Llandysul Paddlers with their campsite and artificial lake. This venue is extensively used by locals and visitors

and is a recognised centre for training for the blue light services, RSPCA, universities from all over Britain, as well as armed services personnel.

Alongside is the community and arts centre Y Pwerdy. We also have extensive community provision with other community groups ranging from Cubs and Scouts in all its guises to youth clubs and other cultural entities.

Education:

Education lies at the heart of improving personal access to the rest of one's life and further afield. Many comments were received on community- based, lifelong learning, part time courses, evening classes, taster workshops, clubs that promote wellbeing, and opportunities for apprenticeships. There was a desire for additional education provision (e.g. evening classes) that is better promoted and visible in the community. Some examples of this would be the provision of Computer courses for adults, more clubs for teenagers and facilities available for people who work. When it comes to the school based curriculum: "How to fill in a tax return, register as self-employed, apply for startup loans, set up a business". "Allow kids to study both Art and Music at GCSE not either/or".

There was a strong feeling that there is insufficient High speed Broadband provision in the area, which reduces people's ability to access services enjoyed by others in more urban areas.

Consideration could be given by the Governing body to increasing its income by for example offering a touring site for summer caravanning as well as other tourism type activities.

Many also expressed a view that the school could provide an excellent base for evening classes etc.

Development Opportunities – Housing:

Current Development Sites;

In **Housing**, term there continues to be constraints across the allocated provision of land in Llandysul, in broad terms these can be characterised by the significant infrastructure costs that comes with medium sized development in terms of roads, sewage, wastewater etc. Only 5 new dwellings have been completed over the last decade, which has its knock on effect on the economy and vitality of the town.

The current allocated development land sits to the North of the town and is located adjacent to the Beeches Housing estate, rear of Parc yr Ynn estate and the largest adjacent to the Llyn y Frân surgery. There are a few other infill plots within the town curtilage.

In times that are more recent, a new linear development has commenced on the Llyn y Frân road and opposite the Llyn y Frân surgery and of the three under construction, two have being bought with a further nine to be included in this phase. This is also the time when Ceredigion is reviewing its Local Development Plan and are calling on landowners to include land as candidate sites. This does not mean that the land will be included in the next plan period, but it will get due consideration.

Development opportunities – Economic:

In terms of the **economy** the land earmarked to service the employment and business needs of Llandysul is located at two established sites, namely Parc Menter Groesffordd for general business use and the Horeb Food Centre Wales, located on the boundary of the ward in Horeb which, as the name suggests, promotes and assists businesses in the food and drink sector as well as encouraging diversification and adding value to the raw materials produced by the farming community.

More needs to be done to encourage greater awareness and promotion of these sites by Welsh Government in order to create further employment. The County Council should, under the review of the local plan, ensure that lands adjacent to these employment sites are safeguarded for future expansion.

Potential Development Sites;

With the closure of both the Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi and the Llandysul Primary schools, both sites are ripe for development. As part of the Place Plan development process, many heralded the opportunity for different end uses for the sites, including a sixth form college, enhanced medical facilities etc. Looking to the future there is certainly an opportunity to have a mixed class of usage for the site including, housing, light commercial use, and potentially, health related development.

The Llandysul Primary School has been sold and after a few years of remaining empty, one part of the former building has been sold to a Theatrical business, whilst the other part, the former Children's Integrated Centre have been taken over by a Christian group with options to buy.

It is understood, that the original owner has a desire to also seek planning approval for a degree of housing on the same site.

There was also a desire to resurrect a project of erecting a bridge over the River Teifi at Tirdref fields, which would link the two local authorities and respective footways, one a permissive footpath at Tirdref, linking into a definitive footpath on the Carmarthenshire side that would create a circular walk which would enhance the tourism agenda but also the health and wellbeing of our local residents.

The other large development opportunity is centred on the old Ysgol Dyffryn Teifi playing fields. There was a significant view that the whole site should not be given

over to housing, but rather a mix of development, some housing, and some light industry type of development like administrative or office accommodation. Many pointed to a new 21st century Healthcare and learning provision on the site to incorporate the now perceived over development of Llynyfrân Surgery. The idea was also promoted of the need to have allotments in the area and that a part of the field could be given over to this purpose.

Potential exists to have a district heating scheme on this site that could provide reduced energy / heating costs for both the private and social housing in close proximity to the site as well as Ceredigion's former Old Peoples Home at Aweldeg, currently being used largely as office accommodation.

There was an overwhelming view that a significant area of land should be retained as green space or amenity land, due to a high proportion of the population residing in that general area, and with future allocation of housing need development in Llandysul, likely to be also earmarked for that area in the Local Development Plan.

In terms of economic development, safeguards need to be put in place to ensure land availability at the Parc Menter Groesffordd, and the Horeb Food Centre for future developments.

Promotion and Management for sustainable growth:

Implementation of these many aspirations cannot and will not happen overnight. It will take a considerable amount of planning, land assembly, identifying funding streams, getting projects into County Council capital expenditure profiles for example, completing applications and so on.

There are many steps and even more consultation that will need to take place in progressing any scheme. These schemes will require prioritization in accordance with any potential funding avenues that become known during the progression of this community vision.

Individuals, organisations and collaborating groups will need to be identified and supported to carry through these potential schemes. The creation of an action plan with milestones will need to be established so that the community can be kept informed on progress against the objectives and a managing group established to lead and promote the aspirations coming out of this Place Plan.

Climate Change Objectives:

This topic will need to be at the core of future development in our community. Organisations are already responding to the challenge by taking measures to mitigate our reliance on old forms of energy.

The Calon Tysul enterprise is investigating the potential of a new boiler system to operate the energy needs of the swimming pool and leisure centre, incorporating solar panels for the roof of the leisure centre.

Gwasg Gomer, a private business is embarking on a large-scale project to utilize their roof area with the installation of solar panels to reduce their high-energy costs and reduce their carbon footprint in terms of energy consumption.

Llandysul Pont-tyweli Ymlaen, and its community transport arm, Dolen Teifi have just taken delivery of an all-electric vehicle with the kind support of the Brechfa windfarm project. It also has an application pending for the provision of three electric- vehicles to support isolation and access to services in our hinterland. These schemes will incorporate the provision of charging points in partnership with Carmarthen Energy Company.

Ysgol Bro Teifi- This School was built to the highest BREAM standards

Horeb Food centre- The centre has been retrofitted with solar panels to reduce the energy cost of the facility.

We need to enlist the support of our AM and lobby Welsh Government to select Llandysul as an active travel centre and encourage better and more regular bus services. Create more cycle paths to encourage healthier lifestyles and linking school and employment centres from the core of the town.

We need to get better at promoting and developing the objectives of a car sharing scheme.

Flood Management:

Llandysul and Pont-tyweli suffered significantly the impact of Storm Calum in 2018 and some enterprises and domestic properties have yet not fully recovered from the incident.

We need to encourage Natural Resources Wales and both Local Authorities to advise the citizens of our two communities what actions they are taking to alleviate such an incident in the future and provide grant aid to assist residents with their own limited flood defences.

Llandysul Community Council is developing a local flood plan to aid residents and businesses in the event of a re-occurrence of such an event in the future.

Currently there is a scheme in place that ensures that no domestic property has to go without flood cover, this is not the case for community enterprises or businesses and we need to lobby Welsh Government and others to ensure that a similar scheme is available to these groupings.