

FINAL PROPOSALS

Community No. M17 - LLANBRYNMAIR

Introduction

1. Llanbrynmair is geographically the second largest community in the county of Powys. It is situated in the western, Welsh heartland of Montgomeryshire where three river valleys converge. The afon Twymyn flows northwards from the Plunlumon range before turning westwards near the settlement of Llanbrynmair to meet the Dyfi. It is joined by the afon Iaen flowing from the east, and the afon Rhiw Saeson flowing from the north. Together they form a dramatic valley that is bounded on all sides by the high moorland plateaux that are characteristic of mid-Wales. The A470 traverses this community and serves as an important link between mid- and west Wales; the B4518, however, is a route of largely local importance, as is the unclassified county road which passes northwards through Cwm Rhiw Saeson and Cwm Tafolog to meet the A458. The large village of Llanbrynmair is centrally located in the community and benefits from a good level of community services and facilities. Llan, Bont-dolgadfan and Talerddig are defined as small villages in the Powys Unitary Development Plan. The remainder of the population lives in scattered farms and dwellings and in the rural settlements of Dolfach, Dylife, East Llanbrynmair, Pandy, Pennant, Tafolwern and Wern-Gerhynt.

2. The community has a population of 958, an electorate of 766 (2005) and a council of 10 members. The community is warded: Bontdolgadfan with 348 electors and four councillors; Wynnstay with 418 and six. The precept required for 2005 is £3,725, representing a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £8.42.

3. In the 1986 Review, two substantial areas that were felt to have a closer affinity with the community of Llanbrynmair were attached to the new community. In the north, the area of Tafolog was transferred from the then community of Cemmaes. This area bounded the northern boundary of the then district of Montgomeryshire and the then county of Powys, and its principal transport artery was the unclassified county road that runs through Cwm Rhiw Saeson to Llanbrynmair. In the south, the area surrounding Dylife, at the very head of the Twymyn valley, was transferred from the then community of Penegoes to the new community of Llanbrynmair. Again it was considered that transport links gave this area a closer affinity with Llanbrynmair than with any other community. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales made its final recommendations for a community council of ten members in a warded community: Bontdolgadfan with 220 electors and four councillors and Wynnstay with 360 electors and six councillors.

Summary of representations received prior to preparation of Draft Proposals

4. A submission form has been received from Llanbrynmair Community Council. This urges the retention of ten councillors for this community because of its geographical size. The form also acknowledges that the ward boundary at the river laen means “that some electors have to travel to Bontdolgadfan to vote when they actually live very near to the Wynnstay polling stations”, and asks “If we reduced the wards to one single ward would we be able to use two polling stations?”

Assessment

5. The electorate of Llanbrynmair has increased from 580 in 1980 to 766 in 2005. The Powys Unitary Development Plan allocates no sites for development in the small villages of Bont-dolgadfan and Talerddig, and only one site for five dwellings in the small village of Llan. Allocations are concentrated in the large village of Llanbrynmair, where there are two allocations for 10 dwellings. There may be further opportunities for infill development and opportunities for affordable housing development adjacent to the settlement development boundaries. There are also opportunities for affordable housing development in the rural settlements of Dolfach, Dylife, East Llanbrynmair, Pandy, Pennant, Tafolwern and Wern-Gerhynt that lie in this community in accordance with Policy HP9 of the Plan, for a limited number of dwellings in the open countryside in accordance with Policy HP6 of the Plan, and for conversions in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Plan. We note that this community's electorate will rise slightly, therefore, to about 800 electors. We refer to Table 7 - Guide to Allocation of Councillors to Community Councillors, and note that the argument for the community's retention of a council of ten councillors is finely balanced. However, as the existing community council itself has urged, this is one of the largest geographical communities in Powys, where representation is required to meet the challenges of population sparsity, and we consider that this secures the argument for the retention of ten councillors in this case.

6. The existing warding arrangement in this community is of long-standing, and was confirmed by the 1986 Review. We have given careful consideration to the question of whether this community should continue to be divided into wards. We are required to apply the criteria in Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act in our consideration of this matter, and these are that (a) the number or distribution of the local government electors for the community is such as to make a single election of community councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (b) it is desirable that areas of the community should be separately represented on the community council. Our initial reaction was this that this must be desirable in this very large community. However, on closer examination, the argument for the retention of the existing warding arrangement becomes more finely balanced. The large village of Llanbrynmair is located at the very heart of this community, where all its transport links converge; the large village has a good level of community services and facilities, and the small villages of Bont-dolgafan, Llan and Talerddig - all lacking in any comparable facilities - are located within about two miles of the large village. Furthermore, the ward boundary, following from west to east the afonydd Twymyn and laen and then the Cambrian Coast railway line, partitions both the large village of Llanbrynmair and the

small village of Talerddig. The present community council has itself drawn attention to the anomalies that result. We would suggest that this arrangement must be incomprehensible to electors to either side of this boundary at these locations. It is, therefore, our draft proposal that the warding arrangement for this community be removed.

7. The community council has asked whether the removal of the warding arrangement would lead also to the closure of one of the two polling stations that serve this community. The existing polling stations are Llanbrynmair Community Centre and Bontdolgadfan Methodist Church Schoolroom. Powys County Council is responsible for dividing its area into polling districts and designating polling places in accordance with Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. However, this legislation will be superseded shortly by the Electoral Administration Act, where the County Council will be given greater duties to provide accessible and suitable polling stations and to conduct regular audits of these. At this early stage, we consider that it is very likely that one polling station would be found to be adequate for this community.

8. If representations persuade us to retain a warding arrangement in this community, we consider that it will be necessary to redraw the ward boundary at the large village of Llanbrynmair and at the small village of Talerddig. Furthermore, it will be necessary for us to assess the current allocation of councillors between wards. (Schedule 11(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires us, in fixing the number of community councillors to be elected for each ward, to have regard to any change in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the community which is likely to take place.) We estimate that the electorate of the present Bontdolgadfan ward will rise to about 355 electors while that of the Wynnstay ward will rise to about 445 electors. This would lead to entitlements to the following councillor allocations: Bontdolgadfan - 4.4 councillors and Wynnstay 5.6 councillors. It would appear, therefore, that the current allocation of councillors is vindicable, and, further, that it would allow for the transfer of some properties and their electors from the Bontdolgadfan ward to the Wynnstay ward, for instance, in the divided large village of Llanbrynmair.

Draft Proposals

9. That there should be a community of Llanbrynmair comprising the present community of that name;

The community should have a council of 10 members;

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
	766	10	77

Responses to the Council's Draft Proposals

10. A letter has been received from Llanbrynmair Community Council. "We agree to the proposal to remove the warding arrangement. The decision will bring the Community 'up to date' in terms of transport, communication etc and the warding has little relevance nowadays."

Final Proposals

11. That there should be a community of Llanbrynmair comprising the present community of that name;

The community should have a council of 10 members;

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
	766	10	77