

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION**

by

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR Rachel Powell  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR Young People and Culture  
December 2020**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Catherine Richards, Professional Lead – Arts and Culture**

**REPORT TITLE: Radnorshire Museum: Revised Opening Hours**

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**REPORT FOR: Decision**

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**1. Purpose**

**1.1** The Museum Service has been tasked with making savings of £16k in 2020/21.

**1.2** In the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved by Full Council on 28 February 2020, the savings were to be achieved by reducing the opening hours of Radnorshire Museum to a seasonal arrangement, opening for 6-9 months of the year.

**1.3** The Museum Service has engaged with some key stakeholders and reconsidered the proposals around seasonal opening and is now seeking approval to maintain the year-round opening of Radnorshire Museum, but to revise the opening hours throughout the week from 5 to 4 days from 1 January 2021.

**1.4** The benefits of the proposed opening hours are:

- Better to support year-round visitors/tourism to Llandrindod and Radnorshire. Tourism contributed £144m to the economy in Radnorshire in 2019, with 0.77m visitors (0.32 “staying” visitors and 0.45 “day” visitors). The number of full-time equivalent jobs supported by tourism spend in Radnorshire is 1,999.
- Year-round opening lends itself to a more diverse and varied exhibition programme, with events and activities targeted at both Powys residents, schools, and visitors to the county.
- Access to the collection is maintained for twelve months of the year for researchers and academics.
- Museum staffing: maintaining staffing is hugely difficult for seasonal opening, which means a continual cycle of appointing and training staff. It would also mean possibly losing existing staff with experience and knowledge of the museum collection, which is important to enhance the visitor experience.

- The three other Council run museums (y Gaer, Brecon; Y Lanfa, Welshpool; Llanidloes Museum) are co-located with libraries with year-round opening. The proposed opening hours for Radnorshire mirrors this arrangement and provides an equitable position across the county.
- There have been past efforts to find a partnership to support the premises, which have already been extensively explored and exhausted. However year-round opening may present more opportunities than seasonal opening for sharing accommodation with an external organisation, which, depending on that partnership arrangement may in turn may allow a review of opening hours.

**1.5** The Museum Service savings target of £16k will be achieved by reducing a minimal amount of staffing at Radnorshire Museum and Y Lanfa, Welshpool. The opening hours at Y Lanfa will be unaffected.

## **2. Background**

**2.1** Radnorshire Museum is housed in the old Carnegie Library in Llandrindod Wells and was established (within the library) in 1929. Radnorshire County Council took control in 1938 with the museum occupying the whole building from 1970. The displays were refurbished, back office facilities improved (including a new store) and a lift installed in 2006 mainly using a large bequest and a Heritage Lottery grant. Visitor numbers are fairly constant reaching around 5,000 visitors per year. The museum is run by one (part-time) curator and two part-time front of house staff.

**2.2** The current opening hours are: Tuesday – Friday 10.00 - 4.00, Saturday 10.00 - 4.00 (April to September), Saturday 10.00 -1.00 (October to March).

**2.3** The proposed new opening hours are: Wednesday – Friday 10.00 - 4.00, Saturday 10.00 - 4.00 (April to September), Saturday 10.00-1.00 (October to March).

**2.4** The collections are Shire-based and include important artefacts for the county of Radnorshire:

### **Archaeology**

A fine collection of items from pre-historic to medieval periods including the Llandrindod Wells Log Boat and Sheela na Gig, the Castell Collen collection.

### **Palaeontology**

An outstanding collection of Ordovician specimens from the Builth-Llandrindod Inlier.

### **Fine Art**

Featuring the work of Thomas Jones, J.M. Ince, William Stone, John Opie, Sir Alfred East, William Mills, Elizabeth and Bryan Organ, Catherine Lyons.

### **Natural History**

Preserved specimens of some of Radnorshire's natural inhabitants along with souvenirs of more exotic climes. An insight into the tastes and fashions of past times.

### **Military History**

Artefacts and information relating to the men and women of Radnorshire who served in two World Wars and material from Radnorshire's Home Front.

### **Social History**

A rich and diverse collection including: a large photographic collection, items relating to Llandrindod's Spa heritage, the Kilvert Society Collection relating to the famous Victorian diarist, and John Roberts' magnificent Welsh Triple Harp.

## **3. Resource Implications**

- 3.1** The Museum Service has been tasked with making savings of £16k in 2020/21. This will be achieved by revising the opening hours of Radnorshire Museum throughout the week from 5 to 4 days from 1 January 2021, and reducing a minimal amount of staffing to support the new opening hours. Staffing will also be slightly reduced at Y Lanfa, Welshpool. The opening hours at Y Lanfa will be unaffected. This will meet the approved saving of £16k.

The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the position above and can support the recommendation.

- 3.2** **Communications Comment:** A press release will be issued

## **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1** Legal: The recommendation can be supported from a legal point of view.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

## **5. Integrated Impact Assessment**

- 5.1** An impact assessment is attached as appendix A

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1** That Radnorshire Museum opening hours are revised from 5 to 4 days a week.

**6.2** The reason for the recommendation is to amend the seasonal opening proposal approved by Full Council on 28 February 2020; to maintain the year-round opening, but to revise the opening hours throughout the week from 5 to 4 days. The savings targets of £16,000 will still be met through minor staff reductions.

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