



## **Proposal to close Ysgol Bro Cynllaith**

## **Draft Community Impact Assessment**

**September 2024**



## Draft Community Impact Assessment – Ysgol Bro Cynllaith

### i) Information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school

The closest provider for the 27 pupils that were attending Ysgol Bro Cynllaith in January 2023 was as follows:

School	% of Pupils
Ysgol Bro Cynllaith	96.3%
Trefonen Primary School (Shropshire)	3.7%

This suggests that Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is the closest school for 96.3% of pupils attending the school.

### ii) After-school clubs and extra-curricular activities provided by the school

The following information was provided by the school:

- Breakfast Club
- After School Club
- Table Tennis
- Music/Singing Lessons
- Eco-Club – Gardening
- Dance Club – pupil run
- Drama Club – pupil run
- Gym Club – pupil run
- Criw Cymraeg – Welsh Games
- Film Club
- Code / ICT Club
- Craft Club
- Cooking
- Outdoor Learning Club: when the children get to explore our local environment and learn about nature.
- Community Carol Singing
- Plays
- Pantomimes
- Eisteddfod's
- Leavers' services

**iii) Any other facilities or services the school accommodates or services the school provides**

The following information was provided by the school:

- Clwb Cynllaith / After School Club
- Use of the school field for the Annual Llansilin Village Show races and display of vintage vehicles etc
- The school field is also in constant use as a village playing field for all children in the community and was listed as a 'Public Green Space' in the planning application for the new housing development.
- The school field is used for the annual school Sports Day – attended by parents, grandparents and other members of the community.
- Bring and Buy Sales
- Fundraising events such as Bake Sales which have helped raised money for Hope House, Brain Tumour Research, Wales Air Ambulance to name a few.
- The Memorial Hall is used every day in term time for school dinners.
- The Memorial Hall is used Thursday afternoons for PE lessons in inclement weather.
- Easter Bingo – a fundraiser for the After School Club.
- Christmas Fayre including Santa's Grotto – another After School Club fundraiser.

Accommodation in the memorial hall for the following:

- Twice weekly meetings of a community Stay and Play Mother & Toddler group (0-4 year olds) whose numbers have reached 70 in total, this is considered a very important group which potentially feeds into Ysgol Bro Cynllaith
- National and local government elections and referendums
- Fortnightly afternoon meeting of the community organisation known as Llansilin Over 60 Club
- Refreshments following funeral services at the local parish church
- The Annual Llansilin Village Show for various displays
- Llansilin Table Tennis Club
- Llansilin Bowls Club
- Llansilin Choir Rehearsal/Practice
- Llansilin History Society

- Various meetings relating to above-mentioned Clubs and the Community Council
- Ffair yr Ysgub
- Macmillan Coffee Mornings
- Cymdeithas Ddywylliadol
- Llansilin Community Council
- Whist Drives
- Playing Fields Association
- Côr Cymysg Llansilin
- Yoga Classes
- Aelwyd Sycharth
- Footpath Volunteers group
- Trefonen Hill Walk staging post – this is another major date in the calendar
- Defibrillator training sessions
- First Aid sessions
- Visiting choirs, musicians etc.

**iv) Other use by the community of the school building**

The following information was provided by the school:

- Use of the school field for the Annual Llansilin Village Show races and display of vintage vehicles etc
- The school field is also in constant use as a village playing field for all children in the community and was listed as a 'Public Green Space' in the planning application for the new housing development.
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- Defibrillator training sessions
- First Aid sessions
- Visiting choirs, musicians etc.

**v) Other links between the school and the community**

The following information was provided by the school:

- The premises of Llansilin Memorial Hall are leased to Powys CC giving the school a substantive exclusive occupation of the premises. The premises are shared with the school by the hall trustees (i.e. Hall Management Committee) to provide, out of school hours, accommodation for the activities of the following community organisations: Cymdeithas Ddywylliadol, Stay & Play (Mother & toddler group), Over 60s Club, Indoor Bowls Club, Llansilin Community Council, History Society, Annual Village Show, Whist Drives, Playing Fields Association, Côr Cymysg Llansilin, Table Tennis Club, Funeral refreshments, After school activities, Yoga Classes, Aelwyd Sycharth, Committee meetings for mentioned groups, Footpath Volunteers group, Trefonen Hill Walk staging post, Defibrillator training sessions, First Aid sessions.
- Weekly volunteering by the children in the community shop which strikes a bond between the volunteering staff, the shoppers and the children – teaching the children different skills and the ability to

interact with adults from the community. This is considered to be an important part of the children's week.

- A newly formed liaison to begin in September 2024 with the children and the Tanat Valley Social Club who visit the Wynnstay Inn in Llansilin every Wednesday during term time.
- Frequent assemblies given by Rev. Norman Morris.
- Use of St Silin's Church for various celebrations through the year, eg. Nativity Plays, Harvest Festival and periodically the Leaver's Service – these links between the two establishments have always been strong and are vital for the community.
- Use of St Silin's church for craft days attended almost exclusively by pupils of the school.
- Pantomimes/Plays/Eisteddfod's which invite not just parents and other family members but the wider community.
- Christmas Fayre with Santa's Grotto which attracts people from many neighbouring villages.
- Annual Llansilin Show Day has sections which are heavily geared towards the school children and are always very well attended.
- Community Carol Singing
- Easter Bingo
- Llansilin Fun Day
- Bore Cymraeg
- Pupils litter picking activities benefit the village.
- Termly visits from our local Police Officer.
- Visits from local artist Mary Cunnagh which the children really enjoy
- Occasional interactive days between the Foundation Phase class and the children from the Mother and Toddler group. Not all the children who attend are from the Llansilin area but it certainly raises the school's profile.

**vi) If accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where would they be provided in the event of closure?**

Should the proposal be implemented, Ysgol Bro Cynllaith would close and pupils transferring to their nearest alternative schools and there would no longer be a school in Llansilin. It is acknowledged that this would mean that there would be no school in Llansilin, meaning that any community facilities provided by the school would no longer be available.

There is a village hall in Llansilin which is located next to school (Llansilin Memorial Hall). Should there be no school in Llansilin, the memorial hall would continue to be available for community events and activities. However, the information received from the school indicates

that closure of the school would impact on the viability of the hall, particularly given the leasing arrangements that are currently in place.

**vii) Distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category**

- Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school for almost all pupils currently attending.
- Currently, the average distance to school for all pupils that were attending in January 2023 was 1.40 miles, and the furthest distance to school for pupils attending the school in January 2023 was 3.62 miles.
- If there was no school in Llansilin, the average distance to school for all pupils that were attending in January 2023 to their closest alternative school would be 4.77 miles, and the furthest distance to pupils' closest alternative school would be 5.66 miles.
- If there was no school in Llansilin, the average distance to school for all pupils that were attending in January 2023 to their closest alternative school in Powys would be 6.64 miles, and the furthest distance to pupils' closest alternative school in Powys would be 9.01 miles.

**viii) How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported**

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process.

**ix) Any wider implications e.g. impact on public transport provision, wider community safety issues**

Information received from the school has expressed concern about the nature and distance of journeys that would be required to alternative schools should there be no school in Llansilin, due to the village's remote location.

In particular, concern was expressed that the local roads are narrow, poorly maintained and poorly lit, and concern was expressed about the safety of children waiting at pick up points.

**x) Additional considerations for rural schools**

The School Organisation Code includes a number of additional considerations that are likely to be relevant when carrying out a community impact assessment for a rural school closure.

Ysgol Bro Cynllaith isn't identified as a rural school on this list, however the Council's view is that it should be identified as a rural school, so consideration is given to these additional factors below:

- **Whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community**

Information received from the school indicates that many parents have said that they moved to Llansilin because of the school, and therefore that families would be discouraged from moving to the village should there be no school.

Concern is also expressed about the impact on house prices in the village.

Reference has also been made to the extensive links with Welsh history in Llansilin, and that pupils would not learn about their local community if they attended school in a different location.

- **What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community**

Information received from the school indicates that the school is 'the Heart of the Village'. Reference is made to the links between the school and the Llansilin Memorial Hall, and concern is expressed that closure of the school would impact on the viability of the hall. Concern is also expressed about the impact on the community shop, the local pub and other local businesses, and the impact on the local village show.

- **Whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purpose – such as public meetings, local events, fetes surgeries, and other get togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere**

The school has provided the following information:

- ***The closure of the school will have a heavy economic impact on those local organisations who, having no financial support only from the subscriptions of their members, will need to pay significantly increased charges for the hire of the (hall) premises. The closure of the school will also have a serious impact on the viability of the hall's finances.***



- Without any doubt the loss of the school and any families will have a massive detrimental effect on the village.
  - There would be no more end of term pantomimes or plays – last Christmas the play was amazing and saw a packed hall made up of parents, grandparents and other members of the community. The children were literally ‘buzzing’. To take this special experience away from both children and parents/community is very negative.
  - The school field is currently the only safe play area for the children along with the new playground, a place used by families as a meeting point.
  - The children Christmas carol singing around the village could no longer be co-ordinated with no base.
  - It is highly unlikely that members of the community (other than parents) would travel further afield to watch school plays etc. There is no public transport from Llansilin to other villages and a lot of the older generation do not drive. This will be a very sad thing for them to miss out on.
- **Whether or not the loss of the school, and potential families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community**

**The following information was received from the school:**

- Without any doubt the loss of the school and any families will have a massive detrimental effect on the village.
- Consider also the staff, many of whom are local and depend on their jobs.
- Consider the loss of the clubs which attract a huge amount of people to the village and raises its profile immensely bringing trade to the local pub, community shop and more recently the new MOT approved garage.
- What would the future of our village be? Another new housing estate possible unable to be filled because there would be no school and nothing else to attract a family to the village, and as the developer quite rightly says, may well be bought as second homes.
- Essentially the beauty of village life would be destroyed with one badly made decision.

- It must be acknowledged that a school attracts young families to a village, bringing with them connections, business opportunities and diversity. All things key to keeping a community alive.
  - The main economic impact will be a loss of potential work force. Many rural jobs, whilst not as labour intensive as in the past, still rely on a young work force as much of the work is physical. Removing this potential pool of workers will detrimentally affect many of the farms and enterprises.
  - There will be an environmental impact. Owing to the fact that rural communities are widely dispersed, more buses will have to be provided. This is coming at a time when the Planet is facing a crisis due to Greenhouse gas emissions and national government is trying to reduce the nation's carbon footprint. This policy of school closures runs counter to that.
- **How parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils, (particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities)**

Should the Council proceed with the statutory process and eventual implementation of the preferred option, support would be provided to pupils and their parents as part of the transition process.

It is acknowledged that there could be an impact on pupils' ability to participate in after school activities as the alternative school would be further away from their home, however the alternative schools in the area already serve rural communities and are experienced in meeting the needs of pupils who travel to school.

Information received from the school expressed concern that pupils would be 'swallowed up' in a larger school, and that parents would not support after school activities at an alternative school due to the distance to the alternative provision. The following information was received from the school:

- It seems to be the general feeling amongst our parents that after schools activities at alternative schools would not be supported, quite simply would not be an option, because no transport is offered to bring the children home and in any event the distance would make the day far too long for the young children.
- It is a widely felt, real concern, that disadvantaged children would be swallowed up in the new system of a larger school. It is felt that they will not be given the attention and care they have been receiving in our smaller rural school, quite possible

resulting in these children being sent to specialist school at an expense to the local authority.

- Please consider mostly the children of the village whose lives will be turned upside down so unnecessarily. We watch these children blossom in a small nurturing environment, we give them opportunities that they will not get in a large primary school. By the time our children are ready to move on to High School they are well rounded young people with a huge sense of self-worth. They have learnt to mix well with other year groups and have learnt mutual respect for each other. This inter-year mixing of children is a big positive.
  - The parents of the school are a close knit group – helping each other out when needed. This would be lost as there would be no point of contact for them. Their child would purely be picked up and dropped off – no social time for parents at all.
  - It would have a massive effect on the community – isolating the village and the people who live there.
- **The overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community)**

The information received from the school indicates that closure of the school would have a significant impact on the community, and would result in a reduction in community activities. Whilst there is a Memorial Hall which would be available for community activities should there be no school in Llansilin, concern has been raised about the impact of closure of the school on the viability of the Hall, as well as the impact on other businesses in the village such as the community shop and the local pub.

The following information has been received from the school:

***Statement from the Llansilin Memorial Hall Committee:***

***Since Ysgol Bro Cynllaith was constructed in 1971 the hall management committee has been pleased and privileged for the premises to be used for the purposes of primary education. The terms and conditions for use of the premises have generated an income for the provision of services, repairs and maintenance of the hall premises which has been used to subsidise the cost of hiring the premises by local community organisations listed in the answer to Q4. Therefore, the closure of the school will have a heavy economic impact on those local organisations who, having no financial support only from the subscriptions of their members, will need to pay significantly***

***increased charges for the hire of the premises. The closure of the school will also have a serious impact on the viability of the hall's finances.***

This statement should not be ignored – the school/hall liaison is a crucial link within the community.

The organisations/clubs/activities that could be affected:

- Cymdeithas Ddywylliadol,
  - Stay & Play (Mother & toddler group),
  - Over 60s Club,
  - Indoor Bowls Club,
  - Llansilin Community Council,
  - History Society,
  - Annual Village Show,
  - Whist Drives,
  - Playing Fields Association,
  - Côr Cymysg Llansilin,
  - Table Tennis Club,
  - Funeral refreshments,
  - Yoga Classes,
  - Aelwyd Sycharth,
  - Footpath Volunteers group,
  - Trefonen Hill Walk staging post,
  - Defibrillator training sessions,
  - First Aid sessions.
- 
- It is imperative for the health of the village that we have young families and children here.
  
  - A huge detrimental effect on families' health and wellbeing as they would no longer enjoy the beauty of being able to walk their children to school (something we are all being encouraged to do!)
  
  - A massive impact will be felt by working families.
  
  - The Council should be considering 'What is right for the community' rather than what is convenient to the service provider.

## **xi) Conclusion**

It is clear that a wide range of extra curricular activities are available to pupils at Ysgol Bro Cynllaith. Should there be no school in Llansilin, pupils would transfer to alternative schools. These would be larger schools, and the expectation is that at least a similar range of activities would be available for

pupils. However, it is acknowledged that Ysgol Bro Cynllaith is currently the closest school for almost all current pupils. Should the school close, additional travel would be required to enable pupils to access their closest school.

Whilst free home to school transport would be provided to eligible pupils in accordance with the home to school transport policy which is in operation at that time, it is acknowledged that there could be an impact on some pupils' ability to access after school activities, and there could also be an impact on the ability of parents to take part in school events, meetings etc. This could impact on their ability to access activities, particularly where these take place after school.

The information received by the school suggests that there are extensive links between the school and the local community, and that many community activities are arranged in the school which are accessed by the community. It is therefore acknowledged that closure of the school could have an impact on the community in terms of the services and activities available.

There is a Memorial Hall in Llansilin which would continue to be available to the community should the school close. However, the school has indicated that closure of the school would make it virtually impossible for the hall to continue. Concern has also been expressed about the impact on other business in the village, such as the community shop and the local pub.

The information received from the school indicated that closure of the school would have a significant impact on the local community.