

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
11th July 2019**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Jackie Charlton

Llangattock and Crickhowell are just 4 miles from the Monmouthshire border and 6 miles from recycling and waste centre in Abergavenny. Residents of both our communities use Abergavenny for shopping, cultural activities, hospital visits and lots else besides. Residents of Llangattock and Crickhowell are constantly asking why they cannot use the waste recycling centre in Abergavenny, which would be much easier, more sustainable and makes perfect sense.

Brecon is 15 + miles (round trip 30 miles) away for most of our residents and for some up to 25 miles (round trip 50 miles) away but we have to take any waste which cannot be taken in weekly recycling to the waste station in Brecon.

I understand from asking about this issue that Powys and Monmouthshire are looking at an approach which would enable our residents to use the site in Abergavenny. A recent email sent to me from a resident after trying to negotiate with Monmouthshire to take their waste to Abergavenny resulted in this response:-

“Over time we have used {Abergavenny} less than we did when we first moved but because of some further house renovation recently we have accumulated some more unwanted items and yesterday loaded the car boot with them, only to discover, to our horror, that because we live just out of Monmouthshire we can no longer use the Llanfoist site. Naturally we checked this morning with the Powys office to find out where our nearest provision is in Powys and was told that Brecon, 15 miles away from us, is our nearest, but that it is closed today and tomorrow. The next nearest site is apparently 40 miles away in Llandrindod Wells and there are in any case only 5 (we understand) sites in the vast area covered by Powys authority.

It was suggested to us by the clerk in the Powys office that we should contact Monmouthshire to see if we might, as a close ‘neighbour’ be able to obtain a permit to use the Llanfoist site. To our amazement we were informed by a clerk in the Monmouthshire office that Monmouthshire have been actively involved with trying to negotiate arrangements for non Monmouthshire residents to use its sites but so far have only met with refusal (from Powys).”

Could you please reassure me that Powys are working actively with Monmouthshire to find a resolution here?

Response

All local authorities in Wales are facing significant reductions in funding and hence need to ensure that they provide the best possible service to their own residents. This is why Monmouthshire have taken these measures to restrict the use of their sites to those residents who pay for them, i.e. their own. In reality, Powys residents have been using this site for a number of years by the good grace of Monmouthshire, although we appreciate that this is not how residents see this and understandably they do not pay much attention to county borders.

For Monmouthshire to allow Powys residents to use the site at no cost to the resident would incur a significant cost to ourselves (potentially tens of thousands of pounds) which we simply do not have within our existing budget.

We were in a similar situation with our site at Lower Cwmtwrch near Ystradgynlais, with considerable cross border use from Neath Port Talbot. When we had previously approached NPT for a contribution to this site, they were similarly not in a position financially to be able to do so and hence we have restricted their residents from using this site. With NPT closing their nearest site at Pontardawe on the expiry of the contract, we are now sharing the use of the Lower Cwmtwrch site with NPT, which has resulted in a saving for both authorities.

With regard to the comment from the resident that all attempts at negotiation have met with refusal from Powys, this is simply not the case, and we are taking this up with colleagues in Monmouthshire. Discussions are underway to potentially allow Powys residents to use the site in Abergavenny on payment of a fee.

We appreciate that this is not an ideal situation but as stated previously, the significant budget cuts (exacerbated by reductions in Welsh Government waste grants) have resulted in Councils having to take drastic measures, as indeed we have had to previously with the closing of sites and restrictions on hours and vehicle types. We do still provide five facilities across Powys against a statutory requirement to provide one. In terms of number of sites per head of population, this is quite high, but unfortunately in a county such as Powys there will always be residents with some distance to travel.

We will continue our discussions with Monmouthshire, but any solution will almost certainly require a contribution from the resident.