

# Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council

## Annual Report 2022/23

### Introduction

Welcome to this annual report which has been produced in response to the requirements of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requiring community councils to prepare and publish an *Annual Report*. The report will provide information on the council's priorities, activities and achievements during the year.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council serves Dolau, a small but strong community high up in the Radnorshire hills midway between the towns of Llandrindod Wells and Knighton on the northern edge of Radnor Forest. The village lies on the Heart of Wales Railway which runs between Swansea and Shrewsbury and boasts one of the best kept unmanned stations in the British Isles. The Register of Electors for the community comprised 193 names.

The community of Llanfihangel Rhydithon is situated on the north-western slopes of the Radnor Forest and follows the valley contours of the river Aran. The main settlement is concentrated at the small villages of Dolau and Tanhouse, just off the A488, an important local link to Knighton. The Powys Unitary Development Plan classifies both as small villages, with a number of community services and facilities, which comprise Llanfihangel Rhydithon Church and railway halt in Dolau and a chapel, primary school, community hall and vehicle sales garage at Tanhouse. In the very north of this community is the rural settlement of Cwm y Geist.

The Council endeavours to provide as much information about its activities on its website – <https://llanrhydithon.wordpress.com/>

### Community Council

The Council is comprised of seven elected Councillors. For the year 2022/23 each Councillor has chosen to carry out their duties on an entirely voluntary basis. The Council meets formally on the third Thursday of the month at 7.45pm when there is business to discuss. Meetings are held in Dolau Community Hall and the Council makes these accessible via a video conferencing platform if given prior notification should persons wish to attend remotely. Anyone is welcome to observe but not to address the councillors unless invited to do so by the chairman.

The seven seats on the Community Council were not contested in the May 2022 election and the seven nominated persons were returned. The Community Councillors are :-

- Cllr David Lewis - Treforgan Farm, Dolau
- Cllr Elizabeth Newman – The Old Vicarage, Dolau
- Cllr Rob Shelton – Upper Mill, Dolau
- Cllr Rob Stuart-Lyon – Lower House Farm, Dolau
- Cllr Richard Thomas – Tanhouse Farm, Dolau
- Cllr Carl Watkins – Tan-Y-Groes, Dolau
- Cllr Richard Watkins – Dolau House, Dolau

At the May Annual Meeting Cllr Rob Stuart-Lyon was elected Chairman and Cllr Richard Thomas was elected Vice-chairman.

### **Budget / Precept**

The Council's budget for 2022/23 was £4,750 and the precept requirement was also £4,750 which represented a cost of £38.02 per Band-D property. In addition to this base budget the Community Council secured a grant of £8,500 from The National Lottery to enable the community to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Community Council also holds a deposit account of £1,221 as a contingency for unexpected expenditure. There is also an investment account of £14,857 which is a capital fund secured as a capital receipt from the sale of the former Parish Hall in the late 1990s.

The Council's budget and expenditure for 2022/23 is summarised below :-

	Budget	Expenditure
Administration	£2,750	£1,523
Grants	£2,000	£2,700
National Lottery Grant	£8,500	£8,494

Further breakdown of the budget and expenditure can be found on the Council's website. The saving in Administration costs was substantially a result of Members deciding to forgo their entitlement for payment in 2022/23. Other reduced expenditure was a result of no fee from Audit Wales for the financial year and will be carried forward to 2023/24.

### **Audits**

Audit returns were submitted to Wales Audit for 2021/22 but Audit Wales has experienced difficulties of resourcing and has not cleared the 2021/22 returns.

### **Dolau Community Hall**

The Community Council acts as Custodian Trustee for Dolau Recreation Association, a charity that acts as the Management Trustee for Dolau Community Hall. The Council makes a major grant to Dolau Recreation Association each year which in 2022/23 represented approximately 42% of the Council's revenue budget.

### **Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School**

Llanfihangel Rhydithon community had its own primary school for over one hundred years. In accordance with the Powys County Council's Schools Modernisation Programme the County Council made a decision in February 2022 to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon School in August 2022. On 5 July 2022 the Council's Cabinet considered a further paper in respect of Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School, and agreed to delay implementation of the proposal from 31 August 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. This decision was made to enable steps to be taken to mitigate the impact of

closure on the community and explore options to establish a Welsh medium primary school in Dolau.

The Community Council actively opposed Powys County Council's proposals to close Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School and supported the Governors in their fight to keep the school open. It was a great disappointment to everyone in the community that the County Council's Cabinet made its final decision to close the School from August 2023.

The Community Council wishes to support community initiatives to retain the environs of the primary school as a community asset once the school is closed in August 2023

### **Highways**

The Council has a standing item when highway/footpath safety issues within the community can be raised and if necessary reported on to Powys County Council.

### **Small Grants / Awards**

Small grants / awards were made to the following groups

- Dolau Recreation Association
- Dolau Young Farmers
- Dolau Parent and Toddler Group
- DJP Foundation
- East Radnor Day Centre
- Wales Air Ambulance Service
- Llandrindod Wells & Area Twinning Association
- Urdd Eisteddfod

### **Dark Skies Project**

New Radnor Community Council invited Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council to join them and other local community councils in order to seek "Dark Sky Status" for the Radnor Forest area. The project has already held several meetings and the numbers involved have increased with a group of about 15 people willing to assist in the project. An approach to the International Dark Skies Association has been made to ask if the communities may make a joint application.

The benefits of dark skies are –

- To preserve the environment and protect the natural behaviour of nocturnal wildlife.
- To enjoy the full experience of our night skies and to see our stars.
- To appreciate the character and beauty of the natural landscape. To protect our health and well-being.

## **Planning Consultations**

The Community Council commented on seven planning applications submitted to Powys County Council during the year.

## **Nant Mithil Energy Park**

Bute Energy has put forward proposals for a major energy park within the boundaries of Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council. Representatives from Bute Energy made a presentation to the Community Council at its meeting on 14 July 2022 outlining the main aspects of the proposed development which will comprise the construction and operation of approximately 36 wind turbines, an electrical substation and control buildings.

Turbines with tip heights of up to 220m are proposed with optimal efficiency in generating renewable electricity totalling approximately 235 MW from wind.

## **King Charles III Coronation Celebrations May 2023**

The Community Council submitted a bid to the National Lottery to fund a community celebration for King Charles III Coronation in May 2023. The bid was successful and the Council was awarded a £6,800. The grant was received in 2022/23 for expenditure in 2023/24.

## **Key Council Objectives for the Year 2023/24**

- Continue to support Dolau Recreation Association in managing and maintaining Dolau Community Hall
- Continue to pursue highway and safety issues
- Continue to respond to planning application consultations in a timely manner
- Continue to support local organisations with small grant awards
- Act as enabling organisation for King Charles III Coronation Celebrations in Dolau in May 2023

## **Budget for 2023/24**

The approved budget for 2023/24 was £4,750, with a precept request of £4,750. In addition the Council secured a £6,800 grant from The National Lottery for the community to celebrate King Charles III Coronation.

*For further information about the council, council business and to see regular updates please view our website : <https://llanrhydithon.wordpress.com/>*

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