

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANSTEFFAN A LLANYBRI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ADRODDIAD CYNGHORYDD SIR/COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT
21 MEHEFIN/JUNE 21 - 2021

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES:

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales have completed the final stage of their review of the electoral arrangements for Carmarthenshire.

The Commission has published and presented all 22 electoral reviews to the Minister for Finance and Local Government who will now make a decision about each boundary review by the end of September 2021, so that changes can be made in time for the 2022 local government elections.

In order to give local authorities as much time to prepare for the 2022 elections, the Minister will make the decisions public as they are made, this means that, from the week beginning 21 June, the Minister will announce the first set of decisions on the reviews. Firstly, a letter will be issued to the County Council Leader and Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales and this will be followed by a written statement to the Senedd of each decision.

The current ward of Llansteffan has a projected 1,736 electors which is 12% below the proposed county average. The existing ward of St Clears has a projected 2,585 electors which is 31% above the proposed county average.

In its Draft Proposals the Commission has proposed to combine the wards of Llansteffan and St. Clears to form one electoral ward with 4,195 electors which, represented by two councillors, would result in a level of representation that is 10% above the proposed county average. The name of the new ward will be Sanclêr gyda Llansteffan / St. Clears with Llansteffan.

The proposal claims that *"This recommendation combines three communities, which already form the existing electoral ward of Llansteffan, with the Town of St. Clears, promoting the desirability to maintain community ties, and will be able to utilise existing community, communication, and social ties to form an effective electoral ward."*

All voters from Llansteffan and St Clears will vote for two councillors. However, there will be a projected 849 more voters living in St Clears than in Llansteffan, so the maths suggests a likelihood that two St Clears candidates could be elected - and no Llansteffan candidates.

I made a strong representation on behalf of the Llansteffa Ward at the consultation stage, and again when the recommendations were published. The Final Recommendations have been published again on Wednesday with no time-window for further representations. I have written to the Minister for Finance and Local Government, Rebecca Evans MS, in an attempt to initiate further dialogue - as has happened in other wards where the proposals were challenged. This proposal could leave the current Llansteffan Ward disenfranchised, which is contrary to the duty of ministers to ensure "effective and convenient" local government across Wales.

I will continue to make our voices heard on this matter.

SPEEDING ON THE GREEN:

A request has been received to erect vertical measures (speed humps) along the road parallel to Llansteffan Beach to address periodic late-night speeding. I have provided a full response from the Traffic and Road Safety Manager to the Community Council for its further consideration.

As a resident of the Green I declare an interest and withdraw from any discussion on this matter. Please direct any comments or queries to the Clerk.

I would remind residents that a recent call-out for volunteers to participate in GoSafe Anti-Speeding monitoring training was disappointing and the plan has therefore been abandoned for the time being.

ASH DIEBACK:

Following several enquiries regarding measures being taken to address Ash Dieback Disease, I have provided the Clerk with information booklets to be available to download from the Community Council website, which outlines the responsibility of land-owners to address the issue on their land.

Carmarthenshire County Council has 3,500km of road network and during the summer of 2019 the 10 Highway inspectors spent 1 day a week surveying all the A & B roads. They tagged over 12,000 trees showing more than 50% of the crown infected by Ash Dieback with just over 10,000 being privately owned. Last summer because of Covid19 restrictions the Class 3 roads were surveyed with 90% of the network completed. 14,000 trees were tagged with just over 200 being council owned. This summer the A & B Road network is being surveyed again, surveys started last week and will continue until September.

Work to remove Council owned diseased trees adjacent to the highway and on land it owns is on-going throughout the summer with help from the county ecologist to ensure strict wildlife regulations are adhered to, including nesting birds.

For further information go to:

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/planning/biodiversity/ash-dieback-disease/>

Am wybodaeth bellach ewch i :

<https://www.sirgar.llyw.cymru/cartref/gwasanaethaur-cyngor/cynllunio/bioamrywiaeth/clefyd-coed-ynn/#.YM-d3iMrJo5>

USE OF HERBICIDES:

I have been approached regarding the local authority's use of herbicides in controlling weeds in Llansteffan and Llanybri. Herbicides are used by the Grounds Maintenance team to treat weeds in hard surface areas such non-public highway roads and footpaths in housing estates and park areas, and by Highways to treat weeds that could cause tripping hazards to users such as pedestrians, mobility scooter users and disabled or elderly people, and also to prevent damage to the highway infrastructure.

I provided the Community Council with a detailed response which can be attached to this report.

THE FUTURE OF LORD'S PARK, LLANYBRI:

Many local residents have raised concerns about the National Trust's future plans for Lord's Park Farm. Current plans may include no further use of the farmstead for agricultural or residential purposes, and extensive tree-planting on the land.

The National Trust has now committed to local consultation, but at present there is no news on how this will be carried out. The potential loss to the community of a residential, business, social and cultural opportunity is not an option I can support.

SECOND HOMES:

Local residents will be aware that questions regarding alternative uses of residential dwellings are increasing, and are often the subject of media current affairs programmes and papers.

The issues relating to the use of a dwelling are complex and definitions vary, however, mitigating against the loss of available, affordable, traditionally-residential dwellings from our communities has now become an urgent matter. Communities in Wales have been calling for legislation to protect the housing stock in rural communities such as Llansteffan and Llanybri for over fifty years, and have been joined more recently by communities all over the UK.

Following a recent non-scientific survey, there are 227 private traditionally-residential dwellings in the "housing stock" of Llansteffan parish, 55 (24%) of which are not occupied throughout the year.

The Senedd is likely to be announcing progress on these issues in coming weeks. However, some legislative measures may take years before they can be applied.

I welcome views on this matter, and will be happy to present a co-ordinated community response to the current situation to Senedd Ministers.

LLANSTEFFAN TOURISM HOT-SPOT:

I am continuing to work alongside Lowri Jones to address some of the issues being raised by the current lifting of Covid travel restrictions and their impact on the community.

Additional No Through Road signage has been erected at the foot of Church Road, and a sign erected at the entrance to ferry Lane.

The majority of the potholes on the North Area of the Green have been addressed due to Health & Safety concerns.

I am hopeful that Public Protection Directives to assist in resolving issues of overnight camping in Llansteffan will shortly be in operation with the co-operation of the Community Council.

COUNCILLOR TRAINING:

I have recently attended a training course on Historical Buildings and Net Zero Carbon targets, and a training seminar on the Circular Economy.

COUNTY NEWSROOM:

Please visit the Carmarthenshire County Council Newsroom for all the latest local news:

<https://newsroom.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/>

Ewch i Ystafell Newyddion Cyngor Sir Gâr am y newyddion diweddaraf yn ein hardal:

<https://newyddion.sirgar.llyw.cymru/>