

## 1. Community Information

### Flooding compensation for households

The Welsh Government has set up a fund to support households flooded by Storm Bert. The fund is administered by local authorities. The officer at the council whom household are asked to contact for further information and to apply is Chief Officer for Place, Matt Perry. His email address is: [matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk)

### A40 Footway Widening at Bwlch

The North and Mid Wales Trunk Road held a public engagement event in Bwlch on 25th November to present and discuss with residents and other stakeholders its design proposals for widening the footway along the A40 and extending it to the junction with the road to the Venison Centre.

Copies of the design proposal and the questionnaire by which stakeholders can submit their views are attached.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to: [wonder.sithole@atkinsrealis.com](mailto:wonder.sithole@atkinsrealis.com)

### County, Town and Community Councils Sustainable Powys Conversation

Sustainable Powys is not a one-off Powys County Council project; it's the direction of travel for the delivery of key services for all residents in Powys, and affects every resident in Powys. Constraints on public sector funding year on year for fifteen years are such that the public services that people rely on and in some cases have done for generations can no longer be delivered in their current form. This is true of local authorities all over Wales and England, and health boards and trusts all over Wales and England, and will remain the situation for the foreseeable future.

The county council seeks to collaborate with its partners in service delivery, with community groups, with residents and, crucially, with town and community councils, to design future service delivery for our residents, meeting with you as equals, learning from your knowledge and understanding of your communities, pooling our varied expertise, experience and ideas, and sharing assets and resources, to build a new system of service provision that meets needs, supports health, fitness and wellbeing, enables daily life to run smoothly, fosters economic growth and community resilience, enables young people to stay and live in Powys as adults, and is fit for the future.

Five in-person discussion meetings between county, town and community councils were scheduled for November and December, and are ongoing. One meeting is being held for each of five clusters of town and community council areas around each of the five 'core hub' towns set out in the Sustainable Powys model. It is important to note and to remember that Sustainable Powys is framed around five hub towns but the model is a hub-and-spoke model, not a hub model. The spokes are the localities around and between each hub, which total 13 across Powys.

The locality that Llangors and the villages around the lake belong to is Crickhowell. Our hub town is Brecon. The localities connected with us, as neighbouring spokes, to our hub town are Crickhowell and Hay and Talgarth, and all of the villages surrounding and connected to those towns.

Our locality meeting was held in the Guild Hall in Brecon on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November. Every town and community council was invited, via the Chair, to send two representatives – the Chair plus one other.

The meeting was supported by the PCC town and community council link officers for the hub locality and the smaller localities within it – Heads of Service Ellen Sullivan and Sharon Powell, and Chief Officer for Place, Matt Perry.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Matthew Dorrance and I.

The meeting began with presentations by Powys Teaching Health Board and the county council, setting out the challenges we face and our unfolding plans for addressing them, much of which work will be undertaken in partnership with each other, with the third sector and with communities. The county council presentation was delivered by Cllr Matthew and I. We emphasised throughout our chairing and the presentation one of the key undertakings of Sustainable Powys, which is real and genuine engagement by the county council with the communities it serves and with town and community councils, as representatives of those communities. To that end, we kept the PCC presentation as short as possible, to maximise the time available for discussion with town and community council representatives.

The presentations were followed by conversational question-and-answer sessions. The participants then divided into two smaller groups which met in separate rooms to begin to explore further what a sustainable and collaborative system of public service delivery in Powys might look like, by exploring the questions:

- What are the most pressing issues in your Council/Locality/Mid Powys Core-Area?
- What are your strengths as Town and community Councils, and how can you use them to help create opportunities and potentially address the issues you have identified?
- What are the barriers to success and how do/can PCC and PTHB help or hinder you?
- How can we collaborate more effectively together, work together and deliver together – is it more meetings like this, locality workshops, or something else?

The conversations in each room were facilitated by the link officers. The PTHB officers took part, and Cllr Matthew and I floated, to be available where needed but not intrusive.

The plan at time of writing is for the county council to host two of these large, hub-based meetings annually going forward. However, county councillors and community councillors of ‘spoke’ localities can meet more frequently and I am keen to explore with the community councils in my ward what that might look like, what my role should be, what would make such meetings most effective and impactful, whether we should join with each other and/or with community councils in neighbouring ‘spokes’, and what support we might need from officers of the council, or other partner agencies.

The presentations from the night are attached.

Also attached is a poster publicising the new temporary opening times for the Minor Injuries Units in Brecon, Ystradgynlais, Newtown and Welshpool. The event was not focused on these changes and

the poster did not form part of the material for the event, but the Health Board officers provided the rationale for the changes during their presentation, answered several questions about them and remained with us for the whole event, participating in the small group discussions.

The Sustainable Powys link officer for the villages around the lake is Matt Perry and he would welcome the opportunity to build his relationship with you. His email address is:

[matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk)

I would be very happy to facilitate his attendance at a community council meeting, should this community council wish me to.

### **Draft Powys Sustainable Resource Strategy**

The Waste and Recycling Service had drafted the strategy for the period 2025-2030, in partnership with WRAP Cymru, the Wales part of the global climate action NGO, WRAP. The strategy aims to be part of the move to a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future for Powys. The strategy builds on the county's progress in waste reduction and recycling over the past decade, in which the amount of waste produced has reduced by 24,000 tonnes, and recycling has increased from 52.5% to over 68%, and seeks to address the ongoing challenges posed by the global climate crisis and the need to preserve Earth's finite resources, alongside other national and local drivers for change.

The strategy's aims and actions follow the principles of 'the waste hierarchy' - to reduce waste, promote reuse and recycling, and transition towards a circular economy.

The five main aims of the strategy are:

- Reduce, Reuse, Repair: Prevent waste generation, extend product lifespans, and promote a circular economy.
- Recycling: Achieve and exceed the Welsh Government's 70% statutory recycling target.
- Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs): Increase recycling and reuse rates at HWRCs.
- Awareness and Enforcement: Improve how waste is managed and reduce illegal activities like fly-tipping.
- Infrastructure: Develop and maintain infrastructure to support increased recycling and decarbonisation.

Over the last 10 years the amount of waste produced in Powys has reduced by 24,000 tonnes, and recycling has increased from 52.5% to over 68%.

The strategy includes a commitment to engagement, to work with the people of Powys to support and where needed enable residents to contribute and be part of the county effort to reduce our impacts on climate and the natural environment. The service will be running a 12-week public engagement exercise to seek the views of residents, partner organisations and workplaces on the draft policy. I will inform the community council when the engagement process opens.

### **Severn Wye Energy Newsletter**

Severn Wye energy advisers work with people in fuel poverty, providing advice and support to help people understand how they're using energy and how they can manage and reduce fuel debt. Energy advisors can also speak to energy suppliers on residents' behalf, but aim as a priority to empower people to be able to heat and power their homes comfortably and affordably.

Fuel poverty in Wales is officially defined as a household needing to spend more than 10% of its income to maintain a satisfactory heating regime. Any household having to spend more than 20% is defined as being in severe fuel poverty.

Severn Wye report a record level of demand for their services in the past two years as more and more people can't afford to top up their prepayment meter or pay their energy bill.

People can contact the service by telephone at the number below, by dropping in to a monthly in-person event (see below), or by completing a referral form.

The form can be accessed here: [https://webforms.dizions.co.uk/severn\\_wye\\_energy\\_agency/2](https://webforms.dizions.co.uk/severn_wye_energy_agency/2)

The energy advisor for South Powys is Kate Lewis. She can be emailed at [katel@severnwye.org.uk](mailto:katel@severnwye.org.uk) or called on 07442 465250

Her December drop-in is on Friday 13th December from 12:00-16:00 at Brecon Food Bank, St John's Centre, Brecon, Powys, LD3 9EA

Time-specific appointments can be booked by calling Severn Wye on 01874 611723.

Severn Wye Energy's newsletter is attached.

### **The Wise Group: Home Energy Advice Team support for households in fuel crisis**

The Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT)'s Relational Mentoring Service offers one to one support and advocacy to families in or at risk of fuel poverty, helping people to understand their options and to make informed decisions. This includes:

- Tackling energy emergencies.
- Managing fuel debt and related issues.
- Advocate on your customer's behalf.
- Accessing energy grants.
- Optimising energy usage and efficiencies.

The referral form to self-refer or refer someone else for further advice is [here](#).

An information pack is attached.

## **Contacting the county council**

Powys county council aims to be an open, accessible and responsive council. Set out below are a range of ways to contact the council, report faults or issues with council services, and make a complaint.

### Opening a My Powys Account

A My Powys account can be used for a range of activity, including:

- Keeping a record of requests and reports made by the resident, and information obtained by the resident (such as school bus routes, as discussed above)
- Enabling the resident to view and track requests and reports
- Pre-filling forms submitted by the resident with the resident's address and contact information
- Expediting phone calls made by the resident by enabling the call handler to view and track the resident's requests and reports
- Enabling the council to send residents updates about their requests and reports

Residents can open a My Powys account here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/login>

The pathway is via the 'Log in/Register' function at the top right of the county council's homepage, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/>

All residents, with or without a My Powys account, can contact the council by any of the following means:

### Contacting the council online

- Use the online live Chat function on the website's Contact Us page, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/contact>

The pathway is via the 'Contact Us' function at the top right of the council's homepage.

- Identify the email address for the service required and contact the service direct (on the same Contact Us page, scroll down to the grid of different services at the base of the page)

### Contacting the council by phone

General Enquiries: 01597 827 460

Enquiries for a specific person whom the resident can name: 01597 826 000

### Contacting the council in person

Several transactions with the council can be undertaken at local libraries, Monday to Friday.

Library staff can signpost residents to the council services required and put them in touch with the appropriate council staff member/s for their enquiry.

Information about all Powys local libraries is available here:

<https://www.storipowys.org.uk/find-a-library>

### Reporting an issue

Residents can report a range of service-related issues directly via the council's website, here:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/816/Report>

Pathway: From the county council's homepage, scroll to the first row of options below the search bar. 'Report' is second on the left. The function enables the uploading of photographs, also.

### Complaining and commenting about a service

Residents can submit complaints and comments about any council service directly via the 'Contact Us' page of the county council's website, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/complaints>

Scroll down to the grid of options at the base of the page. The complaints and comments function is the first option in the second row in the grid. There is a separate function (second grid on the second row) specifically for complaints and comments about Social Services.

Complaining formally in this way ensures that the complaint is logged and can be tracked by the resident making the complaint.

All of the functions outlined above can be performed via a resident's My Powys account, and 'as a guest' for anyone without an account.

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## 1. Council Information

### **Audit Wales Reports and Findings**

#### Powys Planning review

Audit Wales has reported that the county council has fully implemented the recommendations made by the auditor following its review of the service in 2023. The service fully accepted the recommendations at the time. It had recognised that its service had not restored itself to optimum efficiency and effectiveness following the pandemic. Following the audit, a full review of the service was undertaken, and was followed by an in-service transformation of development management and enforcement.

Audit Wales concluded that the service is now well placed to ensure that it can sustain the improvements.

The Audit Wales report can be viewed here: <https://www.audit.wales>

### Corporate Safeguarding

Audit Wales has also reported that the county council's corporate safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened significantly following recommendations made in November 2022.

Safeguarding children or vulnerable adults who may be at risk of harm is a shared responsibility of all councillors and all council staff, at every level.

The report's findings include:

- the Council has acted decisively and quickly in responding to the recommendations.
- has a good level of control over its corporate safeguarding arrangements.
- has fully implemented seven of the eleven recommendations with plans in place to address the remaining four recommendations.

And that the council's Safeguarding Board reports regularly to scrutiny, Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet to provide oversight of the Council's actions.

The council is committed to completing the work to meet the remaining four recommendations.

The Audit Wales report can be viewed at: <https://www.audit.wales>

### **PCC wins procurement award at Government Opportunity (GO) Awards**

The council's Procurement and Commercial Services Team won the Best Net Zero Initiative category at GO Awards Wales for its Supply Chain Sustainability Portal, designed to help social care businesses cut their carbon emissions and improve their managers' carbon knowledge. It won the Sustainable Procurement award at the same event in 2023.

The GO Awards celebrate the procurement achievements of Wales's public sector organisations.

The sustainability portal assesses an organisation's decarbonisation progress and uses AI to create a bespoke plan for further action.

Nearly 75% of the council's carbon emissions arise from its supply chain, and social care is responsible for approximately one third of those.

My comment for the press release was as follows: 'Social care has a very big carbon footprint and it's a big area of spend within the council. We have a duty but also a moral obligation to be at the forefront of the effort to decarbonise, and that includes the agencies we commission and purchase from. Our Adult Social Care Commissioning Team worked with suppliers to understand the barriers to decarbonisation for them, and the web app was designed to help overcome those barriers. It's a leading piece of work that the team can be very proud of.'

The sustainability portal is currently being further developed to be used by all businesses within the council's supply chain, focusing first on the highways, transport and recycling sectors.

The work is being carried out as part of the council's Climate and Nature transformation programme, which aims to help it reach Net Zero for carbon emissions by 2030 and for 30 per cent of the county's land and water to be protected and positively managed for nature by the same date.

For more information about the GO Awards, see here: <https://wales.goawards.co.uk/>

## **Cabinet and Full Council meetings**

### Cabinet met on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November

Cabinet meetings are open to the public and are live-streamed and recorded for public view. The links to the live-streaming and the webcasts, the Minutes, and all documents discussed, are available on the PCC website.

The pathway to access this is:

PCC homepage > My Council (top menu bar) > Committee Meeting Information (select 'Cabinet and Committee Meetings') > Calendar of Meetings > The relevant date and meeting in the calendar grid

Items discussed on 19<sup>th</sup> November included reports setting out:

- The council tax base in Powys for 2025/26
- The forecast end-of-year position for the revenue and capital budgets, as at the end of Quarter 2
- The findings of a survey of the council's tenants in 2023
- The recommendations of the Farm Estate Advisory Group

The page is available here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8089>

The single item discussed on 26<sup>th</sup> November was the council's Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Inclusion Strategic Plan for 2024-2030.

The page is available here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8990>

### Full Council met on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

Full Council meetings are open to the public and are live-streamed and recorded for public view. The links to the live-streaming and the webcasts, and to all documents discussed, are available on the PCC website.

The pathway to access this is:

PCC homepage > My Council (top menu bar) > Committee Meeting Information (select 'Cabinet and Committee Meetings') > Calendar of Meetings > The relevant date and meeting in the calendar grid



The page for the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December is available here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=149&MId=8391>

Questions from the public discussed at the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November were as follows:

- A question seeking action to increase car parking space in Hay-on-Wye
- A question seeking assurance as to the county council's support for the mental health of farmers
- A question challenging the value of the restoration of the Montgomeryshire Canal

Other agenda items considered and approved included:

- Budget virements requested by Social Services to manage in-year overspends by Adult Services and Children's Services, and recommended by Cabinet, to be approved by Full Council
- A report on the role of Member Champions
- Changes to the council's Constitution recommended by the Democratic Services Committee
- A review of the remuneration of the Chair of the Employment Committee
- Two proposed Motions, as follows:
  - To oppose changes to inheritance tax that affect farmers
  - To support the campaign to devolve management of the crown Estate to the Welsh Government

Questions are invited from the public for all Full Council meetings. Questions must relate to the county and the services the council provides, and if accepted by the Chair of Council they will be added to the agenda in the order in which they were received. A total of four valid questions will be considered at each meeting, again in the order that they were received. Where the council receives more than four valid questions for a given meeting, the remaining questions are held over until the next full council meeting.

More information on public participation at council meetings is available here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD672&ID=672&RPID=9845814>

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**8<sup>th</sup> December 2024**