

## 1. Community Information

### **Draft Powys Sustainable Resource Strategy Engagement with residents**

The public engagement process for the county council's draft Sustainable Resource Strategy opened on 10<sup>th</sup> January and runs for twelve weeks, closing on 4<sup>th</sup> April.

The engagement is taking the form of a survey which can be completed online, of the county council's Have Your Say page, or by paper download. To encourage participation, the recycling service is undertaking:

Targeted briefings to a range of stakeholders, including town and community councils

Briefings and development days for ward councillors

Media releases and social media posts to notify residents and encourage them to contribute their views

Notification and information on the front page of the county council's website

Posters in bus stops containing a QR code and the link to the online survey

The survey is available on the Have Your Say page, here:

<https://www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/draft-powys-sustainable-resource-strategy-25-30>

The pathway to the page is:

Homepage > Get Involved (scroll down to the bottom of the page for this) > Take Part in Surveys and Consultations.

### **Recommissioning of contract to manage Powys household recycling centres**

The tendering process for recommissioning this contract has concluded and a seven-year contract to manage and operate the Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Brecon and Lower Cwmtwrch Household Recycling Centres has been awarded to [Bryson Recycling](#). The contract begins on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

Bryson Recycling is the largest social enterprise provider of waste management services in the UK. The company has operated in the field for thirty years and in Wales since 2014, and currently manages the household recycling centres for Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council.

The service provided, opening days and hours, and types of materials accepted will remain the same in all of the Powys recycling centres.

Changes that will come into effect from 1st April 2025 are the introduction of a booking system for visits and charges for DIY and building waste. Information about the changes have been available on the council's website since they were agreed by the county council as part of the Medium Term

Financial Strategy discussed during the budget setting for 2024/25. Further detail will be made available before the changes come into effect.

The aims of the new contract include the improvement of the recycling rate at the household recycling centres, and the increasing of opportunities to reuse.

Bryson Recycling's social enterprise approach will be introduced to the four sites. The company has also stated its intention to explore and consider innovative ways to engage and work with local communities.

### **Social and affordable housing developments – further information**

As noted in last month's report, the county council has had a commitment since 2023 to building at least 350 new council by 2031, and in addition is guiding the development by housing associations of 282 affordable rented homes between 2024 and 2028.

Attached is a schedule of social housing schemes recently completed and currently under development which can be shared with the public. There are additional planned developments across Powys, including in Brecon, Crickhowell and Talgarth, but they're commercially sensitive at the moment, and therefore not yet entered in the table. I'll provide detail as soon as it can be released to the public domain.

### **Review of 20 MPH default speed limit on Powys roads - update**

As noted in previous reports, Welsh Government began a review of the 20 MPH default limit in September 2024, and has been working with the 22 Welsh local authorities since that date to finalise the roads which will remain subject to the default.

The Powys Highways Service is preparing a report setting out its findings and recommendations, on which county councillors and town and community councillors will be consulted. In total, 40 requests for review (pertaining to specific roads) were received by the service during the period of the review. The review collated and considered all requests, and measured them all against the guidance issued to local authorities by Welsh Government. Councillors (county, town and community) will be asked to feed back their views as to whether all concerns relating to roads in their areas have been captured and addressed. Following the consultation, the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Cllr Jackie Charlton, will be asked to provide her formal approval for the service to commence the legal procedures required to proceed with the changes recommended and agreed.

The report is expected to be finalised and shared with councillors shortly.

### **All-Wales Avian Flu prevention**

In January 2025 the Welsh Government declared an all-Wales Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, to protect poultry and captive birds from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Powys County Council's Animal Health Team are reminding all keepers of poultry and other captive birds of the steps that they are required to take, irrespective of the size of the flock or how the birds are kept. The steps include:

Making the areas where the captive birds are kept unattractive to wild birds. Examples of this include netting ponds and surrounding areas and removing wild bird food sources.

Feeding and watering flocks in enclosed areas.

Minimising movement of people in and out of bird enclosures.

Cleaning and disinfecting footwear, using foot dips before entering poultry enclosures, and keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy.

Reducing any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas and fencing off wet or boggy areas.

Keeping domestic ducks and geese separate from other poultry.

Ensuring that wild game birds "caught up" during the open season are not moved for a minimum of 21 days, subject to conditions within the declaration.

Ensuring records are kept in line with the conditions within the declaration. This includes completing the mandatory biosecurity self-assessment checklist within 7 days. (Two biosecurity self-assessment checklists have been created, one for commercial and one for small poultry keepers.) Keepers of more than 500 birds are required to take additional biosecurity measures, which include restricting access to non-essential people, changing clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures, and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.

Avian Influenza is a notifiable disease, and all keepers are required to remain vigilant for signs of disease and to report any sign immediately, even if not certain, to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on 0300 303 8268. Keepers should also seek prompt advice from a vet should they observe any sign, or suspected sign, of the disease.

There have been no cases of HPAI confirmed in poultry or other kept birds in Wales so far this outbreak season, but the number of cases in poultry flocks is increasing across Britain and there is a heightened risk of transmission from wild to kept birds.

Further information on avian influenza can be found on the Welsh Government's website at: <https://gov.wales/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

### **Powys-wide volunteer litter-picking project**

Powys County Council and Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) collaborated through 2023 and 2024 on an environmental project working with volunteers to support community litter picking initiatives and groups across Powys. The project, Caru (Love) Powys, provided volunteers with equipment, training and support. It collected nearly 3,000 bags of litter from Powys streets and green spaces during its 18-month duration.

It also supported groups to make environmental improvements that encourage biodiversity, and ran projects to promote recycling, reuse of equipment and materials, and an interest in nature.

Between July 2023 and the end of 2024, the Caru Powys team worked with 103 different organisations and supported 1,194 different events and activities, which included litter picks and gardening and art projects.

It provided 181 different opportunities to volunteer, which involved 2,692 people.

Caru Powys was funded by a grant of nearly £116,000 awarded to the council's Waste and Recycling Service and Keep Wales Tidy by the Powys Shared Prosperity Fund Local Partnership Board, which is supported by the council's Economy and Climate Service. The project built on a successful previous collaboration between the county council and KWT as part of the Caru Cymru scheme.

Litter-picking hubs are and will continue to be located at nine Powys libraries and several other community venues. Litter-picking equipment such as grabbers, bags, bag hoops and hi-vis vests are available to borrow. Further information is available at:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/8026/Volunteer-Litter-Picking>

### **Business Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme still open for applications**

The Business Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme for the financial year 2024/25 is available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Eligible businesses must apply to the scheme in order to obtain relief on their business rates, and it is estimated that approximately 100 businesses which may be eligible have not applied. To date, 920 businesses which have applied and are eligible have received the 40% relief available via the scheme. Their combined rates reductions amount to £2.8m.

The Welsh Government scheme aims to support businesses in their recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing national economic challenges. It provides a relief cap of up to a maximum of £100,000 for all business properties of eligible businesses. To be eligible, a business must be in the retail, leisure, hospitality or tourism sectors.

Further information on the scheme, including the application form and how to apply, can be found here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/15224/Business-Rates-Retail-Leisure-and-Hospitality-Rates-Relief-2024--2025>

The pathway is: Homepage > Services > Council Tax and Business Rates > Business rates > Find out if you can get a business rates discount > Retail, leisure and hospitality rates relief.

### **Powys warm spaces directory updated**

The directory of warm spaces compiled by Powys County Council to support residents struggling to pay fuel bills has been updated.

It provides information about a range of places where people can access warmth during times when they have to have their heating off at home, and where they will be welcomed to spend time, socialise, work or take part in leisure activities.

Awards of up to £1,000 to help cover costs or to make improvements are available from the county council. The funding is being provided by the Welsh Government, through the Welsh Local Government Association.

Community groups and organisations interested in joining the warm spaces network are encouraged to find out more and to submit their details on the council's warm spaces page, here:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/creatingwarmspaces>

The directory can be found here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/powyswarmspaces>

The Warm Spaces Directory is one feature of the Cost-of-Living Hub, which includes information and advice on a range of finance related topics. The hub can be viewed here:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/costofliving>

The pathway to the hub, the warm spaces page, the directory and the other cost of living information is:

Homepage > Services > Community support > Cost of living hub

Questions about warm spaces in Powys can be emailed to: [costofliving@powys.gov.uk](mailto:costofliving@powys.gov.uk)

### **Council cemeteries memorial inspection**

A safety inspections programme of memorials in Powys County Council's cemeteries will start this month.

Specialist inspecting contractors will place memorials in one of three categories:

Category 1: unsafe and in need of immediate attention

Category 2: unstable but unlikely to cause an immediate health and safety risk

Category 3: stable and no action required

Where Category 1 or 2 applies to a memorial or grave, the county council will not seek to identify the owners of the memorial but will take the following actions.

A Category 1 memorial will be laid down or made safe by other means at the time of inspection. A red notice will be placed on the memorial/grave advising that the memorial is unsafe and providing the county council's contact information.

A Category 2 memorial will have an amber notice placed on the memorial/grave advising that the memorial is unsafe and providing the council's contact information. If after the expiry of six months from the date of inspection the issues causing the memorial to be unsafe not been rectified, it will be laid down or made safe by other methods as appropriate.

Information signs have been erected at the entrances to the cemeteries where the inspections will take place.

More information about the inspections is available from the council's Environmental Protection Service:

Email: [environmental.protection@powys.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.protection@powys.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01938 551300.

### **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

### Online county council meetings increase diversity of county councillors

The Disability Policy Centre has reported that the holding of council meetings online has led to a greater diversity of elected county councillors in Powys.

The study points to the adoption of flexible and remote hybrid working by Powys County Council – in response to the COVID-19 pandemic but maintained since – as being a key driver in making the role of its elected members more attractive to younger people, to people with disabilities, to parents and to unpaid carers.

The report states that ‘remote meetings have improved the working culture for councillors at Powys County Council, allowing them to better connect to their residents and better attend to their council duties.’

The study was commissioned by the Local Government Disability Champions Network, and funded by the UK Government, with the aim of highlighting good practice that supports councillors and officers with disabilities at councils across Wales and England.

The report can be viewed or downloaded from the Local Government Disability Champions Network, here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-disability-champions-network-good-practice-case-studies>

An article by the Local Government Association about Powys County Council’s approach can be viewed on the Local Government Association’s website, here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/powys-county-council-flexible-and-remote-hybrid-working>

### Cabinet and Full Council meetings

#### Cabinet met on 4<sup>th</sup> February

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 4<sup>th</sup> February included:

- The scrutiny committees’ recommendations following scrutiny of the proposed county council budget for 2025/26, as published in January and discussed at Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> January
- A request by Hay and District Sports and Community Association to use a reserve previously held by the former Brecknockshire Committee of the Brecknock Borough Council.
- A proposal for the undertaking of an independent performance assessment of the county council as required by the Local Government and elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The direct link to the page is:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8932>

Full Council will meet on 20<sup>th</sup> February

The focus of the meeting will be the proposed budget for 2025/26, as published for Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> January, amended to reflect recommendations made by scrutiny committees or the Finance Panel accepted by the Cabinet.

The papers for the meeting, including the committee and panel recommendations, will be published one week before the meeting. They can be viewed by following the pathway:

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 direct link to the page is:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=149&MId=8967>

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**8<sup>th</sup> February 2025**