

Chairman's report April 2017

I would like to take the opportunity of the Chairman's report to highlight some of the key areas we have been involved in as a Council during my period as the chair. I am doing this as I think it is important that our community is kept informed of our activities so everyone knows what we are doing and can become more involved if so desired. The Council holds 11 regular meetings during the year with good attendance at all meetings from Councillors. The work of the Council falls into 3 broad areas:

- provision of services to the community
- to act as a voice, and provide information, on behalf of the community to other organisations, groups and individuals
- to receive information on behalf of the community from other organisations, groups and individuals

Some of our areas of work are highlighted below.

The proposed new sewage plant in Manafon. Manafon Community Council (MCC) supports the need for a new plant but objected to the proposed siting of the new development which was very close to many of the residents in Manafon. MCC arranged an on-site meeting with the agents for Severn Trent Water (STW), the Community Council, our County Councillor, the Church who are the landowners and local residents. An alternative and more acceptable site to all residents was suggested at this meeting but unfortunately local views were ignored and the application was submitted. MCC conveyed our views to the planning department. The application was turned down.

Problems with erratic mains water pressure in and around Manafon. MCC raised this issue with STW, monitoring variances in the pressure and feeding this information to STW. It was this continued lobbying by the Council which resulted in STW installing 'pressure loggers' which enabled STW to monitor water pressure more accurately enabling them to reduce this problem.

Planning issues. As a Community council we have information about and the opportunity to comment on all planning applications in our Parish and sometimes in neighbouring parishes. We respond in a way which safeguards our community and as far as we are able within planning regulations reflect the views of our parishioners.

Mobile Phone reception and Super-fast broadband! MCC again took the lead on this, organising meetings which were attended by our AM, other local Councils and the service providers. We also attended a meeting at which our AM, and service providers in Newtown which was covered by National television. As well as broadband we have been pushing to try and improve the quality of mobile phone coverage in the area and are working with other Councils to try and achieve this. These two items will continue to be a priority for the Council.

Powys County Council (PCC) recycling. As everyone knows there have been several consultations and changes of policy by PCC over the last few months. Recently there was a proposal to close some of the recycling sites in Montgomeryshire; this idea was reversed soon after. One of the reasons given as to why it was reversed was the number of complaints they received. MCC was one of the Community Councils that sent a strongly worded letter to them on behalf of our residents in Manafon parish. I suspect this is one area we are going to have to keep an eye on in the future.

Highway issues. It is understandable why this item appears on every agenda of the Council. The most common issue is potholes, these are reported as soon as we are made aware of them and followed up to make sure they are filled albeit not to the standard we would like. Other issues are

grass cutting in the summer months and ensuring drains are cleaned to allow water to be removed from the highway. During this year both STW and PCC highways were intending to close the road around 'The Rock' to carry out works. MCC noticed they were going to do this at different times; we contacted them both and managed to persuade them to do the work at the same time. This resulted in the road being closed once instead of twice. On more than one occasion when flooding was happening it was reported immediately even if at the weekend to ensure it was dealt with as promptly as possible.

Information. In order to keep up to date with any legislation and new ideas Councillors attend One Voice Wales meetings and the Clerk attends meetings organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks. In order to pass on any relevant information to the residents of Manafon the Council maintains two notice boards, all meeting details and some other information is displayed on them. The Council also maintains an interactive website which is regularly updated by the Clerk. This contains a larger amount of information than the notice boards, details of current consultations and other information we think could be useful or interesting. The site also includes details of all Councillors and Clerk, plus copies of all minutes in full and agenda's. It also contains a lot of other information about PCC or WAG activities. When STW needed to close roads in order to carry out their work this was displayed on the website. Members of MCC are also representatives on other organisations. MCC has a Councillor who as Governor of Ysgol Rhiw Bechan attends school Governor meetings as a representative of MCC, and as such can be approached by MCC area parents should they have any unresolved issues concerning school.

As a Council we also respond to many consultations from other organisations, for example Dyfed Powys Police, Fire Brigade, Local Health Board, Community Health Board and others. Donations were made to four charities, Air Ambulance, Marie Curie, Dial a Ride, British Legion Poppy Appeal

I would like to invite residents of Manafon parish to attend MCC meetings if they would like more information on our activities and how we as a Council operate. The more people become involved the better we as Councillors are able to represent your views and wishes.