

New Moat, Llys-y-frân & Bletherston



Y Mot • New Moat • Llys-y-frân • Bletherston • Trefelen

Action Plan



CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

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NEW MOAT, LLYS-Y-FRÂN & BLETHERSTON ACTION PLAN

Prepared By

NEW MOAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

In Conjunction With

PLANED

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This Action Plan was agreed at a public meeting held on 9th July 2003, following the circulation of the Draft Action Plan to households in the communities of New Moat, Llys-y-frân & Bletherston.

INTRODUCTION & WAY FORWARD

The intention of this Action Plan for New Moat, Llys-y-frân and Bletherston is to describe issues and ideas identified by residents which implemented over the next few years would improve the quality of life in the community by enhancing the appearance of the area, improving the economy, including tourism and agriculture, and strengthening and diversifying its attractions for all residents and visitors.

By preparing this community led Action Plan, which stresses the benefits that can be achieved through an integrated approach, it is hoped that public and private sector support and funding can be attracted to implement the projects and initiatives described in the Plan. It is recognised that although some of the proposals may not achieve funding in the near future, local people feel strongly that they should be included.

The various contributors to the Action Plan realise that progress can best be achieved through discussion and partnership as many of the proposals involve a variety of land or property ownerships, separate interests and different sources of funding. Although some of the proposals are relatively small scale, they are likely to be of substantial benefit to significant groups within the local community. In other instances the changes suggested are of a larger scale and may have major impact on a wider range of interests.

It is hoped that the projects described in this report will be achieved as quickly as is practical, with the various partners working in unison to design, fund and implement schemes. The Action Plan invites potential partners to realise its various proposals.

A significant amount of funding has been allocated to the area under the EU Objective 1 scheme and it is hoped that this money can be utilised to financing a number of the projects identified.

The community is part of the Maenclochog Ward and an Area Group has been formed to work together and to agree and take forward bids for Objective 1 Priority 3 funding. A bid has already been made for a Community Officer who will support the communities to implement the Action Plan proposals.

BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION PLAN

In January 2003, New Moat Community Council invited PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) to work with them to establish a Community Forum of voluntary groups and associations and to compile a Community Action Plan. The invitation stressed involvement by all ages and representatives of the various aspects of the community. A considerable amount of work had already been undertaken by the community, including a Planning For Real exercise in September 2001.

The community had already started working with PLANED to contribute to an Area Enterprise Group. In April 2002 a meeting was organised in the North East Central Pembrokeshire Area, where participants identified the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the local area. Following on from this, a Plugging The Leaks exercise was undertaken as part of the LEADER+ programme Creating a Culture of Entrepreneurship. This was held over two evenings in July 2002, the first workshop at Llys-y-frân and the second at Mynachlog-ddu. This programme aims to strengthen local area economies by bringing together groups of people from rural communities to identify new enterprise opportunities based on local resources – human, natural, cultural, social and economic. A follow-up meeting was held at the Nant-y-ffin Motel, Llandysilio.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

The area of the Action Plan includes the villages of New Moat, Llys-y-frân and Bletherston (which also covers Penffordd). The villages come under New Moat Community Council.

New Moat

The parish of New Moat can be found on the linguistic Landsker border where South Pembrokeshire meets the Preseli Hills. Situated on a branch of the River Cleddau it comprises of a considerable portion of meadow, arable and pasture land, all enclosed and in a good state of cultivation. The surrounding country is diversified and displays interesting features of mountain scenery.

New Moat, Nova Mota, Y Mot, derives its name from an artificial mount (within a short distance of the church) which is surrounded by a deep moat which may easily be filled with water. It is believed to have been constructed during the Norman occupation to protect the residents from marauders. New Moat can be considered one of the best examples of a typical Norman village and is one of several new communities that was planted during the 12th Century by Norman lords and populated by

industrious English or Flemish colonists. There is very little record of inhabitants prior to this Norman settlement.

One of the most prominent features within the village is the ancient and venerable parish church of St Nicholas which survives from this period. Despite its Norman foundation, like many churches in the county, it was solidly built and enlarged during the medieval period and extensively restored during the Victorian era. The church serves as a handsome monument to the Scourfield family who dominated the area for many centuries. The Scourfield family crypt can still be found under the village church, where their fine lead coffins can be seen to bear the family crest.

The origin of the Scourfield family is one shrouded in mystery and colourful local legend. One of the most popular stories told is the visit of King John to the area in 1210 who came to stay with the Bishop of Llawhaden. The Scourfields, who were then the Bishop's foresters, presented the King with a greyhound with which to race his own. When the Scourfield's hound beat the King's own hound the name 'scour the field' was given to the forester and his family. After reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries, the Scourfields went on to accumulate land in and around New Moat. Their estate stretched far and wide, with properties in Nevern, in the North and Tenby, in the South. The Scourfields abandoned New Moat in the 18th Century and from the late 19th Century resided in Williamston, near Burton. Their mansion now lies in ruins however, direct descendants of the Scourfield family can be found all over the county.

In the 19th Century, the parish was vibrant with activity. Farms were generally larger than today and employed a much larger workforce. At one time the village was known as Pentreffos thus emphasising its duality regarding the so-called lansker language divide. Within the village communities the various occupations included blacksmiths, wood turners, carpenters and gamekeepers. Religion was a strong focal point within the community and in the 1800s different dominations of religion began to emerge, the majority of whom were Baptists and Congregationalists. However, the only two chapels within the parish are Methodist. Traditionally the services at Penffordd and Gwastad chapels have been conducted in Welsh while the services in the three churches have been in English.

A public house 'The Ivy Bush' once existed in the parish, today the building had been demolished and the site redeveloped. For educational and entertainment purposes, traditional 'penny readings' were held at the local school in Penffordd. Local community members would pay the entry fee of one penny to hear recitations and singing (usually in Welsh). The main festivals held in the village throughout the year, included

Michaelmass, in September and St Nicholas in December. Michaelmass was the time of year when tenant farmers would traditionally change farms.

Llys-y-frân

In the 1800s the parish of Llys-y-frân comprised of only six farms. The parish church which is believed to date back to the 14th century and is named after one of the descendants (Meilyr) of a Christian mission that had arrived in West Wales from America, after the departure of the Romans in the 5th Century. In 1741 Hywel Davies became a curate at Llys-y-frân and he later became known as 'The Apostle of Pembrokeshire' when he set up the Methodist mission at Woodstock.

Situated on a ridge of land, the village overlooked the deep valley of the river Syfynwy. Its name translated means 'Court of the Crows' the parish's original inhabitants, and has been spelt in a number of different ways throughout the centuries; Llyseyvraen, Llysfrane, Llecevrane, Lesyevpayn.

'Brân' is the Welsh word for crow but it is also the name of a character who appears in the Mabinogion. This has led to speculation that there may have been a connection between the community and the Mabinogion.

The Parish has seen many changes as property has changed hands. However, some families are in their fourth generation. The Southfields estate has been resident to some of the most prestigious families in Pembrokeshire. Originally belonging to the powerful family Wogans of Wiston up until the 1500s, it then fell into the hands of the Phillips family which led to six generations of occupation. In its peak in the 19th Century the estate consisted of approximately 1000 acres and until recent land sales, Southfield occupied just under a third of the total land area of the Parish.

Rather surprisingly, because of its distance from the coast, Llys-y-frân was also home to several famous mariners. The most renowned being Captain George in the 1800s who held the record for sailing a ship from South America to the UK. The high number of seamen in the parish can be attributed to the recruitment of local boys as apprentices. Several have been buried in the church cemetery.

Prior to the 1970s, this small Pembrokeshire village was largely unknown. In 1971 the completion of the 100-ft. high dam saw a 200-acre lake created in the valley and a country park formed within the surrounding woods and pastureland. The lake soon became popular with those partaking in outdoor activities and those seeking the

tranquillity of the park. The upper reaches of the lake are popular with birdwatchers and an array of unusual birds can be spotted there in particular different kinds of migrating geese and ducks.

Although no dwellings or buildings were submerged beneath the deep waters of the lake, the loss of land severely effected the village farms, remaining land was sold off and farmhouses and outbuildings became redundant. The threat of dereliction has been averted by the restoration of many of these buildings into holiday retreats.

By the ruins of Cwmderi Farm on the floor of the valley a memorial stone can be seen commemorating the composer of the world famous hymn tune `Blaenwern`. William Penfro Rowlands was born in Cwmderi but composed the tune whilst staying with relatives on a farm known as Blaenwern at nearby Tufton. It has also apparently been published in a Chinese hymnbook.

Llys-y-frân boasts a thriving Young Farmers Club which meets in a redundant school building next to the Presbyterian chapel at Gwastad.

Bletherston and Penffordd

Bletherston is also known as Trefelen and the church there is dedicated to St Elen, the Welsh wife of Magnus Maximus or Maccsen Wledig. The English name refers to the settlement of Bledfri. The church surroundings with its small triangular churchyard boasts a picturesque pond.

A story is often told of two servants who were hired at a Maenclochog hiring fair in order to underline the linguistic duality of the area. The servant had been hired to groom horses at Bletherston and the maid to milk cows at Trefelen. It was only when they arrived at the home of their new master that they realised Bletherston and Trefelen were one and the same!

A non-denominational chapel was built at Penffordd in 1896 and was known as Y Bwthyn situated near the present Methodist chapel building. Until recently there was a primary school in the village.

1 - Community Facilities & Services

Commentary

The community has a tradition of organising successful local concerts, festivals and events, primarily in order to raise funds for chapels, churches, YFC etc. These events help to bring the community together, although more local involvement and community spirit is needed to ensure future success - there is a feeling that the same people organise most activities in the villages. There are lots of new people moving into the area and they should be encouraged to get involved.

Current events in the community include a 'Hill Climb' and regular fishing competitions at Llys-y-frân Country Park; the Vintage Tractor Run passes through the village and regular 'Off-Road' vehicle events take place at Woodpark Farm.

Events organised by community groups include an annual Sports Day organised by the New Moat Senior Citizens and the Children's Society, which raises funds to provide a children's Christmas party and a Christmas lunch for the elderly. Llys-y-frân YFC hold their fundraising Annual Dance and a Bonfire Night event at Llys-y-frân Country Park. A Shrove Tuesday Whist Drive is organised by New Moat Church to raise funds.

Some events no longer take place e.g. the Carnival & Sports Day at Penffordd stopped when the Primary School closed and the once popular 'Parents and Friends' evening is no longer held.

A range of activities take place in Llys-y-frân Y.F.C Hall. These include: Courses/Classes, village parties, YFC meetings, Community Council meetings, Senior Citizens meetings, PLANED workshops and meetings, local elections, birthday parties, Christmas parties, and Chapel meetings.

If the hall was refurbished and upgraded it would be better utilised as other clubs and associations would hire it. It could be used to generate more activities for community residents, in particular for younger people. Music and drama events could take place and there could be wider use by the YFC as an activities centre for young people. A Youth Club, evening classes including dress-making and computer classes, aerobics, squash, Urdd, community meeting place, Arts and Craft development, indoor sports, skill sharing (e.g. traditional skills such as wood turning etc) would all be possible.

There is a strong desire to see Penffordd School returned for Community benefit, either for low cost local housing, or for business workshops.

Proposals

- **Community involvement** - It is proposed that further effort should be made to involve more local people in events and encourage them to support local groups. This could be achieved through better promotion and requests for specific help which might be in the form of practical skills or experience of publicising events etc.
- **Improved Communication** – there is a strong feeling that there could be much improved communication – this might be through the medium of a newsletter and/or meetings of a community association, for example. The importance of a strong communication network was stressed particularly as in the past few years many new people have moved to the area who are keen to contribute and participate in community events.
- **Development of Llys-y-frân YFC Hall** – a Health and Safety study has already been undertaken and has shown a list of important requirements but no costings have been estimated. It is proposed to:
 - to upgrade the existing toilets to include provision for the disabled; improve fixtures and fittings such as furniture (tables and chairs, curtains etc); improve storage, heating, lighting and flooring and make improvements to the existing car parking area.
- **Llys-y-frân Country Park** – there is potential for further community involvement at Llys-y-frân Country Park and Visitor Centre. A good relationship already exists e.g. co-operation with YFC Bonfire night, but a meeting to discuss further potential such as social evenings in the restaurant, should be requested.
- **New Moat Church** - Phase 1 Developments had Heritage Lottery Funding for work required to the church tower (due to be completed in 2003); Phase 2 Developments are proposed for internal work. Upgrading the vestry as a community room (heating, lighting etc) is necessary in order for it to be utilised as a small meeting room. Cleaning and general tidying up of the graveyard and around the Church is required. A car park is required as well as toilet facilities for members and visitors.
- **Penffordd School** – the community of Penffordd wish to have time to investigate the possibility of its future use as a community facility for the village.
- **Public Toilets** – there is a lack of local amenities in the community, and much concern in particular over the public toilets being open only during the summer. It is proposed to investigate the possibility of better provision.

- **Mains Sewerage System** – invite representatives of Dŵr Cymru, the County Council and The Environment Agency to discuss the provision of a mains sewerage system.
- **Undergrounding of cables** – investigate placing all electricity and telephone cables underground.
- **Recycling Facilities** – request the return of the ‘Community Skips Scheme’ from Pembrokeshire County Council and general information about waste management. Existing recycling facilities are at Maenclochog and Clarboston Road – this sort of information could be publicised in a community newsletter.

2 - Heritage, Culture & History

Commentary

The Welsh language is perceived to be integral to the cultural heritage of the community. There is a strong feeling of the need to protect and enhance the rich cultural heritage and history of the community amongst residents. Residents feel that it is extremely important to record the community’s history for the benefit of future generations.

St Meilyr’s Church at Llys-y-frân has an active membership and produced a fascinating record of the past for the Millennium entitled “A celebration in words and pictures of the people of Llys-y frân Parish Church.”

Although considerable research of the area’s history has already taken place, further effort is being made. A local history group exists and there is a plan to compile an oral history of local peoples’ memories. It is felt that information about Bletherston should be added to the existing records held in the County Archives. Another proposal is to research the history of the Scourfield family and New Moat Church. People feel that local schools should be encouraged to teach the history of the area to their pupils.

Llys-y-frân YFC has its own special history, having been established for 51 years and holding a reputation as one of the most successful clubs in the County. It has a strong and wide membership as well as local support from community residents

Proposals

- **Keep alive Welsh Culture** - e.g. singing festivals, drama, Eistedfodd and recitation. Traditional church and chapel activities could be

explored and shared e.g. Gymanfa Bwnc, Gymanfa Ganu and 'penny readings'.

- **Traditional Skills** – Revive traditional skills such as home brewing and old cultures and pastimes. There is interest in traditional agricultural skills such as hedge laying/ plashing, sheep shearing and ploughing matches.
- **Local History Group** – needs support. The current recording of history should be progressed and new methods investigated – eg new techniques for scanning in family photographs and drawings, paintings etc.
- **A Community History Book, leaflet or pamphlet** would be an excellent way of recording history, as well as audio recordings of interviews with local people.
- **Bletherston Hamlet leaflet** – There is an existing leaflet published some years ago – the community is keen to include information i.e. the Colby family, Mabinogion and the Roman times.
- **History Exhibition** – this could be developed and provide a means of involving lots of local people. It could be part of the improved YFC hall plan.
- **Existing oral history** of the area should be translated so that it is available to all.
- **Local Churches and Chapels** – further research their history and produce a fundraising booklet or leaflet.
- **Maintenance of Motte and Bailey** – although these features are situated on private land, the community feels that they are important and should be conserved.

3 - Environment

Commentary

The area is extremely scenic with unspoilt natural beauty. It boasts large areas of countryside, woodland and a good footpath network. The Llys-y-frân Dam and Country Park is an environmental attraction for residents and visitors.

Proposals

- **Village Enhancements** – the attractiveness and general appearance of the villages could be enhanced. A Village Study is needed. It should include items such as benches, better and clearer bi-lingual signage, as well as further green areas, flowerbeds and hanging baskets.

- **Bletherston Church Pond and Graveyard** – general cleaning, improvements and maintenance of these features would encourage natural wildlife enhancements. The church wall is in need of repair.
- **Llys-y-frân Church** – this is a considerable attraction to visitors who include the church in walks from the Country Park. Volunteers are needed to help with maintenance of the churchyard.
- **Llys-y-frân Country Park Enhancements** – landscaping areas within the Park and including outdoor sculptures as forms of interpretation could enhance the overall appearance of the Park and increase the quality of the visitor's experience.
- **Form an Environment Group** – identify and recruit volunteers within the community to work on environmental projects for visitors & locals alike. To be sustainable a maintenance programme must be agreed. Potential projects could include Llys-y-frân Churchyard (including repairs and maintenance to the railings); maintaining the New Moat Lodge Pond, preserving the stone walls in the community, clearing footpaths and work on Llys-y-frân Common. Any works on private land would obviously require permission from the landowner.
- **Village Wildlife Area** – a piece of common land near the entrance to Llys-y-frân Dam is currently overgrown but could be developed and enhanced to create a village pond and a wildlife area. Picnic tables, flowers and shrubs, along with suitable access for the disabled would enhance the area. It would attract residents and visitors to enjoy the peaceful surroundings. First step would be to establish who owns the land and it is possible that this would be a suitable project for the YFC.
- **Bridle Paths** – Forlan, New Moat, Feidr Isaf and Ffynnonfair bridle paths require clearing as riding on the road is dangerous.
- **Best Kept Village Award Scheme** – each village could enter this competition following the completion of the village enhancement schemes. New Moat has won in the past.

4 - Business & Tourism

Commentary

One of the main tourist attractions in the community is the Llys-y-frân Country Park and Visitor Centre which includes a restaurant. However, there is plenty of potential to expand tourism and business opportunities around the features it offers i.e. the reservoir and the hills, the woodlands and the sailing and fishing facilities. Local residents should *be encouraged* to support the activities at Park to develop its full potential to create employment for local people.

Business premises within the community are extremely limited and a lack of funding is a constraint for existing businesses. Young people in particular find it extremely difficult to find local employment, and it is suggested to target the Agriculture, Crafts and Tourism sectors to try to develop further job opportunities for local people.

A community Business Group was set up some years ago. It discussed issues and organised visits. Some projects have come from this, such as woodland development.

Proposals

- **Business Advice** – investigate easier access of information for local people e.g. Gateway scheme which is administered by the County Council and offers signposting to advice for businesses.
- **Business Directory** – contribute to an area business directory, promoting local businesses.
- **Starter Workshop Units** – explore opportunities to create workshop units to develop further training and development of new and traditional skills. To support the development of alternative uses of redundant agricultural buildings to provide workshops for craft and light industries.
- **Penffordd School** - The community is also keen to investigate potential uses for Penffordd School.
- **Investigate opportunities for new business ventures** - e.g. hardwood forestry, agriculture, tourism, arts and crafts (e.g. an art gallery), oil recycling centre, more shopping facilities, Post Office, a pub, joinery, engineering etc.
- **Investigate re-establishing the shop/Post Office/Pub** in New Moat, possibly as a co-operative. Support existing services e.g. the travelling shop needs better publicity, for example, via community newsletter.
- **Better Marketing** - There is a lack of locally accessible information on where to market goods– investigate broadband access for businesses in the area
- **Encourage more local employment opportunities**, especially for the young, and encourage young people to come and live and work in the area.
- **Renewable Energy** – investigate alternative local energy production e.g. hydro-electricity generator at the Reservoir; local wind farms and other alternative energy production
- **Natural Resources** – utilise the area's natural beauty, scenery and pleasant surroundings by investigating further developments and visitor potential around these resources e.g. themed holidays, eco-tourism - nature reserves, walking, trekking and off-road cycle paths.

- **Themed Holidays** – support idea of developing short-stay breaks around local arts and crafts, painting, off-road driving, reservoir etc. More local Bed and Breakfast accommodation must be created to provide flexible accommodation.

5 - Transport and Highways

Commentary

There is a lack of public transport in the community - poor and expensive train services mean poor links with nearby towns. The villages in the community are off the beaten track and residents have to travel by car. Improvements to existing transport facilities and better publicity is needed.

There is also great concern over the quality of road surfaces – the “back roads” are very rough and dirty. It is felt that there is a general lack of improvements and regular maintenance of the area’s roads and drains.

Speeding is perceived by most to be another problem, along with blind junctions and pedestrian safety.

Proposals

- **Traffic Calming** – investigate possibility of sleeping policemen or other forms of traffic calming at various locations in the area. Is it possible to introduce a ‘stepped down’ system for speed limit signs i.e. a 40mph sign stepping down to a 30mph sign two hundred yards further down the road to ensure traffic slows down. One specific location for improvement is the Rhyd-ddu/Brynsiriol junction.
- **Road Safety** – the Twmpath section of road is highlighted as a major concern, e.g. ‘Halt’ sign is needed where Penlan Road meets New Moat to Maenclochog Road; another alternative would be to completely remove the one-way system.
- **Road Surfaces** – more attention and upgrading is required to most of the roads in the community, as well as more regular cleaning of drains. People should be encouraged to clear up after heavy vehicle activity.
- **Road Signs** – Better and bilingual signing needed generally.
- **Hedge Trimming and Road Widening** – more regular hedge trimming is required in order to improve visibility, especially at junctions. Egremont Hill road needs widening.
- **Pavements** - A pavement is needed between the lower part of New Moat to the T-junction near the bus shelter in New Moat because of concern for road safety. Investigate SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL.

- **Bus shelters** – the existing bus shelters in New Moat require improving. A bus shelter for school children in Llys-y-frân is required, but this could also be used by the public waiting for lifts to practices, meetings. It could be sited at Gwastad.
- **Bus Services** – the existing school bus service needs improving, especially to Sir Thomas Picton and Ysgol Y Preseli. The Tuesday and Saturday bus to Haverfordwest need re-scheduling to enable more people to use this facility – for work purposes, as well as tie in with sporting and leisure facilities at Haverfordwest, Fishguard and Crymych. Also, there is a need for a bus service for Penfordd.
- **Community Transport services** - develop better services such as a 'Dial and Ride' Scheme or a community bus, lower fares and offer more convenient routes and destinations.

6 – Sport & Recreation

Commentary

The most popular current activities include swimming, walking and football. Other recreational hobbies include gardening, cookery, photography, painting, needlework and many more. Community social events, sports clubs and children's play areas are also popular. Motor sport is another popular local pastime. However, access to general sport and recreation facilities within the community is relatively poor. Each village would benefit greatly from improvements to existing facilities or through the provision of new play areas and equipment.

The Young Farmers Club, youth clubs (in Maenclochog), discos and drama club are highly popular. Potential future interest is expressed in brownies, cubs, scouts and guides. Suggestions for buildings that could be made available for recreation use include Llys-y-frân YFC Hall and the conversion of the New Moat Church Vestry.

Proposals

- **Consult with Llys-y-frân Country Park for possible leisure facilities.** These might include a community Boating Club, guided woodland walks, a pony trekking route, badminton, skateboard park, cycling routes and bike rides, playground, and a tennis court.
- **Support youth activities for the whole area.** Seek to provide more sports facilities such as cricket and football, leisure activities, e.g. an adventure playground, tennis court, small golf course, basketball pitch, play park, and bicycle obstacle course (cycle park).

7 – Housing

Commentary

The high proportion of children in the community has particular implications in the planning of the future housing needs. Concern is expressed over the lack of affordable accommodation.

Proposals

- **Penffordd School** – In line with wishing to preserve the school for community benefit investigate the possibility of developing it as affordable rented or leased housing provision for local people.