

The current state of our community and
employment prospects for our people.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr

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www.pckgroup.wales

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The Depression of Cefn Mawr

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The Depression of Cefn Mawr

The Good Old Days

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

CEFN was in Saxon times, the scene of ancient border warfare, there being remains of old fortifications in the area, but until quite recently it was relatively an undeveloped open rural area, the main population being along the Dee, weaving wool. The village really grew up around the furnaces and forges that started there in the middle of the eighteenth Century.

Coal, iron and clay industries were important in the area, and this growing industry required better communications. In 1391 certain tenants in Cefn paid 2/- a year for to have a ferry boat across the Dee, to take themselves and others to and from 'Kyssyllle' and Trevor, but in 1795 Thomas Telford started to build the Pontcysyllte aqueduct to take the Ellesmere Canal over the Dee from Froncysyllte to Cefn. The bridge is 121 feet high and 1,007 feet long with 19 arches each 45 feet in span. It was opened in 1805. Later, in 1848 the Cefn viaduct was completed, it was built by Thomas Brassey to the design of Henry Robertson.

The works in the area at this time included Metal Tube Works, Plaskynaston Potteries, Plaskynaston Iron Works, J.C. Edwards Brick Works, etc., in 1867 the Plaskynaston Chemical Works was started by Roberts Graesser and Timothy Crowther, the works being locally known as the 'oilworks'. The partnership was dissolved after a quarrel but Graesser continued to work locally and eventually re-bought the business. It was this business that eventually became part of the Monsanto organisation. The raw and finished products were transported by canal.

During the year 1939 Monsanto was a 'designated' factory and it was under the supervision of M Company of the Denflint House Guard Battalion. Since the war millions of pounds have been spent on new plants, laboratories, etc., and the companies products have continued to develop and grow.

Plas Kynaston was built by Roger Kynaston who had married Catherine, daughter of Roger Eyton, and it was then the only residence in Cefn Mawr. The hall passed from the Kynaston family through the Mostyn Owens and eventually into the Wynnstay Estate. It now belongs to the local Council and is to become a recreation centre.

Education in Cefn started with a number of small private institutions some of which lived for only a few months, others lasting quite a number of years. Each had their own charges, usually around a penny to twopence a week, sometimes they would be paid in kind. These schools were usually held in the teachers house or in chapels but sometimes they were held in public houses. Among the most notable of these institutions were, Mahaty's school which started in about 1833, Ellen Saunders and 'Mrs. Oxley's school'. Most of these concentrated on reading and writing, some included arithmetic and other needlework. There was a national school called 'Chwarele', it was started around 1863 and in 1864 Rev. John Evans, Perpetual Curate of Trevor Chapel applied for a building grant for this school from the National Society.

The British and Foreign School Society had less success in the Cefn Area. Rev. John Phillips was the society's agent in North Wales and in 1846 he sent John Griffiths to the Borough Road Training College, London, for training as a schoolmaster, by the end of ~~time~~ that year the course had been completed and Griffiths opened the British School at Seion Baptist Chapel in 1848. John Griffiths left to take charge of the British School founded in Llangollen and the Cefn school had to close. There was an attempt to restart the school in the 1860's but the committee could not agree amongst themselves and the project again died.

10723

Clwyd Welsh Language Library
Sharn Road
Wrexham.

Figure 1 Clwyd Library Service 1981

The Depression of Cefn Mawr

Gwasanaeth Llyfrgell CLWYD Library Service

CEFN MAWR - COMMUNITY PROFILE

LOCATION: 6,223 (1971 Census) 1981 census - 5690.

The majority of the population are from social classes C - E with only statutory-minimum education and working in manual occupations.

LOCATION: Cefn Mawr is seven miles south-west of Wrexham, between the A539 Wrexham/Llangollen and the A5 Chirk/Llangollen roads. As its name suggests, it is built on a steeply rising hill over-looking the Dee Valley. As such it stands out as an utter contrast being a rocky and industrialised enclave above a luscious, wooded valley. The nearest centre for shopping/administrative facilities, etc., is Wrexham with Oswestry very much a second choice. Residents do not look to any great extent to the other small communities (e.g. Chirk, Llangollen, Ruabon) in the area.

AREA SERVED BY THE LIBRARY: Cefn Mawr itself including the majority of the Plas Madoc housing estate. Acrefair and the smaller villages of the Dee Valley such as Trevor (a small part-time library is also in this village). Rhosymedre, Newbridge and Pentre and also from as far afield as Chirk. (For an explanation of this wide span please see "Amenities and shopping centres").

COMMUNICATIONS: Although the main Shrewsbury-Chester railway line virtually runs through the village, the nearest stations are at Ruabon and Chirk. Crossville have the Wrexham/Llangollen and the Chester/Oswestry buses calling once an hour. There is also a regular service from Plas Madoc to Asda in Wrexham by Wright's buses. Although the proximity to main busy roads allows ready access to those with cars, within the community itself, roads are generally narrow and winding.

HISTORY: Four, now disused quarries almost certainly caused the development of Cefn, reinforced by a profusion of small coal-mines. These led to the development of iron, chemical and engineering industries with railway and canal systems to serve them. The area was thus an industrial development of the last century with the accompanying and expected poor and unplanned residential growth.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

- a) CEFN COMMUNITY COUNCIL - based at Plas Kynaston House, next to the library with a part time clerk.
(phone number listed in directory)
- b) WREXHAM MAELOR BOROUGH COUNCIL.
Cefn-Cefn/Rhosymedre & Cefn Bychan - Councillor John Warren Coleman, 54, Trefynant Park, Acrefair. 821089
Cefn-Acrefair & Penybryn - Councillor William Ronald Meyers, 2, Bryn View, Llangollen Rd., Acrefair. 823481
Cefn-Rhosymedre & Cefn Bychan - Councillor Noel Isfryn Wright, 34, Heol Cefnydd, Cefn Mawr. 821040
- c) CLWYD COUNTY COUNCIL Wrexham Rural No. 2. Councillor Richard Arthur.
(M.P. Mr. Tom Ellis, Whitehurst Cottage, Whitehurst, Chirk)
(M.E.P. Beata Brookes, The Cottage, Wayside Acres, Bodolwyddan)

Cont./...

Figure 2 Clwyd Library Service 1981

The Depression of Cefn Mawr

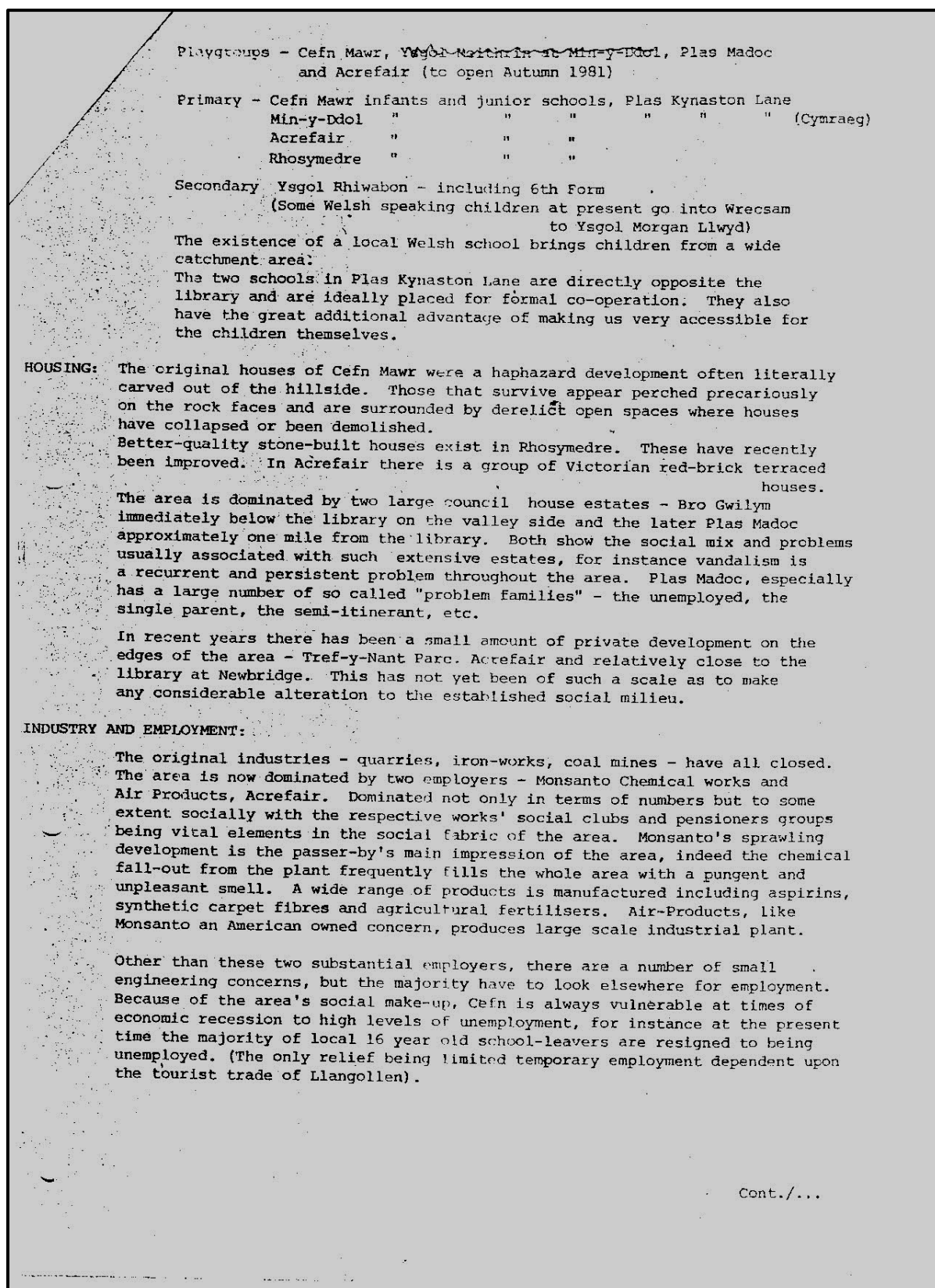


Figure 3 Clwyd Library Service 1981

Please note the last section on industry and employment for our community in 1981, and consider the change now with the main employers gone.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 4 The former Monsanto Chemical Works 1970's

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 5 The former Air Products Plant 1970's



Figure 6 The former Air Products Plant 2010



As of 2015 both the main employers of the Cefn have closed and the sites cleared. This has left our community with the highest unemployment in the county of Wrexham.

However, this is unnecessary as our community is next to one of the top tourist attractions in NE Wales, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and therefore if connected to it this will go a long way to relieving the social depression in our community through losing our main employers.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr

Cefn Job Centre



Figure 7 Cefn Mawr Job Centre 2003



Figure 8 Former Job Centre Cefn Mawr 2016

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The Current State of Affairs

The traditional shopping centre of Cefn Mawr hit the lowest point in 2012 with the arrival of Tesco.



Figure 9 the former Co-Op Supermarket 2016

Unsurprisingly one of the first closures, the former Co-operative Supermarket and lost jobs.



Figure 10 The Co-Op Supermarket in 2010

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 11 The former Railway Inn 2016



Figure 12 the Railway Inn 2010

Cefn Mawr was once proud of all its pubs, now we only have a hand full left.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 13 The former Nat West Bank 2017



Figure 14 the former HSBC Bank 2017

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 15 The Ebenezer 2017

The leading work of the THI that was supposed to initiate the regeneration of Cefn Mawr, closed for over three years as of 2017. This needs reopening as an Arts & Visitor Centre for the WHS to give a major tourist attraction in the centre of our village that will encourage tourism.

To do this on a viable and sustainable basis we need to:

- Set up the Windborne Gateway Interchange (parking) WBG
- Open Jessop's Tramway to connect Cefn Mawr to the Aqueduct & WBG
- Establish the correct main road signage leading to WBG

This will save WCBC and CRT building another £1.5M greenhouse at the Trevor Basin. It will also more importantly help secure sustainable development for Cefn Mawr by putting the building to a practical use that can cover costs and bring in trade.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 16 The George Edwards Hall 2010

The George Edwards Hall struggles to find use from the community even in better times before the Old Vaults closed. This is the office of the Cefn Community Council.

However, if Cefn Mawr was reconnected to the aqueduct and the foot fall raised this building could be turned around. It has proven to be successful as a cinema in the past before the age of the TV and could once again be so by operating it as a limited circuit type cinema.



These cinemas can be run successfully if the foot fall is right and with the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct next to the village that footfall can be achieved with WBG, JT, Reopening the Ebenezer as an Arts & Visitor Centre for the WHS and the correct main road signage. It is that simple.

The PKC Group at the Holly Bush Inn next door certainly wish that the Cefn Community Council would follow up on this and join them in seeking to get Cefn Mawr reconnected to the aqueduct rather than being segregated as is the current case.

The George Edwards Hall is another major building at the centre of our village that has little use but can be turned around by reconnecting Cefn Mawr & the Aqueduct.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 17 The Old Vaults 2012



Figure 18 The Old Vaults Chinese takeaway 2016

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 19 The Holly Bush Inn 2012



Figure 20 Holly Bush Inn 2017

Please note that the Holly Bush Inn now leads the regeneration of Cefn Mawr and keeps the heart of the village alive. We will try to keep going but we need WCBC and other third parties to work with us. The village of Cefn Mawr needs to be reconnected to the aqueduct with Jessop's Tramway and the Windborne Gateway Interchange and advertised on the main roads with big brown and white tourist information signs. We need the Ebenezer reopening as a World Heritage Site Visitor Centre to encourage more tourists to frequent our village high streets. By doing so this will give us 10% or approximately 20,000 tourists in Cefn Mawr as opposed to nil at present.

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Figure 21 the former sit down Chippy on Well Street 2016



Figure 22 The former taxi office on Well Street 2016

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 23 another empty shop on Well Street 2017



Figure 24 another empty shop on Well Street 2017

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 25 one of the gap sites on Well Street 2017



Figure 26 another gap site on Well Street 2017

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 27 the old Exchange and Mart before demolition 2005



Figure 28 the gap site of the former Exchange & Mart on Crane Street 2016

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Figure 29 the old Florists on Crane Street gap site next to what used to be the dentists 2017

Please also see associated documents:

- [“Where is Cefn Mawr”](#), shows how poor the signage is for Cefn Mawr
- [“Sign of the Times”](#), shows some of the negative aspects of Cefn Mawr

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 30 Cefn Mawr Health Centre closed for 5 years as of 2017

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 31 the Old Bakery gap site Crane Street 2017



Figure 32 Another empty shop on Crane Street 2017

The Depression of Cefn Mawr



Figure 33 The former Rhosymdre Post Office 2015

FGA 2015 & Sustainable Development

To achieve Sustainable Development, it is essential to stop the downward recession of our economy and put it on a path of recovery that shows a real and positive upward trend. Our community can contribute towards this and help with the desired goals in several important ways. Simply by encouraging more people to stay longer and explore the wider area of the Cefn & Cefn Mawr rather than driving off after only visiting the aqueduct is a very practical way to reduce CO2 emission. Furthermore, in the same process this will help build our community by bringing tourism into it. This directly leads to all the Well Being Goals of the FGA 2015 which can then be reported as an upward trend in our community for the benefit of Wales. These results will allow realistic and achievable predictions on future performance of our community in social, economic and cultural wellbeing, that the community of Cefn Mawr will be involved with.

For more detailed information and reference on how this can be achieved in accordance with all WAG guidelines for continue Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Development please see:

- [The Cefn, Cefn Mawr & FGA 2015](#) (Future Generations Act)
- [The Cefn, Cefn Mawr & WSP 2016](#) (Wales Spatial Plan)
- [The Cefn, Cefn Mawr & PPW 2016](#) (Wales Planning Policy)
- [The Cefn, Cefn Mawr & WTS 2016](#) (Wales Transport Strategy)

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WIMD

Although some of this may seem anti WCBC this is not meant to be the case and we seek to work with WCBC for the betterment of our Community, the Cefn & Cefn Mawr at the center of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site, as well as all other associated groups and organizations. Please note that for the purposes of this document that when we say the Cefn & Cefn Mawr, this includes all the surrounding villages at the central section of the WHS. These are Cefn Bychan, New Bridge, Pentre, Plas Madoc, Acrefair, Trevor, Garth, Rhosymedre, Froncysyllte, Cysyllte and Cefn Mawr. The combined population for our area is more than 8000 and our social and domestic housing mix includes areas of multiple deprivation with some rating in the top 10% of the WIMD and other areas not far behind. All the proposals made in this document and supporting documents by the PKC Group will benefit all in the central section of the WHS and it is written to remove and prevent exclusion and isolation and promote a cohesive and common community.

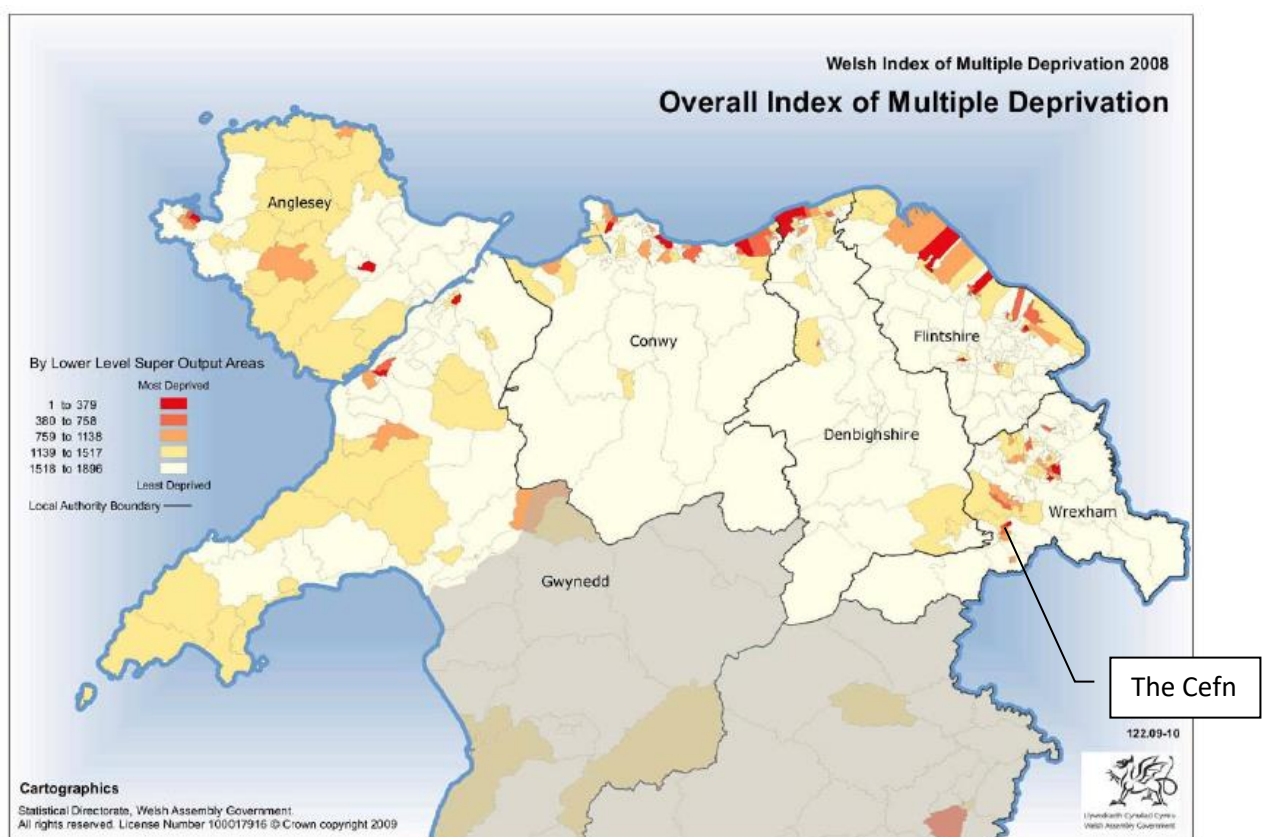


Figure 34 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Please note the date of this map of multiple deprivation, 2008. This means that the data for this was collected before the closure of the only two main employers in our area, Air Products and the former Monsanto Chemical works, then called Solutia. The situation shown on this map has deteriorated further than is shown due to the economic depression of our post-industrial community, immediately next the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in the World Heritage Site corridor. Unless this is rectified and the Cefn & Cefn Mawr is included in WHS planning this will result in a very negative effect on the UNESCO Inscription and WHS status as the economic disparity grows.

The Depression of Cefn Mawr

LDP2 & Settlement Hierarchy and Development Potential

Whilst it is likely that larger settlements in a more urban setting will tend to perform key functions, it is important to recognize that rural areas make up a significant part of the County Borough. National Policy highlights the interconnectedness of urban areas and rural hinterlands and the Cefn and Cefn Mawr in South Wrexham is an ideal example. Subject to effective transport links, larger settlements can provide a range of services and employment opportunities for those living in rural areas.

However, in more remote locations or where transport links are poor, this assumption may not be correct. In those instances, consideration regarding the location of development may need a different approach. National Policy advises that development in rural areas should be directed towards local service centers or clusters of smaller settlements where sustainable functional linkages can be demonstrated, such as a transport hub in Cefn Mawr.

Cefn Mawr is a semi urban community surrounded by the other villages of the Cefn and rural communities. It can and should once again form the central hub for the area of South Wrexham, it once was before the dawn of the motor car. Coincidentally today in 2015 it is the motor car that is accounting for the success of the new Tesco Supermarket, simply because it is so much easier to go to the store in Cefn Mawr than drive into Wrexham on the overcrowded A483.

Settlement Hierarchy	Settlement
Tier 1: Primary Key Settlement	Wrexham Town
Tier 2: Key Settlement	Acrefair/Cefn Mawr Chirk Coedpoeth Gresford/Marford Gwersyllt Rhosllanerchrugog
Tier 3: Local Service Centres	Bangor Broughton Brymbo Glyn Ceiriog Holt Llay Overton Penley Penycae Rhostyllen Rossett Ruabon
Tier 4: Minor Village	Bersham Bradley Bronington Bwlchwyn Crosslanes

Please note that we are glad to see that Cefn Mawr / Acrefair is at the top of Tier 2 next to Wrexham in this table of Settlement Hierarchy from the LDP2 and we point out that Cefn Mawr is central to 12 surrounding villages:

- Rhosymedre
- Plas Madoc
- New Bridge
- Cefn Bychan
- Froncysyllte
- Cysyllte
- Acrefair
- Penycae
- Ruabon
- Trevor
- Pentre
- Garth

Figure 35 Settlement Hierarchy Table

Therefore, Cefn Mawr should be the central hub for South Wrexham, the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site and Dee Valley with appropriate infrastructure such as a Railway Station and bus terminus to support the local communities public transport needs in a sustainable way that will reduce CO2 emission while boosting the tourism industry in the County of Wrexham in accordance with the LDP2 and Welsh Planning Policies.

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WCBC Preferred Spatial Strategy

Planning Policy Wales states that Development Plans should secure a sustainable settlement pattern which meets the needs of the economy, the environment and health. The key messages regarding sustainable settlement patterns include locating development to reduce the need to travel by car by maximising accessibility to employment opportunities, services, and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport. Development should be directed to existing urban areas which are well served by public transport, and which benefit from concentrations of jobs, facilities, and services.

A tiered approach (based on the existing settlement limits as defined in the current Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011) is used to group settlements with similar characteristics in terms of facilities and services. This information, combined with development opportunities, constraints and viability has then been used to direct development to appropriate locations, and ensure sustainable and proportionate growth in the most appropriate areas. The Figure below shows the tiers within the settlement hierarchy:

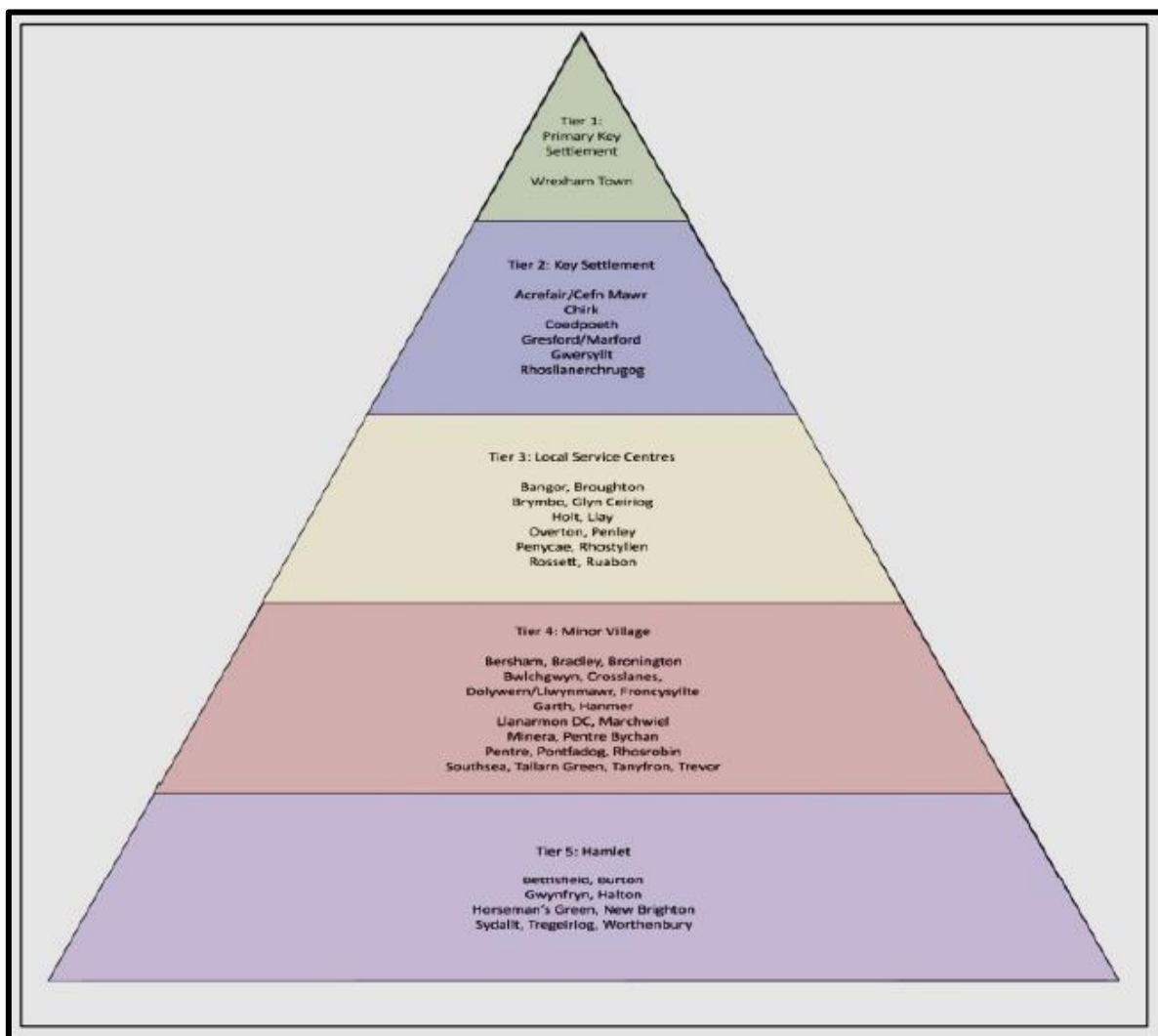


Figure 36 Tiered Hierarchy Table

Again, we are glad to see Acrefair / Cefn Mawr in second position behind Wrexham Town here. Our community was once a central focus for South Wrexham and with the drive towards public transport should once again become such, unless we are going to build new railway lines elsewhere.

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Appendix 4 - Settlement Function and Development Potential spreadsheet																											
	Acrefair/Cefn Mawr	Bangor	Bersham	Bettisfield	Bradley	Broughton	Brymbo	Burton	Bwlchgwyn	Chirk	Coedpoeth	Cross Lanes	Dolymern/ Llwynmawr	Francysville	Garth	Glyn Ceirrog	Gresford/ Marford	Gwersyllt	Gwyrffryn	Halton	Hammett	Holt	Horseman's Green	Llanarmon DC	Llay	Marchwiel	
Settlement Function																											
Employment/ Economic Opportunities & Function																											
Labour Force (% of population economically active)																											
Unemployed (% of economically active population out of work)																											
Employment Area Located in the settlement limit / distance to nearest employment area																											
Employment Land Review																											
Employment function conclusion																											
Community Services and Retail Role																											
School																											
Health Care Provision																											
Retail Provision																											
Other facilities																											
Recreation Capacity																											
Sustainable Travel Options																											
Public Transport Provision (bus)																											
Public Transport Provision (train)																											
Walking/ cycling																											
Settlement Function Conclusion	2	3	4	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	4
Development Opportunities																											
Potential sites which can accommodate residential development (green or amber sites)																											
Constraints																											
Flooding																											
Sewerage/ waste water treatment																											
Ecology																											
Built heritage																											
Agricultural land classification																											
Mineral resource																											
School Capacity																											
Highways capacity																											

Figure 37 Appendix 4 Settlement Function & Development

This table is taken from the WCBC LDP2 document called "Settlement Hierarchy and Development Potential" and shows the conclusions that the WCBC has formed about our community in Cefn Mawr & Acrefair. The two most striking indications are the above average unemployment levels and the best potential for residential development. The green sector for the employment area is referring to the proximity of the Rhosymedre Industrial Estate; however, the employment opportunities currently available as of 2016 on the estate are low with literally a lot of room for improvement. The Rhosymedre Industrial Estate needs a significant boost to encourage inward investment and increase employment levels. The Cefn Railway Station linked in with a local bus service terminus would address this directly and cause an economic boom on the estate as well as in Cefn Mawr & Acrefair at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS and gateway to Dee Valley.