

# EASTER BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND 2019

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During the Easter Weekend Bank Holiday 2019, Good Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> April to Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April exceptional weather was experienced and very high numbers of visitors were seen at the Aqueduct and Ty Mawr Country Park whilst the traditional retail and commercial centre for the area, Cefn Mawr saw nothing other than the nice weather.



• Ty Mawr Country Park →

1. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct 330,000 Visitors annually.
2. Trevor, a residential area of our community.
3. **WBG**, Windborne Gateway Parking, a very large parking area 300 parking slots available and accessed via good roads not going through a residential area.
4. Acrefair, another residential area of our community.
5. Cefn Mawr, the traditional commercial and retail sector for the area, annual visitor count, NIL.
6. Ty Mawr Country Park, annual visitor with counts of 70,000 is adjacent to the Cefn Viaduct.





Ty Mawr Country Park overflow car park full, very good to see, even if an encroachment on green field.





Apart from the major lack of road signage for our community, that of Cefn Mawr lying between the Viaduct and the Aqueduct, very little mention if any is made of our community on most tourist information boards.

How hard would it be to incorporate the Cefn Mawr Heritage Trail?



This is very bad coordination on behalf of all responsible.





The net effect of this is that the Queens Hotel, Cefn Mawr's ONLY hotel struggles, which for an area that sees over 400,000 visitors annually is grossly wrong.





Welcome to “Stalag 17” or what is currently the Windborne Gate parking area (WBG). This parking area is key to the sustainable development of our community at the central section of the WHS, that of the Cefn & Cefn Mawr as it is central to the whole area. WBG can be accessed without transiting through or being a nuisance to a residential area, and can have a very large holding capacity, over 300 slots. Furthermore, the majority of the WBG is still in very good condition and could be brought back into use simply by moving the unsightly Palisade fencing and cleaning the place up. This would drastically improve the whole area and provide a very attractive major parking facility at a very reasonable cost exactly where it is needed.

Unfortunately, in its current state it is unattractive, virtually un-connected to either the aqueduct or Cefn Mawr village centre, and very poorly signed.

This needs to be resolved not only for our community but also for the Pontcysyllte WHS and the Dee Valley AONB, or what is the point of these designations?

The lower Cable Car & Zip Wire Stations will be immediately next to this parking lot, if we are successful.





As usual, people in their thousands walking across the aqueduct and back to the car parks. This means a walk of about 1km or so and this takes on average around 60 minutes including time for a couple of photographs before driving off the Llangollen etc, according to WCBC how conducted a survey on this. This is a very short visitor dwell time and something that could be drastically improved upon if the correct measures are taken and implemented.

People generally leave the area as they perceive there is nothing else here, therefore a Cable Car Station immediately next to the WBG would provide a very positive and attractive link into the village centre of Cefn Mawr, where people would find a whole host of local facilities and the Ebenezer set up as a Arts & Visitor Centre for the Cefn & Cefn Mawr at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS.





Note the extremely small mention of Cefn Mawr on the main Tourist Information Boards at the aqueduct.

Please also remember the disproportion representation of all this as Cefn Mawr and the Cefn is the largest community in the whole of the WHS Corridor out numbering both Llangollen and Chirk.

This needs to be addressed or our community will continue to dwindle and die at the very centre of the WHS corridor which is not conclusive with UNESCO inscription.

Whilst WCBC, CRT and partners are celebrating 10 years of UNESCO Inscription and WHS, World Heritage Site Status in 2019 our community has seen 10 years of economic decline since the closure of the only two main employers in the area, Monsanto and Air Products from 2009 onwards and is now caught in a state of post-industrial depression.





Another busy day for the Telford Inn and the Chapple Tea Room, very good to see, note Reads Yard Parking in distance full.





More security fencing at Reads Yard parking (green and added in 2017). This is to try and ensure that there are no accidents involving young children escaping from the play ground into the car park. The PKC Group has always questioned this dubious combination of a high turnover car park (average stay time 60mins), and a children's playground? Furthermore, the additional security fencing will do nothing in relation to the NOX & CO2 emission into the children's play area and we are sure that the only reason this was given planning permission was because it was a WCBC initiative in 2011 / 12.





Another random couple, (from Caernarfon) leaving Reads Car Park after seeing the aqueduct.

When asked if they knew where Cefn Mawr was, they thought it was in South Wales.

This is quite common for most visitors to our area, either not knowing or thinking it is somewhere else!

This is a very clear indication of what is going on and very easy to prove. It also highlights the problems we face.

If people were made aware of the Cefn & Cefn Mawr whilst visiting the aqueduct and Ty Mawr Country Park, and encouraged to come into our community and explore the wider area of such, this would boost our local business and alleviate the traffic excessive congestion that was current throughout the Easter Bank Holiday in Llangollen.

Either Sustainable Tourism Development at the heart of the Pontcysyllte WHS or our community will remain on its knees in post industrial depression for ever.





The sign post for the Trevor Basin DISABLED PARKING AREA?





The Trevor Basin parking area full of disabled access drivers?





The new parking lot (opened in 2018) for the Trevor Basin which does nothing for our community and only exasperates the turn around time of people visiting the aqueduct. This has a vehicular entrance at the far end with only one pedestrian exit to the aqueduct at where this picture is taken from, and other wise is totally enclosed in 2mt high security fencing. Cefn Mawr can be seen on the far side of the security fencing on the hill to the right of picture. The PKC Group begged the CRT (Canal & River Trust) to reconsider this (**before construction**) at the first public consultation of the new Trevor Basin Master Plan in the George Edwards Hall in February 2017.





Crane Street, Cefn Mawr in the early afternoon and nothing happening, and so the shops close. All too often we hear from council members blame laid on the shop keeps for the lack of foot fall by not staying open, and this is not fair at all, opportunity must be there, and our village is being isolated and denied any chance it has.





Crane Street before the age of the motor car and tourism.





The GEH Car Park empty as usual.





The old Co-op Supermarket car park, again obviously not a great number of visitors to our village centre.

One proposed use of this site has been for a new medical facility which the PKC Group fully supports.

The site is of the correct size with good parking. The parking lot is also accessed from good two-lane road that will not cause unnecessary traffic congestion or additional pinch points.

It is also adjacent to the Railway Line and the new Tesco Supermarket which has an annual head count of 500,000, which again indicates the current road access available.





The Well Street Car Park in mid-afternoon.





Well Street Cefn Mawr and all quiet, whilst Llangollen was heaving with people and trying to cope with excessive traffic congestion as usual.

If we connect to the aqueduct and manage the very high visitor count our area is receiving this whole situation can be reversed and Cefn Mawr & Rhosymedre Village centres can once again become thriving communities instead of being left to waste.





The excessive traffic flow and size of vehicles using the B5434 to access the aqueduct is proving problematic at both Trevor and Froncysyllte. Physical damage has been caused to the Pont Bridge on several occasions and has even required Commercial Diving teams to be brought in to recover the stone work from the River Dee. The bridge is a Grade 1 Listed Structure (1670) twice the age of the aqueduct and is being damaged by people rushing to see the far newer aqueduct as well as all the traffic congestion problems on roads not built to cater for this traffic volume. More will be raised on this topic as necessary, to make WCBC and partners aware of the situation we must face on a daily basis, and the simple answer to this would be, to work with us as we politely ask.





WCBC are obviously aware of the traffic management problems on the B5434, note the roadside curb damage here caused by large coaches accessing the Froncysyllte Basin along the B5434 which is not suitable for such large vehicles.





What is in the wrong place in the above picture?





## CYSYLLTE BRIDGE

Previous damage and temporary repair to the Cysyllte Bridge IN 2012. The bridge was first built in the 1600's predating the aqueduct by some 200 years. This bridge that the B5434 crosses is now being damaged on an almost regular basis by the excessive traffic flow on route to see the much newer Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

This is a classic case of our heritage being damaged by the effective promotion of the aqueduct following UNESCO Inscription and WHS Status. Unfortunately, the increased volume of visitors and traffic flow has not been managed properly and problems are resulting.

Whilst a new parking lot at the Trevor Basin was added in 2018 to try and combat some of this, that new parking lot does nothing for the majority of the community around it which has largely been ignored and remains excluded from the WHS Corridor apart from having to put up with large volumes of traffic in inappropriate and unsuitable areas.

As we keep saying to WCBC and all, WBG, Windborne Gateway Parking is the key to the whole area. Approximately 330 parking slots that are central to the area and can be accessed directly from the A539 without having to travel along the B5434 which is not suitable for the current traffic flow that it is being exposed to because of promotion of the aqueduct.

WCBC and all need to start working with us and the local community so that BETWEEN US we can provide the correct answers instead of being forced to endure the current and unnecessary problems.





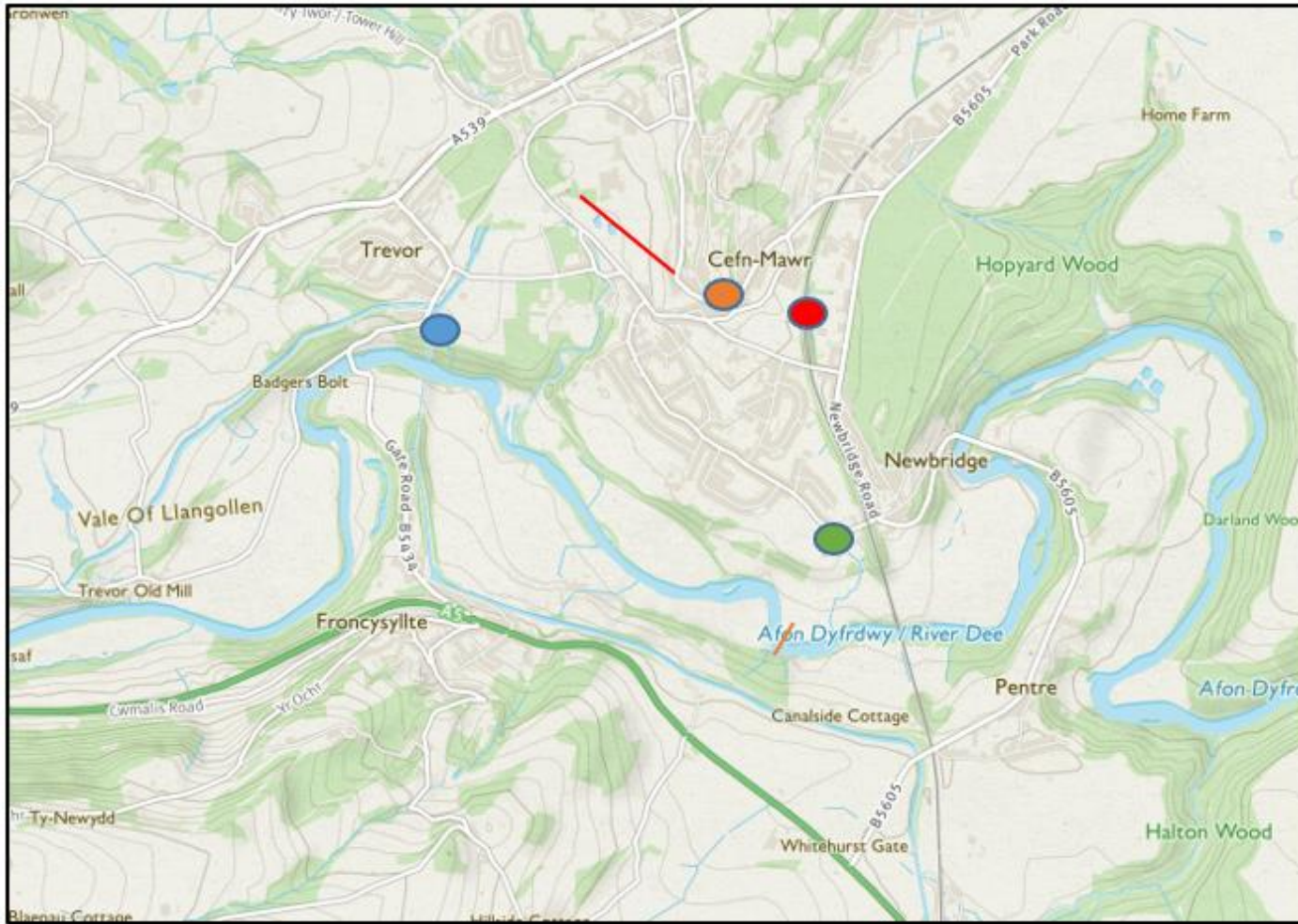
The 2019 Easter Bank Holiday Survey Team.





WBG Parking central to whole area.





Local signposting needs to be coordinated with locally produced mapping of our area that shows what we have to offer in the Cefn & Cefn Mawr other than just the aqueduct and Ty Mawr Country Park. This will then encourage some of the 400,000 visitors to our two main attractions to also explore the wider area of the Cefn rather than just driving off as in the present case.

The **THREE VISITOR** centers in our community will need to work closely together to coordinate tourism throughout the Cefn & Cefn Mawr, these being:

1. Cefn Mawr Arts & Visitor Centre (red circle)
2. Ty Mawr Country Park Visitor Centre (green circle)
3. Trevor Basin Visitor Centre (blue circle)

Please note the proposed Railway Station in Red on the main railway line from Chester to Shrewsbury and with direct access to Birmingham International Airport.

Although the current proposal (2019) by the PKC Group for the Cable Car & Zip Wires is to link the main parking at Windborne Gateway Interchange to Cefn Mawr village centre (red line) serves the motorist and coach passenger, i.e. road transport,

the increasingly important role that the railway will have should not be forgotten. In which case a Visitor Centre in Cefn Mawr would be most appropriate to handle the tourist traffic from the train and a new Railway Station adjacent to the Tesco Supermarket at the very centre of the WHS corridor.

Furthermore, a simple foot bridge between Ty Mawr Country Park and Tany Cut Woods (short brown line) would encourage a lot of visitors to make circular walks from the aqueduct & WBG or Ty Mawr Country Park around our area. This then links all three, the aqueduct, Ty Mawr Country Park and the village centre of Cefn Mawr.





Easter Bank Holiday Weekend saw very good weather and exceptional visitor numbers at both Ty Mawr Country Park and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, with car parks full, whilst our village centre remained quiet. Tourism is the only viable option we have of improving the economic prospects of our community and our unique position at the centre of the WHS Corridor between the aqueduct and Cefn Viaduct. Please also consider the extremely high road traffic vehicle counts on the A539, A5 and A483, which is 15.5 million vehicles annually, (three times that of Llangollen). We are on a mainline railway line leading to major cities and airports, Birmingham, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester and London. The former Shropshire Union Canal (renamed Llangollen in the 1980's) is one of the busiest canals of the inland waterway network and Offa's Dyke is one of the most well-trodden long-distance footpaths in the UK. Yet our village centre suffers from a lack of footfall, what is going on????

What is lacking for our community is SIGNAGE and COORDINATED VISITOR MANAGEMENT. With both correctly implemented the economic decline of our community can be reversed, which is the main reason behind all PKG Group Proposals. Our latest for the Ebenezer (as an Arts & Visitor Centre for Cefn), Cable Car

and WBG Parking is about ending the segregation of our community from the very lucrative opportunity on our door step. However, unless WCBC and partners join in, we cannot gain access to the very substantial grant funding streams and loan facilities available to make this happen. So, it may be said, "The writing is on the wall" and unless WCBC is willing to work with us, the future economic base and prosperity of our community is being sold off.

Regards, David Metcalfe, Cefn Community Councillor & Dee Valley AONB Champion.