

2020

Wider Social & Economic Study



David Metcalfe, Iona Metcalfe, Rod Taylor
& Other Cefn Community Members.

Plas Kynaston Canal Group

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Welcome to the Cefn Mawr Conservation / Deprivation Area	3
WAG WIMD 2014	5
WCBC LDP2 Settlement Function	6
Employment Prospects 2020?	7
WHS Corridor Demographics	9
Cefn Health Facilities.....	14
The Ebenezer 2019	16
Cefn Mawr Townscape Heritage Initiative.....	18
Cefn Retail Economy	21
Tesco	22
Public Transport.....	23
Aldi & Ruabon Roundabout	25
Plas Madoc Leisure Centre.....	26
Children's Playgrounds & Other Sports Facilities	27
Possible Closure of Our Library in Cefn Mawr	28
Representation & Signage	29
Recent Industrial History	30
Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2017 for WAG.....	31
Tourist Count at Present.....	32
Climate Change	32
AONB & Dark Skies.....	32
OPL	33
Divided Community	34
Advantages of the Cefn.....	35
Cefn Mawr Post Office	37
Appendix 1 UK Pubs	38
UK pub sector expands for first time in 10 years.....	38
Appendix 2 UK Business rates.....	40
UK's business rates system 'broken' says Treasury committee.....	40
Appendix 3 Letters	42
Appendix 4 The Slow Demise Since UNESCO Inscription.....	46
Appendix 5 Apathy.....	70

Introduction



During the excellent 2019 UK World Heritage Site Conference held at the Pavilion in Llangollen a new theme was announced for our area which is central to the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. It was termed; “A Wider Social & Economic Study” and was mentioned by both WCBC and Arcadis, the consultants working for WCBC, CRT and Eastman’s.

When we asked about the “Trevor Basin Master Plan” we were informed that a “Wider Social & Economic Study” would be conducted next. This was welcome news and hopefully will lead to a better appreciation of the community living around the aqueduct. We would like to help and participate as much as possible to ensure our community is represented correctly and included in WHS planning, so that we can move away from Post Industrial Depression, and on to Sustainable Tourism Development in accordance with WAG FGA2 2015 and Welsh Planning Policy.

Therefore, we offer this initial summary of our area for the study.

There has been a lot of good work done already by many reputable bodies which we take notice of and use in this report on a “Wider Social & Economic Study” of our community.

Our Community, loosely termed the Cefn & Cefn Mawr in most of our documents covers all the small villages at the central section of the WHS, these being Acrefair, Garth, Trevor, Trefynant, Cysyllte, Froncysyllte, Whitehurst, Pentre, New Bridge, Cefn Bychan, Plas Madoc, Rhosymedre and Cefn Mawr. These villages represent the industrial heartland of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site and without such the WHS would not be, even though their current status in such is low. They all date back to the industrial revolution and came about because of the coming of the canal, bar Plas Madoc which was a council creation of the 1970’s. Cefn Mawr simply represents the principle village centre as it has the largest retail sector and number of significant buildings.

Other documents in our collection can be found on our website at:

<https://www.plaskynastoncanalgroup.org/library/>

Welcome to the Cefn Mawr ~~Conservation~~ / Deprivation Area



Welcome to what is now becoming the Cefn Mawr Deprivation Area at the very centre of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. The population of this community, the Cefn & Cefn Mawr including all the villages in the central section of the WHS and within a 1.5-mile radius from where this photograph is taken, is approximately 10,000 people.

We are the largest community in the WHS, outnumbering both Llangollen and Chirk combined.

Our community formed the industrial heartland of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, is only half a mile from the location of the photograph above. Our community lives around the aqueduct. The reason for the aqueduct being where it is, dates to the late 1700's and the rich mineral deposits to be found in and around our area. These being coal, ironstone, lime and clay which were necessary to fuel the industrial revolution. So, the decision was made to cut the Ellesmere Canal along the more difficult and technically challenging westerly and northern route into Wrexham, Denbighshire and Flintshire on the way to Chester.

The route (not completed) would entail many challenges and the most notable structures are the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Embankment and the Chirk Aqueduct and tunnel, apart from the canal itself. Unfortunately, funds for construction works ran out during construction of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the canal was terminated at Trevor Basin. This resulted in an insufficient supply of head water as the planned reservoir for the canal would have been at Hope Mountain in Flintshire. Hope Mountain Reservoir and was to be connected to the [Ellesmere Canal](#) via the Ffrwd branch canal, (also partially constructed) north of Wrexham.

Due to termination of the Ellesmere Canal at the Trevor Basin an alternative headwater supply had to be found. William Jessop (Telford's Boss) proposed the branch to Llantysilio (beyond Llangollen), construction of the Horseshoe Falls and the raising on Bala Lake.

The point here being that Llangollen only became a part of the canal system as an afterthought and contingency factor, although this section of the Ellesmere Canal has now been renamed the “Llangollen Canal”. Technically this is a misrepresentation of our history. We believe that our community should be given the recognition it quite rightly deserves considering the contribution it has made to the infrastructure and development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The Plas Kynaston Canal Group (the PKC Group) see our area as akin to Coalbrookdale and Iron Bridge, except that Coalbrookdale has been given the acknowledgement it quite rightly deserves. Iron Bridge is famous for the Iron Bridge that crosses the River Severn and has developed very well around such and the transport route, (much like Llangollen) whilst Coalbrookdale (where the iron for the bridge was made) was for a long time forgotten. This is a bit like Llangollen and the Cefn today, however our community has done far more than just build an iron bridge or aqueduct and for reference on some of what has been made in our community and is still in everyday use around the UK, please see [Plas Kynaston Foundry](#).

The villages of the Cefn spread around the aqueduct on both sides of the Dee Valley largely borne out of the Industrial Revolution and coming of the canal, have always had an industrial based economy. However, the last of our major industry and employers announced closure 10 years ago.

Whilst the Pontcysyllte WHS celebrated 10 years of UNESCO Inscription in 2019 (last year) the Cefn Community endured yet another year of post-industrial depression and a further squeeze on its fragile economy with the opening of the new Ruabon Roundabout Development. Not before too long, if this downward trend continues, our economy will collapse and a ghost town will be created at the very centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS, and we ask, what will this do for UNESCO Inscription and WHS Status?

Efforts to make improvements have been made. The Cefn Mawr Conservation Area and THI Work funded by the National Lottery and administered by WCBC have been good efforts but unfortunately failed, simply because they have NOT linked up with the canal and visitors. The single most controversial reason for failure of the Ebenezer is a lack of footfall which is ironic when it is next to an area with exceptionally high visitor count and acres of car and coach parking.

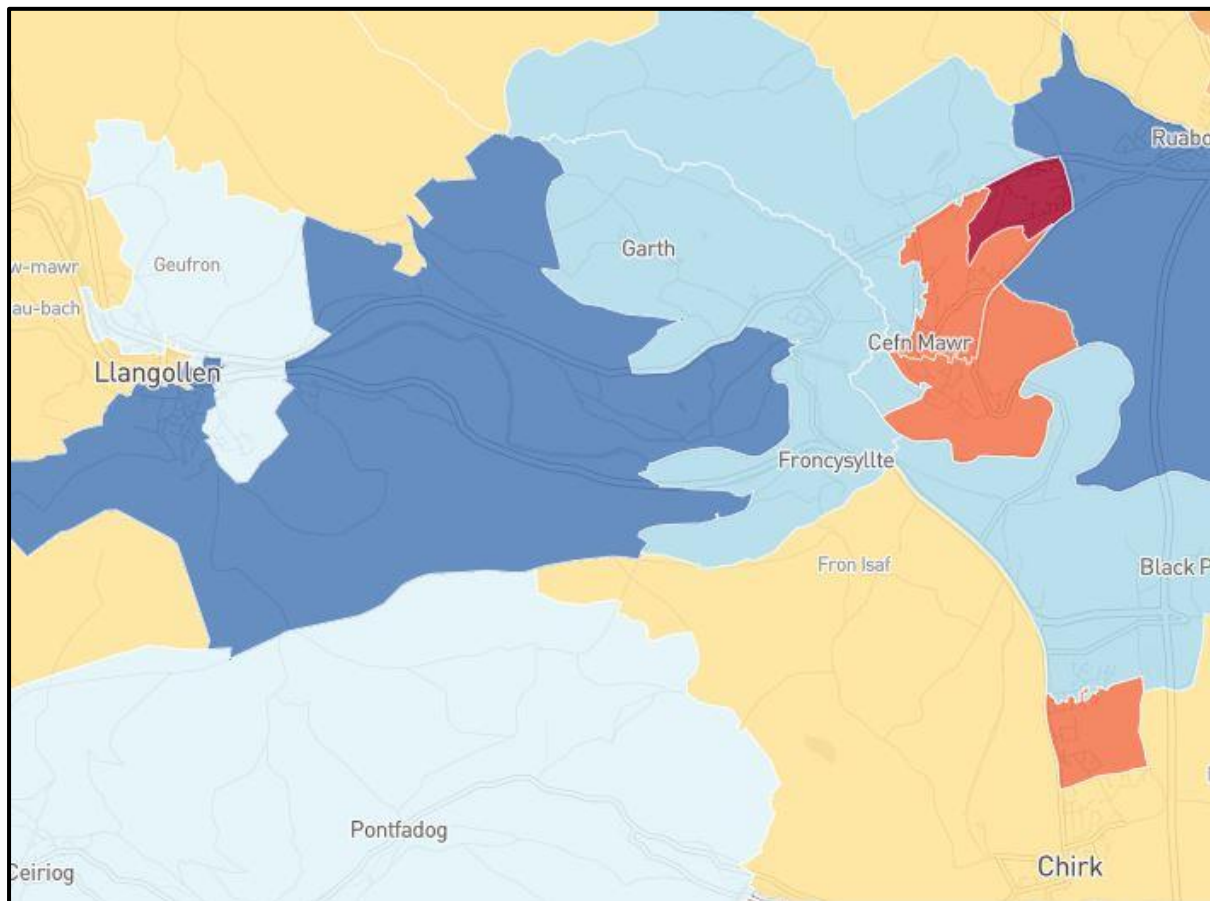
However, the total opposite could be true if initiatives were undertaken which encouraged visitors to stay longer, and more importantly encourage them to explore the wider area.

The current trend of parking as close to the aqueduct as possible, walking over it, taking a couple of happy snaps and then moving on, could be changed to extent the visitors experience is not just the aqueduct but also wider area of Cefn. This is what we seek for our community and should happen, developing the opportunity our community has to offer. Our community as a whole can do so much more for the World Heritage Site if only we all work together on plans that actually promote Sustainable Tourism Development in accordance with the FGA, Future Generations Act 2015, NDF, National Development Framework, WPP Welsh Planning Policy, WCBC's LDP2 (and associated documents) and the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site Master Plan.

For confirmation of the current poor state of our community please see the following pages, but at the end we give you respite, with a list of all the opportunities and advantages we know the Cefn has and how they can be used, if we work together.

WAG WIMD 2014

This extract from the Welsh Assembly Government for the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2014 clearly shows that our area has the highest rating for multiple deprivation in the Pontcysyllte WHS Corridor. Further implications of the above map can be found on the government website for WIMD. Not only do we have the highest rating for WIMD in the WHS we also have one of the highest ratings in NE Wales. Something we are committed to seeing addressed.



[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)

Please also note that the WIMD is dated 2014 and based on preceding information, in short there is a significant time delay with the above picture and the economic structure of our community has without doubt, deteriorated further than is depicted in this WIMD data.

WCBC LDP2 Settlement Function

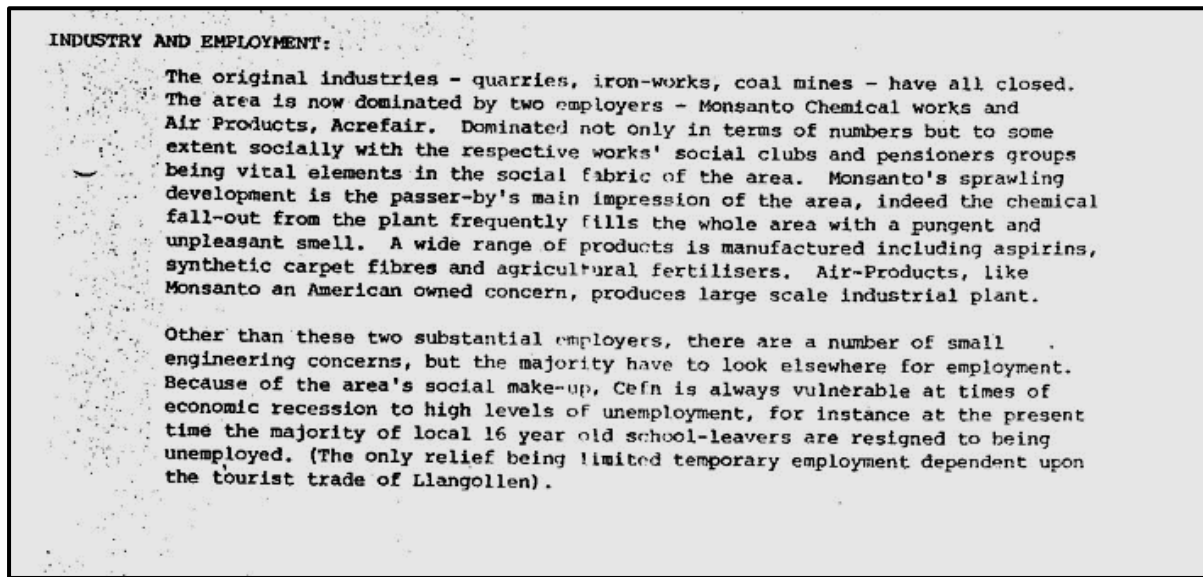
Appendix 4 - Settlement Function and Development Potential spreadsheet

	Marchwile	Llay	Llanarmon DC	Horseman's Green	Holt	Hammer	Halton	Gwynfryn	Gwersyllt	Grestford/ Marford	Glyn Ceirlog	Garth	Froncysyllte	Dolymern/ Llwynmawr	Cross Lanes	Coedpoeth	Chirk	Bwlchgwym	Burton	Brymbo	Broughton	Bronington	Bradley	Bettistled	Bersham	Bangor	Acrefair/Cefn Mawr
Settlement Function																											
<i>Employment/ Economic Opportunities & Function</i>																											
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																											
<i>Community Services and Retail Role</i>																											
School																											
Health Care Provision																											
Retail Provision																											
Other facilities																											
Recreation Capacity																											
<i>Sustainable Travel Options</i>																											
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																											

Our Community & Unemployment

WCBC LDP2 Appendix 4 clearly shows our community is in the red as far as the % of our population that are economically active, i.e. working and the number of people employed. Our community clearly leads the way again in this table by WCBC which is not good. However, the table also shows that there is good opportunity for employment and this needs to be realized and we believe could be, by establishing our community as a Tourist Destination in its own right and Transport Hub for the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site, which would also realise our local industrial estate, again providing more employment and revenue for WCBC through paying business rates.

Employment Prospects 2020?



This extract from the Clwyd Library Service in 1981 gives a retrospective view to the present social and economic situation in the central section of the Pontcysyllte WHS.

The links below show what has happened to those main employers.

BBC North East Wales 21 May 2008

163 jobs to go at rubber factory

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/7413117.stm

Daily Post 10th June 2008

Flexsys workers facing redundancy to meet Ieuan Wyn Jones - WAG

<http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/2008/06/10/flexsys-workers-to-meet-minister-55578-21047420/>

BBC North East Wales 1 July 2009

Urgent help needed for job crisis

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/8128229.stm>

Clwyd South Assembly Member 1st July 2009

Karen Sinclair expresses her sadness regarding Air Products Plant Closure at Acrefair

<http://www.karensinclair.co.uk/2009/07/air-products-closure.html>

BBC North East Wales 18 December 2009

Air Products factory closes for the last time

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_east/8418818.stm

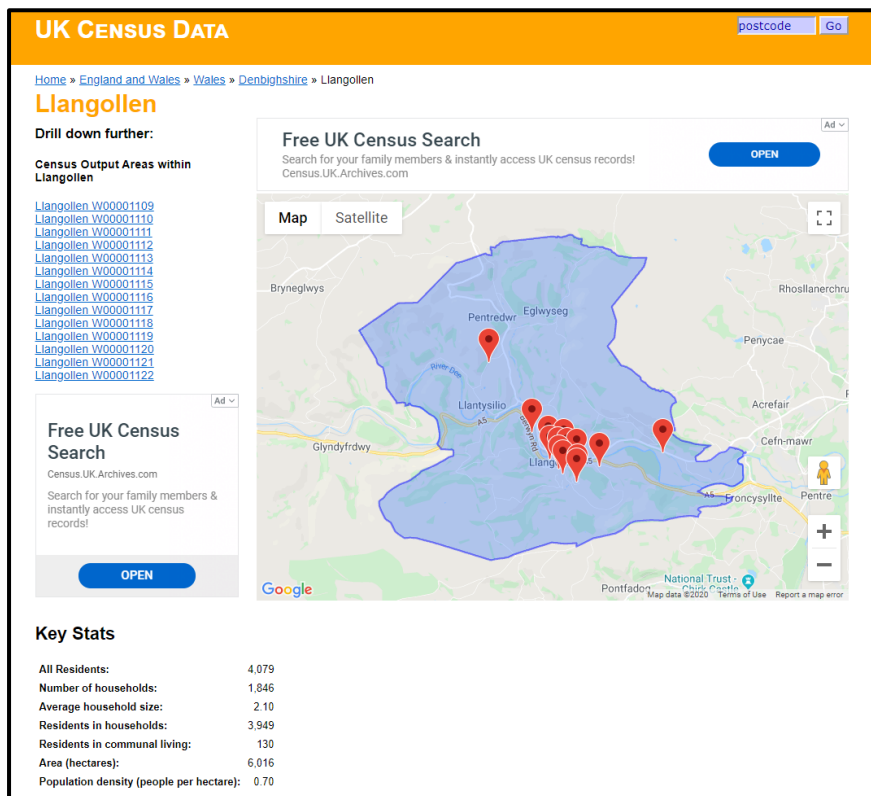


The former Monsanto Works site and the Vale of Llangollen.

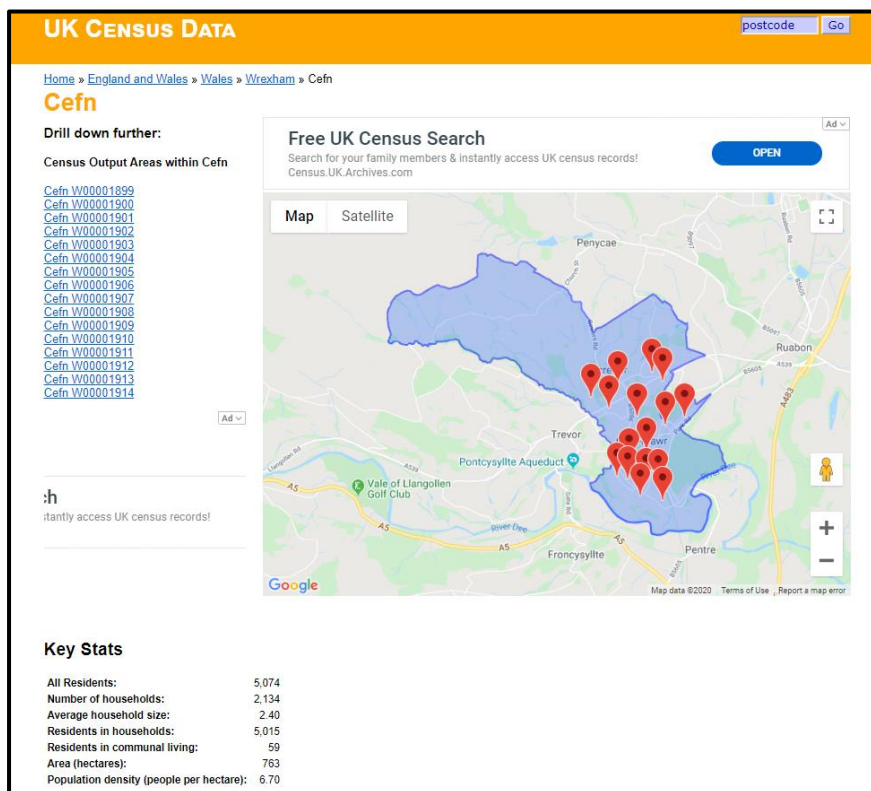


The former Air Products Works site in Acrefair.

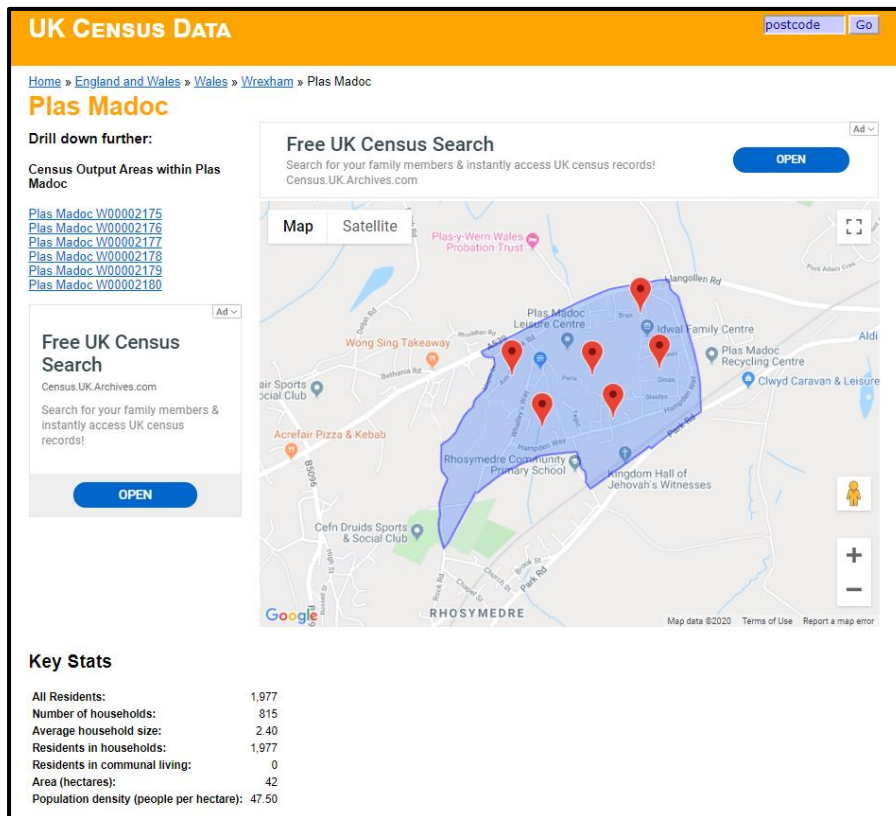
WHS Corridor Demographics



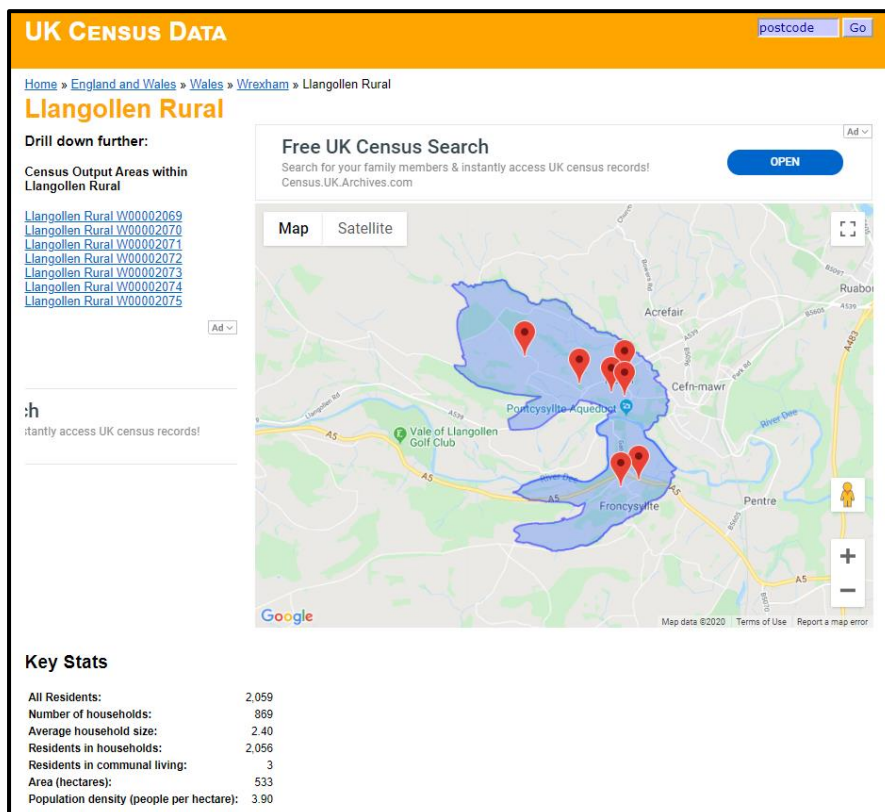
Population of Llangollen as a whole, 4,079.



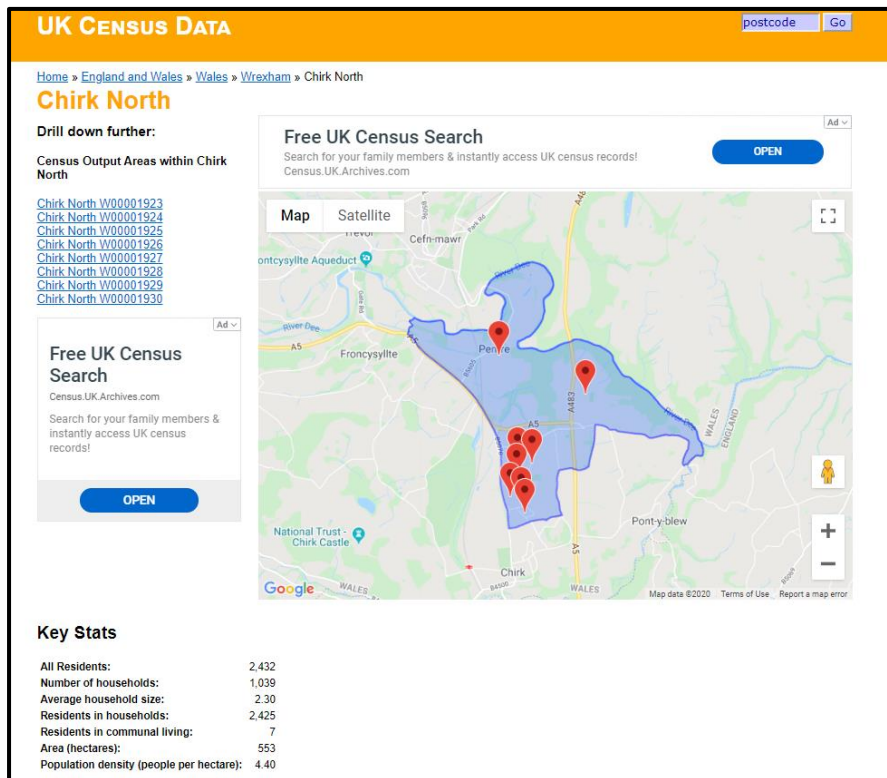
Population of Cefn 5,074



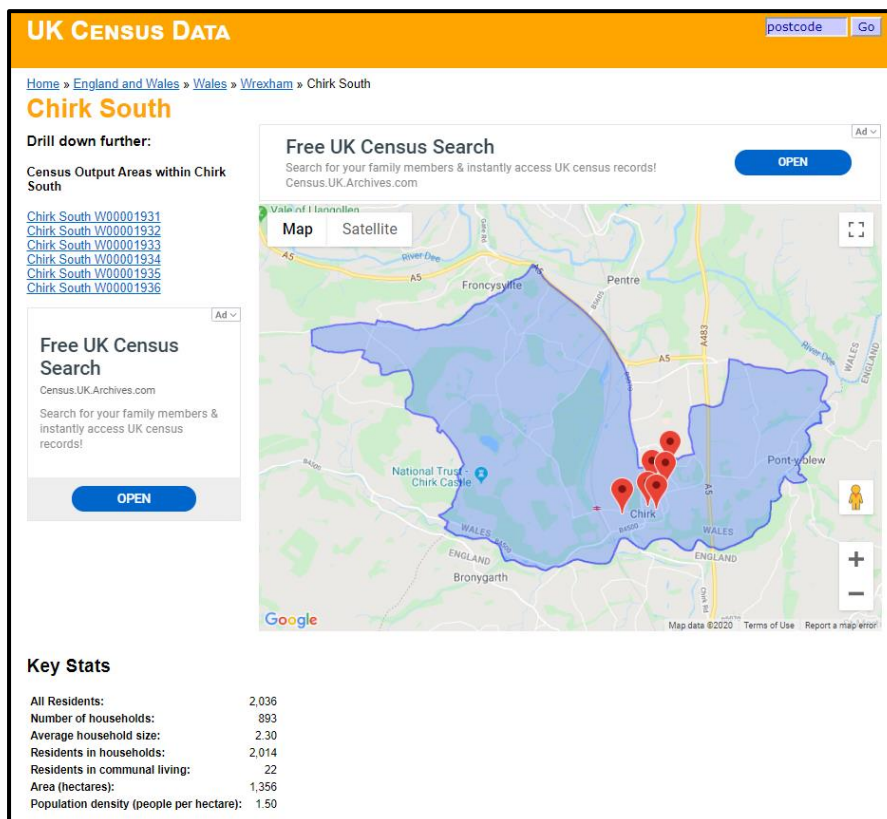
Population Plas Madoc 1,977



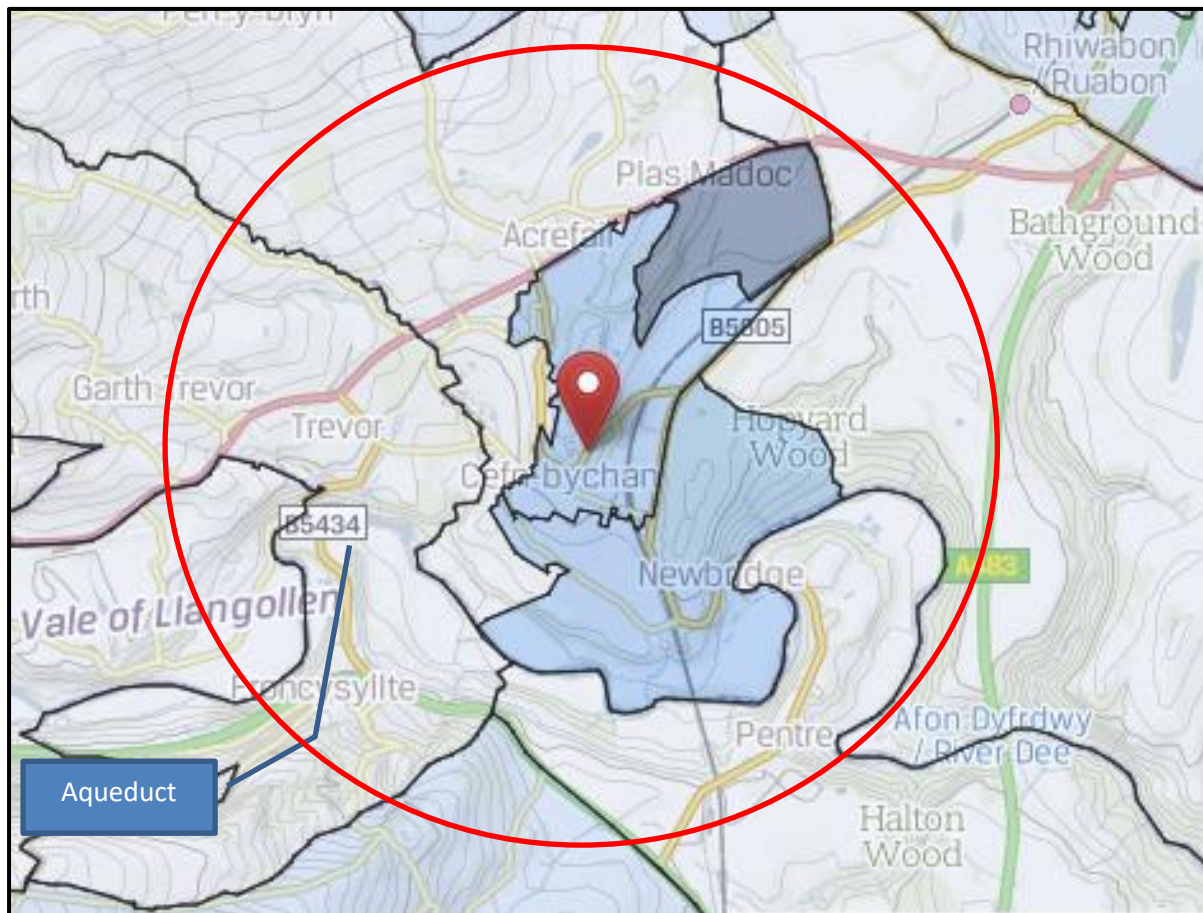
Llangollen Rural population 2059 (in county of Wrexham & Denbighshire)



Population Chirk North 2,432



Population Chirk South 2,036

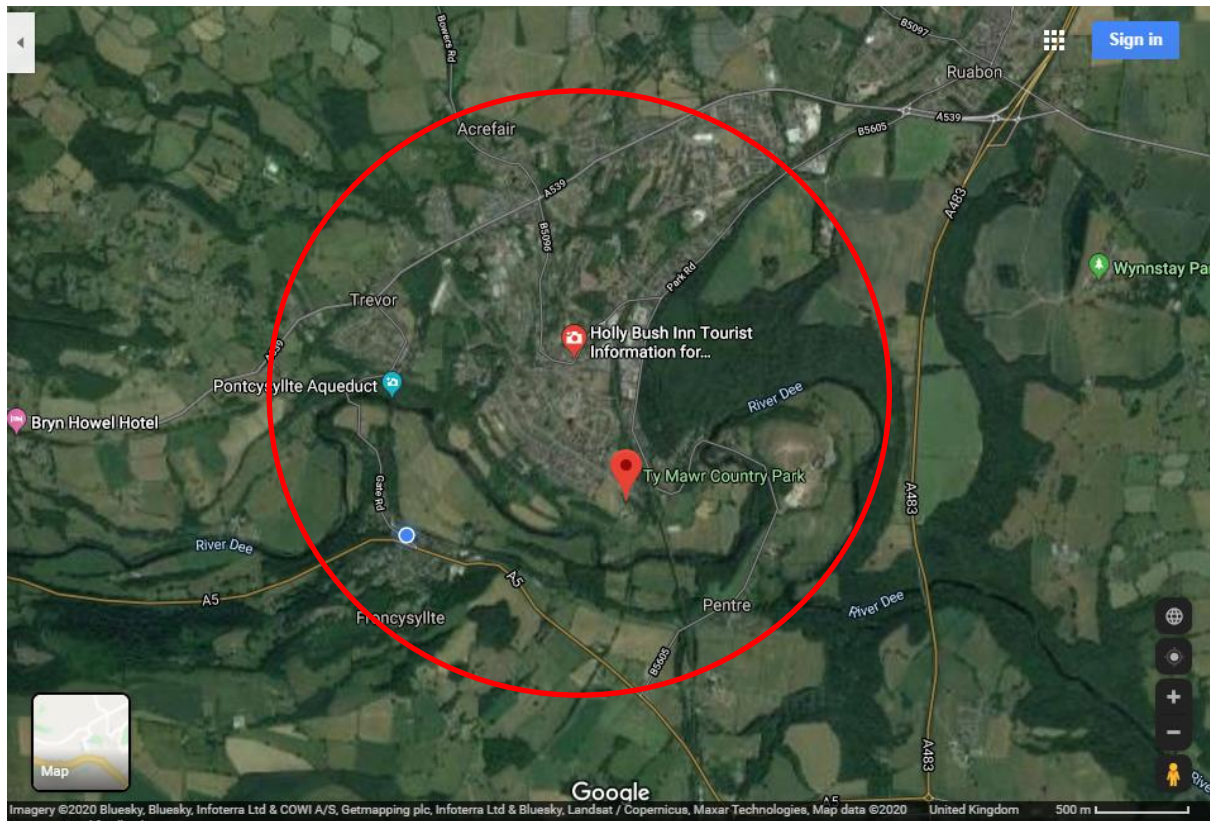


If the true population of our area is assessed simply by drawing a 1-mile radius circle around Cefn Mawr village centre, i.e. the central section of the Pontcysyllte WHS, the true population figures for the central section of the WHS can be found.

Cefn =	5074
Plas Madoc =	1977
Llangollen Rural =	2059
Pentre =	250

This gives a total of approximately 9,360 people according to the census reports living in this area. This is the largest population in the WHS corridor outnumbering Chirk and Llangollen combined. It is also second only to Wrexham Town in the county of Wrexham.

Because of the high number of people living in this area around the aqueduct, i.e. the former industrial heartland of the WHS, this gives a population density of just over 7 people per hectare and is by far the highest population density in the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site.



An aerial view of the same central area of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site corridor clearly showing our Urban / Rural Community.

Simply by increasing the radius of the circle to 1.5 miles or 2kms gives a population in excess of 10,000 people.

Cefn Health Facilities



Cefn Community Council are actively trying to get funding for a new Health Centre for our community, which again is an interesting point. We have by far the largest population, but by far the poorest health facilities. Simple comparison between the new state of the art health facilities in Llangollen and Chirk, will reveal the disparity in this.

Furthermore, a new health centre built on the former Co-Op Supermarket site would be ideally situated to be served by a new railway station on the Chester to Shrewsbury line adjacent to the Tesco supermarket. This would then promote active travel by rail and avoid the road traffic problems currently experienced by Wrexham medical facilities.

Wrexham.com 13th January 2020

Health Board advises visitors to hospital to “factor in potential traffic congestion” – we ask AM & MP about the issue

<http://www.wrexham.com/news/health-board-advises-visitors-to-hospital-to-factor-in-potential-traffic-congestion-we-ask-am-mp-about-the-issue-179310.html>

Unfortunately, this is not a one-off situation and most people in Wrexham are aware of this. However, with our plan for the Sustainable Development of our community, [a Railway Station next to Tesco](#) is an end goal and will enable the Cefn to become a Transport Hub for the WHS as well as a tourist destination and we fully support Cefn Community Council.



Cefn Mawr Health Centre 2020



Health Centres in comparison in 2020.

The Ebenezer 2019



The Ebenezer was supposed to lead the economic regeneration of our community through the THI scheme following on from Article 4 designation of the Cefn Mawr Conservation Area. However, the two local conservation areas (Pontcysyllte & Cefn) were not effectively connected and the Ebenezer closed in 2013 due to a lack of footfall only a short distance from one of the highest visitor counts in Wales. In 2019 following continued expenditure and six years of non-use, WCBC put the building up for sale by auction.

Since the foremost principle of World Heritage Sites is to “Preserve and Conserve Heritage” as stated at the 2019 WHS Conference, we and our community were shocked when we learnt that the Ebenezer was being sold off at auction.

Under all master planning to date for the “Trevor Basin” talk has always been of a NEW visitor centre which we question when NLHF has already spent £1.5M on transforming an historic building in the centre of Cefn for visitor use?

The PKC Group realises the potential of this building, how that can be realised and the key role it needs to play in the economic recovery of our community through Sustainable Tourism Development. An application to rent the building was made by the PKC Group in 2015, but this was refused in favour of the now defunct CRP (Cefn Regeneration Partnership). In 2019 the PKC Group offered WCBC twice the guide price to save it going to auction, however the sale fell through.

Following this the Ebenezer was offered back to the CCC, Cefn Community Council on a pepper corn rent basis but after 7 months of deliberation CCC decided not to take the building.

Shropshire Star 30th January 2019

Visitor numbers quadruple at Pontcysyllte aqueduct

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/mid-wales/llangollen/2019/01/30/visitor-numbers-quadruple-at-pontcysyllte-aqueduct/>

BBC News 29th January 2019

Ebenezer chapel community centre in Cefn Mawr auction

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-47047021>

The Leader Live 29th January 2019

Former Baptist chapel to go under hammer

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/17392467.former-baptist-chapel-to-go-under-hammer/>

Wrexham.com 29th January 2019

Community building which received £1m cash injection set for auction unless council accept bid

<http://www.wrexham.com/news/community-building-which-received-1m-cash-injection-set-for-auction-unless-council-accept-bid-162845.html>

Following this the Ebenezer was offered to the CCC, Cefn Community Council on a pepper corn rent basis, but after 7 months of deliberation CCC declined the offer in early 2020.

However, the PKC offer to WCBC for twice the auction guide price still stands, if WCBC are willing to work with us, to bring about Sustainable Tourism Development for our community at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS.

We are confident that our offer of twice the guide price at auction is by far the best offer WCBC will get for the building considering the present economic climate. If the building does go to auction, we doubt that it will exceed the guide price of £100K and will most likely go for around £60K and more importantly, it will probably not be used to support the community.

Cefn Mawr Townscape Heritage Initiative



The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme was an important step in the recent history of our community with the intention of bringing about economic recovery. Unfortunately, it has failed as did the Ebenezer (the lead THI work) through a lack of footfall due to non- connectivity with the main potential income for the area, tourism.

The visitor figures for our area at 400,000 per year are some of the best in Wales and yet our community is failing from a lack of footfall. One has to admit there is something very wrong here, and we believe this can be rectified if we choose to. The PKC group remains firmly committed to help bring about change for the community of Cefn and see the Ebenezer as a primary enabler.

We estimate from practical experience of working with WCBC through the THI scheme that the combined financial input by our community in addition to the £3.5M of NHL Funding for restoration of Cefn Mawr village centre was in the region of £2M. This is a £2M investment by our local people / community (including ourselves) bringing the total spent to around £5.5M, so yes it can be said that we have a vested interest in seeing our community do better.

Furthermore, the THI came in two phases which can be broken down into pre and post Tesco.

The scheme was first introduced in 2007/8 and initially there was considerable interest and the Ebenezer Chapel was renovated to the tune of £1.5M as the leading economic regeneration work.

After formation of the PKC Group in 2010 following the announcements of the closure of the only two main employers in the community, Monsanto and Air Products the PKC group met with the DVCP (the main tenants of the Ebenezer) many times in an effort to get interest in linking up with the canal through the reinstatement of the Plas Kynaston Canal. Simply by doing so would start the influx of tourism that is still sadly needed into our community; however, this did not happen.

Following the 2011 announcements that Tesco would be built, interest in THI grant funding for retail property in our community dwindled to an all-time low. WCBC literally had a million pounds they could not even give away! The Vaults had closed, the Ebenezer closed for the fourth and last time and the Holly Bush Inn was on the verge of closure and becoming another roundabout for Tesco. Please note, the Vaults, The Ebenezer and the Holly Bush Inn are the three principle properties at the centre of Cefn Mawr surrounding Cefn Square with the George Edwards Hall next to the Holly Bush Inn further along Well Street.

The PKC group stepped in to save Cefn Mawr's oldest pub,

Campaign group saves pub 'for the village'
Wrexham header. 27/3/13.

A 200-YEAR-OLD village pub has been saved from closure by a campaign group.

The Hollybush is the oldest, and now one of the last surviving, pubs in Cefn Mawr.

Two weeks ago it looked set to go the same way as other pubs in the village as the windows and doors were boarded up.

But this week it will reopen after a village regeneration campaign group stepped in to save it.

The Plas Kynaston Canal (PKC) group was set up by local business leaders and residents, originally to push for the Plas Kynaston arm of the Llangollen canal to be reinstated, complete with a tourist-attracting marina. That is a long-term project which is still ongoing.

But when PKC chairman David Metcalfe saw the Hollybush up for sale last year, he "had a brainwave", said fellow PKC director Steve Hughes.

Mr Hughes, proprietor of Lure It fishing tackle on Crane Street, Cefn Mawr, said: "We do not want to lose another pub in the village."

"There's only that and the Queen's Hotel left."

"Dave had a brainwave, that we could buy the pub and use it as a base for the PKC".

In the past two years The Old Vaults on Well Street, the Railway Inn on King Street and the Plough in Rhosymedre have all closed.

The Hollybush itself has been under threat of closure since operators Pubfolio went into administration in 2010.

It has been kept running under a succession of landlords and administrators including Pricewaterhousecoopers, IBRC and KPMG.

Now, after months of negotiations, Mr Metcalfe has been granted the licence for the pub after finalising an £118,000 deal.

A grand re-opening is scheduled for Good Friday – although the windows may still be boarded up as the vacant property specialists had not been able to get a vehicle to the pub, due to the snow.

Mr Metcalfe said it had not been an easy process.

"We were hoping for a smooth transition but the pub was boarded up two weeks ago."

"We put in an offer which was accepted in October. We exchanged £10,000 and it was due to complete on February 7 but then it didn't get finalised."

"KPMG (administrators) gave clearance for the licence to be transferred on March 6, but it's been a battle to try to get it sorted out."

"It has cost us a fortune and the pool table and fruit machines have gone back, which is something we didn't need."

But it had been worth it, he said: "We're saving it for the village."

■ The Hollybush pub in Cefn Mawr.
■ Plas Kynaston Canal group chairman David Metcalfe.

Villagers who won their battle

VILLAGERS won their battle to reopen a pub in Minera last week. The village's Tyn y Capel pub closed two years ago, sparking a massive community campaign to reopen it that even caught the attention of TV chef Heston Blumenthal.

Campaigners set up Minera Community Ltd, which now has a lease on the building and keys to the property.

The pub is set to reopen on April 20.

Dave had a brainwave that we could buy it and use it as a base
27/3/13.




Following the purchase of the Holly Bush Inn, planned restoration and relaxation of the THI ruling more interest was shown in the THI scheme and more properties were restored bringing the total spent to an approximate £3.5M of NLHF funds and an estimated combined input by our community of around £2M. This should not be wasted by our community being left out of the WHS corridor. We need to make the most of this and work towards our community becoming a Tourist Destination and Transport Hub for the Pontcysyllte WHS, Dee Valley AONB and South Wrexham.



The Holly Bush Inn 2020 stands as the Leading Regeneration Work of the THI keeping the heart of our community alive. However, with the continued downturn of our economy during the past ten years of UNESCO Inscription and WHS status it has become increasingly hard to run successfully, as is the same for all other licenced premises in our area. Unless this trend is reversed there will be an economic collapse which is totally wrong given the potential visitor count. Our economy and pubs should be booming in a similar way to Llangollen. We simply need the authorities to start working with us to bring about the change we need, and so yes the “Wider Social & Economic Study” is a welcome change from “Trevor Basin” only master planning which has been persisting since 2012.

We know that our pub will only do as well as the community around it. Therefore, not only is our pub a hub pub for our community on the social side, i.e. serving our locals, we also strive for a general improvement for all our community. We see most of our trade in the day and early evening before moving on to other venues, and therefore again we are a hub pub for our community, but we are also making it a hub pub for the recovery of the economy of our community and we are members of [Pub is the Hub](#). We invite the patron of Pub is the Hub, Prince Charles along for a beer and I promise I will buy the first round. [Holly Bush Inn, Hub Pub for Cefn Mawr](#).

Please note that we seek a better trade for all licenced premises in our community as can be seen from our webpage on such, the [Pubs of Cefn Mawr & the Cefn](#).

We are proud not only of our own premises but the host of historical pubs we have and want to see them all stay open. Unfortunately, we have lost a few during the past ten years (since 2010) but do not want to lose any more. Interestingly, although not reflected in our community the downward spiral of public house closures across the UK halted in 2019 and showed a slight positive increase for the first time in ten years. If we work together, maybe we can replicate this in our community at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS.

BBC 11th December 2019

UK pub sector expands for first time in 10 years

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-50743853>

Cefn Retail Economy

The recent Cefn Retail Economy can basically be broken down into two eras, i.e. pre and post Tesco. There is no denying that Tesco has had a profound effect on our community in several ways but perhaps the most obvious is that imposed on the retail sector of our community. Tesco came at the expense of other business that competed with it, as has been the case in countless other communities across the country. One of the first closures was the former Co-Op supermarket, followed by other small independent traders.

As a simple example of such, Crane Street, once one of our main streets for independent retail outlets is now nicknamed "*Cranium Street*" after the number of hairdressers, and Well Street our other main retail street now has the same offering.

Everyone is doing their best to keep their heads above water and the Business Rates alleviation in Cefn Mawr does help. But how many of the current businesses will survive when Business rates are reintroduced, remains to be seen. This is especially worrying given the increase in rateable value councils are expected to take by central government to supplement council coffers in this age of austerity.

The Guardian 31st October 2019

UK's business rates system 'broken' says Treasury committee

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/oct/31/uks-business-rates-system-broken-says-treasury-committee>

The simple answer here is for us to work together and bring about Economic Regeneration through Sustainable Tourism Development and increased visitor footfall which will allow a diversification of our retail sector as opportunity presents. The increased trade will enhance the capability and robustness of our retail sector leading towards a more viable and vibrant community with greater employment opportunity.

However, not to do so, will no doubt result in the eventual collapse of what is left of our village centre, as businesses close due to the lack of footfall and custom. This will result in a net loss for WCBC as business rates will not be available from businesses that have ceased to exist. This will then be followed by further eventual decay and all the good work of the THI will be lost as the village centre crumbles through a lack of investment, even in basic maintenance. The Ebenezer is currently an example of this decay and will soon be, if not already, a derelict building.

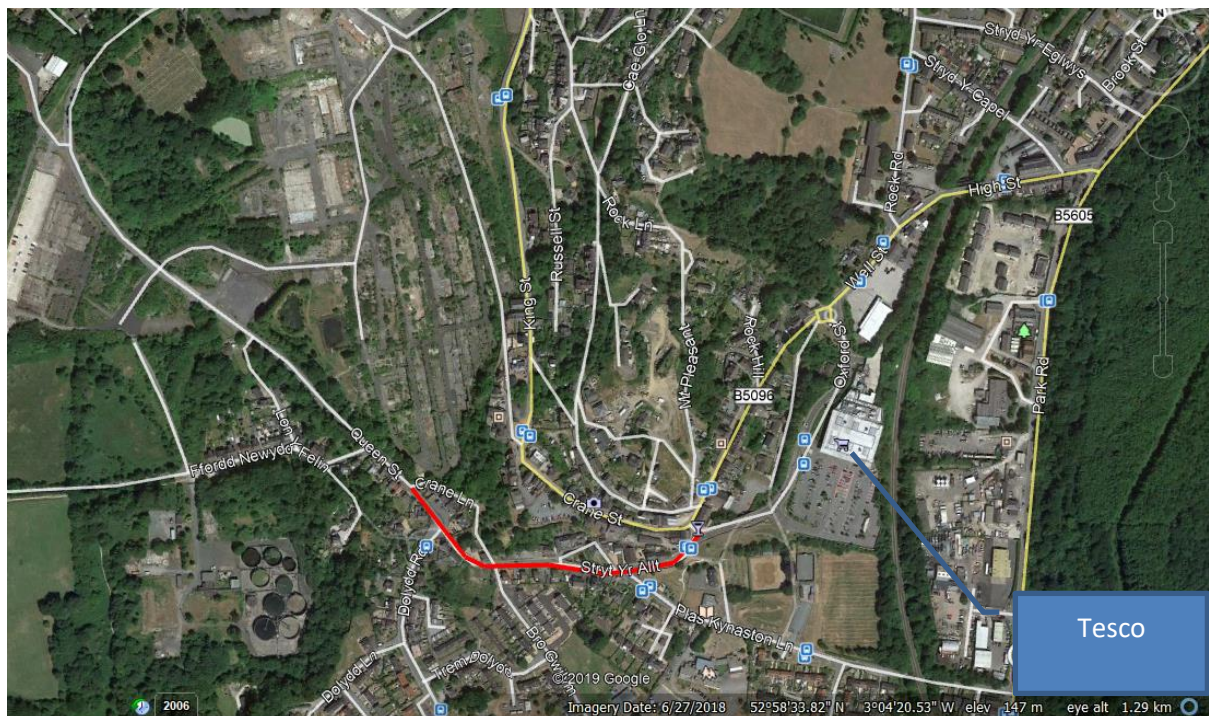
So, in the long run, it is in the local authority's interest to work with us towards Sustainable Tourism Development for our community. We simply want to be able to pay Business Rates when they are reintroduced, rather than be forced into closure through a lack of business in an area. The ability to do so will then provide income for the local authority as well, rather than the opposite which will lead to nothing for WCBC.

So, we believe there is an opportunity to work together to improve the situation, or if not, a Ghost Town will be created at the very centre of the WHS.

Tesco

The arrival of the £20M Tesco Store has been a mixed story, jobs were created but then again jobs were lost, and this should not be forgotten, including the loss of independent business. Without meaning to be anti-Tesco, the loss of local independent traders is a net loss to our community. For instance, local people will use local tradesmen to work on their property for maintenance etc. and in turn these local tradesmen and their families spend their income in the local community. This is about as basic as it gets for the circular economy.

However during the £20M build of the Tesco Store, only six local people were employed, so there was not a large input to our community on this basis, and since opening, although Tesco have an active community programme, and are the largest employer in the area, store profits are not retained in our community. Supermarkets and retail chains are not integral to local circular economies and the vast majority of profit goes elsewhere.



Tesco is by far the largest building in the Cefn & Cefn Mawr itself, dwarfing everything around it. The store has been successful after opening in 2013 attracting around 500,000 annually which is the single highest head count for our area. The store has proved a point in the amount of business it can account for which is good to see and shows what can be achieved in our community. The location of the store and large parking gives good access to the Shrewsbury / Chester line and a [Railway Station](#) next to Tesco would do well encouraging far more people to use the railway which would help alleviate congestion on the A483.

However, a knock-on effect of the success of Tesco in our community is the road traffic safety issue of unclassified roads becoming the main thoroughfare for traffic.

The red line shows a major black spot in our community along Queens & Hill Street as a result of this.

Public Transport



King Street at the Crane in Cefn Mawr and Cefn Mawr Post Office. The **DISUSED BUS STOPS** are clearly visible, but public transport service to our village centre was removed in 2014 to serve Tesco. This has left our traditional village centre and retail sector without public transport.

The B5096 runs along King Street, Crane Street and Well Street in Acrefair & Cefn Mawr and High Street in Rhosymedre which is a classified road and was the main thoroughfare before the opening of the new Tesco Store and Oxford Street.

Our traditional shopping centre has been bypassed (largely by Oxford Street) and the new thoroughfare has become Queens Street, Hill Street, Oxford Street before re-joining the B5096 at the Tesco roundabout and continuing along High Street through Rhosymedre.

This has led to a significant traffic black spot in our community along Queens Street and Hill Street that were never engineered for the volume of, or, weight of traffic now experienced. Although a 20mph blanket speed limit was imposed in 2019 this has had very little effect, if any, on the situation, much in agreement with the Department for Transport Report (2018) on 20mph blanket speed restrictions, which stated they were largely ineffective.

The removal of public transport from the traditional village centre is a clear violation of Welsh Planning Policy, (WPP) and the Future Generation Act (FGA) 2015 and has had another negative effect on our retail sector.



The picture above shows busses passing each other on Queens Street. Please note there is only one pavement on the road at this point and the buses must mount daily in order to comply with the designated route and timetable. This is a positive danger to our residents and a contravention of the highway code and should not be happening. However, it is happening, on a daily basis because of the way our community's infrastructure, has been allowed to develop, over the past 10 years.

Again, questions need to be asked and the PKC Group is raising this major road safety issue on behalf of our community.

Please see [Hill & Queens Street Cefn Mawr 2020](#).

Aldi & Ruabon Roundabout



The new Aldi supermarket (opened 2019) will no doubt influence the Tesco trade and to a smaller extent, on what is left of the independent retail sector of the Cefn & Cefn Mawr. One thing is for sure we cannot continue to withstand more large supermarkets and retail chains moving into the area and taking away all the local commerce.

WPP clearly states that development should be geared towards working with and building the traditional shopping centres, ones that are within walking distance of the local population. New developments should also encourage more use of public transport where necessary, rather than the private car. They should preferably be built on brownfield sites wherever possible rather than consuming greenfield land to help combat climate change and preserve our environment according to WPP and the new LDP2 by WCBC.

The Ruabon Roundabout development does none of this.

It has been built on a greenfield site, that is nowhere near any traditional shopping or village centres, needs to be accessed by use of the private car, along roads that already suffer from severe road congestion.

How this ever got through planning is beyond us and calls into question WPP, Welsh Planning Policy and the new LDP2, Local Development Plan 2 by WCBC which is supposed to be based on WPP, and the concept of Brexit.

Plas Madoc Leisure Centre



The closure of Plas Madoc Leisure Centre by WCBC in 2014 caused an uproar in the local community who banded together to get it reopened, and did so, well done everyone and now Splash Magic Trust operate the facility.

See:

<https://www.plaskynastoncanalgroup.org/cefn-mawr/plas-madoc-ll14-3hl/>

<https://www.plas-madoc.com/>

for more information.

Children's Playgrounds & Other Sports Facilities

Plas Madoc and other major facility cutbacks also signalled the oncoming of less well-known cuts and transfers of responsibility. The maintenance and upkeep costs of our local playgrounds and sports facilities has been transferred from WCBC to our local Community Councils.

As a result of this the CCC are now looking to employ a "Projects Officer" to chase any available grant funding to spend on our local playgrounds and sports facilities to compensate for the additional financial burden. Obviously, this is a limited cycle approach as grant funding will not be continually given to causes that are not self-sustaining, in the new age of austerity. The funds for such will have to be found from local rates, both business and residential as they always have been. Therefore, it is imperative that we work towards building our local economy so it can pay the rates which will then contribute towards these facilities.



One development that the PKC Group has always questioned is that of Reeds Yard parking at the Trevor Basin immediately next to a children's playground? We note as of 2019 double security fencing has been erected to stop the children escaping onto the car park, however the fencing does nothing with regard to the pollution from the vehicles, Carbon Monoxide etc. Our children are being exposed to this daily during the height of the season in August when they are on holiday and playing in the playground and the maximum number of people are visiting the aqueduct.

This is wrong and needs correction.

Possible Closure of Our Library in Cefn Mawr

WCBC operates a library service in nine communities across the county borough. However, in relation to Rhos, Ruabon, Cefn and Chirk, Wrexham Council says it is unable to continue to fund all four libraries.

The council asks for opinions on what services users would like to see provided and “decentralised” to community libraries – including blue badges, bus passes, council tax enquiries and queries, school transport enquiries or streetscene enquiries.

WCBC say, “We need the public’s views to let us know which way to proceed – as such, I would encourage all library users, and communities, to take part in the consultation and make their views known.”



Cefn Mawr Library

Wrexham.com 2nd October 2019

Self-serve libraries proposed as Wrexham Council look to make 23% library service cuts

<http://www.wrexham.com/news/self-serve-libraries-proposed-as-wrexham-council-look-to-make-23-library-service-cuts-174873.html?fbclid=IwAR1hA5ryPa6VAy5H0EWUPMr-OBNE2Ogr4apw08QBJGrxpKNy6KnzL7KlhUc>

Representation & Signage



Representation of our community in the WHS is very poor, see [“Where is Cefn Mawr”](#).



On this map at Trevor Basin, Cefn Mawr is shown as in Rhosymedre!

Our community is extremely poorly signed and represented, please see [“Where is Cefn Mawr”](#)

Recent Industrial History



In the heyday of Monsanto and Air Products more that 2000 people were employed directly or indirectly to the plants, or through subsidiary support companies, and the plants provided the bulk of the income to the community.

However due to the nature of the products being produced at Monsanto, synthetic rubber, there were regular realises of H₂S, Hydrogen Sulphide which smelt of bad eggs. This led to the nickname of “Smelly Town” for Cefn Mawr and detracted from tourism. And then the plants were not that pretty either and [Hydrogen Sulphide](#) is a known toxic gas.

However, those days have long gone and so have all the jobs. Therefore, it is time to move on and work towards setting our community up as a Tourist Destination and Transport Hub for the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site, Dee Valley AONB and South Wrexham through Sustainable Tourism Development.

If anyone is wondering how to accomplish this, simply start working with the PKC Group and we will show you the way.

Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2017 for WAG

Table 1: Top ten paid attractions 2017

Name	Region**	Category**	Owner**	No. of visits 2016	No. of visits 2017	% change	£ Adult
1 LC Waterpark & Leisure Complex	SW	THEME	PO	784,522	796,149	+1.5%	£7.00
2 Folly Farm	SW	FARM	PO	490,000	480,000	-2.0%	£14.00
3 Cardiff Castle	SE	HP	LA	301,349	319,131	+5.9%	£13.00
4 Bodnant Garden	N	CP	NT	242,898	255,949	+5.4%	£14.60
5 Electric Mountain Visitor Centre	N	SC/T	PO	NP*	250,000	-	£9.00
6 Conwy Castle	N	HP	Cadw	208,887	221,652	+6.1%	£8.95
7 Great Ome Tramway	N	R/T	LA	208,850	205,495	-1.6%	£7.50
8 Caernarfon Castle	N	HP	Cadw	195,151	204,675	+4.9%	£8.95
9 Techniquet	SE	SC/T	PO	190,000	189,000	-0.5%	£8.00
10 Erddig	N	HP	NT	162,911	163,758	+0.5%	£8.80

* NP = not provided

** See appendix for key to abbreviations used

Only 2 paid attractions exceed our current visitor count number in Wales.

Table 2: Top ten free attractions 2017

Name	Region**	Category**	Owner**	No. of visits 2016	No. of visits 2017	% change
1 Wales Millennium Centre1	SE	MAG	PO	1,264,458	1,082,494	-14.6%
2 Snowdon Summit Visitor Centre	N	CP	PO	465,000	654,077	+40.7%
3 St Fagans National Museum of History	SE	MAG	AC - NMW	504,402	553,090	+9.7%
4 National Museum Cardiff	SE	MAG	AC - NMW	509,981	539,550	+5.8%
5 Pembrey Country Park	SW	CP	LA	491,641	470,000	-4.4%
6 Newborough National Nature Reserve	N	WL	NRW	492,259	449,771	-4.5%
7 Pontcysyllte Aqueduct	N	HP	PO	NP*	333,363	-
8 Cardiff Visitor Centre	SE	OTHER	LA	277,712	322,671	+16.2%
9 Gwydir Forest Park	N	WL	NRW	NP*	317,405	-
10 St David's Cathedral	SW	HP	PO	271,700	287,000	+5.7%

* NP = not provided

** See appendix for key to abbreviations used

On the free attraction table, we rate as 7th for Wales.

So why is our community doing so badly when there is such vast opportunity, as well as a very high visitor count, we have many other advantages.

Tourist Count at Present

Although the tourist count for our area is exceptional at approximately 400,000 this is only in isolated spots and does nothing for the general local infrastructure or social welfare. The 400,000 visitors are split between the aqueduct at 330,000 and Ty Mawr Country Park at 70,000.

However, the tourist count in the leading retail sector of the community, Cefn Mawr village centre is virtually nil. Please see our publication on this which puts the whole picture across very simply:

[Easter Bank Holiday Weekend 2019](#)

It is notable that the survey conducted for Easter Bank Holiday Weekend was completed during the same year as the celebrations of 10 years UNESCO Inscription, for which our community has seen no benefit.

Climate Change

A lot of noise and hot air is made about climate change, but the proposals that we make for Sustainable Tourism Development directly address this. Simply by getting people visiting our area to stay longer exploring a wider area rather than the current trend of short stay (60mins) and then driving off, will directly reduce the amount of CO₂ production from their vehicles.

In an area with such a high visitor count, this can represent a considerable contribution to carbon footprint reduction, whilst boosting our local economy. This therefore is a win-win situation and we would welcome other bodies working with us on this.

The key to this is large capacity parking in a central location, and this can be amply provided for at the WBG, [Windborne Gate parking area](#).

There are many other areas we can improve on in our community to move to a more sustainable way of living while again reducing our CO₂ output, which will form the basis of another document, but for now this is a “Wider Social & Economic Study” of present circumstances.

AONB & Dark Skies

A part of the Cefn (Llangollen Rural) lies within the Dee Valley AONB and the remaining part of our community lies adjacent. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB has a Dark Skies programme to reduce the light pollution across North Wales in coordination with Snowdonia National Park.

This is a very good initiative that has many benefits for our community as a whole and with the correct planning we should be able to make significant contribution towards such whilst also reducing our operating costs, environmental and carbon footprint.

Unfortunately, at present the street lighting (and private lighting) needs work to accomplish this, however with time we can make improvements whilst providing our local community with better lighting at the ground level where it is needed.

OPL

Our Picturesque Landscape is a project that centres on the landscape of the Dee Valley and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site. It takes as its theme the inspirational journeys that have and continue to be a feature of the area, which is cut by the canal, Telford's A5 and the River Dee. Visitors have drawn inspiration from this beautiful valley in art and poetry since the 18th century and today it continues to draw tourists in search of the sublime.

The PKC Group seeks to work with both the AONB and the OPL team to realise these goals in our community. The current sight of large amounts of palisade security fencing left over from the former Monsanto works giving the impression of a prison camp next to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct is without doubt another major factor in detracting visitors to our community.

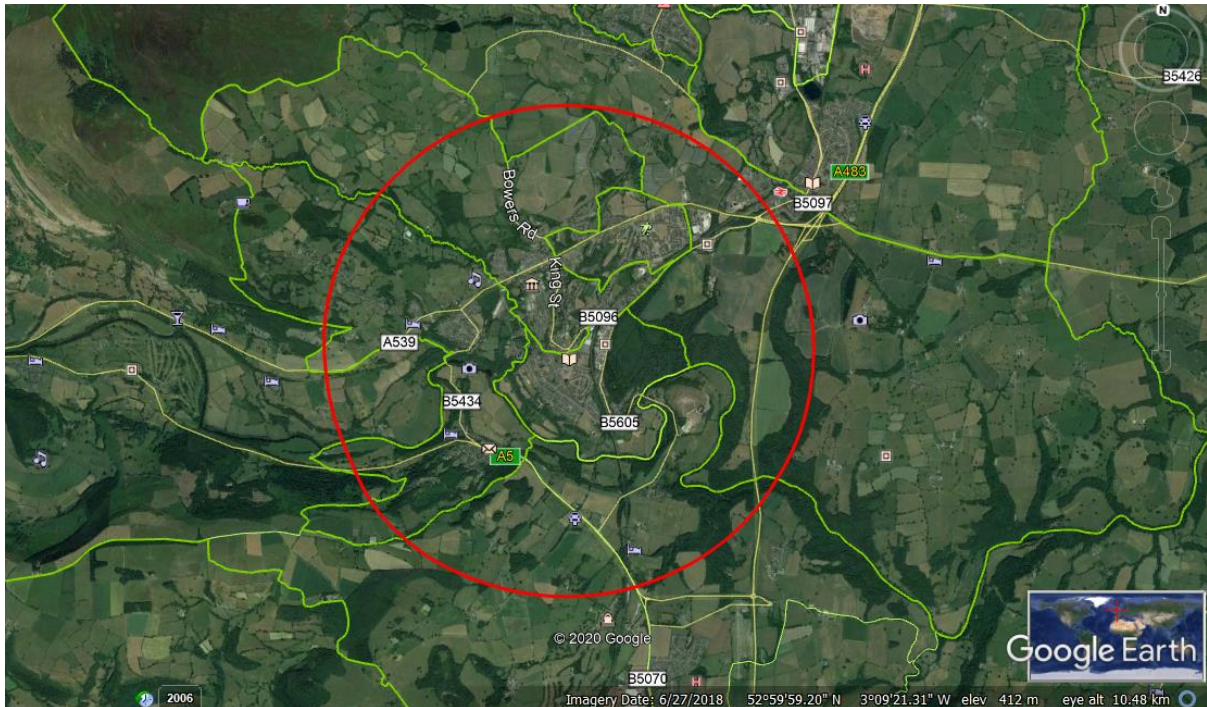


The fencing is not attractive and a lot of it is totally unnecessary. Much can now be removed and reused to secure the areas that need to be secured, which would drastically improve the whole area and enable the central parking that is needed.

The new nickname for this area is "Stalag 17" after the film about a prison camp in the second world war, which it now resembles in 2020 right next to the so called Jewel in the Crown (the aqueduct) of the Pontcysyllte World heritage Site.

So come on lets get real and do something about this.

Divided Community



This 1.5-mile radius circle encompasses all the villages at the central section, or former industrial heart land of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. The circle is centred on Cefn Square at the front of the Ebenezer and there are approximately 10,000 people living in this area, i.e. more than Llangollen and Chirk combined as the Census records show. Unfortunately, in this same area the population is split on about a 25/27% ratio between LRC, Llangollen Rural and CCC, Cefn Community councils. This division does not lead to harmonious relations or development of our community. LRC is a bit of a mystery name as Llangollen is obviously not even in the picture and LRC comes under WCBC for administration.

Further divisions are and have been, those that worked for Monsanto and those that did not. Those that sought the plant closed and those that defended it. The people that live at the top of Cefn and TOCRA, Top of Cefn Residents Association and those that live in Lower Cefn and are represented by the CRNCA. Then there are those that live in the much better area, Llangollen Rural as opposed to the people living in Cefn Mawr, and of course there is always Plas Madoc which is a large council estate created in the early 1970's. The villages are still territorial even in this small area.

Then there are the football teams and all the other minor social divisions and that is why the PKC Group looks at the whole area and classifies it as one, as this is the best way for us to work, together.

One very recent and bad division is that created by UNESCO Inscription. The aqueduct was always in Cefn Mawr as old photography and post cards show and Cefn Mawr was where the author we came teenagers in the early 1970's to see the salmon run. However following UNESCO Inscription and WHS status the aqueduct was "moved" to Trevor Basin and Cefn Mawr and other villages have been forgotten.

Advantages of the Cefn

OPPORTUNITY: We have good opportunity on our doorstep that we are not linking into. If there are any doubts about this please just see our document, [Easter Bank Holiday Weekend 2019](#).

1. There are over 400,000 visitors to the aqueduct and Ty Mawr Country Park at present.
2. This is forecast to rise to 500,000 in the next few years as the aqueduct is now featuring on many national and international coach tour operator itineraries.
3. The aqueduct currently rates as the seventh most popular free attraction in Wales according to WAG.
4. And there are only 2 paid attractions that attract more visitor numbers than our area in the whole of Wales.
5. There are 15M vehicles passing our community on the A5, A539 & A483 annually going by DfT statistics. Llangollen does very well on just 2 of these roads with a mere 5M vehicles.
6. The Llangollen Canal is the busiest stretch of inland waterway in the UK according to CRT.
7. The Llangollen Canal has in excess of 15,000 boat movements annually, again recorded by CRT.
8. Offa's Dyke is one of the most well-trodden long-distance footpaths in the UK, as reported by National Trails.
9. Sutrans Cycle Routes are here, and a new route is planned from Rhyl to Oswestry.
10. A good start was made with the THI scheme that our community has invested (US) an estimated £2M into, and although currently stalled, can be revived to bring about economic regeneration through Sustainable Tourism Development.
11. We have a quite unique set of shops (something to be proud of) that are not dominated by retail chains and this gives us great flexibility and adaptability in our retail offer if opportunity is increased through Sustainable Tourism Development.
12. A good start was made with the [Cefn Heritage Trail that links Ty Mawr Country Park to the aqueduct via our community](#) but has been left to fall into disrepair. This can be put back to good use encouraging more people to come into our community.
13. A host of historical pubs, many relating to the Aqueduct and the Viaduct, for an example see the [Holly Bush Inn History](#) page for an insight of this.
14. Cefn Mawr village centre is still the leading retail centre for the area and is still quite attractive, but the paint will eventually peel if we don't work at this.
15. We have the Cefn Community Museum in the basement of the GEH.
16. We have the Clwyd Family History Society.
17. Cefn Druids Football Club, the oldest football club in Wales at the new Rock Stadium.
18. Plas Madoc Leisure Centre, still a leading sports facility in NE Wales.
19. The Ebenezer which could be reopened as an Arts and Visitor Centre for the Cefn & Cefn Mawr if WCBC etc will work with the community.
20. The Cartographic Museum in the Holly Bush Inn will be opened if we get the footfall up.

21. The Phase 2 Build of the HBI, Holly Bush Inn for 2 recording studios will be completed if we can bring about economic regeneration in our community.
22. We have a very important and interesting industrial history that has largely been forgotten and can be realised if we choose to. If there are any doubts about this please just see [Plas Kynaston Iron Foundry](#) for some of the works.
23. The Chester to Shrewsbury railway line runs through the middle of our community and service frequency will increase. Furthermore, and the forecast traffic increase on the line over the next 20 years is phenomenal, as forecast by Network Rail.
24. The average rail passenger count is rising by 5% annually.
25. Rail will be the mass transport system of the future.
26. Electric Trains will become more common without the need for overhead cabling. They will operate on a similar basis to electric cars, which they are more suited for than cars and can carry a far larger battery capacity.
27. Our railway line connects to major cities and international airports, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, and London. Unfortunately, the Llangollen stream railway attraction cannot now be re-instated, from Llangollen to Ruabon station, but a large portion of the route could be turned into a walking/cycling route.
28. If the Cefn & Cefn Mawr, the largest community in the Pontcysyllte WHS gets its new medical centre as it deserves at the ex-Co Op supermarket site then a new railway station next to Tesco will serve this very well.

In short if we cannot turn our community around through Sustainable Tourism Development from post industrial depression given the above list, the whole concept of Sustainable Tourism Development is about as useless as other forms of STD!

Note on a [New Railway Station for the Cefn & Cefn Mawr](#), even if this seems outlandish with a price tag of around 8 to 12M (for a very good one) it is not when considering the other options. A railway station adjacent to Tesco in Cefn Mawr would be at the heart of a community as well as the WHS, unlike the other two, Ruabon and Chirk which are leftovers from bygone ages. Ruabon station is where it is because of the former Ruabon Barmouth line closed under the Beeching Cuts in the 1960's. Chirk is where it is as a result of the Glyn Ceiriog Slate mines, the last of which closed in the 1950's.

Cost, the station would provide alleviation for the A483 and the cost is marginal in comparison to the gross expenditure that will be necessary to resolve the bottleneck situation along the A483/A5 confluence between Mile End Roundabout at Oswestry and Ruabon. Turning this section of road into a dual carriageway will cost far more than the mere 8 to 12M for a new railway station at Cefn Mawr where it is needed, and we believe would be very well frequented.

Cefn Mawr Post Office



The Post Office in Cefn Mawr at the Crane has been there for over 100 years but is closing in due to continued downturn in business from both the postal service and the lack of traffic thoroughfare.

Most of the traffic now driving through the Cefn has switched from the B5096 running past the Post Office at the Crane to the new rat run along the Tesco bypass of Cefn Mawr causing the black spot on Queens Street and Hill Street which are unclassified roads.

Please see [Hill & Queens Street Cefn Mawr 2020](#)

Therefore, not only has our one of our longest standing facilities been forced into closure by the “developments” over the past ten years, a major road safety issue has also been created.

Only a short while ago, when UNESCO Inscription was being granted to the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site Cefn Mawr Post Office was a thriving community centre, and the busiest shop in Cefn Mawr.

How far it has fallen in ten years is extremely sad to see and both Dave & Janine Taylor have our sympathies who have been running the Post office for the past 20 years but soon will no longer do so.

Anyone who says our communities economy is OK and not in recession is just not paying attention and needs to have a good look around.

Appendix 1 UK Pubs

UK pub sector expands for first time in 10 years



Britain's pubs have seemed to be in state of terminal decline over the last decade, with about 700 shutting every year.

However, official figures suggest the sector may be turning a corner.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there was a net gain of 320 pubs in the year to March - the first increase since 2009.

Marketing software firm Stampede, which obtained the figures, said pubs were trying to broaden their appeal.

Since 2010, almost 6,000 pubs have been lost from Britain as consumers rein in their spending and young people drink less.

Pubs have also faced a "triple whammy" of high beer duty, rising business rates and VAT, according to industry group the Campaign for Real Ale.

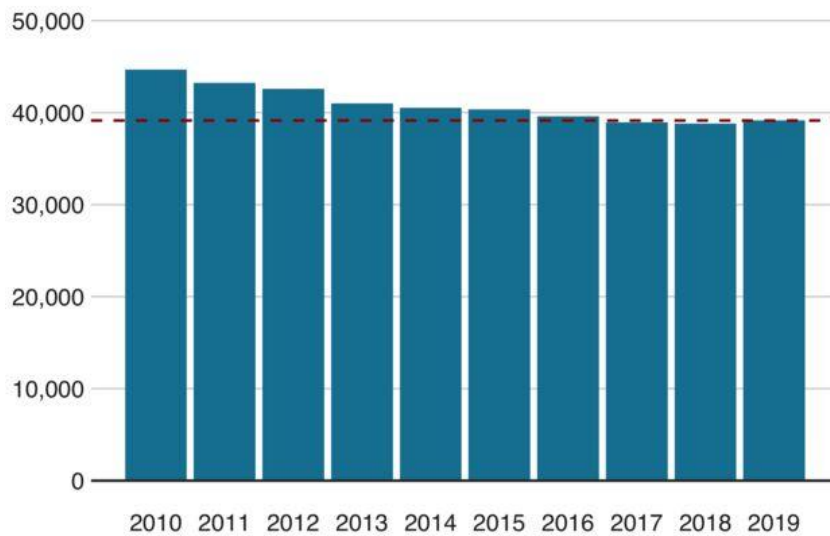
- **Wetherspoon pub chain 'to create 10,000 jobs'**
- **Greene King pub giant snapped up by Hong Kong firm**

The ONS figures, which are the most recent available, show the UK ended March 2019 with 39,135 pubs - a slight net increase on the same month a year earlier.

Most of the new openings were in England, and there was a small net gain in Northern Ireland. Scotland and Wales continued to see declines.

New pubs opening for the first time since 2010

Total number of pubs in the UK



Source: Office for National Statistics. Note: 2019 data updated to March

BBC

On Tuesday, British pub chain Wetherspoon said it planned to add 10,000 jobs in the UK and Ireland over the next four years by opening new pubs and hotels and enlarging existing ones.

A spokesman for the chain welcomed the new figures, adding: "Pubs play an important role in their respective communities. We hope that this is a trend that will continue."

Stampede, which predicts the sector will add almost 9,000 jobs next year, credited the growth to a change in pubs' attitudes.

It said many operators realised they could no longer rely on the "same old regulars", and were instead improving their menus, hosting events and offering accommodation.

"The reduction of pubs over the last decade has been heart-breaking, following devastating changes to business taxes and alcohol duties, but I hope these figures signpost a reversal of fortunes," said boss Patrick Clover.

The British Beer & Pub Association said it was "cautiously optimistic" about the figures which differ from its own estimations of pub numbers. The trade group believes closures still outnumber openings but said the rate of decline had slowed.

"Our pubs continue to be under severe pressure to stay open. Closures have been driven by increasing and considerable cost pressures from a range of sources; particularly high beer duty, unfair business rates and VAT. This is deeply concerning because pubs are a great British institution and are often the social hub of their local community," a spokesperson from the BBPA told the BBC.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-50743853>

Please note this trend is not happening in the Cefn where all pubs struggle including our only hotel, the Queens at the centre of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. This is wrong.

Appendix 2 UK Business rates

UK's business rates system 'broken' says Treasury committee

MPs tell government to urgently review tax it claims is high and unfair on physical stores. MPs also highlighted the complexity of business rate relief and how the system punished investment.

The business rates system is broken and the government must undertake an urgent review to find alternatives, an influential committee of MPs has said.

The Treasury committee said business rates in England and Wales were high, complex and placed an unfair burden on bricks-and-mortar shops and manufacturers compared with businesses that operate online.

The cross-party group of MPs released their unanimous report [as the economy teeters on the edge of recession, retailers and factory owners cut jobs and high street stores close.](#)

The MPs highlighted a complicated web of business rate reliefs and a system that punished investment. The committee also criticised a backlog of 16,000 appeals against business rate decisions and called for the government's valuation office to be properly staffed.

Business rates have risen faster than inflation since 1990 and grown as a share of taxes paid by companies, generating £31bn of income for the government last year, the MPs' report found. The UK has the one of the highest property taxes as a share of output in the developed world, the report said.

The committee called on the government to explain whether this was a deliberate policy and to consider the impact on economic growth. It said the chancellor should launch a review and report on alternatives in the spring.

Alison McGovern, the MP who led the inquiry, said: "The current business rates system is broken. The tax represents an increasing burden on businesses, particularly those with a physical high street presence struggling to remain competitive.

"The government must ensure that business rates align with its aim to boost productivity and do not disincentivise growth. The government must examine such alternatives in time for spring statement 2020.

Retailers and other industries have protested for many years about the burden imposed by business rates. In August more than 50 large retailers, including Marks & Spencer and Harrods, [wrote to the chancellor calling on him to cut business rates to support declining high streets.](#)

The MPs heard that Tesco's business rates bill had almost doubled to £700m in the past 10 years and that the UK accounts for two-thirds of carmaker Vauxhall's property taxes in Europe but just 8% of its floor space.

The National Trust said it received almost 1,000 different bills from local authorities. **Tesco** said a tax of 2% on online sales of physical goods would raise £1.5bn a year – enough to cut business rates by 20% for all retailers.

Business rates charge companies based on the estimated rental value of the property they occupy. **Local authorities, which raise the tax, keep half the amount but the government wants that to increase to 75% next year. That would leave councils relying more heavily on business rates** despite the impact on the local economy.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, said: “Business rates are a significant driver of store closures and job losses, and retailers have been getting a raw deal for too long. We urge political parties to support local shops, local shopworkers and local communities by including these recommendations in their manifestos.”

A Treasury spokesman said: “We concluded a fundamental review of business rates in 2016 and have since introduced reforms and reliefs saving businesses more than £13bn over the next five years. We will respond to the select committee’s report in due course.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/oct/31/uks-business-rates-system-broken-says-treasury-committee>

Please note unless we start working together for the Economic Regeneration of our community our area will become a Ghost Town at the centre of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site immediately next to and surrounding the aqueduct. This will lead to further social unrest as the disparity becomes ever more apparent between visitor affluence and local poverty. This will in turn lead to further anti-social behaviour which will detract from and add further question to the appropriateness of UNESCO inscription and WHS Status.

We support UNESCO Inscription and WHS Status but unless an improvement is made, we can also understand what will happen and why and ask everyone else to consider this.

Appendix 3 Letters

David R Taylor
Cefn Mawr Post Office
Crane Street, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham
LL143LN

To whom it may concern

17th January 2020

I write regarding some serious issues which may affected the economic viability and sustainability of our village. A number of years ago it was deemed by Wrexham County Council that due to the history of our village it would attain Conservation and Heritage status.

Since then, over the past three years, after the previous five years 2012-2017 of some investment from Lottery Funding, a degradation of investment and services. Funding that went into the Ebenezer Chapel, wasted due to ineffective and appropriate planning of what to do with the building, signage decaying and falling apart, the cleanliness of the area and cleanliness of in particular land owed by Wrexham Council looking messy and unkept.

In particular the complete lack of planning on how Cefn Mawr, the village that built the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (a world heritage site) through its Iron Works and Stone Work, has been left out in the cold instead of seeing how the closest economic/ shopping area can be integrated into the planning of the historic area.

Secondly, due to the bus routes being changed to the outskirts of the village due to the building of Tesco's in the local area, we have seen a huge lack of footfall within the local shops. Again there is no connectivity from the Tesco's site into the centre of the village thus cutting the village shops off from any potential economic viability/ sustainability.

Over the past 3 years I am ashamed of the lack of any action taking place wiping away any good that was previously undertaken and look forward to the next Council elections when action can be taken to ensure the village can be appropriately represented.

What is needed is some connectivity between the World Heritage Site and the village of Cefn Mawr, this can be best achieved by linking the areas via the old Railway Road which runs from the village through the old Monsanto site and by highlighting the many old photos and map as well as highlighting the key Industrialists that brought economic prosperity to the area, this can be done in the village and along the route, thus encouraging tourism movement through the area and increasing their stay and spending.

Yours sincerely
D.R Taylor

All Commercial Property Owners
Crane Street & Well Street
Cefn Mawr
Pontcysyllte WHS Corridor
Wrexham

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you on the belief you may like to join us. I, my family and company own the Holly Bush Inn at the centre of our community and have invested a lot of money into this building to help keep our community alive. Part of the incentive to do so was through the THI scheme which many of us have joined in with and what this letter is essentially about.

I must admit that I feel partly responsible for what has happened. In 2012 we decided to take on the Holly Bush Inn to save Cefn Mawr's Oldest pub and try to offset the impact of the new Tesco Store would have on our traditional shopping centre, Crane Street and Well Street. I.E. both myself and my family invested in our community to keep it alive. At that point in time the THI still had £1M pounds of HLF monies and the Ebenezer was still opening a couple of days a week. However, WCBC and the THI were literally having problems giving away the funding they had as it was to be spent on commercial / retail property (i.e. shop fronts etc) and with the coming of Tesco there were not that many takers!

This is quite understandable, and we knew this. We were also aware of the financial undertaking we were going to have to make with the Holly Bush Inn and stated that if we did take the building on, as we had to buy it as well, we would need to link the village centre to the aqueduct, to bring meaningful numbers of people into our village centre. The need was verbally agreed with WCBC and the THI, however nothing was ever put in writing saying so, but then we do tend to take people at their word. We also gave ours that we would continue the struggle and this letter proves we do keep our word.

THE VALUE OF OUR PROPERTIES: As the commercial centre for our area the value of our properties is dependant on the business turnover which is dependant on the footfall on our streets. Furthermore, with the new mixed-use development at the Ruabon roundabout we are about to take yet another economic hit to our retail sector which again will have a negative impact on the value of our property in Cefn Mawr, including Tesco!

TOTAL LOCAL INVESTMENT IN THI SCHEME: We believe that HLF supplied WCBC with £3.5M of which £1.5M was spent on the Ebenezer as the lead regeneration work for our community. This then left £2M for individual commercial property. I am aware of the 80% grant funding that WCBC are so keen on quoting, however in reality we estimate at best this would be approximately 50% assuming prior ownership of the building. In our case we had to buy the building as well and the THI grant funding now stands at around 30% of total monies spent on the pub.

So if we assume an average of 50% grant funding for total investment into the retail sector of our community by the THI, we the local people have match funded this with the other 50%. Therefore, collectively between us we have invested £2M into the refurbishment of our high street in good faith with WCBC through the THI Scheme. Unfortunately, WCBC seem to have forgotten this and are writing off the "*Economic Regeneration*" of our retail sector and all the investment made. The proposed sale of the "*Lead Regeneration Work*", the Ebenezer (Glass House) at auction in April was a prime example of this, and unfortunately their continued reluctance to work with us is also making a very clear statement.

NEGATIVE EQUITY: If the economy of our community continues to decline as it has done for the last 20 years coupled with the next two big hits:

- The mixed-use development at the Ruabon roundabout and;
- The eventual reintroduction of commercial rates

Our property and business values will decline further, and we will be in a negative equity situation, if not so already. Obviously, you will know your own circumstances better and I hope you fair better, but if you would like to do better and avoid this and the subsequent costs, please join us.

Collapse of the Cefn Economy and further financial implication: If our economy fails which is a very real possibility, given the trend over the past 20 years and especially so since 2009 and the closure of our only two main employers, what will we do with our property? We will have to convert to residential if nothing else at further expenditure, so again please join us to avoid this additional cost burden.

OPPORTUNITY: We have good opportunity on our doorstep that we are not linking into. If there are any doubts about this please just see our document, [Easter Bank Holiday Weekend 2019](#).

1. There are over 400,000 visitors to the aqueduct and Ty Mawr Country Park at present.
2. This is forecast to rise to 500,000 in the next few years as the aqueduct is now featuring on many national and international coach tour operator itineraries.
3. The aqueduct currently rates as the seventh most popular free attraction in Wales according to WAG.
4. And there are only 2 paid attractions that attract more visitor numbers than our area in the whole of Wales.
5. There are 15M vehicles passing our community on the A5, A539 & A483 annually going by DfT statistics. Llangollen does very well on just 2 of these roads with a mere 5M vehicles.
6. The Llangollen Canal is the busiest stretch of inland waterway in the UK according to CRT.
7. The Llangollen Canal has in excess of 15,000 boat movements annually, again recorded by CRT.
8. Offa's Dyke is one of the most well-trodden long-distance footpaths in the UK, as reported by National Trails.
9. Sutrans Cycle Routes are here, and a new route is planned from Rhyl to Oswestry.
10. A good start was made with the THI scheme that our community has invested (US) an estimated £2M into, and although currently stalled, can be revived to bring about economic regeneration through Sustainable Tourism Development.
11. We have a quite unique set of shops (something to be proud of really) that are not dominated by retail chains and this gives us great flexibility in our retail offer as opportunity is increased.
12. A good start was made with the Cefn Heritage Trail that links Ty Mawr Country Park to the aqueduct via our community but has been left out and has fallen into disrepair. This can be put back to good use encouraging more people to come into our community.
13. Cefn Mawr village centre is still the leading retail centre for the area and is still quite attractive, but the paint will eventually peel if we don't work at this.
14. We have the Cefn Community Museum in the basement of the GEH.
15. We have the Clwyd Family History Society.
16. Cefn Druids Football Ground, the Rock.
17. Plas Madoc Leisure Centre, still a leading sports facility in NE Wales.
18. The Ebenezer can be reopened as an Arts and Visitor Centre for the Cefn & Cefn Mawr if WCBC etc will work with us.
19. The Cartographic Museum in the Holly Bush Inn will be opened if we can get the footfall up.
20. The Phase 2 Build of the HBI for 2 recording studios will be completed if we can bring about economic regeneration in our community through Sustainable Tourism Development.
21. We have a very important and interesting industrial history that has largely been forgotten and can be realised if we choose to. If there are any doubts about this please just see [Plas Kynaston Iron Foundry](#) for some of the works completed here.
22. The Chester to Shrewsbury railway line runs through the middle of our community and service frequency is about to double. Furthermore, the forecast traffic increase on this line over the next 20 years is phenomenal by Network Rail.
23. Our railway line connects to major cities and international airports, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, and London. Where does the Llangollen railway line go, Corwen!

In summary our community is at a juncture of three major transport systems, road, rail and marine with exceptionally high visitor counts, some of the best in Wales but, where are we?

Our (PKCG) Solution: We simply propose the Economic Regeneration of our community through Sustainable Tourism Development and given the opportunity we are surrounded with this is perfectly feasible. This is why we have offered to buy the Ebenezer off WCBC, but only if they will work with us. I / we cannot get people to come up the hill into our village on the offer of a couple of pints in the Holly Bush Inn, that will not work. But if we can secure the Ebenezer from WCBC (and stop it from becoming another HMO) and reopen it as an Arts & Visitor Centre as we have been publishing on the back page of the Community News etc. we can link this into the high visitor counts at both Ty Mawr Country Park and the aqueduct via the Cefn Heritage Trail etc.

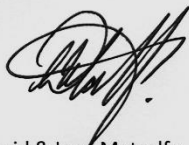
By setting up the WBG as the primary parking lot for the aqueduct as we have been proposing since 2012, this will give a central parking lot that we can connect to. From the middle of this parking lot it is 500mts to the aqueduct and 500mts to the centre of our village, i.e. the main parking for the aqueduct will then be in the middle rather than all over at the Trevor Basin, which is twice as far to walk. Hence, we currently never see anyone! We can link into this with a Cable Car System (or inclined railway) operating over the ex-Monsanto Site which actually works to our advantage if approached from the right angle. Such a system linked to the Ebenezer as an Arts & Visitor Centre for the Cefn & Cefn Mawr and a couple of Zip Wires etc. can then deliver approximately 20% of the expected foot fall at the aqueduct into our village centre if managed correctly. This represents 100,000 people, which is a significant increase in foot fall over the present nil or next to. The turnover from the CC & ZW systems will also cover the operating costs of the Ebenezer which will be used to promote the whole area and all business.

Once the significant CAPEX loans are repaid surplus funds will then be directed to other infrastructure investment, such as the full reinstatement of the Plas Kynaston Canal and what ever we can do to get a Railway Station next to Tesco. Our cumulative objective is to turn our community around from post-industrial depression to that of a Tourist Destination and Transport Hub for the Dee Valley, Pontcysyllte WHS and South Wrexham. This is what we call Sustainable Tourism Development and fully realise the implications and benefits of doing so.

Therefore, again we ask you to join us to help ensure the value our property (all of us) which is directly linked to the economic prosperity of our community. The choice of myself here is simple, if I stand by and watch our community go down the drain, which is where it is currently heading, our pub the Holly Bush Inn at the centre of it, will follow.

We are holding our next meeting on Monday the 1st July at 1900 in the Holly Bush Inn, please come.

Yours Sincerely,



David & Iona Metcalfe,
Fron House,
Canal Side,
Froncysyllte,
LL20 7RB,

Tel: 01691 239 644

Tel: 07796 260 666 & 07515 915 020

www.pkcgroup.wales

www.fronhouse.co.uk

Please note the positive response shown by our community to this letter in July 2019, it is on our website www.pkcgroup.wales

Appendix 4 The Slow Demise Since UNESCO Inscription



The Monsanto Chemical Works announced closure as the aqueduct received UNESCO Inscription. The site is now a large vacant brownfield site acting as a barrier between Cefn Mawr village centre and the canal and aqueduct. This site is now having a very negative effect on our community and is an eye saw at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS and immediately next to the Dee Valley AONB?



The former Air Products plant at Cefn Mawr / Acrefair was the second largest employer until 2010 when closure was announced. The plant closed shortly after and demolition followed, with the site being cleared a few years later. The Air products site despite having planning permission for 250 housing units has remained a vacant brownfield site for over 6 years as of 2020.



Skilled Pressure Vessel work leaving what was the former Air Products plant in the 1970's. Now all that remains is a vacant lot. It should also not be forgotten that other smaller engineering works that relied on the large plats for work have also closed down. One example is Reeds Engineering at the Trevor Basin which is now a car park next to a children's play area, which we consider wrong, as it exposes our young children to car and coach exhaust fumes at the hight of the season when they want to play out.



The former Plough Inn, closed, demolished and houses built on site.



The former Railway Inn closed and converted to housing.



The Old Vaults closed but reopened as a Chinese take away.



The Australian has now (2020) been closed for a number of years.



Flexsys Community Hall and social club 2013



Last orders 2019.



Check out the sustainable future!



The Post Office at the Crane in Cefn Mawr is due to close in 2020.



Disused bus stops in Cefn Mawr, this one at the Crane, once a main terminus complete with public toilet facilities.



The former Exchange and Mart closed and demolished.





Cefn Barbers for 80 years now gone.



Kays Greengrocers long since gone.



Former Florists on Crane Street.



Image 6: Example of key community uses along Crane Street.

The former Job Centre, not required anymore(?), we have the highest unemployment in the WHS.



Former Dentists moved to Ruabon and now housing.



Cefn Mawr Health Centre closed for the last 9 years as of 2020.



The end of another retail premises on Crane Street Cefn Mawr



The slow demise of the former National Westminster Bank, Cefn Mawr at the Crane.



Cefn's oldest bank on Well Street, now housing.



The former HSBC Bank on Well Street in 2019.



The HSBC Bank, your local bank available in most locations worldwide but not in Cefn Mawr or the Cefn anymore. These shots are taken per and post Tesco arrival who opened in 2013/14.

The bank actually closed in 2012 and the hole in the wall cash machine was removed on Christmas Eve, thank you very much HSBC for all your help.



The bright new future for Cefn Mawr in 2011 with the Cefn Mawr Conservation Area, THI, Townscape Heritage Initiative and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site Status.



The same scene in 2019.



Our shop at the Holly Bush Inn on Well Street restored under the THI Scheme in 2014 remains vacant as do other properties in our community.



Rhosymedre Post Office closed since 2010.



The former Co-Op Supermarket closed since the arrival of Tesco.



The main medical centre for the bulk of our community, with 8000 patients on the books, are we in a third world country?



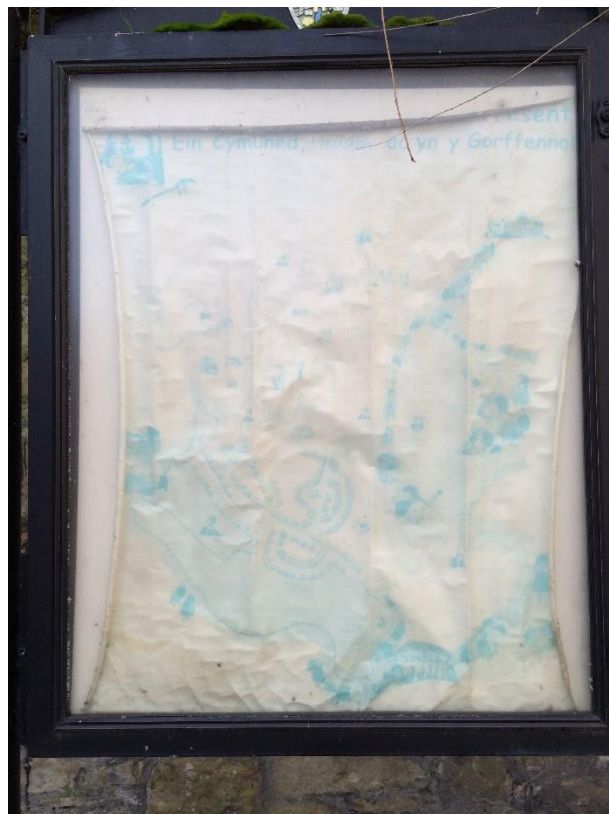
Although the shop is still open selling auto parts Derek's Cycles has ceased in our community. Yet Wales has an Active Travel Policy to promote healthier forms of transport such as cycling?



Although this shop was renovated with THI funding it has never been let and remains unused.



An unused cycle park facility and a map that is unreadable.





The signage for, in and around Cefn Mawr is the poorest in the whole of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. Even on this sign, one of our best for the Cefn Heritage Trail it is filthy and even the dog fouling stickers are fading. Our community simply has the worst signage of all, and it is appalling. Please see [Where is Cefn Mawr 2017](#) for more details of this terrible situation.



Hubbard's Butchers 2012



Home of Hair 2020, same building. Most independent traders have moved on and shops have been taken over by hair and beauty outfits. Crane Street has now been nicknamed Cranium Street after the number of hairdressers on it. Therefore our retail offering is a bit limited at present.



The Wheatseaf belonging to WCBC, now with no tenants and a very suspect future.



Not anymore as of 2020.



Former Acrefair New Agents & Convenience Store closed since 2015.



Acrefair Service Station 2010.



Acrefair car wash 2020.



The [Ebenezer](#) complete with smashed windows 2020 after standing vacant for 8 years, the supposed lead regeneration work of the THI and DVCP, long disbanded. Although this building and the program has been a failure to date the PKC Group are trying to secure the building to reopen it for the community and turn the whole situation around and are asking WCBC the owners of the building to work with them.

Appendix 5 Apathy



The Cefn an Cefn Mawr was the industrial heartland of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site. The Cefn and Llangollen can be likened to Iron Bridge and Coalbrookdale, except that in our case the iron bridge, the aqueduct is in our community and not Llangollen. Our community including all the surrounding villages at the central section of the WHS were borne out of the industrial revolution and bore the brunt of industrial activity for the area. We produced not on the iron for the aqueduct but many more significant pieces of infrastructure around the UK, please see [Plas Kynaston Foundry](#).

This large industrial base taught our people to do as they were told and this is still causing problems today, as that instruction for work has long since ceased. This causes social depression and is characteristic of an industrially depressed community. There are many other factors as well that have a negative contribution to the current outlook for our people, such as the WHS and not being a part of it. Seeing vast number of people coming to our area and leave again without interacting with us and our economy. This will eventually lead to increased social unrest and ASB behaviour spreading down to the tourist community unless we make positive changes for the better. Currently almost 30% of every CCC set of minutes is taken up with ASB activity. This will only get worse if the current disparity continues to grow as it has been since UNESCO Inscription.

The combined effect of this on our community coupled with the closures as shown in this document leads to a loss of hope and a state of increased apathy towards any positive goals. And apathy is one of the largest problems we have to deal with in our community.