

## LEVELLING UP FUNDING?

In 2021 the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site & Dee Valley was promised £15 Million in Levelling Up Funding of which £4.2 Million is allocated to the Trevor Basin Master Plan. However, although we are glad to see the investment in our area, we question if the goals for the funding will be achieved?

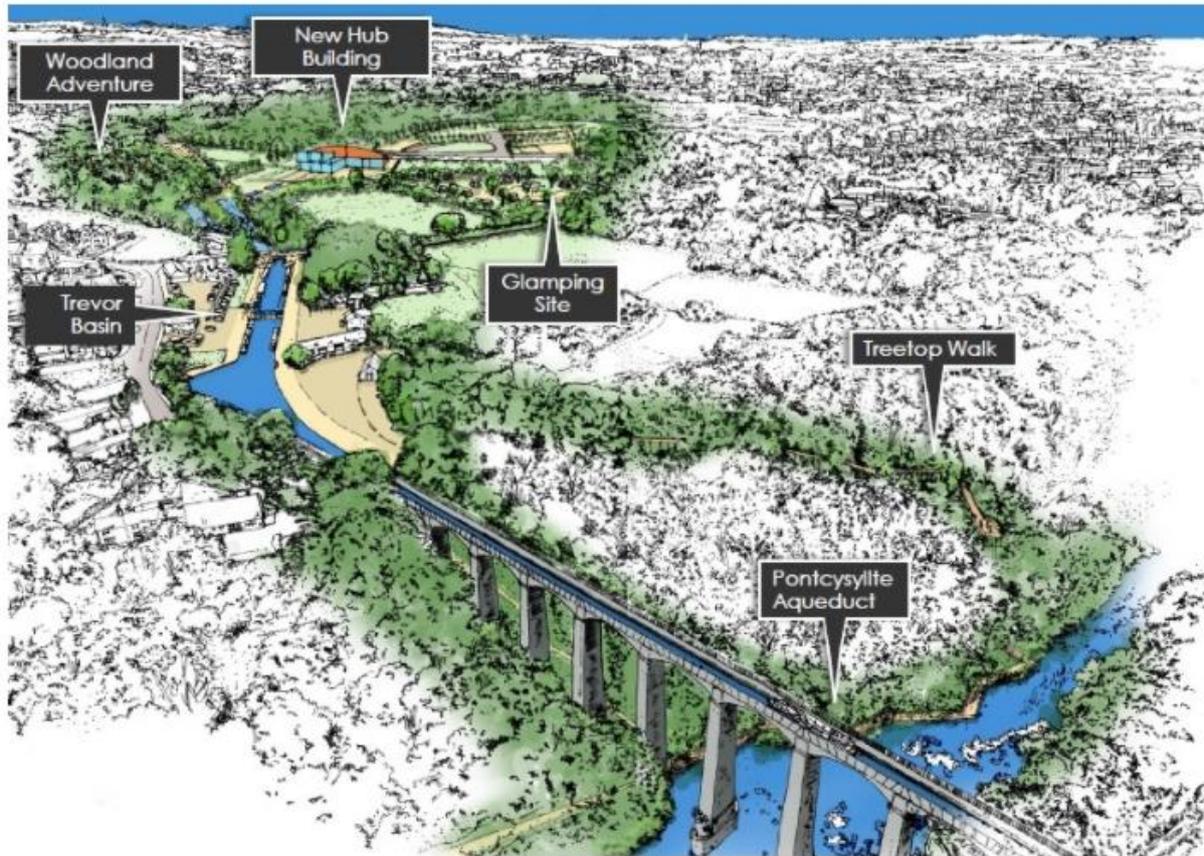
[The UK Government says](#) the money contributes to its "levelling up agenda" by "investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets".

[The projects included in the bid](#) (Pontcysyllte Bid) are of equal benefit to residents and visitors alike. They are strongly supported by their local communities and in many cases have already been the subject of extensive public consultation. We ask is this correct?



The Aqueduct used to be in Cefn Mawr when I was a child in the 1960's and we could see the salmon running upriver from the towpath. However following UNESCO Inscription in 2009 the aqueduct was moved to the Trevor Basin and Cefn Mawr, the former main retail and commercial centre for the area has been forgotten along with all surrounding villages. This is unfortunately evident in all Master Planning for the "Trevor Basin" to date and there have been three master plans so far. The last of which was produced in 2017 and since then a lot has happened.

Therefore, we ask is the Trevor Basin Master Plan right for the central section of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage site or will it further increase the gross economic imbalance our community (including all the villages in the central section of the WHS) must face daily?



The new visitor facilities as planned included “another” new visitor centre, glamping site, woodland adventure, and treetop walkway. WCBC have only just disposed of one, the [Ebenezer](#) earlier this year. Was that preserving Heritage at the centre of the Cefn Mawr Conservation Area? The Ebenezer has been cited by WCBC as being too far from the aqueduct (1km) to be of any use, despite the visitor centre at Stonehenge being three times the distance (3km). Therefore, is a new Visitor Centre really needed or could better use be made of existing facilities saving “X” million?

What is not indicated in the above map is the new retail activity being planned for under the term of “[Potential Mixed-Use Development \(1.45ha\)](#)”. This will be centred on the new Visitor Centre at the Trevor Basin and will no doubt accommodate national retail chains, fast food outlets and at least one licenced premises. This new retail activity will come in unfair competition to, and at the cost of local existing businesses and will again no doubt result in further closures of private concerns in favour of major retail chains and outlets. Is this really working with the local community?

The economy of our community including all villages in the central section of the WHS Corridor have been in decline since UNESCO Inscription in 2009 despite the exceedingly high visitor numbers to the Aqueduct (330K) and Ty Mawr (70K). The current state of our economy can best be shown by the recent closure of one of the best shops in Cefn Mawr, [Nightingale House Hospice Charity Shop on Well Street](#). Therefore do really need a kick in the teeth by outside concerns that are only interested in the profit margin and offer our people minimum wages on zero hour contracts?

The Levelling Up Fund talks of “Infrastructure Improvement”. Well there are some major infrastructure improvements required around our area that are not being addressed that would benefit both local people and visitors alike such as the repair works required on the [B5605](#), our other roads ridden with pot holes and the storm drains below, to alleviate flooding around our community.



The closure of the B5605 for the last 12 months because of high rain fall and collapse has forced traffic diversion to the B5434 which now carries three times the traffic flow before closure of the Newbridge Road. The B5434 is the Bont Bridge Road (Station Road in Trevor and Gate Road in Froncysyllte) remains the main road at present feeding traffic to the aqueduct, which is now amplified by a factor of 3 through the diverted traffic from the B5605!



The Bont Bridge now carrying more traffic than ever was constructed in 1600, 200 years before the much newer aqueduct. It is a Grade 1 Listed Structure that is being destroyed by excessive traffic flow. The Bont Bridge is a mere 500 mts upstream from the aqueduct and this increased traffic flow brings another problem with it. Three times the volume of litter is now being seen from all the usual sources at the very heart of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site.

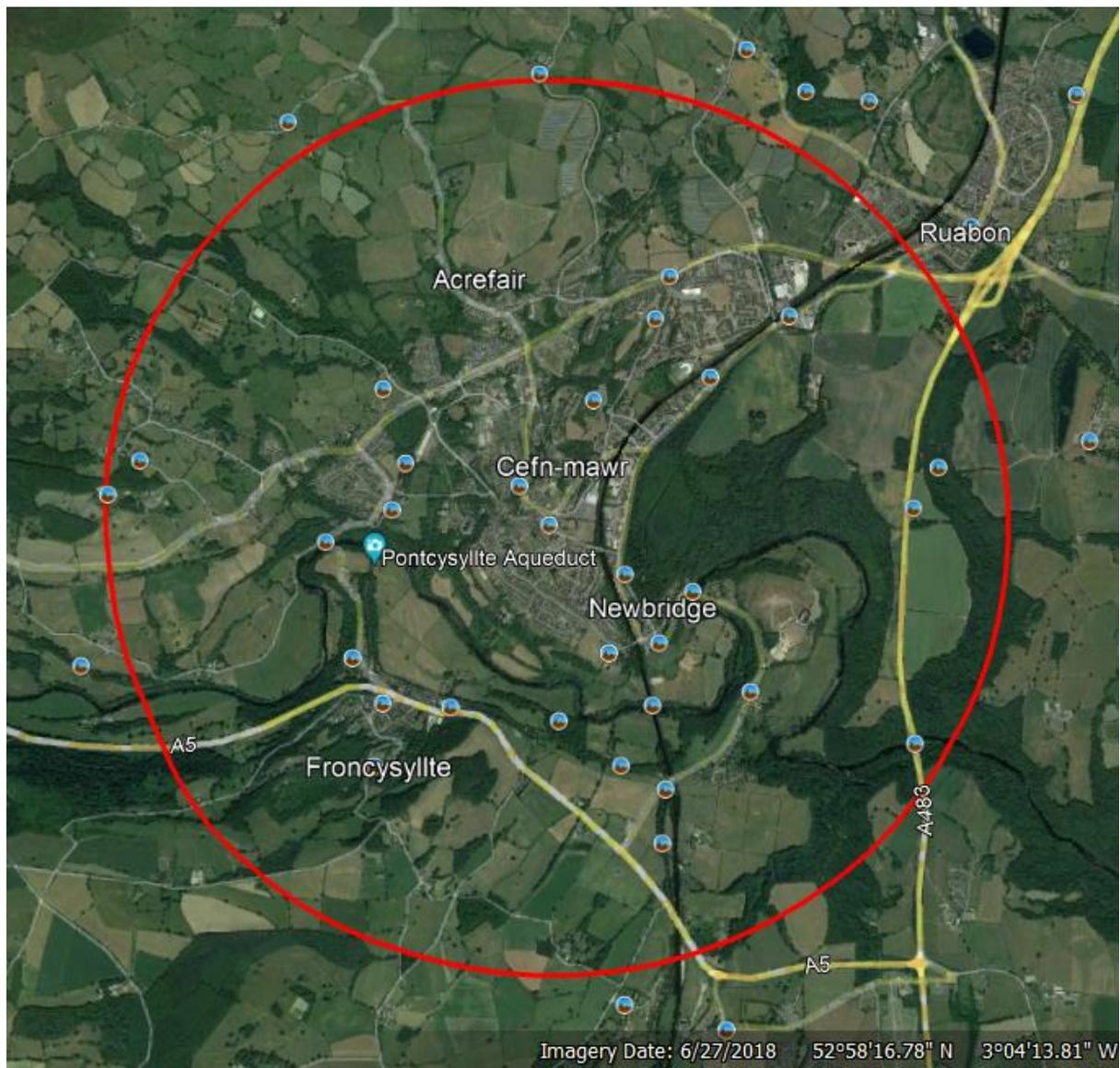


Please see if you can make out who are the main contributors to this collection made in 5 minutes walk along Gate Road. Note the shopping bag in this case was not litter, this was a reused bag from our house! All I can say as a local business man and publican to the area is, that NON of this crap came out of our pub, [The Holly Bush Inn, Cefn Mawr](#).

Unfortunately, the story for the above litter does not end here, the aluminium cans, glass and plastic bottles collected will be put into the correct recycling streams. However, this will require significant amounts of energy from our power stations which will in turn add further CO2 to the atmosphere. As for the Environment side of things, as Greta Thunberg said, there has been a lot of talk but not much action.

So, if you would like some real action that can help (instead of nonsense) save the planet please read and sign out petition for [Duty Free Keg Beer](#).

Our community consisting of all the villages in the central section of the Pontcysyllte WHS when looked at is one of the largest if not the largest community outside Wrexham Town in the county of Wrexham. There are 10,000 people living within a 2-mile radius circle shown below.



However, our community remains locked into Post Industrial Depression with one of the highest unemployment rates in NE Wales since the closure of our only main industrial plants, Air Products and Monsanto over ten years ago. Furthermore, this is due to be compounded even further in the near future with the large housing estates now scheduled for construction on the former [Air Products Site](#) in Acrefair and at the Ruabon Roundabout.

There are many other issues as well that need addressing but perhaps the starkest example of the sad state of affairs for the largest population in the [Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site](#) are the [poor medical facilities for our community](#).



So, we ask is the Levelling Up Funding being spent in the correct manner or will it just serve to increase the disparity between the visitor community and the resident community through continued hardship and unnecessary poverty within our community.

Furthermore, now in 2022, we are looking at big rises in the cost of our utilities and rising inflation. Therefore, we are factoring all this into our planning for the Ebenezer which we will be announcing in the not to distant future.

We the people of the Cefn would like to see better and I, David Metcalfe will be standing for County Councillor at this year's elections to try and bring about such for our people.

Regards,

David Metcalfe,

<https://www.change.org/Duty-Free-Keg-Beer>

BPS Director,  
Holly Bush Inn Proprietor,  
PKC Group Project Manager,  
Cefn Community Councillor & AONB Champion.