

## **Joint Submission by Cwm Gwaun Community Council and County Councillor Bob Kilmister concerning the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park Deposit Plan.**

We reject the plan that has been submitted for our Community. Our reason for doing so is because it fails to offer a sustainable future and our consultations at earlier stages in the process have been largely ignored.

We held a Public Meeting on Monday 30/03/09 starting at 20.00 at the Vestry Jabes Chapel to discuss the proposals. We wrote and invited all persons who were on the electoral roll for AP0 and AP1 divisions, which is 108 houses and 241 people. We asked all persons attending to sign in and we had 33 signatures. This represents 13.7% of the population which clearly shows the interest the community takes when somebody bothers to involve them.

We consider the consultation process undertaken by the National Park to be woeful. The Community Council and I attended a Community Panel meeting in September 2008 where a draft plan was presented by consultants. We gave our response at the time which was:

- 1). Insufficient affordable housing.
- 2). No employment provision.
- 3). Land at Bryn Deri Llanychaer not included in the settlement plan.
- 4). Open space land in Pontfaen makes no sense.

Only item 3 was given a formal response, which in our view makes no sense. Other maps included within the plan have breaks in the development but in Llanychaer that is not possible. The National Park although informed about the Public Meeting did not send a representative.

The plans were outlined at the Public Meeting by County Councillor Bob Kilmister. He outlined the reasons for the plan, the process and then went through the maps C16 for Llanychaer and C24 for Pontfaen. All those attending were given a copy of the maps, provided by Bob Kilmister. He then asked the public for their comments. He outlined that the Community Council's response and his own would be driven by their views. The principle concern was the lack of affordable housing. Many expressed the view that they did not want or need large developments. Affordable housing could be provided within the community using redundant farm buildings or ruins. One person believed that there were at least 17 ruins, which was three times the number of affordable houses that the Rural Housing Enabler had suggested was required. The population was lower now in this area than it was in 1841. Great concern was expressed about Llanychllwydog School which would come under great pressure unless there was an increase in numbers. Concern was expressed that the maps only included a very small amount of the community. Why was the area of Pontfaen by the bridge not included? A series of votes were taken at the end of the meeting. The results were:

- 1). Do you support the principle of ensuring that land is made available for the provision of affordable housing?

Unanimous Yes

- 2). Do you think the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Parks Deposit Plan will provide the village with a sustainable future for Pontfaen & Llanychaer in its present form?

Unanimous No

- 3). A vote was requested on the numbers of affordable houses required.

At least 5 houses = 20

At Least 10 houses = 10

More than 10 houses = 03

The Community Council and I met on 01/04/09 to consider the comments made at the Public meeting. Bob Kilmister was requested to draw up a formal response which was to be agreed by the Chair. This is our formal response:

- 1). We believe that at least 5 affordable properties need to be built in this area. We do not believe a single site is available but that there are many ruins and redundant farm buildings which could be designated as affordable homes. The present National Park policy on these buildings is in our view not sustainable or sensible.
- 2). We are very concerned about the Welsh language Policy and do not feel that the National Parks plan meets the requirements necessary. The Gwaun Community Council area is predominately Welsh speaking. The school Llanychllwydog is essential to maintaining this in the future. This school presently has 26 pupils and this is extremely unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. If the school is to survive it must attract new pupils which means new properties for young families are essential. We have outlined how this could be achieved without changing the nature of this area. Failure to address this issue in the new local plan will undoubtedly see the school close and the language decline.
- 3). We are very concerned about the settlement area boundaries. Only a very small amount of the community has been acknowledged and the rest allocated rural status. Bryn Deri and other areas in Pontfaen should have been included as there are sufficient properties to map. This has been done in other communities, why not ours? The affect of this is that development of single affordable units in rural areas would have to be granted on an exceptional basis. Our belief is that the Parks attitude to exceptional development in the past and now is to oppose any development. The population is now lower than in 1841 and cannot reduce any further if we are to remain sustainable. We believe that individuals who propose suitable sites for affordable homes should be allowed permission. This may be on land they already own with their children benefiting. Concern about future sales we believe could be overcome by stipulating that any properties built in this manner have to be for rent only.
- 4). We support the Open Space provision in Llanychaer.
- 5). We think that the National Park should have considered parking arrangements for the circular walk recently completed by Llais Llanychaer with National Park support. We believe land could be identified for this use in the area close to the river opposite the Lodge and have submitted two possible sites on the attached map. The land owners have not been contacted about these proposals.
- 6). We cannot understand the open space marked on the map at Pontfaen. It appears to be a very small amount of a bank close to the Baptismal area. We could understand the whole of this area being designated for historical reasons but not the area you show.

In conclusion we are very concerned about this local plan and its failure to address the sustainability of our unique area. Whilst many of these issues would not affect other areas within the National Park the Cwm Gwaun community is under great threat. It is a culturally unique area. We believe that your plans consign us to museum status for tourists to look at. We have clearly shown that the residents agree with our views. Indeed as elected representatives we have actively sought their opinions and suggestions. We hope that a proper meaningful dialogue could take place to find solutions but so far that has been missing. The National Park has taken the view that they know best and have not consulted the community in a suitable manner. The unanimous rejection of the plans by the community and its representatives show how out of touch the National Park appears to those that live within this area.

**Bob Kilmister**  
**County Councillor Dinas Cross Ward**

**Councillor S.E. Evans**  
**Chair Cwm Gwaun Community Council**  
**On behalf of Cwm Gwaun CC.**