**Report for Abermule Community Council Meeting 3rd February 2016**

**From : County Councillor Wynne Jones. Elected Member Dolforwyn Ward**

1. **Powys County Council budget update.**
* Fight is still ongoing to try and get WG to provide additional financial support to the rural authorities most affected by the settlement.
* Politically it would seem that we have WG in some difficulty with getting their budget through the Senedd.
* Understand that some form of a Rural Grant may be forthcoming and that it may we worth £1.993m to Powys CC. Problem is the timing, we have to crack on with the budget process as that is part of a legal and democratic process, and Council Tax has to be set by 9th March.
* As this stands I shall be taking two budgets to Cabinet for agreement on 9th February and we shall just have to see how we go from there.
* Without any additional funding the budget is going to be very difficult, to try and achieve the additional funding for education and Dom Care and at same time ‘back off; the savings I outlined to you last meeting ( Post 16 charging, 4 weekly residual collections & further cuts in bus services.
* An additional budget pressure has arrived in last month by way of the obligation under the Welsh Language Act, which from initial estimates in going to cost PCC at least £150k per year and maybe more.
* A further budget pressure has also arrived with the announcement of the 2016 rate for the Living Wage, which is being increased from 7.85 per hour to 8.25per hour. This will cost PCC £300k per on direct employees but significantly more indirectly.
* At present it looks as if Council Tax will increase by 4.25% in Powys, which looks like it is about average for Wales. You also have to consider that 0.5% of our Council Tax every year is to pay back the cost of fighting the Windfarm development proposals (initial cost was met from PCC reserves) and also an additional 0.3% to additional funding for the Fire Service. So Powys CC budget actually only benefits from a 3.45% CT increase.
* Not many residents understand that the Fire Service is funded by and through Powys County Council and the other 5 constituent County Councils. Currently PCC receives £5.4 from WG for M & WW F& RS, but the Fire Service Levy is £6.4million for 16/17, meaning that Powys CC has to fund over £1.2m.
1. **Abermule Industrial Estate**
* In the Autumn I reported that at last we were seeing some progress on the Industrial/Commercial Park and I mentioned that this looked like it was going to now become a joint venture between PCC and W Government.
* In the last couple of months progress has been positive and at present plans for the site are being drawn up and funding is being allocated in order to facilitate build.
* Some legal work and some detailed negotiations to be sorted which will take some weeks, and there is a good deal of confidentiality around some of the details, and I will share with Community Council what I can verbally in the meeting.
1. **Planning.**
* Notification has been sent to Town & Community Councils with regards the proposed changes on how PCC will consult on planning applications. The Council will not be sending paper copies of applications and plans to T & CC with immediate effect(last Monday).
* In future when there is a planning application in your ward, the clerk will get an email informing of the application and providing the reference number. The information can then be obtained from the Councils Planning website. This is exactly the system that has operated for County Councillors since 2010.
* In your case you did of course back in 2010 take advantage of a grant to buy a projector so that you can place the plans etc., at your meetings, and you have successfully done that on numerous occasions. Unfortunately back in 2010 only a small number of Community Councils who took advantage of the grant on offer, so now the big complaint now from Community Councils is that they don’t have the equipment required. Unfortunately there is not going to any grant assistance on this occasion and any costs will have to be met by each Town or Community Council.
* Moving to the Local Development Plan, the plan has now been submitted for official examination, and in accordance with the regulations we are also carrying out a public consultation on the ‘focussed changes’ ( that are the changes that we have made as a result of the consultation responses to the deposit plan. This consultation runs from 29th January, until 11th March.
* It is hoped that the plan will have smooth passage through the examination process which will see it becoming an adopted plan at end of December 2016, and thus minimise the period when Powys does not have an adopted development plan. ( UDP ends it life at end of June 2016)
1. **Re-cycling and residual waste collections.**
* Just to inform you of a useful development regarding collections. There is now a website tool that residents can use to check when their next collection is due. I shall be advertising this in the next newsletter. For your information the address is <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/bins-collection-day/>
1. **Adoption of Felin Hafren( NatyFelin Estate)**
* Adoption of the estate infrastructure remains a problem. One of the problem is that the developer has entered into an agreement with ST regarding the sewer pipes that site under the estate roads, that is not in accordance with the Section 38 agreement with Powys CC. In addition there is a problem with the storm water attenuation pond ( which sits in Millfields land) apparently is not constructed as required.
* In addition there is an area on RH side of entrance that has been planted with shrubs and a hedge ( this is very unsightly at present). This needs to cleared and restored to clear grassed area.
1. **Trunk improvement.**
* Unfortunately we have seen a couple of nasty accidents on the trunk road adjacent to the entrance to Penant Pitch unclassified road, which has understandably caused a lot of concern with residents using that road .I are currently working to bring about improvements there, but major works has been ruled out by WG, but they have agreed for the trunk authority ( MNWTRA) to carry out significant improvement to signage, including carriageway markings. This work will go ahead in the spring.