



Bettws y Crwyn



PARISH PLAN



Bettws y Crwyn

Where are we?



The Clun Valley is in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Bettws y Crwyn is high in the hills at its most westerly point, bordering both Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire.

Bettws y Crwyn is in the Upper Clun valley which was the 'Welshry' of the Lordship of Clun, which did not become part of England in the formal sense until the 16th century. The parish name comes from St Mary's Church and is roughly circular, nearly 5 miles in diameter. To the east are Llanfair Waterdine and Newcastle. To the north is the Kerry Ridgeway, in the south the Teme, in the west the Rhddwyr Brook, and around these three is Wales.



Bettws y Crwyn is a dispersed parish, whose residents nestle among the hills - a truly rural parish, with no village settlement. This places the church among three meeting places: the other two being the Parish Hall and The Anchor Inn. In the year 2000 it won the title 'Shropshire Village of the Year', and also the accolade of 'Best Community Spirit' for the Midlands. This is an accurate testament to the residents who form a cooperative and caring community.

There are about 240 residents, many of whom are, or have been, involved in farming. There are a few young families, a considerable number of retired persons, some home based business and some affordable housing for local need. There are also a number of holiday residences.

There are approximately 100 residences, comprising old farmhouses and cottages, barn conversions, 19th and 20th century cottages and bungalows, and some new build. Most old farmhouses are stone built – some in shale, but many in sandstone with some newer houses built for farm workers or family members, and barn conversions.

Next down the valley is Newcastle, which has a rich history with ancient sites and a substantial stretch of the Offa's Dyke crossing the parish from north to south.



Further down the valley is Clun, which is a very ancient town. The Saxon community was a hamlet on the south side of the river built around what is now St George's Church. Clun was listed in the Domesday Book and was obviously a place of prosperity even at that time. The Normans planned their new town north of the river, beside their castle, and the grid pattern of their streets still survives. The castle was

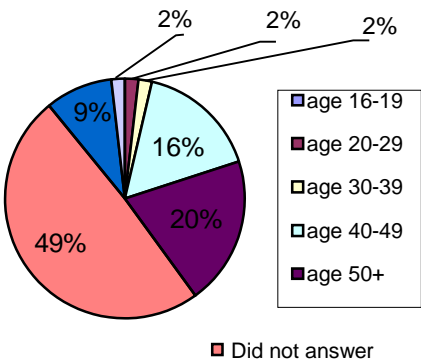
built by Picot le Say, then eventually owned by the Fitzalans, who joined up with the Howards. The present owner of the castle is the Duke of Norfolk, and one of his titles is Baron Clun.

Clun was granted its town charter in the 14th century. From mediaeval times to the middle of the 20th century Clun was a bustling and lively centre boasting countless shops and pubs as well as its famous livestock markets. It was a market town serving a wide area stretching right up to the Welsh hills. The advent of motorised transport and changes in social conditions has led to a gradual decline of Clun as a business town. It is now quiet and rural with a population of around 650 as opposed to about 1200 in 1851.

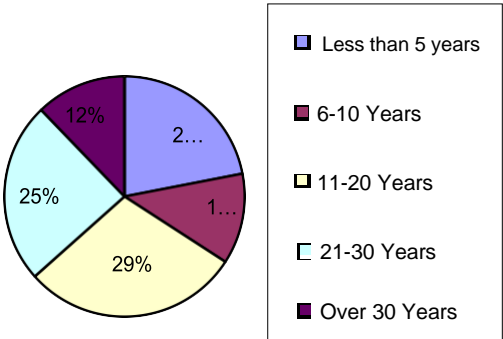


The landscape of the Upper Clun Valley is hilly and wooded, with the Clun river flowing through the valley. The population is spread among small, somewhat dispersed settlements, and many outlying farms and houses. The main source of income is farming with mostly mixed farms of livestock and arable, with Bed and Breakfast, small campsites and holiday cottages bringing extra income.

Who are we?



How long have we lived here?



It is clear from the analysis of the answers to the questionnaires returned that those over 50 years of age form the greatest part of the community – approximately three quarters. Of the working community most are self-employed. A growing proportion of the community is retired, with an increase in recent years of people moving to the area on retirement.

There are, however, some young families – and it is important to emphasise that the sustainability of the area lies in ensuring that the parish supports them. The challenge is in how this may be achieved in a climate of school closure, the diminishing of sport and cultural funding, poor communication systems, and lack of employment opportunity.

Despite, or, perhaps because of the dispersed nature of the parish, there is plenty going on in the community. Events organised by extremely hard working people are very well attended and greatly enjoyed. People work well together, and communication tends to be word of mouth. There is a thriving Choir, a Womens' Institute, and monthly coffee mornings take place. There is considerable co-operation with the people of Newcastle, and some events are shared.

Planning for the future

Bettws y Crwyn is a dispersed community, which does not currently fit into any formulated plans. It forms part of the hinterland of Bishop's Castle within its place plan. The parish is within the Shropshire hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a designation which recognizes and protects a landscape of national importance. The County planning system is expected to prevent development from harming the special qualities of the AONB and to support appropriate sustainable development to ensure active management of the landscape.

The AONB partnership provides design guidelines for houses and farm buildings, but does not itself have planning controls. In creating this plan we have endeavoured to involve the community through the means of a questionnaire, as well as conversations with local people.

We live in a beautiful area, and what has become clear is that those who live here have no wish to make great changes to the environment. However, there is a perception that there has been a diminishing of services, and that those who are involved in the administration of services are unconcerned about those who live in rural areas. There is a need to make our voices heard.

The Parish Plan

The plan is partly a statement of who we are, and partly a base for future planning. In order to assist the process of formulating such a plan we provided a questionnaire for all residents. 54 were returned. The statistics – in the form of pie charts – are available for anyone who is interested, *It must be noted that any statistics quoted in this document are based on the 54 questionnaires that were returned, not on the total number in the Parish.* We hope that they are a representative sample (at over a quarter it is a good sample but they must be taken only as an approximation).

Amenities

Those existing within the parish are the church, the parish hall and the public house. The mobile library visits fortnightly.

Outside the parish, but of some importance are the school at Newcastle, and the post office and shop in Beguildy.

Housing

Housing is generally dispersed. It is mainly owner occupied. There is a small row of terraced accommodation which is Housing Association owned and rented. There is also some holiday accommodation.

Land and planning approval has been granted at Anchor for low cost housing. At present, two of the three adjacent sites have been taken up by local people. Only one house has been built on this site. Nearby is another house built under the low cost scheme.

There is housing alongside the roads that cross the parish, and there are some clearly defined settlements: The Quabbs settlement, the Anchor settlement and the Riddings areas are fairly clearly defined, there are others that are more nebulous. Beyond these are those houses which are scattered among the hills.

The fact that some of the low cost possibility has not been taken up might appear to indicate that accommodation in the area is adequate, However, this is not necessarily an indication of lack of need. The desirability of the area for retirement, and the high cost of housing in towns and cities has pushed up the costs of local purchases, Young people can no longer afford to remain where there is little work. The knock on effect of this is reflected in the average age of the residents.

Planning

Planning is an issue that carries some problems. The Parish does not contain a village settlement. Because there is no 'village envelope' there is no prospect of new build within an area that has the village definition.

Building is restricted to that which is required for farming accommodation, and which carries a restriction on selling, and for business use – agricultural build, mainly barn conversion for holiday use or diversification into other businesses such as education and training.

Of those who returned the questionnaires 56% felt that current planning was adequate for the area. Opinions of those who did not feel it was adequate was divided more or less equally between those who felt it should be eased, and those who felt it should be more restricted, Of those who answered the questions there was some support for planning for places of work, tourism, and farm buildings.

The general view reflected is that major change is undesirable. There would not be any support at all for housing schemes or commercial development.

Power

The existing sources are deemed to be adequate. Certainly we do not have the power cuts that were commonplace in the past. Any which occur are usually due to adverse weather conditions affecting the infrastructure, which is mainly overground.

Local opinion is fairly evenly divided on the issue of wind turbines, as it is on iomass, and heat sink pumps, with rather greater support for water power. There is, however, a strong support for an increase in the use of solar power, and managed woodland timber provision for wood burning stoves. There is considerable support in co-operative schemes for ordering fuel, and a few of these are beginning to emerge, although the dispersed nature of the area is not always deemed by the suppliers to be as economic as in larger settlements.

There is a strong view that we should be looking at methods of energy conservation in our homes and transportation.

Action Points

Join with Newcastle and Llanfairwaterdine to produce a Neighbourhood Plan
Support planning applications which encourage diversification in line with AONB considerations
Support planning which brings empty properties back into use as homes and businesses.

Communication

While 65% of those who answered the questionnaire were satisfied with the quality of their land line, the significant remainder were not. Those who are dissatisfied are very dissatisfied. Location is the key factor here. Those in high and windy areas often suffer loss of line for weeks at a time. It would be interesting to have asked the questions about telephone lines after the high winds of the latter part of 2015. It is clear that the infrastructure is inadequate.

There are two telephone kiosks in Bettws y Crwyn
There is a very strong feeling that both should remain.

Only 55% have mobile phones. There is a very good reason why the rest do not. Only 20% have a good signal. The main providers are Vodaphone and EE – depending on which part of the parish the owners are living. Where there is a signal it is usually on hilltops. The valleys – even in the upper regions – have no signal.

Action Points

Participate actively in Better Broadband campaigns, and, through the Local Joint Council lobby providers to improve their services.

76% have a broadband connection. Of those 31% considered it to be sufficiently strong. A huge 45% are in a 'not spot'. This is considered to be appalling in an area with farming as its main occupation, since DEFRA sends large files and considers the internet to be its main means of communication.

In addition to farming there are other small businesses which require good quality broadband. For those running 'B and B' and holiday accommodation WI Fi is a requirement for advertising, booking and visitors' use. The same is true of educators and trainers.

Local Public Places

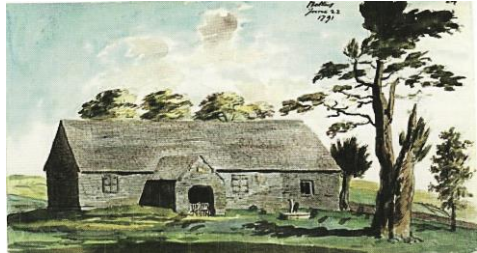
St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church is beautiful. It looks exactly as a country church is supposed to look. Built on a lonely and windswept hill, 1300 feet above sea level, among the highest in England, it was built perhaps seven hundred years ago. There is mention of it in the records of Wenlock Priory in 1276. 'Bettws y Crwyn' means Chapel (Bede House' – house of prayer) of the skins.



The ancient drover road from Wales may have been the reason for its existence, built near the Bettws Pool, an overnight stopping place for drovers. It may have begun even earlier as the shrine for the well (perhaps with healing powers) that is now in Ladywell Cottage garden. There might well have been a much older pagan settlement of agriculturalists around their holy hill or sacred well. The drovers and hill shepherds may have been the first worshippers there. Little remains of this

early church – possibly only the north and south walls of the nave. The nave dates from the latter part of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th century. The roof and the screen were added some two hundred years later. The screen is of great beauty and interest, and the roof, made of Spanish Chestnut has notable carving. The wooden pulpit and altar rails are Jacobean, as is the font cover. The pre 1860 font may be seen in the churchyard. An interesting feature is that the ends of the wooden pews are painted with the names of the farms to which they were allotted.



The Chancel was rebuilt in Victorian times, when the turret for one bell was erected. At this time, the thatch was replaced by slates, but there are still two hooks on the north wall which held a pole ready for fire in the days of the thatched roof.

The parish registers begin in 1662. Many of the pages are faded and damaged, but enough remains to be readable. They are stored in the archives in Shrewsbury. These registers, together with the memorials in the church and the tombstones in the churchyard exist as a reminder of the generations who have lived and worshipped here. They cared for the fabric and appearance of the building just as the people of the 21st century care now.



Through all the years the parishioners have respected and revered the traditions and the spirit of this little church.

78% use the church, and would be very concerned if it closed. While at regular Sunday services congregations may seem small in number, as a percentage of the population it

is greater than in towns and cities. Special services for Christmas, Harvest, Lambing, are very well attended. Currently many of the services are shared with Newcastle, which has been of benefit to both churches. There is always concern about whether the church will continue to be as well supported in the future – particularly as the Parish share has to be paid, as well as insurance and maintenance. At present, thanks to dedicated efforts and support in fund raising, it manages to pay its way.

However, year by year it becomes more difficult to raise the money required. If the parish still wishes the church to be available for baptisms, marriages and funerals, it may be necessary to find a way of raising a regular income.

Action Points

Explore, together with the Vicar, the Church Wardens and the PCC The ways in which future funding might be managed.

Black Mountain Chapel

Black Mountain chapel is occasionally used, but not in regular use for services. There would, however, be considerable concern if it were lost to the community, both as a part of the history of the area, and as a landmark. It is currently managed by a group of trustees who are using grant funding to improve the building.



The Parish Hall



The Parish Hall is the principal meeting place for Bettws y Crwyn. Originally a school (closed in 1951) and formerly a Church Hall, it is now leased by the Parish Council, who are trustees, and run by a committee on behalf of the Parish Council. Fund raising is highly successful – much of it on a shared basis with the church, sometimes shared with charity events. There is a modest income from lettings for elections, wedding and baptism receptions, and post funeral teas. It's used regularly by the Parish Council, PCC.

Women's Institute and Choir, and is the venue for activities such as Harvest Suppers, Coffee Mornings, Lenten Lunches, Concerts, Flicks in the Sticks, Celebrations, and other events. There have been some suggestions that local courses would be welcomed. Internet access would assist this process.

It is an old building, and there are maintenance issues. It is due to the enthusiasm and support of the community that it survives.

Action Points

Consider how the hall may further be used. WiFi access would extend its use, making computer presentations possible and learning of computer skills by those who wish to do so in a local supportive environment

The Anchor Inn

The Anchor inn is unique. It was once a drovers' inn, and was featured in one of the books of Mary Webb as 'The Mermaid's Rest' in 'Seven for a Secret'. At 1266 ft it is the second highest and the most westerly pub in Shropshire, at only 400 metres from the Welsh Border. Many local marriages began with meetings at The Anchor, which was long a venue for entertainment. It is, in many ways, a step into the past. 85% would be concerned if it were to be lost.



Places of Historic Interest

Castell Bryn Amlwg, now known locally as Castle Cefn Vron in the parish of Bettws y Crwyn was built around the year 1200 on a west facing site on the Anchor Farm close to the border with Wales. In the valley below are the streams that divide the counties of Shropshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire. It is one of the places in Britain where, in two strides, a person can claim to have been in three counties. The site of the castle is now grassy mounds, but it can still be seen what a huge fortress this must have been when it was built. The mounds clearly show that there was a large keep and surrounding curtain walls.



At **The Moat** on the Bettws-y-crwyn side of the Teme near Beguildy, there is a fine example of a motte and bailey fortification. This would have been a timber castle on a mound with a fortified enclosure. These sometimes evolved into stone castles, this one remains as a well preserved earthwork.

The Cantlin Stone at Shadwell Hill is a monument to ' **W.C DECSED HERE BURIED 1691 AT BETTUS.**' . For the Millenium the Parish Council obtained a grant and had a replica of the original 'Botfield Cross' placed there, The original, broken cross, now marks the grave in the church. The fact that the people of Bettws y Crwyn buried the man who died, was used to define the Parish boundary.



Public Services

Highways

Those who have ever attended a Parish Council meeting will know that this is an agenda item at every meeting. The road from Newcastle to Anchor is usually in a reasonable condition, and is gritted during cold periods. However most of the Bettws roads are better described as lanes, and are often in poor condition. The current policy of contracting out these services creates real difficulties. There is no cohesion. Where once we were informed of planned road improvements, now there seems to be no local consultation. As a result rarely used roads have been beautifully resurfaced, whereas much used roads are potholed, and the surfaces broken. Residents are expected to grit the roads in poor weather – but there are insufficient grit buckets for this to be effective. Ditches often do not drain effectively, and, where there are drains, these are often blocked.

The maintenance of roadside verges is considered to be essential balancing the safety needs and conservation of the rich flora. This parish has a network of narrow twisted lanes where visibility is of utmost importance. The condition of roads and markings have suffered considerable deterioration. There are junctions

Action Points

Continue to report unsatisfactory conditions to the council and ensure that the council is made aware when conditions are dangerous.

where it needs to be made clear which is the road with priority. Minor accidents and 'near misses' occur frequently'.

Flooding is also a problem in the valley area. In one particular spot the road floods regularly during periods of heavy rainfall. The road dips considerably and people unaware of this have attempted to drive through. Over the years, drains have been dug and cleared, to no permanent effect. Serious consideration needs to be given to a permanent solution.

When there is heavy snow Bettws can be seriously affected. We can have deep snow in Bettws, when there may be none in the towns. Two snow wardens on the parish council will inform the County council of the situation if they are contacted. In this instance local contractors are usually used, and this has recently been very effective.

The Mobile Library

The Mobile Library visits the area fortnightly on Wednesdays. It is used by relatively few people, but those who do use it value it greatly. Apart from taking library books to those in remote areas, who may not easily be able to travel to a library, it can be a mini meeting point for those who may seldom see their neighbours. For these people, if the service were to be removed it would be a great loss.

Newcastle School

Until recently Bettws y Crwyn was served by two schools. Sadly, Beguildy School has closed. The closest school is now in Newcastle. Built in 1962 it replaced the original 1860s school. The school takes children from a wide area. Currently it is led by an Acting Headteacher who is committed to the school and the area. All members of the staff are implementing a high standard leading to a lovely school with happy children. It may be described as 'small, but perfectly formed'.

Action Points

Support the school's continued existence – either as a stand alone school or part of a co-operative of federation.

Like all small schools it is ever under threat of closure. For both the children and the village this would be a tragedy. The school is at the heart of the community.

Newcastle also has a nursery and playgroup located nearby in the Community Centre.

Environment and Sustainable Living

It is agreed by the vast majority of those who answered the questions that the peace and tranquility of the area is of the utmost importance. The landscape provides some of the most beautiful vistas in the United Kingdom. Because of this conservation is a high priority.



It should be remembered, however, that the landscape was created by those who worked the land. These were the antecedents of those who are native to the locality. Principally it was the farming community of landowners and many agricultural workers employed by them who created what we have today. Hill farms were small, but many worked them. The population was far greater than it is today. Farming methods have changed, and homes that were once occupied by families of workers, are now standing empty, or occupied by those who have moved into the area, usually, but not always, to retire.

The people living in Bettws recognize the importance of integrating all into one community. The Parish once won an award for the Best Community Spirit in the Midlands – an accolade of which its people were justly proud. Bettws welcomes newcomers, and gladly involves them in its activities. A Welcome leaflet is given to newcomers, listing all the local amenities and activities.

Considerable importance is given to conserving the landscape and wild life. Rhoss Fiddle Nature Reserve is run by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust – and is an area dedicated to conservation. There are also many special interest wildlife sites on local farms. It is also recognised that water quality is of great importance, as most obtain their water supplies from bore holes or springs. To this end what is placed on the land has considerable significance, and Bettws is now home to some farms with organic status.

There is, however, a concern, often expressed, about the amount of black plastic that is allowed to roam freely. There are kind souls who pick this up and dispose of it in bins while they are out walking, but the problem of persuading agricultural workers not to leave plastic in the fields and hedgerows needs to be addressed.

We are fortunate in an absence of street lighting, which means that we have wonderful night skies.

Refuse Collection

Refuse is collected on Thursdays and Fridays – except when there are Bank Holidays – when it is a day later. Refuse of different kinds are collected on alternate weeks. Black bin and recycling boxes alternate with Green Bin garden waste collections. Bulky waste and household appliances may be taken to Craven Arms – some considerable distance away. Overwhelmingly the answers on the questionnaires reflected the high importance placed on the importance of recycling facilities.

Emergency Services

Fire

It is considered essential that the Fire service in Clun be retained. Apart from the distances from other fire stations – which would mean considerable delays in an emergency, the local knowledge of the officers is vital. In this area satellite navigation systems cannot be relied upon to deliver people to the correct address. The words ‘You have reached your destination’ frequently occur when the user is nowhere near the correct address, which may be, at best, round a corner 1/4 of a mile away, or, at worst, across several fields completely out of sight.

Action Points

As is clear that cuts will affect the parish severely it is important that we participate in all consultation exercises, and, through the Local Joint Council make our situation very clear to the county representatives and portfolio holders

Ambulance

Experiences differ. 44% of those who answered the question were reasonably satisfied. A significant number were not. There is a perception that response times are deteriorating – for a number of reasons. There is considerable apprehension that the outcomes of the ‘Future Fit’ programme will result in greater distances to emergency services. The time taken to travel to the PRH in Telford is more than 1½ hours for most of the people in the parish. Added to that the time taken for an ambulance to arrive, leaves little hope for a serious condition to receive emergency treatment. Air Ambulance may well be the only hope for those – and they do not fly at night.

Medical

Just under half had used the **Shropdoc** service, but only a minority of those felt that it was satisfactory. The loss of the on call services of the local GPs is much missed. The existence of hospital services in the Market Towns is generally appreciated, and would be missed if the one in Bishop’s Castle is removed, as recuperating patients are able to receive more visitors in a local hospital.

Bettws has two defibrillators sited at the Parish Hall and The Anchor. The Parish is aware of their existence. There is a group of trained people who have VOIP telephones installed.

Police

About two thirds felt that police coverage is adequate for the area – where there is little crime. Most people have had no reason to call upon them. However, there is a feeling that response times are inadequate – which is unsurprising considering the distances they have to travel.

Health

84% felt that GP services are sufficient, although a significant minority did not think that the times provided for this service were adequate. 6% use hospital transport – a reflection on the age of the community. Depending in which part of the extensive area of the parish, its inhabitants attend surgeries in Knighton, Newcastle, Clun or Bishop's Castle. Time taken to travel to a GP would be 15 – 30 minutes.

On the subject of out of hours GP coverage 27% did not answer the question. Of those who did half answered yes, and half answered no. This may somewhat depend on which surgeries are used.

Issues and Action Points

Meetings where Future Fit has been discussed have been well attended, and it is very obvious that people are hugely concerned about the future possibilities.

It is extremely important that parishioners attend these meetings and have their say.

Hospital Provision

There is great concern about the possibility of cuts in hospital provision, and the reorganisation of services under 'Future Fit'. The time taken to travel to Shrewsbury can be over an hour, and Telford is considerably further. To have to travel 1½ hours in an emergency is considered unacceptable.

Care for the elderly / disabled

Care for the elderly is usually in the hands of the family. In the past there was a formal car volunteer scheme, but this now has become informal. Families, neighbours and friends in the community are often eager to help. The existence of 'Dial a Ride' is invaluable – but possibly not publicised as much as it could be.

The Stone House, in Bishop's Castle is sometimes able to provide palliative care, post hospital care or respite care.

The elderly do, however, often experience difficulties due to problems with communication systems. Sometimes telephones are out of order for weeks at a time. The infrastructure is inadequate, and is increasingly more so as providers concentrate efforts on increasing broadband infrastructure to those fortunate enough to live in towns and villages large enough to support it.

Technology is improving at a fast pace. Many elderly people are able to learn to use iPads and other tablets. This could be seen as a wonderful means of

communication with friends and families – particularly with those who have moved away from the immediate area or are living abroad. However, this opportunity is available to only those who are able to receive a broadband signal.

Employment

It is a farming area, but the farms are fewer in number as the years pass. There are 12 full time farms with owner occupation, a few of whom farm organically. 11 farms are letting their farm land for grass keep. 9 small holdings have kept a few acres for horses and a small number of livestock. The rest of the land has been sold off or let to adjoining farmers, with the homes sold as private houses.

Of those who answered 57% work from home. The majority of these would be farming, but there are some home based businesses. Of those who do not work at home the majority travel over 13 miles to work, with the largest group travelling over 25 miles.

Business

There are people who work in education, manufacturing, public service, law, transport, the arts, health and care, information technology, horticulture – and other occupations.

However, the main occupation of the working (and retired) community is Agriculture.



A farm is a business. This is a fact that seems to have gone unrecognised by BT who have often stated that they prioritise areas where there are businesses! As has been stated before, good broadband service is essential, but has not yet been provided under the 'Connecting Shropshire' initiative.



Some farms have diversified, creating supporting businesses. B & B, holiday cottages and small camping and caravanning sites bring farms into the tourism industry. One organic farm has a straw bale build education and training centre, hosting craft, farming and smallholder courses. It also has an eco cottage.

There are also dedicated B & B businesses – the owner of one has struggled in providing for her four star accommodation, where good wi-fi and mobile signal is an expectation of those who wish to stay there.

There is a highly successful education studio for Crafts – where courses are run by an internationally known textile artist and her many guest artists. Her centre has no mobile signal. Her website is essential, both for advertising and booking but its administration is a real struggle, with very low and inconsistent broadband provision.

A Graphics Designer who moved into the area had to rent an office in Newtown because it was impossible to work from home as he had originally planned.

63% felt that broadband would assist their businesses, and 65% said the same of mobile phone provision.

Parish Council

The parish council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish. It is the level government closest to the community, with links to the county through the county councillors. Its function is to set the precept for the parish – in relation to the local assets for which it has responsibility, and for the benefit of the community. It is the authority closest to the people, and invariably the first place people will go with concerns or ideas. For this reason it is a vital part of any community.

At the beginning of each meeting members of the public are invited to participate.

Bettws Parish Council has seven councillors, who are elected on a four year cycle. The councillors work on an entirely voluntary basis, on behalf of the residents and are responsible for negotiations with the Shropshire Council about such issues as highway maintenance, planning applications, and any issues specific to the area. The Chairperson attends meetings of the Local Joint Council, which addresses issues common to other parish councils in the area. Decisions on small local grant funding are taken at these meetings, and representatives of service providers, county councilors, and county portfolio holders attend the LJC public meetings. The public is encouraged to attend these meetings, which give the public the opportunity to question the authorities and voice opinions.

A surprising one third of those who responded read the Parish Council Minutes. A similar number have, on at least one occasion, attended the Annual Parish meeting, with one quarter having attended an ordinary Parish meeting – most to listen to discussions on Planning. Approximately the same number are aware of the use of the precept. Just over a quarter visit the Parish pages on the web site.

The Parish web site is run by a member of the community. It is extensive – with over thirty pages covering all groups in the community. It relies on contributions from members of the different groups that exist in the parish, so is varied in the quantity of its content.



In an area as dispersed as Bettws y Crwyn a website could be a useful resource and means of communication. Those who do view it do so on a regular basis. However, to use this as effective communication requires wi fi connectivity and training. The Parish Council would love to create computer and tablet training, but the Parish Hall is situated at the end of the Kerry exchange – so, at present, wi-fi

is unlikely to be possible. However, the Parish Council is currently exploring possibilities of bringing wi-fi to the hall.

There is also no Mobile signal in the Parish Hall.

Summary

There is no doubt that the quality of life is considered to be high in Bettws, and no desire for most of its residents to make major changes. Basically, what we have is good, and we should like it to remain that way. However, sustainability needs active participation and dedication to ensuring that services are supported and maintained, and the special landscape and community cared for and appreciated.

What next?

This plan is the beginning of a process which is designed to give clarity to the work of the Parish Council, and to act as a starting point for future action and further planning. For it to be effective it will need to be reviewed regularly, and updated where necessary.

A biennial review will take place in the July meeting.

Many thanks to all those who returned their questionnaires. The statistics gained are available in a comprehensive set of pie charts which can be made available for any who are interested.

