

To: One Voice Wales
From: Llanybydder Community Council
Re: How our Communities coped during Covid pandemic
Date: 7 June 2021

This is a brief summary of how our two Wards, Llanybydder & Rhydcymerau coped during the recent Covid-19 pandemic from about March 2020 to date.

Llanybydder is a large village and has Dunbia meat processing plant as it's principal employer with some 500+ staff. In view of the high number of travelling personnel, there was concern about Covid in the village, and the Community Council liaised closely with Public Health to reduce or ameliorate any risk which may occur.

It is also home to one of the largest sheep and cattle markets in the area (Evans Bros, Auctioneers) and as a result of this emphasis on agriculture/livestock, Llanybydder has proved to be very resilient and we extend our thanks to all residents, volunteers, businesses, local authorities and key workers who made this possible.

At the very beginning of the crisis, our two major convenience stores, Nisa (including Post Office) and Siop y Bont put in place grocery delivery services and ensured anybody who was unable to travel to shop were well provided for. This was particularly helpful to our older, shielding residents.

The local surgery is an outpost of Lampeter's Bro-Pedr practice and was able to see urgent cases if and when necessary. Once the vaccination programme was introduced earlier in February 2021, this surgery provided a very efficient service, ensuring those eligible patients did not have to travel vast distances to receive their inoculations.

During this period, we have also had two additional defibrillators installed in Llanybydder & Rhydcymerau.

Our local baker, pharmacy, agricultural merchants, mobile butchery service and fruiterer continued to provide a full service to our communities which put us at a distinct advantage to other areas.

When Covid-19 restrictions permitted, the Old School Gym was well attended. It is widely acknowledged that exercise is beneficial for health and well-being, including mental health and members benefited greatly from this community provision

And, as Llanybydder is on the main T1 bus route from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen, the buses continued to run every day and on the hour during the height of the pandemic, despite not having any/or many users. This meant that essential workers could still get to their places of work, whether hospitals or other key sectors.

Llanybydder Community Council put in place virtual meetings from March 2020 via Zoom in the first few months and then Microsoft Teams. This meant, despite some technical issues, we continued to represent the communities throughout the period. This new way of working has many benefits and, in the future, can be a solution during winter months when elected members are unable to travel.

This hiatus also gave the Community Council a chance to review our local services and after a recent inspection of the Park, it was discovered that much of our play equipment was in a poor condition and needed replacing. So, working closely with Carmarthenshire County Council, funding was secured to the sum of circa £32,000 to refurbish Llanybydder Park. There is still some more work to be done but the majority of this refit has been provided by the County.

And, following on from the Llanybydder Park improvements, the Community Council invited tenders from specialist providers to update Rhydcymerau Park. This refurbishment has been approved by the County and we have put in place funds to enable us to proceed.

The Community Council also has responsibility for maintaining the local public conveniences and we made a commitment at the very beginning of the pandemic, that these toilets should remain open and accessible with additional hygiene regimes put into place. These services are out-sourced to our local café, Rominos, and they are paid annually for maintaining them.

The Community Council also provided a donation to Canolfan Deuluol Ty'r Teulu Llanybydder Family Centre which could not open during the pandemic but families still needed help, support and guidance. This donation enabled children's activity packs to be sent out to families, despite not being able to access the Centre. And the Centre provided clothes to families and signposting to agencies able to help those families in need. A donation was also made to Cylch Meithrin to support their work.

Following many requests for Community Police attendance at our monthly meetings, pre-pandemic, it was decided to invite the Police & Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llewelyn to a virtual meeting to discuss our concerns. A meeting was convened for January 2021 and Dafydd Llewelyn was very interested to hear of our concerns around speed awareness, drugs in the community, Covid-19 restrictions and breaches with action following.

Finally, the past 15 months has been difficult for many people, especially those who were furloughed or made redundant because of the pandemic. The crisis also impacted on our many small business owners and it will take time to recover, but we are proud of how Llanybydder & Rhydcymerau have demonstrated that a strong community, working together, can overcome severe challenges and we look forward to a brighter, positive future for all.

END