

***Open Meeting re Proposed Conservation Area******Friday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2011 7pm until 9pm in Victoria Hall***

Town Mayor, Councillor Carol Prichard welcomed around 26 members of the public (including 2 other councillors) to the meeting and introduced Cy Griffith and Peter Morris from the Built Heritage Team (BHT) at Powys County Council (PCC).

Cllr Prichard briefly outlined how this stage had been reached, and said that Llanwrtyd Town Council (LTC) had made many attempts over the years for parts of the town to be made a conservation area. In November 2009 Ms Griffiths first attended a TC meeting to discuss this with members. It was agreed by all at that first meeting that it was essential to have support and agreement from residents of the town, and that the final decision would be with them.

A series of information and consultation events were arranged including an open meeting in March 2010 followed by workshops in August and September.

The BHT analysed the information and comments gained at these events and in early 2011 a consultation document with questionnaire was posted out to residents homes and there were public displays of maps showing the suggested conservation areas. Ms Griffiths had held a surgery the previous day between 10am and 7pm and in the Library, and all these meetings had been well publicised in Grapevine and in posters around the town.

About three weeks ago comprehensive consultation documents were posted out to residents along with a response form for residents to return and give their views by no later than 30/10/2011. Cllr Prichard said it was essential that residents return these, as the result of these will determine whether the scheme goes ahead. She said that one concern from local people was that house insurance premiums would increase in a conservation area. Cllr Prichard said she had approached several insurance companies who told her this was untrue.

Ms Griffiths said she hoped everyone had taken the opportunity to read the documents posted out to them, and distributed hand-outs which summarised the pros and cons of a conservation area. She said the most asked questions at her surgery had been as follows:

Q – Why is a conservation area being considered? A – Because the LTC requested it.

Q – What happens next? A – The results of the survey will form a democratic vote. If the majority vote is for a conservation area, then the request will go to Cabinet and Ms Griffiths said she could see no reason why it wouldn't be approved. If the majority vote is to not have a conservation area, then no further action would be taken. PCC could enforce the conservation area; however they are unlikely to do this without resident's agreement.

There are some controls on planning applications and this is summarised in the consultation draft. Conservation areas are designated to reflect the special interests there might be in a town or village. This can bring with it opportunities for applications for funding

to improve and enhance a property, and Ms Griffiths gave examples of this all over Powys and in Llandovery.

Cllr Prichard invited questions from the floor, requesting that people ask one question only initially to give everyone a chance. She requested that people asking questions supplied their name and the area of town where they resided.

Mark Jones – If permission is needed to erect a satellite dish, how long would this process take and how much would it cost?

A – It would depend on the Planning Dept, but probably around 8 weeks. There would be no fee to the Planning Dept, however there would be a cost in residents time completing forms etc. It would however be worth consulting with BHT as it might be possible to place the dish in such a way that it would not require permission.

Derek Morris, Station Road – Too late now to preserve the town, some local services like the Post Office have already gone. Planning permission has been given to building properties not in keeping with the town. Should put up cameras to see who is letting their dogs foul and not pick up. Felt annoyed that the rates he pays is going to fund a survey for a conservation area.

A – PCC has a duty to provide such surveys.

Robert Christie – Referred to the conservation area in Llandovery and the strong controls imposed (Article 4 (2) Direction).

A – Such controls are not planned for LW unless they are requested.

Jonathan Lloyd – If people can change windows as a for instance without permission, what are we preserving?

A – Architectural details are important if they are of special or historical interest, and we would be looking to preserve the character and setting, e.g. road layout, landmarks etc. To recognise, maintain, protect and enhance the character of the town. People might need to ask themselves if there is something really worth keeping and if so then a designated conservation area would go some way to offering protection.

Denley Jones – What map is being used? If it is the big one, then buildings previously erected in that area are not in keeping with the town.

A – The map being used is the one in the latest consultation doc, because that is the one that was most popular in the last survey. Regarding properties being erected that are not in keeping with the town, if this were in a conservation area, this would not be granted. Even if planning permission is sought just out of the boundaries, then the plans would have to be respectful of the conservation area.

Cllr Rowlands – People have pride in LW, and it is not too late as there is still a lot here to preserve, however in time there might not be. Regarding the plans submitted for residential

buildings on Station Road that were not in keeping with the town, LWT objected as did many other local people, however if it had been a conservation area it would have been much more difficult for the plans to get that far.

Denley Jones – Will it stop more shops being turned into residential properties?

A – There are different controls, but is it not better for the use to be changed and the property being put to good use rather than remain empty?

Peter Morris said that Llandrindod Wells had received finance to purchase seven buildings, and have made compliant with their conservation area. This has provided valuable residential accommodations. Lottery funding had been accessed to replace windows and balconies, to bring the properties up to standard. For every £1 provided by PCC, the BHT had found another £21. He continued that the conservation scheme at Talgarth continues to flourish, and outlined schemes in other areas.

Robin Harris – If this is to be decided by local residents, why aren't there more people here?

A – Everything possible has been done to keep people informed, perhaps people should badger their neighbours to return the questionnaire giving their views.

Jack Kemp, The Grange – Didn't know anything about the proposals until now.

A – The BHT has consulted with local residents previously, and all meetings, workshops etc. have been advertised on posters around town and in Grapevine. The original and this latest consultation draft were posted out to 400 addresses in town. Question 3 on the response form asks 'Do you think LW should be designated as a conservation area?'

Jonathan Lloyd – My house would be included in boundary suggestion 3, what if I want to trim or cut down a tree?

A – You would have to give 6 weeks notice to PCC. PCC could put a preservation order on the tree, however that is unlikely unless the tree is rare or of special interest.

Robert Christie – What if someone wanted to demolish the Neuadd Arms and build an office block?

A – If it were in a conservation area this would not be allowed.

John Rowlands – Someone could purchase the Congregational Chapel and demolish it, but if the conservation area goes ahead, this would protect the building against things like this happening.

Mark Jones – If someone wanted to erect a porch, who would decide?

A – The plans would be viewed in line with the consultation document.

Q – Why should we give control to a stranger?

A – It is the BHT role to give professional advice to the Planning Officer.

Mr Morris outlined some restrictions to fitting solar panels. Ones on the roof are acceptable but there are restrictions on ones which fit on walls if facing the highway.

Denley Jones – What if I wanted to erect a wind turbine on my land?

A – Planning permission is needed for that anyhow.

Ms Griffiths said that if the scheme goes ahead, one of the team would be available to visit and discuss/advise ways of getting things done without having to apply for planning permission. She invited people to look on the website, [www.powys.gov.uk/heritage](http://www.powys.gov.uk/heritage) and to take leaflets.

Cllr Prichard thanked everyone for their time and requested that they returned the response form and advised their friends and neighbours to do the same. The meeting concluded at 7.55pm.

Pat Dryden

Town Clerk