



# **Llanfyllin / North Welshpool Catchment Review**

## **Engagement with Staff and Governors**

**May 2023**



## 1. Introduction

The Council is currently undertaking a review of the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool Catchments. As part of this work, engagement was carried out with staff and governors in the area on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023, to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to give their views on the current provision in the area, and to suggest ideas for the future.

All staff and governors at the 12 schools within the scope of this work were invited to attend. 41 attended the session for staff, and 41 attended the session for governors. All 12 schools were represented at both sessions.

The sessions were also attended by:

- Cllr Pete Roberts, Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys,
- Lynette Lovell, Director of Education and Children (via Teams)
- Emma Palmer, Director of Corporate Services (via Teams)
- Georgie Bevan, Head of Education

In addition, members of the Council's Transforming Education Team, School Improvement Team and HR Team were in attendance.

At the sessions, a presentation was given which included the following:

- An overview of the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys
- An overview of activity to date in the Llanfyllin / North Welshpool catchments since the Strategy was launched in 2020
- An overview of data for schools in the area

Attendees were then asked to take part in 2 group exercises. The outcome of these are provided below.



## 2. SWOT assessment

Groups were asked to prepare a SWOT assessment of the current provision in the area.

Copies of the sheets completed by each group are provided in Appendix A at the end of this report. These have been combined in the following tables.

### Staff

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Range of schools to suit different learners</li> <li>- Currently, the schools provide close proximity for pupils</li> <li>- Strong cluster / collaborative working</li> <li>- Post-16 collaboration through Trisgol</li> <li>- Good parent/staff relationships with communities</li> <li>- Good skills and experiences and Cynefin knowledge</li> <li>- Every child gets an opportunity opposed to very large schools</li> <li>- Current Welsh ethos in the cluster</li> <li>- Sharing of teaching resources in the cluster</li> <li>- Experienced teachers sharing their skills</li> <li>- Large primary schools which are viable on their own</li> <li>- Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language is strong</li> <li>- Sustainability/green travel to school</li> <li>- Learners travel into the area from outside of the catchment</li> <li>- Health and Well-being – supporting each other, small communities supporting everyone</li> <li>- Good Church School provision</li> <li>- Range of schools to suit different learners – small community schools and Church in Wales provision</li> <li>- Smaller schools can offer provision for ALN &amp; EBD pupils who might struggle in a larger setting</li> <li>- Schools celebrate individuality</li> <li>- Provision remains local</li> <li>- Parent and staff relationships are good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling constantly under threat of change and closure</li> <li>- Flooding in North Welshpool area</li> <li>- Climate change is really affecting the area – would need to be considered when deciding the location of area school</li> <li>- Expectations of children with ALN and the skew on data</li> <li>- Disparity between budget per pupil across the cluster</li> <li>- Lots of buildings need updating</li> <li>- Welsh Language provision &amp; variety</li> <li>- Reliability of pupil data and not matching investment in housing plans</li> <li>- Nearest school doesn't match the intention of parents – parental choice on admissions</li> <li>- Lack of consistency in collaborative working</li> <li>- No centralised ALN provision</li> <li>- Lack of Welsh-language provision</li> <li>- Concern at a 360 place school involving community &amp; Church in Wales provision being merged</li> <li>- Loss of community / Cynefin</li> <li>- Transport may be a barrier to achievability</li> <li>- Recruitment of staff for supporting Welsh continuum e.g. midday, support staff</li> <li>- Future pupil information</li> <li>- Funding for schools</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New community campus planned</li> <li>- New 360 place school planned</li> <li>- Early years provision</li> <li>- Learners travel into the cluster to receive provision</li> </ul>	
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New school could be an opportunity – depends on location, other schools etc</li> <li>- Being recognised as a “specialism” for ALN</li> <li>- New build would encourage use of sharing of facilities etc, offering after school provision &amp; centralised admin</li> <li>- Enhanced Cluster working</li> <li>- Investment in technology</li> <li>- Greater collaboration between schools in the cluster</li> <li>- Being close to the border with the new curriculum – opportunity to pull from England</li> <li>- Range of schools in the Cluster</li> <li>- Peer working</li> <li>- Enhancing ALN provision</li> <li>- Enhancing primary provision using specialist staff and teachers</li> <li>- Use of the all-age school in Llanfyllin</li> <li>- Community classroom</li> <li>- New community campus build will encourage efficient use of buildings and sharing of facilities</li> <li>- Opportunity to centralise administration functions</li> <li>- The potential location of a new school</li> <li>- Phased approach – how does each step affect other schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instability in schools due to the review/closure</li> <li>- Pupils could go across the border due to school closures</li> <li>- Staff wellbeing generally</li> <li>- Welsh Education for Welsh Children – pupils moving over the border</li> <li>- This process and communication with schools/staff/communities</li> <li>- Damage to the communities – impact on closures</li> <li>- Impact on staff/jobs</li> <li>- Impact on pupil numbers now – admissions. Knock on the data</li> <li>- Money / cost</li> <li>- Instability in the current system</li> <li>- Cross border migration, especially for Post-16 learners</li> <li>- Lack of funding with the status quo</li> <li>- Parental insecurity can lead to a loss in pupil numbers</li> <li>- Local ‘gossip’ can fuel instability</li> <li>- Welshpool High School needs to be involved</li> </ul>

## Governors

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community base</li> <li>- Strong collaborative work</li> <li>- ALN provision in small schools can be provided differently</li> <li>- Parental choice – lots of schools of differing sizes and faiths</li> <li>- Lowest cost per pupil in Powys in Arddleen</li> <li>- Small schools – attractive to parents</li> <li>- Opportunity to provide targeted Welsh provision</li> <li>- Strong pupil engagement – part of a small community</li> <li>- Staff commitment</li> <li>- Rural setting – in the countryside and appreciate national/local issues – linked to well-being</li> <li>- Quality of education – outstanding</li> <li>- Schools are distributed well – linked to environment</li> <li>- Active Travel</li> <li>- ALN – smaller school allows more targeted support and intervention</li> <li>- Flexible and adaptable provision which can change based on local need and demand</li> <li>- Good variety of schools (quality of education, sizes, religion etc)</li> <li>- Pupils engage with each other well outside of school</li> <li>- Can walk to school</li> <li>- Trochi has helped to increase Welsh-medium pupils</li> <li>- Pupil to Teacher Ratio is lower</li> <li>- The community are committed and intertwined into the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil numbers</li> <li>- Recruitment of staff</li> <li>- Constant uncertainty caused by this process</li> <li>- Rurality and spread out causes issues in accessing services</li> <li>- Cost of maintenance and poor building conditions</li> <li>- Lack of investment into buildings and education</li> <li>- Transport and transport policies – lack of free transport around language</li> <li>- Geography – not far away from Oswestry and urban environments</li> <li>- Might lose pupils across the border and those pupils lose access to Welsh curriculum</li> <li>- Staff spread thinly across small schools – extra capacities in larger schools e.g. sickness</li> <li>- Lack of resilience for smaller environments</li> <li>- Access to ALN provision, particularly in secondary provision</li> <li>- Lack of expertise in smaller schools, lack of curriculum opportunities</li> <li>- Teachers having to multi-task and look at a range of different areas in schools</li> <li>- Pupil numbers are in decline</li> <li>- The transformation process has an impact</li> <li>- Poor Welsh-medium provision</li> <li>- Strong community objection to closing a small school</li> <li>- Excessive travel to school distance / time if plans proceed</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing resources, expertise and skills</li> <li>- Accelerate digital investment</li> <li>- Opportunity to engage local adults into the school community which can lead to a supply of governors</li> <li>- New housing and people moving into the area – positive impact on pupil numbers</li> <li>- Improved Welsh language provision</li> <li>- Pupils &amp; staff networking and collaboration with the cluster</li> <li>- Opportunity to attract English pupils and capitalise on ‘Welshness’</li> <li>- Federation with different models – 2 or 3 site schools. Less focus on buildings and more organisationally split across sites.</li> <li>- Enhancements to the Curriculum for Wales in the cluster</li> <li>- Professional development opportunities e.g. to become senior leaders</li> <li>- Potential to centralise functions to free up Headteacher time and to allocate further resources to this area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools Transformation</li> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- Budget pressures</li> <li>- Pupils moving into EHE</li> <li>- Distance to the border – loss of pupils from Powys</li> <li>- Differing curriculums – England vs Wales – Welsh curriculum may stop pupils from coming into Wales</li> <li>- Loss of pupil Welshness</li> <li>- Schools over the border paying for transport to entice Welsh pupils - transport</li> <li>- Change in catchment areas</li> <li>- Staff morale in this process</li> <li>- Impact on well-being and mental health</li> <li>- People might move away if language changes</li> <li>- Funding – small schools not getting what they need</li> <li>- Impact on staff – loss of jobs</li> <li>- Impact on community – loss of community feel</li> <li>- Impact on recruitment incl Welsh speaking teachers</li> </ul>

### 3. Future developments

Groups were asked to consider the updated preferred way forward for the area and consider what local issues the Council needed to know about which could impact on implementation, and to suggest ideas and suggestions about the way forward for schools in the area.

Copies of the sheets completed by each group are provided in Appendix A at the end of this report. These have been combined in the following tables.

#### Staff

What local issues do we need to know about which could impact on implementation?	What other ideas and suggestions do you have about the way forward for schools in the area?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flooding in North Powys</li> <li>- Online learning in a rural area</li> <li>- Transport and local housing</li> <li>- Ownership of land which CiW schools are built on</li> <li>- CiW and Community primaries – process and how</li> <li>- Losing children over the border to England</li> <li>- Local families able to reluctant send to larger primaries</li> <li>- Travel times – younger pupils and the impact on village communities</li> <li>- Town vs rural village life – reasons for living</li> <li>- Integration of transport – impact on traffic and lack of infrastructure</li> <li>- 360 school would remove those local communities</li> <li>- Removal of nursery provision had a massive impact</li> <li>- Pupils over the border come from an English EY system and lack Welsh skills etc</li> <li>- Lack of provision around social services – heavy burden on schools due to lack of localised provision</li> <li>- Funding for 360 school could be spent on the schools we already have</li> <li>- Speed of progress in plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment opportunities for the local area. Recruiting within schools to leadership positions</li> <li>- Language and staffing – recruitment of Welsh language. Includes support staff not just teachers</li> <li>- Develop a successful existing site – expanded</li> <li>- Community use of buildings – more efficient</li> <li>- Dedicated ALN provision within the cluster</li> <li>- Welshpool High School included</li> <li>- Umbrella organisations – sharing leadership across schools</li> <li>- Removing barriers in Financial Regulations and using the resources more effectively – e.g. transport</li> <li>- Early Years provision &amp; development</li> <li>- Nurseries back in schools</li> <li>- Dedicated Welsh-medium provision – linked to Early Years – growth</li> <li>- Not removing green space / playing fields in building</li> <li>- FLO role needed in larger schools / urban / cluster</li> <li>- Invest in the schools &amp; sites. Utilise community links – improved facilities may lead to more community use which builds relationships</li> </ul>

## Governors

What local issues do we need to know about which could impact on implementation?	What other ideas and suggestions do you have about the way forward for schools in the area?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too much focus on buildings – condition, size</li> <li>- Flooding in North Welshpool area</li> <li>- Lack of funding</li> <li>- Small schools &amp; small communities align with the new curriculum</li> <li>- New housing and development in the area</li> <li>- Work and travel patterns across the border – parents tend to travel to Shropshire and pupils tend to be dropped off on their route</li> <li>- Reluctance of local families in rural areas to send children to larger schools</li> <li>- Not environmentally friendly to bus pupils around the area</li> <li>- Parents cannot afford the high cost of transport</li> <li>- Strong local objection to closing small schools</li> <li>- Excessive travel time for pupils</li> <li>- Ownership of school buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cluster School – one organisation but retain sites as community classrooms. Different funding model &amp; combination of FY &amp; AC</li> <li>- Church in Wales places</li> <li>- Multi-site schools</li> <li>- Explore value of federation further</li> <li>- Focus on provision, not buildings</li> <li>- Autonomy of decision making in a smaller environment</li> <li>- Centralisation of functions</li> <li>- Collaboration and federation</li> <li>- Enhancement and development of villages – jobs which lead to pupils etc</li> <li>- Sharing of staff and management</li> <li>- Wrap around provision in schools</li> <li>- Transport policy needs to match what we're doing</li> <li>- Focus on education and pupils</li> <li>- New community campus for Ysgol Llanfyllin</li> <li>- Move Ysgol Bro Cynllaith along the language continuum</li> <li>- Nurseries back into schools</li> <li>- Develop and extend an existing school</li> <li>- Keep playing fields – don't build on them</li> <li>- Focus more on younger pupils to retain that localised education</li> <li>- Think differently!</li> <li>- Small is better – it works!</li> <li>- Enhanced Welsh-medium provision</li> </ul>



# Appendix A – Engagement Sheets

## Governors

### Strengths-

- Community Link & Base.
- Flexible & adaptable provision based on local need & demand.
- Pupils engagement with each other outside of school
- Welsh provision
- Small Targetted provision for SEN/ALN.
- SEN/ALN Pupils & Staff all know children
- Don't have to travel- Can walk to school.

### Weaknesses- Staff recruitment

- External provision for SEN/ALN
- Teachers having to multi task.

### Opportunities- Pupils & Staff networking <sup>& collaboration</sup> with the rest of the cluster

- Reach Shropshire pupils & capitalise on 'Welshness'
- Engaging local Adults into the school community

### Threats-

- Loss of Jobs
- Loss of Community feel
- Loss of funding.

25/29

- Professional development (onto SLT)

### Opportunities

- Good parental choice
- Local schools
- Trochi

### Strengths

- Pupil reduction
- Border migration
- Recruitment (incl. Welsh speaking teachers)
- Budget pressures

### Threats

- Welsh provision
- Building conditions
- ALN provision

### Weaknesses

## Strengths.

Collaborative work.

Rurality

Community commitment

Pupil ratios

## Weaknesses

Ability to recruit leaders and Welsh speakers.

Consistency of provision

Transport

Maintenance backlog.

Lack of investment

Uncertainty - instability.

## Opportunity

Pupils coming across from England for Welsh language

## Threats.

Rurality.

Lack of funding

Reducing Pupil numbers

Loss of pupils → Shropshire

New curriculum stopping pupils coming from England

THERE IS STRONG LOCAL OBJECTION TO CLOSING SMALL SCHOOL - LOSS OF COMMUNITY FEEL.

EXCESSIVE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL DISTANCE / TIME

EXTRA TRANSPORT COSTS.

LACK OF ACCESS TO AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

POTENTIAL TO CENTRALISE ADMIN EDUCATIONAL WHICH COULD FREE-UP HEAD TEACHER TIME.

ALLOCATE BUDGET FOR ADDITIONAL ADMIN SUPPORT

S

HAPPY  
LOCAL  
COMMUNITY / FOCUS / INVOLVEMENT  
VARIETY  
CHOICE - CIN W?  
SIZE / CATCHMENT

W

NUMBERS  
COST  
BORDER / GEOGRAPHY  
TRANSFORMATION

O

FEDERATION  
- DIFFERENT MODELS / 2/3 SITE SCHOOLS  
- SHARING RESOURCES  
- CURRICULUM.

T

FUNDING  
~~RISK~~  
THE UNCERTAINTY  
HOME EDUCATION.

Opps Enhancing Primary provision using specialist teachers

Use of Hough school, shared provision - Community classroom.

Adult education

Community build will encourage efficient use of buildings + sharing of facilities eg - 3g pitch / bike track / after school clubs etc. Centralised Admin etc.

Threats.

Cross border migration - Post-16

Lack of funding with status quo.

Possible primary closures may mean pupils leave Powsy.

Strengths

Collaborative working.

Shared teaching resources.

Local provision

Variety

Post-16 collaboration - Trisgar

Weaknesses

need consistency in this.

Centralised ALN provision.

Welsh language provision

Building condition

Strengths

NOW: Cluster working

Now: Parent/Staff relationships

360 school X 2 over 91 schools.

Opportunities

New school - location??

Phased approach - how each step affects others??

Weaknesses

360 school Cnw + Community merged

Flooding

Unable to walk - Transport loss of community / cynryfin

Threats

\*Welsh education for Welsh children\* (closest school will be in England)

Jobs

Parent insecurity

Pupil numbers.

New Community campus <sup>Closure?</sup> New 360 Place school Welsh continuum

- geography - which schools link/merge and where?
- less costs on staffing/building - but more on transport
- Flood plain prevents children getting to school
- Provision of outside space and playing fields
- Travel times, especially for the younger pupils
- Impact on village communities
- Empty sites - community loss.
- Issues merging Church and non-Church schools
- Existing empty Church sites
- language and staffing recruitment for supporting Welsh continuum - midday/support staff.
- Developing community use of school facilities
- Re-introduce nurseries back into schools.

## Strengths

- Close proximity
- close proximity
- Welsh ethos to the cluster

## Weaknesses

- Future pupil data
- Future pupil data
- Disparity between budgets per pupil

## Opportunities

- Investments in building/technology
- Collaboration within the cluster

## Threats

- Welshpool High School
- Welshpool Cluster
- Transport
- Connections
- Jobs security
- Jobs security
- Parent perceptions

S - Range of schools to suit different learners.

- Small community schools.  
 (smaller schools offer provision for ALN & EBD pupils who struggle in a larger setting) <sup>wellbeing focus.</sup>

- Church School places.

W - Buildings need updating.

O - Range of schools.  
 Cluster working.  
 Peer working.  
 Inclusion.  
 ALN provision.

T - ~~That~~ Money / Cost Instability.

Celebration of individuality

Strengths

- Strong cluster working
- Skill sharing
- Experienced ALN Teaching and support

TIS  
 ELSA  
 Early Years  
 MELSA  
 Emotion Coaching

- Family feeling, school

- Over 50% of learners have ALN  
 - Learners travel from out of area (Pantrebert Saint Martin's)

Weaknesses

- funding
- known as a 'special' school locally
- expectations of level of ALN learners in ALN provision is in data

Opportunities

- known as a 'special' school locally and having high
- closest specialist provision is in Newtown (out of cluster area)

Threats

- local 'gossip'
- staff well-being
- stigma of false reputation

Llangedwyn

Local issues and ideas for the future

STRENGTHS  
WEAKNESSES

THERE IS STRONG LOCAL OBJECTION TO CLOSING & SELLING SCHOOL - LOSS OF COMMUNITY FEEL.

EXCESSIVE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL DISTANCE/TIME

EXTRA TRANSPORT COSTS.

LACK OF ACCESS TO AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

POTENTIAL TO INCREASE ADMIN EDUCATIONAL WHICH COULD FREE-UP HOURS TEACHERS TIME.

ALLOCATE BUDGET FOR ADDITIONAL ADMIN SUPPORT

LOCAL ISSUES.

Recruitment of Leadership.

Transport policies

Issues with the 'Scheme of Funding'

Geography of local area - proximity to border.

OTHER IDEAS.

SHARED LEADERSHIP - COMMON CLASSROOMS.

SHARED ALN, ADMIN/FINANCE.

JOINT GOVERNANCE

SHARED FINANCIAL + ACADEMIC YEAR.

Strengths - Community Link @ Base. - Sustainable Provision based

## LOCAL ISSUES

Bryn Maben

Flood plans / road closures impacts transport

New building - housing being built in Crew Green, Llandrinio, Four Crosses, Ardalen

Work travel patterns - parent travelling east or north combined with lack of wrap around childcare.

## Ideas & Suggestions

Keeping younger children close to home

Increased pre-school childcare + wrap around care

Sharing staff / management.

Make a firm long term decision & manage it well !!

Make the transport policy ~~work~~ coherent / more suitable & flexible where reasonable.

Issues - Flooding

Local Transport - not LA provided.

Local Housing - Positive.

Local Businesses - Positive.

Suggestions - Federalisation

- We are losing Welsh pupils based purely on financial constraints. Children who have had a Welsh education up to age 10/11 (yr 6) are being driven across the border as parents cannot afford the £240 per term per pupil cost to send their child to continue at a Welsh school. This means Welsh children are losing their 'Welshness' because affordable housing is on the English side of the village.



- CHURCH IN WALES PLACE?

- DIFFERENT MODELS

- FEDERATION

- MULTI SITE SCHOOLS

- NOT ABOUT BUILDINGS - BEST PROVISION.

- BUILDING BASED ~~MODELS~~ MINDSET

(EXAMPLE - CIMW PROVISION = EXPAMP LLANSANTFFALD)

- URBAN MODEL - RURAL COMMUNITY

④ Continue to promote  
Community feeling  
for schools.

⑤ Include  
Wentwood High  
School in  
session or apprentice  
to connect or way  
forward without their  
input for "border regions"

Develop / extend  
an existing successful  
school

Be mindful of  
Flooding!!!  
④ For 360° school proposal!

### Local Issues

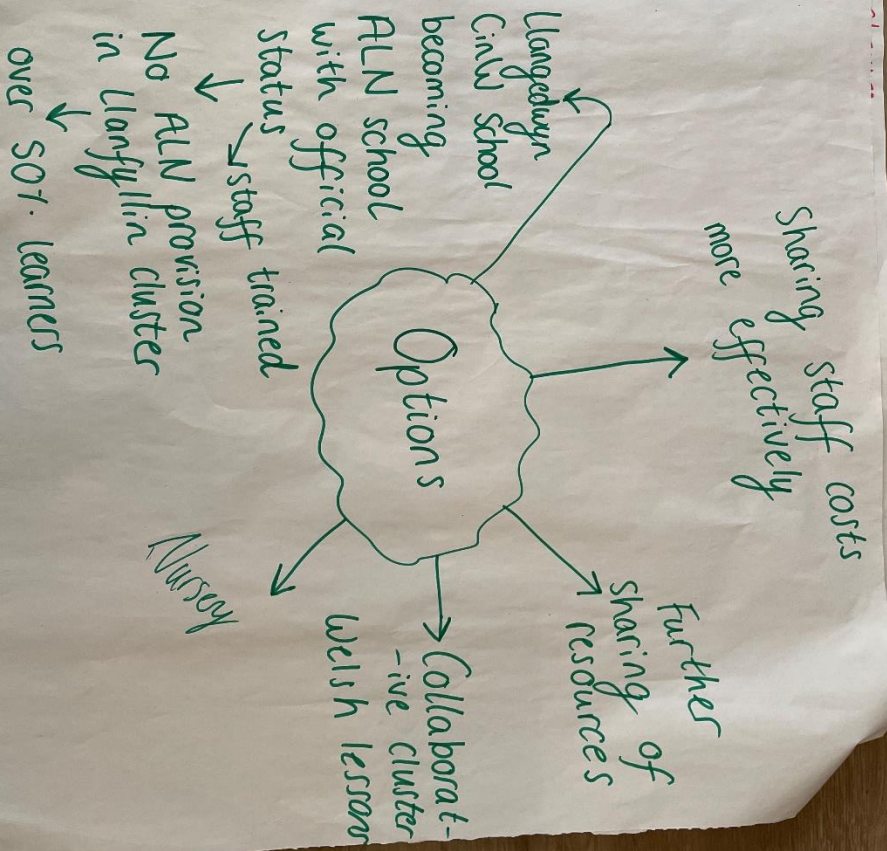
- Parents in border villages will send their children to school in the direction they go to work - which tends to be Shropshire.
- reluctance of local families in rural areas to send children to larger town schools unless young.
- putting young children on buses for long periods
- not 'green' to bus more children - many walk to school currently.

### Ideas Going Forward

- Federations
- ALN facilities - repurpose an existing school?
- Potential council housing estates (local provision) could further affect pupil numbers. (Llanfyllin)
- preserve current provision to prevent homelessness of pupils over border.
- wrap around care.
- keep playing fields - don't build on them.
- nursery classes back within schools; helps working parents and keeps children in Wales.
- Going along the Welsh Continuum. (Llanfyllin).

### Local issues?

- Borders ✓
- Flooding ✓
- Small villages in close proximity
- "gossip"
- lack of invest in community
- buildings
- ownership of land schools built on



## LOCAL ISSUES.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

DIFFICULTY IN RECRUITING HEAD TEACHERS - WELSH TEACHERS

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## OTHER IDEAS

NEW BUILD CAPACITY INCREASED.

COMMUNITY USE OF BUILDINGS 24/7

UMBRELLA ORGANISATION, SHARED GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP - COMMUNITY CLASSROOMS

REMOVE S.2 TO HELP WITH TRANSPORT.

ENHANCED WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION

EARLY YEARS PROVISION

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local Issues → Transport - length of journeys to school

Flooding.

Internet - rural areas.

Churches & communities.

ALN provision.

Losing chn to England.

Ideas & suggestions →