

ABERHAFESP COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

From the Editor: You may have seen me 'picking litter' along the B4568 while taking our daily exercise. I have been amazed at the rubbish lying on the roadside and in the hedges.

Here is an example of what I have carried back to our house to recycle!

Approximately six wheel trims so far, and YES that is a **toilet seat!**

COMMUNITY CENTRE

When I went down to the hall this week, the sun was shining, all the daffodils were out and the small ones encircling the big bed looked particularly pretty – in fact the whole place looked lovely. I checked the food cupboards, and sadly had to ditch all the comestibles, apart from one bag of sugar and a packet of welsh tea dated 2022. Everything else was very stale, so when we reopen we shall have to restock.

The hall will reopen, briefly, for the forthcoming elections, but the presiding officers and staff will all be coming from central office, bringing their own equipment. They will be sterilising everything before leaving, so it is all out of our hands.

On a personal note, it has been a long, hard winter, the weather not helping to ease the general gloom. The landline has been a lifeline, to those of us on our own, and I am sure I am not being too dramatic when I say that it has been a way of remembering how to converse! I even talk to the birds, and when I go out to feed them, and say "come on birdies, tweet, tweet", the dog gives me that same pitying look which my children, when teenagers, used to give me, when I sang along to carols in shops at Christmas! Man's best friend is always good for a laugh, though great company, and ensures sticking to some sort of routine, which is important at present.

I was gutted for our Rugby team in their match against the French. After playing so well, it was hard to lose a 10 point lead right at the end. All their games this time have been so good – edge of the seat cliffhangers, and so great to watch.

Good news: We have received a grant from a Powys County Council Initiative to help people to meet up safely, obviously in numbers as allowed when lockdown eases. The grant is for a pop up gazebo 6 metres by 3 meters, with optional removable sides, and also for two portable electric heaters.

On a bright note, the roll out of the Covid vaccine has been phenomenal in Wales, the health professionals and volunteers at the Maldwyn Centre have been marvellous, kind and jolly, and have generated almost a party atmosphere, so a big thank you to them all – we are so grateful!

Best wishes to everyone, a Happy Easter, and I hope against hope that we can all be back together again soon, eating biscuits and bacon butties. Edward tells me that he has just renewed the bar licence too. **More good news!**

Maddy Thornton





Get your gutters cleared from the safety of the ground Reaches over conservatories and all those awkward places No more ladders

Telephone: Nigel Hamer 07870220845 Covers Newtown and surrounding areas.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Aberhafesp Community Council covers the area of Aberhafesp, Bwlch-y-Fridd, Bethel and Rhyd-y-Felin.

A Community Council is governed by the Local Government Act of 1972. Here in Aberhafesp it consists of seven Councillors who sign a Declaration of Office and work on a voluntary basis for the good of the whole community. They are supported by a clerk who is employed to ensure the correct procedures are enforced and the smooth running of the Council in general.

Notice of each meeting is displayed for three clear days giving the date, the time, the agenda and currently the '*Zoom joining details*'. They are posted on the notice boards at Bwlch-y-Ffridd, Hillcrest Aberhafesp, the Community Centre and the telephone kiosk in Bethel.

Details of meetings can also be found on the

Community Council <u>website</u>. There will soon be a new Facebook page

You can access the latest *County Councillor monthly reports*

as well as current County planning applications,

where you can enter comments to support or object.

The minutes of meetings are only posted on the website after they have been approved by the Community Council which takes place at the start of the following meeting. For example minutes from a meeting in January would be approved in February, if a meeting was held then.

Meetings are held on a Wednesday evening, but due to Covid restrictions are currently being held via **Zoom**. Members of the public can attend any meeting, unless otherwise specified.

If you have an item you wish to add to the agenda please contact the clerk Rachel Hamer <u>rachel.hamer72@hotmail.com</u>. Come and just watch if you have an interest in anything on the agenda, or if you have anything you wish to bring to the attention of the council and you wish to speak at the meeting you need to ask the chairman.

Note: Due to the retirement of Alun Pryce after 30 years representing the residents of Bethel and the rest of the parish an election for a replacement councillor took place on Thursday 25th March. The results were Steve Pryce 90 votes and Jenny Lloyd 71 votes. Steve Pryce is now elected.

Editor: Marilyn Bedworth/Printed by Bluesdigital (Newtown)

Spring 2021 2 of 14

WELSH SHEEP EVENT

The NSA Cymru/Wales Committee has made the decision to postpone the 2021 event at Red House, Aberhafesp. Following the recent Government announcements and continued uncertainty in the events industry, it has made it difficult for us to plan for our usual prestigious event. The decision has therefore been made to postpone until Tuesday 16th May 2023 and we will work to be back stronger.

Details regards exhibiting and sponsoring at this event will be released in 2022.

However, we are hoping to hold some farm walks later this year. More details available on the event website: <u>https://nationalsheep.org.uk/welshsheep</u> or contact National Sheep Association Welsh Sheep organiser Helen Roberts email helen@nationalsheep.org.uk

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200 CLUB

Each year we collect money for these draws in July and the winners are drawn in the Autumn and Winter of that year, and the Spring and Summer of the following year. The last two draws for 2019 were delayed until the end of 2020, so having been unable to collect in July 2020 due to Covid-19, we are hoping to start the cycle again in July 2021.

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GAME CHANGE REVAMP PROJECT – FUNDRAISING APPEAL

The Game Change Project is a not-for-profit organisation, based near Newtown that provides opportunities for young people to develop confidence and resilience by learning essential life skills and volunteering to help older people in the community.

At the start of the pandemic, the project stepped in to manage and coordinate volunteers for Aberhafesp, Caersws and the surrounding villages Covid-19 Support Group. Volunteers helped people who were self isolating by collecting essential food items, delivering prescriptions, exercising pets and other daily tasks.

The project does not receive any statutory funding and relies on grants and donations to be able to carry out its work. Following Covid-19 there will be a need for activities and experiences to help people develop the resilience needed to thrive in the "new normal". A recent survey carried out by the project revealed a need for outdoor spaces where people can meet to enjoy shared activities and take part in "shoulder to shoulder" projects.

Pictured here in the old barn are Marley Robertson from Newtown and Tomos Roberts from Welshpool who attend the digger driving and mechanics course.

Since September, the project has supported 24 young people and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. One of the young participants who had been



struggling in school said: "being involved with the project has taught me many things. I feel it has made a big difference".

Sian Roberts project manager and co-founder said: "Social distancing will be needed for some time to come and we want to adapt our facilities so that social interaction and hands on learning can take place safely. We are appealing for donations to help us refurbish and renew the workspace and create a covered outdoor area for young people at The Game Change Project so that they have a modern, state of the art centre to learn life skills and gain experience". Current facilities include a small workshop area kitted out with some basic tools for small mechanical jobs and woodwork, a cabin which is used as a classroom area and has basic cooking facilities and an old wooden barn which provides a covered space where the young people can have their lunch or hang out with the animals.

Any donations will help the project make a difference for many more young people. The new workspace would enable the project to offer a wider range of activities and practical experiences to help people of all ages raise their aspirations and reach their true potential. You can donate to the appeal by clicking on this <u>link https://localgiving.org/revampproject</u> or by visiting https://www.thegamechangeproject.co.uk. The project would also love to hear from any local businesses that could provide sponsorship or raise money through fundraising activities.

For further information, please contact Sian at <u>gamechangeproject@gmail.com</u> or phone 0776660627.

Staff and participants of The Game Change Project pictured outside the old shed which is due to be renovated and converted into a workshop for young people.



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ST GWYNOG'S CHURCH

As we write this we do not have a date for reopening the church for services and we will not be having services before Easter.

However we will be decorating the churchyard for this occasion. There will be a competition for an Easter Garden. We will be making banners with the first line of some Easter hymns, baskets containing flowers and other Easter items, which you will see when you visit the churchyard.

We have been having Zoom get togethers and quizzes during lockdown. All our activities which are normally held in church have had to go to Zoom, but we hope it won't be too long before we can get back to some sort of normality and meet in church.

In place of the coffee mornings we have been taking afternoon teas to church members and members of the community who live alone or who are unwell. We hope we will be able to continue doing this until such time that we are able to restart the coffee mornings in the church room. If you know of someone who would benefit from having a tea please let any church member know. Pam on 07710438203 or the Rev. Nia Wyn Morris on 01686 951395.

Note: You can view Easter services recorded at All Saints here.

RYDFELIN CHAPEL

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, the chapel will remain closed until changes are announced by the Welsh government.

MOTHER'S UNION

The Aberhafesp Group of the Mothers' Union held their Annual General Meeting on the 18th March 2021 at 3.00pm on Zoom. The members reflected on how very disrupted the programme for 2020 had been due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans were made to continue running our Aberhafesp Mothers' Union with a committee of members leading the branch. Barbara Moelwyn-Williams stepped down as committee coordinator and all committee members agreed to share the running of our Mothers' Union group whilst looking for a new coordinator.

The Annual General Meeting held on the 20th February 2020 turned out to be the last actual meeting to be held throughout that year. None of the programme of events planned for 2020 were able to go ahead when all public gatherings were cancelled as social distancing, washing hands, wearing face coverings and sanitising surfaces took over in lockdown.

The Mothers' Union e-newsletters update members online and have announced that their theme for 2021 will be 'Rebuilding Hope and Confidence' as in 2020, since they recognise that the global pandemic will continue to create a need for support as many people come to terms with loss of all kinds.

The Aberhafesp Mothers' Union hope that 2021 is able to deliver added protection from the coronavirus infection by means of effective testing and vaccinating so that our planned programme can go ahead in person later in the year.

In the meantime our thanks to Zoom, FaceTime, telephone etc, as they continue to keep us in touch with one another!

Barbara Moelwyn-Williams

LOCAL YOUNG FARMERS

Aberhafesp Young Farmers has not stopped. The County held a virtual Eisteddfod and our club came an overall fifth which is the highest we have come in an Eisteddfod for a long while! If you would like to see some of the entries from the Eisteddfod they are all on the

Montgomery YFC website.





Erin Lovell, our newest member, came an amazing first in the Stand Up Comedy competition and her video went forward to the All Wales round on the weekend of the 30th March when she came third. You can see her entry **here**. More details on our **Facebook page**.

Erin also came third in writing a poem 'Under 27'. This is such a great achievement for Erin and as a club we are so happy to have her, and look forward to getting back to normal to show her what more Young Farmers has to offer.

Young Farmers look forward to hopefully getting back to normal, we have loved helping our community and hope you will all continue to support us in events and fundraising when we can. Stay safe, see you all soon.

Gemma Owen. Chair.



See our <u>Website:</u> Note: Anyone needing some relaxing hypnotherapy during these strange times? Currently available via Skype for a reduced rate of £30 per hour. Further discounts considered for low income clients.

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WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Throughout this long winter we have had to be very patient and be content to stay at home to keep safe. With the vaccination programme going well there is certainly more cause for optimism than this time last year when there was so much despair and fear throughout the world. With optimism being the key word the members of our W.I. are looking ahead to better days. Hopefully before too long we will all have had our second vaccination and the country will begin to open up slowly.



However, with so much uncertainty as to when groups will be allowed to meet we have not drawn up a programme for this year. The emphasis will be informality, meet up for a chat, have a cup of coffee and a piece of cake and take each month as it comes. As confidence grows and meetings can be planned we have a wealth of talent to call upon from amongst our own members who I am sure will be willing to talk of career experiences or provide workshops.

We will contact all our members when we know it is safe to meet. In the meantime we continue to keep in touch by email, telephone calls and letters and if anyone reading this feels they would like to come along to our first get together please do so, we would love to see you.

Contact: Elaine Benbow, President: Telephone 01686 625586

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Spring 2021 10 of 14

A TALE OF TWO BRIDGES

As increasing numbers of us explore our immediate surroundings during lockdown we became aware of features in the landscape which we have either ignored or taken so much for granted that we hardly give them a second glance. The footbridge which crosses the Severn from Aberhafesp to Penstrowed near Ty Mawr farm is one example. The present elegant suspension bridge is the second on this site. We are fortunate that the local newspaper covered the opening of both and a comparison of the two reports makes interesting reading.

The local communities of Aberhafesp and Penstrowed decided to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837 by building a footbridge linking the two parishes. So in 1887 a large crowd of local people gathered to celebrate the opening of a structure with a span of about 140 feet and two yards wide. The newspaper reported that the bridge 'is intended for the use of residents in the adjoining parishes of Penstrowed and Aberhafesp, and supplies a route to Moat Lane station, about one and a half miles shorter than the highway' i.e. via Caersws. (Moat Lane station was where the line to Llanidloes met the Newtown to Machynlleth railway). The bridge, paid for by public subscriptions, cost £35.

The opening ceremony was performed by Mrs Proctor of Aberhafesp Hall, her husband, Edward and the Rev. J. Dixon, rector of Aberhafesp were the chairman and secretary respectively of the committee responsible for the bridge. A procession started from the Hall and marched through the fields to the bridge, accompanied by the Royal Welsh Warehouse Band – very appropriate as Queen Victoria, who ordered Welsh flannel underwear, was the RWW's most distinguished customer.

The ceremony was preceded by prayers celebrating Victoria 'as a queen [who] had been an earthly queen of queens....the nursing mother of the church and the benefactor of her people'. Mrs Proctor and Mr Scott Owen, the agent for Lord Sudeley of Gregynog, walked across the bridge and then dashed a bottle of champagne against it and named 'the Victoria bridge in commemoration of her Majesty's Jubilee (Cheers)'. The opening was followed by tea – presided over by local ladies – served in a tent erected in an adjoining field. Later in the evening the band played and sports were held 'for which prizes to the amount of £15 were given'.

In 1950 the bridge was swept away by flood waters and it was decided to replace it. On Thursday August 9th 1951 the new Festival bridge was opened, so called because this was the year of the Festival of Britain a commemoration of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and a celebration of British achievements after the dark years of war and austerity. This opening ceremony lacked the pomp and scale of the Victorian occasion but there was one very special link between the two.

The new bridge was opened by Mr and Mrs John Thomas; 66 years earlier John as a young man had been present when the Jubilee bridge was opened. In 1985 Miss Maggie Thomas, Mr and Mrs Thomas's daughter who lived at Severn View (which stood opposite the garage at the Pentre) recalled the event with pride. 'To mark the occasion they [her parents] were presented with a beautiful pair of scissors by the younger son of Mr Davies, Red House and Ann Griffiths of Ty Mawr farm presented the bouquet'. In 1951 there was no band to play at the ceremony but the opening was followed by sports for both children and adults.

Thanks to Kate McCaffrey at Newtown library for sending me copies of the local newspaper reports on which this article is based. *Edward G Parry 29/01/2021* Photo by



OW DO MISTER!

I am going to tell you about a strange experience Now I have to ask myself how I knew he was I had a few years back, probably around 2004 there as I hadn't heard him arrive and I hadn't though it is hard to be certain now. It wasn't looked up. Somehow I just knew there was a exciting or dramatic, indeed it was anything but boy there. Then he spoke. since it occurred whilst I was busy doing what I "Ow do mister, what's tha doing'?" did most days at that time, chasing up a fault on "I'm trying to repair a telephone line" I told him an underground telephone line. Yes yours truly without looking up and carried on prodding was a BT man – or possibly by then an amongst the wires. A short silence then he spoke Openreach man but no matter. I was for forty again. "Why ist tha shiverin' mister, ist tha years a telephone engineer. Oh, and one other cold?" That accent again, why didn't I thing I should mention before going any further immediately ask him what on earth he was doing since it has a bearing on what I am about to so obviously so far from home. I told him that I recount, is that my ancestry on my father's side had an icy wind blowing up my back and that is pure West Riding of Yorkshire so I am very was why I was shivering. Then I looked up at familiar with the broad accent. Ee bah gum and him. Oh gosh. all that.

It was a sunny weekday morning in March and I most. This was the first decade of the twenty was sitting on a folded up groundsheet, my legs first century and boys of that age would over the side of an underground engineering box typically be wearing jeans, trainers, a tee shirt, the cover of which I had dragged off before first and jumper in the cooler months, and perhaps an identifying and then opening up the cable that I anorak. This boy was dressed somewhat was interested in. Sunny it might have been but differently. there was a chilly wind blowing up the road On his head he wore a cap like the school caps reminding one that winter was barely out of my generation had to suffer (whilst anyone was sight.

The road led uphill through a 1960's housing school cap as it was all plain grey and had no estate, a not unattractive one since it had had badge on the front. He had on a navy blue time to mature. The houses were for the most overcoat worn unbuttoned over a grey short part set well back off the road and the effect was trousered suit just like the one I had at his age one of spaciousness. If one chose to live on an only that even in the mid nineteen fifties mine estate there were a lot worse. My work point boasted an admixture of Terylene unlike this was in the middle of the tarmac path that boy's which looked decidedly scratchy. I can't bordered the road on both sides though separated now remember any details regarding his shirt from it by a grass verge.

lap full of wires, shuddering from time to time socks held up by elasticated garters which as the cold wind blew up my back.

I became aware of a small boy standing at the flashes that showed below the turnover. This boy end of the box no more than three feet from me. was a cub scout, I had had garters like that when Oh dear, I didn't like children around when I I was a ten year old cub. Then my gaze settled was working, you couldn't concentrate on the on his footwear, he was wearing his Sunday best job in hand and watch to see what they were up boots. to at the same time. The biggest worry was that they might hurt themselves whilst messing around, guess who would get the blame?

My visitor however was on his own and one boy was never a problem.

He was aged ten I would think, eleven at the

watching at least) except it wasn't obviously a and tie but he was wearing a grey pullover. On There I sat hunched over an opened cable and a his lower limbs were knee length grey woollen revealed their presence by the bright green In the excellent history of Aberhafesp School But I do recall it from time to time, more so now compiled to mark its centenary in 2009 there is a perhaps as it recedes into the past and I have photograph taken in 1929 of the then more time for reflection. Just how am I to think headteacher Mr. Hamer with his pupils, and the about it? A perfectly average working day, an boys are all wearing boots. By the mid thirties almost deserted housing estate and a small boy boots would be in a minority and soon from another age. Was there really a mother consigned to history.

Forget about Doc Martens or baseball boots, dressed for the early nineteen thirties whose here we are talking about leather soled boots boots should have been in the Northampton with laces neatly tied and above all highly Shoe Museum ten miles distant? Just possible I polished. Our boy wasn't allowed to kick around suppose but very unlikely. A film extra in in these boots, they were for church attendance costume? Pinewood studios were sixty miles to and paying visits to relatives in the company of the south and the nearest theatre no closer than parents.

For a few seconds I turned my attention back to possibilities you may feel that the obvious the wires in my lap and then looked up again explanation was that the boy did not exist at all surely now with the intention of asking him but that I had been glue sniffing, pill popping, or what he was up to. You have guessed where this injecting. No emphatically no. Saint I am not but tale is going haven't you? Yes the boy had I have never taken that path. disappeared.

I looked up and down the road and then turned outside the box. My father had died in 1996 and to look across at the houses opposite. No small I have a sepia photo taken of him when he was boy in sight. I got to my feet and walked up to about the same age as 'my boy' but then the year the nearest house which was set back behind a would have been 1922. Apart from the fact that low hedge, a front lawn and with a drive long dad was wearing boots there is no similarity at enough for a couple of cars. All was quiet as all in how the boys were dressed. So we must housing estates usually are at that time of day discount the possibility of my most recent with adults at work and children in school. If the ancestor returning briefly to the mortal world to boy had taken to his heels he could have just check up on me and if ever he should choose to about made the distance whilst I glanced down do so surely he will appear in a form that I will at the job in hand but then surely I would have recognise, after all I never knew him as a ten heard his departure, after all this was a year old. tarmacked path and his boots were leather soled. In conclusion I have to ask myself this. What Remember I was sitting on the path hunched would someone in a nearby house have seen had over wires and my ears were not so far from they glanced out of their window? Would they ground level with the boy's boots no more than have seen a small boy watching a BT man at three feet away and yet I hadn't heard him arrive work or would they have seen a BT man talking nor leave. How I wish now that I had at least to himself? We shall never know. made some conversation with him. I spoke of my strange encounter when I returned home but Graham Green. Bwlch-y-Ffridd.

then life moved on and the experience became a fading memory.

visiting nearby who chose to turn her son out the Shoe Museum. Having ruled out these

We are left with no option but to really think

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Community Council information	www.communityorg.uk/ aberhafespcommunitycouncil		
	Community council facebook page		

This newsletter can be accessed from both the Council website and our **Facebook** page

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of this newsletter will be published in **July 2021**. Please send any articles of interest to the Editor (mbedworth@gmail.com) no later than the **20**th **June**.

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