Llanfyllin Town Council
Wednesday 18 November 2026
Llanfyllin Town Square
Consideration of Asset Transfer

This document is intended as a discussion paper for the council to further consider the asset transfer of the Town Square into its ownership under a leasehold agreement.

It has been written gathering the views of some people living and/or working in Llanfyllin. It is intended to be objectively capturing those views on the three outlined options. There may be further options, but none were suggested at this stage. There may be further views. This is a starting point for a formal consideration of the matter.

Introduction

The Town Square is currently owned by and the responsibility of Powys County Council.

It is valued by the community as a natural community meeting space and is used for a variety of things including:

- Location of the Christmas Tree.
- Outdoor seating on tables and benches, which are utilised by but not for the exclusive use of the café in the square.
- Remembrance Sunday – the War Memorial is on the square.
- Christmas market.
- Christmas Carols on Christmas Eve.
- St Myllin's Day.
- Stalls on various occasions at various events.

Until it was demolished in the 1960s a town hall stood on the site where the square now is. The highway ran immediately in front of the shop fronts on the square and was paved and blended into the square created when the town hall was demolished. The highway remains a designated highway and vehicles do on occasions drive on it and may need to continue to do so. It will be an onerous process to resolve the issue (see Appendix 1) and potentially of little value to do so.

There is a view that the Town Square is cluttered, however the 'collection' has evolved over a number of years and all, or most are deemed useful to varying degrees. Whatever the view is, it has a significant amount of street furniture and other 'things' in a relatively small area possibly resulting in some things being overlooked:

- War memorial.
- Sculpture donated by a local artist.

- Post box.
- Ornate streetlamps.
- The Town Council Noticeboard, on the wall of the old newsagents, faces on to the Town Square (currently awaiting repair).
- Historic milestone.
- Tourist information finger post.
- A number benches and tables with benches seating.
- Slate plague acknowledging funding for the square's creation/refurbishment.
- Two fibre optic boxes (which cannot be moved, one of which is camouflaged in the above slate plague).
- Flower troughs (one is cracked and needs removing).
- Wheelie bins for the café (which has no rear access).
- Grit box.
- Rails to lock bicycles to.
- Removable sandwich boards giving information on Arts Connection events, The Workhouse and Arwen Gallery.

The Square is regularly used to park motorbikes, by people in the town and visitors.

People with mobility and sight issues can find it hard to navigate their way across the Town Square currently, therefor it is not an accessible space for all of the community.

Option one - Undertake asset transfer to the full ownership of the Town Council

Financial Implications

All costs of managing and maintaining the square:
Initial grants available to be applied for with possible financial contribution from the Town Council.
Possible increased precept for the town, with further increases also possible to meet any further developmental and ongoing maintenance costs.

If the asset transfer were to be agreed the proposed design and indicative costings will help identify suitable schemes, check eligibility and establish any contribution the Council would need to make.

Potential Advantages

The Town Council will have the ability to define how and what the square is used for.

Town Council is viewed to be taking up the opportunity to further shape the Town Square to how the majority of the town wish it to be.

The Town Square needs re-laying and the asset transfer would give the Town Council the potential ability to do this.

It would be possible to reconfigure the Town Square to make it an even more inviting, user-friendly place. Some ideas for how the square could be used and how things could be changed have been muted to date, including:

- ‘Decluttering’, having a more planned approach and making the area potentially more useable by everyone.
- Rationalising the collection of seating into a more purposeful orderly presentation.
- Possible dedicated tables for café use during opening times, with nominal contribution to wear and tear of tables. Previously ‘bistro style’ tables and chairs were used by the café which could be more easily stacked away. There is a view that it would be better to remove the heavier more permanent wooden tables and chairs and replace with the bistro style again.
- Clear space for events EG Christmas market planning highlighted lack of actual space.
- Planting of appropriate trees with water tanks buried to feed/water.
- Planting of smaller ornamental trees in large troughs.
- New plant troughs (either galvanised metal or stone) planted with perennial plants which are more resilient to less predictable and more extreme weather.
- Relocating the War Memorial to a different site.
- Encouraging traders on the square on market day.

* The fibre optic green boxes cannot be moved.

Other suggestions can be encouraged and considered.

It is understood there are potential grant opportunities to be explored to fund the now needed maintenance work and/or the redevelopment of the square possibly utilising some of the above and other suggestions.

Engagement and involvement of the town to input into the agreed the design would help enable broader town ownership and pride in the square.

Potential Disadvantages

The Town Square needs re-laying and this would become the responsibility of the Town Council.

There is a risk the Town Square may be transferred to the ownership of the Town Council and the necessary funds for re-laying the Square are not secured. It is understood there are potential grant opportunities to be explored, but funding via grant application is never guaranteed.

There will be an ongoing need for funding to manage and maintain the Square, there are no guarantees there will be grant funding available to apply for nor that the Council will be successful in its bids resulting in further increases in the precept.

The expectations of the town of how the Square will be used and managed could be raised with there being differing expectations. The various views and wants would need to be listened to, addressed and managed and seen to be so.

The Square will need regular ongoing maintenance.

H&S monitoring and management and any risk implications become the responsibility of the Town Council.

Town Council is viewed to be taking on additional responsibilities and risks.

Further Considerations

What is the community benefit? The community can have more influence on how the square looks and is managed. There may be other benefits, not yet voiced.

Is this something the community wants? To consider an engagement and consultation process with the town to establish views and legitimacy of the asset transfer. If the asset is transferred, then it would be advantageous to engage with the community to gather their views on how the Square should look and be used and would establish the community benefit.

Increased resource to maintain and manage. Will the responsibility fall on the part time employed Town Clerk? It may become necessary for increased staffing hours to manage the Town Square and other town assets and resources either by increasing the Town Clerk hours or an additional employee.

Currently willing and able volunteers (including people who are also town councillors) get involved and ‘get their hands dirty’, but the nature of volunteering means caution should be exercised if volunteering is key to the longer-term plan of maintaining and managing the assets.

It is understood the transfer will be leasehold with a service level agreement (SLA). Could the Town Square revert to the ownership of the County Council before the end of the lease term without penalties should the Town Council be unable to manage it at any point in the future?

How will any misuse of the Town Square to be managed?

Option two – Do not undertake an asset transfer and explore the possibility of doing all of what it outlined to be possible in option one

Financial Implications

Responsible only for what the Town Council chooses to do.
Potentially easier to financially manage as everything the Town Council undertakes in respect of the Square is choice.

Potential Advantages

Use of the Square can continue to be used in the way it is currently.

Over a number of years the Square and its use has evolved. Could this be reviewed and improved upon by a more planned approach by the Town Council in partnership with others?

The below suggestions would still be possible and other suggestions could be encouraged and considered:

- 'Decluttering', having a more planned approach and making the area potentially more useable by everyone.
- Rationalising the collection of seating into a more purposeful orderly presentation.
- Possible dedicated tables for café use during opening times, with nominal contribution to wear and tear of tables.
- Clear space for events EG Christmas market planning highlighted lack of actual space.
- New plant troughs (either galvanised metal or stone) planted with perennial plants which are more resilient to less predictable and more extreme weather.

Less responsibility and risk to manage.

There is the scope to not do anything should the Town Council wish to.

Potential Disadvantages

The Town Council has reduced ability to use, shape and develop the square.

The town is dependent on Powys County Council taking responsibility for the square. In the current climate of local government the county council appears to have limited interest, will or ability to do anything other than its basic responsibilities. This results in limiting how the square looks and can be used and developed.

May be less or unlikely to secure funding for the 'repaving'.

Option three - Do nothing

Keep the Town Square as it is. Maintain the status quo.

Financial Implications

No cost implications for the Town Square

Potential Advantages

Town Council is viewed to be not taking on the additional responsibilities or risks. Powys CC, continues to be responsible.

The status quo in terms of use of the Square remains.

Potential Disadvantages

The Town Council has reduced ability to use, shape and develop the square.

The town is dependent on Powys County Council taking responsibility for the square. In the current climate of local government the county council appears to have limited interest or will to do anything other than its basic responsibilities. This results in limiting how the square looks and can be used and developed.

Disadvantageous. Town Council is viewed to be not taking on additional responsibilities or risks but also to be not seizing an opportunity to make potential improvements to the Town Square and therefore the town.

May be less or unlikely to secure funding for the ‘repaving’.

Appendix One

The highway position has previously been investigated with Powys County Council. The paved highway section, immediately in front of the shop fronts on the square, is outside the area included in the proposed asset transfer and they are not able to include it.

The Town Council has looked in depth at removing the highway status and this would require a formal stopping-up process, including consultation, public notices and an opportunity for objections before determination by the magistrates court. Costs are significant and would have to be met by the Town Council. Approval is not guaranteed, and magistrates do uphold objections.

It is also worth noting that stopping-up process would not automatically give the Town Council ownership. Under the "ad medium filum viae" presumption, adjoining owners may already own the underlying land up to the centre of the highway, when the highway designation is removed the land would likely revert to them; this would make it incredibly complex to manage.

Information supplied by the Town Clerk.