

Llandrillo Public Convenience Access Group, Llandrillo, Denbighshire, North Wales

Renovation works to the Llandrillo Public Conveniences commenced on Monday 21st March and opened on Saturday 20th August. This is the outcome of three years dedicated work by Llandrillo Public Convenience Access Group. In 1998 Denbighshire County Council (DCC) closed the conveniences and subsequently announced in 2001 that they were entering into a consultation with Llandrillo Community Council (LCC) to dispose of/demolish the redundant toilet building.

Llandrillo has had a public convenience, for some 40 years or so, from when it was part of Meirionnyddshire pre1974. The facility became a welcome oasis for those who frequently passed through the village, tourist on-route or those using the children's playground and/or adjacent car park by the River Ciediog as a base for walking, cycling and picnicking.

Endeavouring keep the doors open thereafter LCC attempted to operate the facility but was beaten by the burden of the annual National Non-Domestic Rate bill, some £500, rendering the effort unsustainable after a few months. Unfortunately nobody told those who needed the facility and when you have to go you have to go, consequently a public health problem was becoming an issue in the immediate vicinity of the closed facility.



‘Closed up’ Toilet Facility, Llandrillo

In March-April 2002 a public consultation exercise was initiated by resident David Robinson backed by three other residents canvassing the Llandrillo Community and Visitor support for reopening the facility. Coincidentally in April 2002 the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) announced the inclusion of Berwyn, Llantisilio and Ruabon Mountain areas in to ‘right to roam’ Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 implementation programme. The CCW road show promoting the proposals indicated that there was no provision for such basic facilities as toilets in their plans; it was made clear that it was not their problem.

In May 2002 a comprehensive feasibility report was prepared by Mr. Robinson on behalf of the ‘Llandrillo Public Convenience Access Group’ and submitted to DCC Chief Executive, Mr Ian Miler. The report concluded that there was substantial local support and unanimous visitor support for the facility. The likelihood of increased demand as a consequence of the CRoW Act implementation, in near future, was emphasised. All returns from the survey

were included in the report. A site meeting took place in June 2002 at the derelict toilet facility organised by local DDC Councillor Cefyn Williams, present were the Access Group, Mr. Ian Miller and the Head of Public Protection. A Subsequent meeting took place to find a way to renovate the building; this resulted in a submission to DCC for funding towards refurbishment works.

During July 2002 a preliminary condition survey of the toilet building was carried out. In January 2003 a meeting took place with DCC Estates and Renovation Grants Officers resulting in the preparation of Specification and Schedule of Works for the refurbishment in May 2003. In parallel with this open public meetings were taking place at Y Ganolfan, Llandrillo in June, August 2003 and December 2004 to present the plans and formally adopted a constitution for the Access Group. The Chair person of the Group was determined as the incumbent chair person of the LCC (the position is subject to re-election each year). This has created a perpetual link between the Access Group and the LCC.

The Access Group engaged formal legal representation to iron-out the small print of a 20year lease agreement between the Group and DCC. This was a vital ingredient in determining a satisfactory outcome of a formal agreement. The Group received no financial assistance for their legal representation.

With one aim 'to manage the facility with no charge to the user' the Access Group opened the facility on 20th August 2005 and now operate the facility daily taking responsibility for the cleaning, servicing of electricity, consumables, water consumption, appropriate insurances for public liability and buildings. A massive commitment, but its one that the Group are willing to take on, because the sad fact is that nobody else is. The renovation costs



have been provided by DCC with the Group finances comprising of a mixture of annual contribution from DCC, Llandrillo Community Rate Precept, Community Groups Donations, Local Sponsors and users of the facility. It has taken a lot of dedication to get this far and from now on they the Group are in challenging un-chartered waters with no model to follow.

It is evident that the Group are very positive it what they have achieved so far but it will be difficult for the immediate future until a financial model is developed over the first few years of operation. For more information regarding the project contact the Llandrillo Public Convenience Access Group Secretary David Robinson, Gwalia, Llandrillo, Denbighshire, LL21 OTF Tel 01490 440217.



A sign has been erected on the front of the building to inform all those who use the facility how it is operated, it is hoped that visitor contributions will help to make that positive involvement to the long term future of the project.

