

MANAFON COMMUNITY COUNCIL (MCC)

Statemented response to Senneds request by Local Government and Housing Committee

From :- Manafon Community Council SY218BL (the beating heart of the community)

Manafon CC are a small but diverse Community consisting two villages, Manafon and New Mills supplemented by the Hamlet of the Green. The inhabitants find a varied means of employment with agriculture as expected in a rural area playing a significant role in that aspect while tourism also features strongly in impacting on the local economy. The dwellings within the villages are occupied by a range of people some of which have chosen this area by moving here and have quickly seamlessly adopted the way of life and its benefits that such communities provides, thus providing and promoting a vibrant and dynamic place to live and work as well as creating employment. Key to this progress has been the younger members of community coming onto the Council with fresh ideas, technologies and enthusiasm, due to this energy we now have Defibrillators in New Mills and Manafon with many locals trained in its use. As part of the defib project MCC adopted and restored a traditional Red Telephone Kiosk which now compliments the heritage aspect of the village of Manafon

Question

- The role and value of community council in (Manafon Community)

Response

MCC have an excellent record of representing the electorate in terms of getting the things that are of concern to local residents resolved in where possible a timely effective manner. Full council meetings are conducted ten times a year. With councillors suitably placed within the Community they represent to ensure that the flow of information or requests reflects the very essence of the democratic concept of the community culture.

MCC has played a significant role in ensuring that the community has benefited from the best of broadband connectivity, this was very evident during COVID when residents had to work from home. Also persevered with quest to eliminate the mobile not spot that has restricted not only vital means of mobile phone use, but also access to everyday modern advantages such as smart meters and cheap overnight vehicle charging. We now will thanks largely to the persistence of MCC have the Shared rural network mobile mast in Manafon operational by late 2024.

We continue to strive to add value to local society by working closely with our County Councillor who attends our monthly MCC meetings with MCC Councillors also represented on many organisations such as local Community centre, local health issues through LLAIS ,local charities to name just a few.

Question

- Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape;

Response

There remains concern within MCC that Powys Unitary Authority does not always consider the aspect and role of Community Councils such as MCC with enough respect and consideration. Many surveys and consultations are simply ignored, so many times regarded as done deals or simply tick box exercises. What is needed is a more structured and consistent form of two way communication process between unitary authority and MCC, This would help identify accountability and clarity of relationship between the lower tiers of this democratic system. The once vision of a shared community seems to be still some way off.

is it fit for purpose ?? Definitely scope for improvement within local government

Question

- Governance and scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency;

Response

At this time MCC unable to comment on this topic. Other than to say that we have recently carried out a detailed review of governance, accountability and transparency and as result of that review we are about to advertise for new RFO and clerk. MCC still however remain fully committed to compliance with all aspects of the 2021 act.

Question

- Scope of digital and new technology to improve decision-making, service provision and participation in local democratic processes;

Response

Covid undoubtedly created a steep learning curve for MCC in the need to embrace all forms of digital means to carry out all aspects of Council business. Fortunately that prior to Covid MCC had campaigned hard for the community to receive the latest Fibre form of broadband; this facilitated the means to be able to conduct our online digital meetings. MCC is currently in process of refreshing its WEB site which is planned to be complete by Jan 2025

Question

- How new powers and responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities.

Response

As previously stated it has been felt for some time that MCC are the front line or coal face representatives of the council ? Democratic system, this when complaints or concerns are recorded/logged by MCC and relayed to appropriate department we do not get a consistent form of response. This is often interoperated as the process itself is a waste of time and effort by councillors who freely volunteer their time. We fully understand that everything cannot be fixed , but we would appreciate being told why

We do have good relationship with our local County Councillor and offer no complaint of that role

Concluding summary

Manafon Community Council wish to register for inclusion in any future discussion that will involve the way Community and Town Council are organised as result of this consultation/enquiry/review .

Thank you for keeping us informed of the outcome of this consultation
Chairman of Manafon Community Council

Ben Coppin
23/10/2024