

The Montgomeryshire Villages Project

Report to the Montgomeryshire Community Regeneration Association



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Summary

Montgomeryshire has been one of the fastest growing parts of England and Wales over the last three decades since 1980, with all wards experiencing increases in population. Growth has been driven by a combination of the planned expansion of Newtown from the late 1960s onwards, and by a broader trend of counterurbanization with migration from both within and outside Mid Wales into rural communities. As such, population growth in Montgomeryshire, and associated housing development, has not been limited to towns and larger villages, but has encompassed smaller villages and hamlets.

This research was commissioned by the MCRA to investigate the dynamics and consequences of development in smaller villages in Montgomeryshire. It has focused on case studies of five villages: Adfa, Llanfechain, Penegoes, Sarn and Tregynon, selected to illustrate a range of different settings and dynamics.

All of the case study villages have increased in population since 1980, but with differences in magnitude, pace and timing. Increases in population have been irregular and associated with specific housing developments in each village. These have taken place at different times, reflecting both supply and demand factors, including different migration trends. Overspill migration from Newtown has been a key driver of development in Tregynon and to a lesser extent, Adfa and Sarn; cross-border migration from Shropshire has also been significant in Sarn as well as in Llanfechain; and lifestyle migration from outside the region has contributed to growth in all the villages, but especially Penegoes.

The distribution of housing development has been regulated by planning policies, but also by the decisions of landowners and developers. Housing construction in villages close to the English border was particularly stimulated in the 1990s by lower land prices relative to neighbouring Shropshire, but over-inflation of values in the 2000s led to a slowing of development, which subsequently largely ceased with the housing crash of 2008.

Housing development has been largely accepted by residents of the case study communities to date, and in some cases has been welcomed for halting depopulation and contributing to the revitalisation of community life. As such, the success of individual housing developments has tended to be viewed in terms of the new residents that they have attracted to the village and their participation in village life. There is however a perception that infrastructure improvements have not kept pace with the rate of new house-building and this has contributed to widespread concern about the capacity of the villages to accommodate substantial new housing development in future, along with concerns about the impacts of developments on social interactions and community life, housing affordability and the demographic balance of the community, and on the rural character of the village.

There is a necessity, therefore, to ensure not only that future planning policy, including the Powys Local Development Plan is reflective of the varying dynamics of migration and housing need in different villages within Montgomeryshire, but also that appropriate opportunities are facilitated for public engagement with the planning process at all stages.

1. Background

1.1 The historic county of Montgomeryshire sits at the heart of Wales, spanning the country from the Dyfi estuary to the English border and forming a bridge between North and South Wales. Since 1995, Montgomeryshire has been incorporated into the unitary local authority area of Powys, administered by Powys County Council, but retains a strong, distinctive identity. It is a predominantly rural county, with the largest town, Newtown, numbering only 11,357 residents in the 2011 Census. The remainder of the county's population is dispersed among small market towns, villages, hamlets and isolated farms and dwellings. In common with rural Wales as a whole, Montgomeryshire experienced a reversal of demographic fortunes in the second half of the twentieth century, with a trend of depopulation replaced by population growth fuelled by in-migration.

1.2 This study was accordingly commissioned by the Montgomeryshire Community Regeneration Association (MCRA) to examine the population dynamics and development of villages in Montgomeryshire since 1980 in order to obtain a better understanding of:

- The scale and character of new development in villages;
- The background and motivations of new in-migrants to villages;
- The implications of development trends for village infrastructure;
- The attitudes of local residents towards future village development.

1.3 The research has focused on five case study villages selected by the MCRA to illustrate a range of geographical settings, population sizes and experiences of development. The case study villages are: Adfa, Llanfechain, Penegoes, Sarn and Tregynon.

1.4 The study has been undertaken on behalf of the MCRA by the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences at Aberystwyth University, with field research and analysis primarily conducted by researcher Emily Strub working under the supervision of Professor Michael Woods, who was primarily responsible for writing the report.

2. Research Methods

2.1 The research undertaken for this study was conducted between April and August 2014 following a mixed-method strategy that included use of a number of techniques for data collection including archival research and collation of information from public databases; questionnaire surveys; interviews; and field visits to the five case study villages.

2.2 In the first phase of the research, records in the online Powys Planning Portal were analysed to identify all new housing and commercial developments in the case study villages between 1980 and 2010. These records document all planning permissions granted and enabled the identification of patterns in development related to the dates of construction, the developer/s and the scale and character of the buildings. This method did not, however, identify proposed developments for which planning permission was not obtained. To identify any concerns that were raised at the time of development, the associated papers that were available on the online Powys Planning Portal were also examined. This was supplemented with reference to local newspaper archives to gain the perspectives of individuals and communities at the time of the development.

2.3 Documents relating to the Powys Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and new Local Development Plan (LDP) were also reviewed in order to establish the principles and policies informing planning decisions in the period 1980 to 2010, and to identify current proposals for future development control and how these are positioned with respect to the county's needs.

2.4 In parallel to the document analysis, field visits were made to each of the five case study villages to 'ground truth' the records with field observations and to gain an appreciation of the context of new developments in the local area.

2.5 The second phase of the research involved the distribution of a bilingual questionnaire survey to each household in each of the study villages. The questionnaires were delivered by hand and respondents were given the option of either completing the questionnaire by hand and returning it using a pre-addressed envelope, or completing the questionnaire online using a supplied web-link. In total, 668 questionnaires were returned, the majority by post. This response rate of 61% across the five villages compares favourably with similar household surveys employed in other recent studies, for which response rates typically ranged between 25% and 51%.¹

¹ The comparison studies are Cheshire East Council Housing Needs Survey (2013) (38%), Wollaston Rural Housing Survey (2012) (29%), Howley et al (2009) neighbourhood satisfaction survey (25%), and the Wales Rural Observatory 'Deep Rural Localities' household survey (2009) (51%).

2.6 Cross-referencing between contextual information provided by the survey respondents and Census data for the case study villages showed that representatives who had lived in their respective villages for 6-15 years and residents living in owner-occupied houses are over-represented in the responses. Aside from Tregynon, residents in rented accommodation (public- and private-) and residents who had lived in the respective village for fewer than five years are slightly under-represented. However, any potential bias introduced into the results by these skews is not considered to be significant.

2.7 The questionnaire was designed to collect anonymised information concerning residents' choice of property, employment status and location, what they valued about their village, and opinions of how their village should develop in the future. It contained both qualitative and quantitative questions, using clearly defined terms and avoiding the use of emotionally charged and negative words to reduce bias. Closed questions were arranged in an easy-to-follow structure that enabled respondents to filter the questions relevant to them. Open questions were also included that enabled respondents to comment at greater length. It should be noted that more expansive answers to the open questions were received from the online responses.

2.8 The third phase of the research comprised 25 semi-structured interviews, varying in length from 40 minutes to two hours. Seven interviews were conducted with 'elite' stakeholders, including estate agents and local authority representatives, who were selected to provide an overview of the development of the county, the local real estate market, and the framework of planning policy. The remaining 18 interviews were conducted with selected residents from the case study villages as 'key informants'. The key informants were selected on the basis of their capacity to comment broadly on developments in the village and included, for example, members of community councils or other prominent figures in village life, additionally stratified to provide gender balance and to reflect a range of different lengths of residence in the village (see Table 2.1). Participants were primarily recruited through a 'snow-balling' technique, with interviewees asked to suggest other prospective people to interview. Three interviews were conducted by telephone and the remainder face-to-face.

2.9 The interviews followed a semi-structured schedule designed to obtain comparable information across interviews, whilst also allowing for supplementary questions and prompts to follow-up interesting lines of enquiry. In accordance with the Aberystwyth University Policy for Ethics in Research, all interviewees were asked to sign a consent form to confirm their voluntary participation in the research and their agreement to material from the interviews being used anonymously in this report. The interviews were recorded and partly transcribed for analysis.

'Elite' Interviews					
Interview Reference	Organisation			Date	Telephone Interview
Interview 1 (Int.01)	MCRA			16.06.2014	
Interview 2 (Int.02)	Mid Wales Housing Association			06.08.2014	
Interview 3 (Int.03)	MMP Estate Agents			23.06.2014	
Interview 4 (Int.04)	Powys Council Representative			28.07.2014	
Interview 5 (Int.05)	Powys Council Representative			28.07.2014	
Interview 6 (Int.06)	Property Developer Agent			15.07.2014	
Interview 7 (Int.07)	Rural Housing Enabler, Wales			10.06.2014	✓
'Key Informant' Interviews					
Interview Reference	Village	Gender	Length of time lived in village	Date	Telephone Interview
Interview 8 (Int.08)	Adfa	M	32 years	14.07.2014	
Interview 9 (Int.09)	Adfa	F	6 years	14.08.2014	
Interview 10 (Int.10)	Adfa	F	70 years	16.08.2014	✓
Interview 11 (Int.11)	Llanfechain	M	65 years	20.06.2014	
Interview 12 (Int.12)	Llanfechain	F	9 years	31.07.2014	
Interview 13 (Int.13)	Llanfechain	F	24 years	06.08.2014	
Interview 14 (Int.14)	Llanfechain	M	40 years	08.08.2014	
Interview 15 (Int.15)	Penegoes	M	12 years	12.07.2014	
Interview 16 (Int.16)	Penegoes	F	3 years	10.08.2014	
Interview 17 (Int.17)	Penegoes	M	75 years	13.08.2014	
Interview 18 (Int.18)	Penegoes	F	45 years	15.08.2014	
Interview 19 (Int.19)	Sarn	M	7 years	20.06.2014	
Interview 20 (Int.20)	Sarn	F	40 years	11.08.2014	
Interview 21 (Int.21)	Sarn	F	50 years	17.09.2014	✓
Interview 22 (Int.22)	Tregynon	F	30 years	12.07.2014	
Interview 23 (Int.23)	Tregynon	F	47 years	17.07.2014	
Interview 24 (Int.24)	Tregynon	M	70 years	11.08.2014	
Interview 25 (Int.25)	Tregynon	M	9 years	15.08.2014	

Table 2.1: Summary of interviews conducted for the study

2.10 The original research design had additionally included a proposal to organize focus groups in each of the case study villages. Attempts were made to recruit participants for focus groups through the questionnaire survey, however there were insufficient volunteers to make focus groups viable. It was therefore decided to drop the focus groups and to instead increase the number of key informant interviews conducted in order to capture a wider cross-section of the community.

3. Overview of Montgomeryshire

3.1 The historic county of Montgomeryshire occupies a position in northern Mid Wales that spans the country from the Dyfi estuary to the English border. Since 1995, it has been incorporated into the unitary local authority area of Powys, but has retained a strong, distinctive identity. Its boundaries are contiguous with the parliamentary constituency of Montgomery and it has been recognized as a 'Shire' area within Powys County Council.

3.2 With a population of 63,779 in the 2011 Census, and a land area of 797 square miles (2064 km²), Montgomeryshire is one of the least densely populated areas of mainland Britain with just 80 people per square mile. Around 44% of the population is resident in the main towns of Newtown (11,357), Welshpool (6,664), Llandiloes (2,929), Machynlleth (2,235), Llanfair Caereinion (1,810), Llanfyllin (1,510) and Montgomery (1,295) with the remainder dispersed among villages, hamlets and isolated farms and dwellings. The county is accordingly predominantly rural in character, with the landscape encompassing parts of Snowdonia, the Cambrian Mountains and the Berwyn Range, and the river valleys of the Severn, Dyfi, Banwy and Vyrnwy.

3.3 Despite an arguably limited transport infrastructure, Montgomeryshire is relatively accessible to the population centres of the English West Midlands and North East Wales. Trunk roads connect Montgomeryshire to Shrewsbury (A458) and beyond to Telford, Wolverhampton and Birmingham (via the M54), and to Oswestry, Wrexham and Chester (A483). Connections within Wales to the south and west are less direct and include routes to Aberystwyth (A44 and A487), Dolgellau (A470) and Cardiff (via the A470). The railway runs east-west through the county, connecting Machynlleth, Caersws, Newtown and Welshpool with Aberystwyth and the Cambrian Coast line to the west, and Shrewsbury, Telford, Birmingham and Birmingham Airport to the east. Llanfair Caereinion, in the centre of the county, is approximately 45 minutes travel time by road from Shrewsbury, 1 hour from Telford and Wrexham, 1 hour 10 minutes from Aberystwyth, 1 hour 40 minutes from central Birmingham, 1 hour 50 minutes from Birmingham Airport, and 2 hours 50 minutes from Cardiff.

3.4 During the first half of the twentieth century, the region of Mid Wales, including Montgomeryshire, experienced dramatic depopulation, with the population falling by a quarter between 1871 and 1961. A Royal Commission, led by Professor Beacham, recommended in its 1964 report that region required substantial modernization to arrest the decline, including a policy of 'settlement rationalization'.² Proposals to establish a new town of 70,000 people centred on Caersws in the Severn valley,

² Beacham Committee (1964) *Depopulation in Mid Wales*. London: HMSO.

outlined in 1966,³ were never implemented, but a more modest programme to develop Newtown as a growth centre was pursued by the Development Board for Rural Wales (DBRW), with new industrial estates and new housing development expanding the population of Newtown from around 5,000 in 1965 to 9,276 in 1981.

3.5 The development of Newtown combined with a new national trend of counterurbanization, with people migrating from cities to rural areas for lifestyle reasons, reversed the pattern of population decline in Montgomeryshire. The county's population increased from 43,131 in 1971 to 63,779 in 2011, making it one of the fastest-growing areas in England and Wales over the last quarter of the twentieth century (see Figure 3.1).

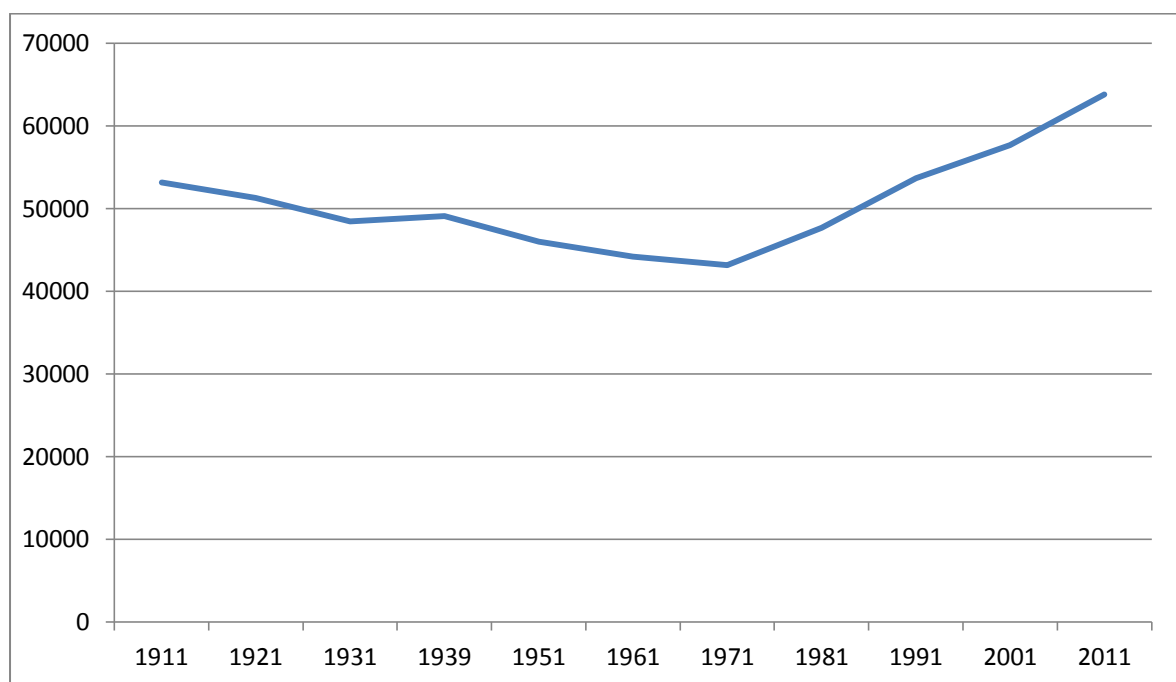


Figure 3.1: Population of Montgomeryshire, 1911-2011

3.6 Notably, in the last two decades, population growth in the more rural communities in Montgomeryshire has outstripped that in the larger towns, in contrast to patterns in many other parts of Wales. Between 1991 and 2001, the only wards in Montgomeryshire to lose population were Newtown East, Newtown South and Welshpool Castle, along with Berriew (located between Newtown and Welshpool), whilst most of rural Montgomeryshire experienced an increase in population of at least 5%, and seven rural wards had population increases of more than 15%: Churchstoke, Dolforwyn, Forden, Kerry, Llandysilio, Meifod and Llanfihangel, Montgomery and Trewern. The pattern between 2001 and 2011 is more mixed, but continues to show significant growth in many rural communities (see Table 3.1).

³ Welsh Office (1966) *A New Town in Mid Wales: Consultants' Proposals*. London: HMSO.

Ward	Type	Population 2001	Population 2011	Change 01-11
Llandrinio	Rural	1767	2191	24.0%
Trewern	Rural	1164	1430	22.9%
Banwy	Rural	831	1011	21.7%
Dolforwyn	Rural	1665	1972	18.4%
Newtown Llanllwchaiarn North	Small Town	1917	2267	18.3%
Rhiwcynon	Rural	1857	2180	17.4%
Llandysilio	Rural	1569	1789	14.0%
Churchstoke	Rural	1494	1691	13.2%
Llanfair Caereinion	Rural	1614	1810	12.1%
Llanfyllin	Rural	1401	1532	9.4%
Welshpool Gungrog	Small Town	2583	2826	9.4%
Llansantffraid	Rural	1722	1880	9.2%
Welshpool Llanerchuddol	Small Town	2115	2300	8.7%
Fordeu	Rural	1317	1426	8.3%
Blaen Hafren	Rural	2136	2294	7.4%
Gwilsfield	Rural	2166	2319	7.1%
Caersws	Rural	2172	2316	6.6%
Kerry	Rural	1929	2057	6.6%
Newtown Llanllwchaiarn West	Small Town	1734	1844	6.3%
Meifod	Rural	1254	1322	5.4%
Llanidloes	Small Town	2790	2929	5.0%
Newtown East	Small Town	1980	2069	4.5%
Machynlleth	Small Town	2148	2235	4.1%
Glanwymyn	Rural	1962	2040	4.0%
Berriew	Rural	1305	1334	2.2%
Newtown South	Small Town	1872	1899	1.4%
Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant / Llansilin	Rural	2265	2295	1.3%
Newtown Central	Small Town	3270	3278	0.2%
Welshpool Castle	Small Town	1557	1538	-1.2%
Llandinam	Rural	1431	1405	-1.8%
Montgomery	Rural	1326	1295	-2.3%
Llanfihangel	Rural	1137	1049	-7.7%
Llanbrynmaur	Rural	1071	920	-14.1%

Table 3.1: Population change 2001-11 for wards in Montgomeryshire
Wards containing case study villages are in bold. Source: Census data.

3.7 The drivers of population growth in Montgomeryshire have reflected those identified for rural Wales more widely in a 2006 report for the Welsh Assembly Government on 'The Role of the Housing System in Rural Wales', which emphasized the significance of in-migration from outside the region, local economic development and local housing supply as key factors.⁴ The 2006 report also noted that these factors interacted differently in different parts of rural Wales to produce a variegated

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) *The Role of the Housing System in Rural Wales*. Cardiff: WAG.

pattern of local housing systems, which is also evident in Montgomeryshire. Indeed, there are three major dynamics that have shaped the evolution of Montgomeryshire's rural population since the 1980, each with a distinctive spatial and temporal expression.

3.8 First, the planned development of Newtown from 1967 through to the 1990s resulted not only in the expansion of the town itself, but also the growth of neighbouring villages such as Tregynon as commuter settlements, especially during the 1980s and 1990s. The strength of local economic development in Newtown, with employment opportunities created by the relocation and expansion of companies such as Laura Ashley and Control Techniques, was the most significant driver of this development, with population growth comprised by both in-migration from England (especially the West Midlands) and internal migration within mid Wales, primarily for employment reasons.

3.9 Second, in-migration from England has driven significant population growth in communities along the English border – including Churchstoke, Dolforwyn, Forden, Kerry, Llandrino, Llandysilio and Trewen. This was particularly marked in the 1990s and 2000s, though slowing dramatically with the global economic crash in 2008. Evidence from stakeholder interviews indicates that this dynamic was fuelled by a cross-border differential in land prices during the 1980s and 1990s, with lower land prices in Montgomeryshire relative to Shropshire encouraging speculative development. However, it was also suggested that land in Montgomeryshire became over-priced after 2000, resulting in a slowing of new development.

3.10 Third, there is also evidence of internal migration within Montgomeryshire, sometimes reflecting lifestyle choices but more commonly structured by the availability and affordability of housing, especially in smaller villages. Analysis of Census data by Nigel Walford of Kingston University, for example, has identified intra-regional migration within rural Wales as a significant source of in-migrants for a band of wards across the middle of Montgomeryshire including Glantwymyn, Llanbryn-mair, Caersws, Llandinam, Rhiwcynon, Dolforwyn and Guilsfield, as well as Newtown and Welshpool, but less so in the north and east of the county.⁵

3.11 These dynamics have been mediated by local planning policy as adopted by the Montgomeryshire District Council (to 1995) and Powys County Council (since 1995). In broad terms, planning policy has followed a 'key settlement' approach, concentrating development in larger settlements with appropriate infrastructure (including edge-of-town developments in Newtown and Welshpool), whilst militating against new developments in open countryside and in smaller villages where the capacity of existing infrastructure (including roads and sewerage systems) is limited. More specifically, though, the identification and zoning of particular sites for new housing development in periodic plans has been shaped by land availability and by

⁵ Walford, N. (2010) Connecting rural and urban places: enduring migration between small areas in England and Wales, in G. Halseth, S. Markey and D. Bruce (eds) *Next Rural Economies*. Wallingford: CABI.

the assessment of immediate infrastructure capacity. Accordingly, whilst new housing development in Montgomeryshire has been policy-led it has also been pragmatic, and largely determined by supply rather than demand.

3.12 Nevertheless, most villages in Montgomeryshire has experienced some degree of new housing development in the period since 1980s, mostly commonly in the form of private housing estates constructed by developers (sometimes using local contractors). The pre-eminence of this form of housing development has meant that population growth in individual villages has been abrupt and uneven rather than gradual, resulting in substantial variations in inter-censal measures of population change for individual communities, and presenting challenges for long-term planning. The tendency for developers to favour standard designs for new housing has also impacted on the appearance of villages, and led some interviewees to voice concerns about the 'Telfordisation' of Montgomeryshire.

3.13 The next section examines these trends and responses in more detail through five village case studies.

4. Case studies

4.1 In order to explore further the dynamics and implications of development and population change in Montgomeryshire villages at a local scale, five communities were selected as case studies. The five villages – Adfa, Llanfechain, Penegoes, Sarn and Tregynon – were identified by the MCRA as illustrative of different patterns of development in Montgomeryshire but within certain parameters. As Table 4.1 shows, the villages are all small communities with fewer than 900 residents in 2011, but they range in population size from 309 to 892.⁶ Similarly, whilst all have experienced population growth since the 1980, the rate of growth varies between 25% and 106%. The five case study villages are also located in different parts of Montgomeryshire, and thus subject to different spatial dynamics as discussed in the previous section (Figure 4.1). Adfa, Sarn and Tregynon are all located within the hinterland of Newtown, whilst Sarn, along with Llanfechain, is also close to the Shropshire border. Penegoes is located further west, close to the town of Machynlleth. Penegoes and Sarn are both located on mains roads, and Llanfechain and Tregynon on secondary roads, whereas Adfa is only accessible via minor roads.

Census Date	Adfa	Llanfechain	Penegoes	Sarn	Tregynon
1981	404	372	153	268	434
2011	571	465	309	409	892
<i>Population Increase</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>102%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>106%</i>

Table 4.1: Population of the five case study villages and surrounding areas



Figure 4.1: Location of the case study villages in Montgomeryshire

⁶ Figures for Adfa, Llanfechain and Tregynon refer to the Community area in which they are located. Figures for Penegoes and Sarn are approximated from figures for the Census enumeration district / output area in which they are located. For more detail about these categories see the discussion below.

4.2 This section discusses the research results from each case study in turn, whilst the next section makes comparisons between the case studies and draws overarching conclusions.

Case Study 1: Adfa

4.3 Adfa is located approximately 10 miles north of Newtown, below Mynydd Clogau on the eastern edge of the Cambrian Mountains, and is accessed by a network of small and unclassified roads. The area has a largely dispersed settlement pattern, with the village of Adfa forming a relatively small nucleus of around 70 properties largely situated along a single through road (see Figure 4.2). The wider Adfa area has 231 households, including isolated farms and dwellings, with an average household size of 2.5 people, according to the 2011 Census. The village has a Welsh language heritage, but this has been diluted by in-migration, with 26.6% of residents in the community of Dwyriw (in which Adfa is located) recorded as Welsh-speakers in the 2011 Census, down from 33.3% in 2001. It has also traditionally acted as small local service centre for the dispersed rural population of the upper Rhiw valley, but this role was diminished by the closure of the village school in 1996. Its remaining facilities include a community hall, a chapel, a garage, and visits by a mobile post office.

4.4 With an altitude of over 800 feet above sea level, Adfa is perceived to have an exposed position, especially during winter months, but this has not deterred in-migrants or developers. The community of Dwyriw, in which Adfa is located, has increased its population from 404 in 1981 to 571 in 2011, but includes the hamlets of Cefn Coch, Llanllugan and Llanwyddelan, as well as isolated farms and dwellings, in addition to Adfa (Figure 4.3). More precise figures for the population of Adfa village are not available, as the lowest census output area covering Adfa (W00002606) is contiguous with Dwyriw Community. However, based on the number of households, we estimate that around a third of the population of Dwyriw is resident in the village of Adfa itself, approximately 175-190 people.

4.5 The increase in population has reflected significant development in Adfa relative to its size, with two new housing estates constructed in the 2000s – Meillionydd, with 20 properties in 2004-5 and Treganol with 18 properties in 2002-3 -- as well as a smaller later development towards the western end of the village. These developments are marked in red in Figure 4.4 (from the Powys UDP).

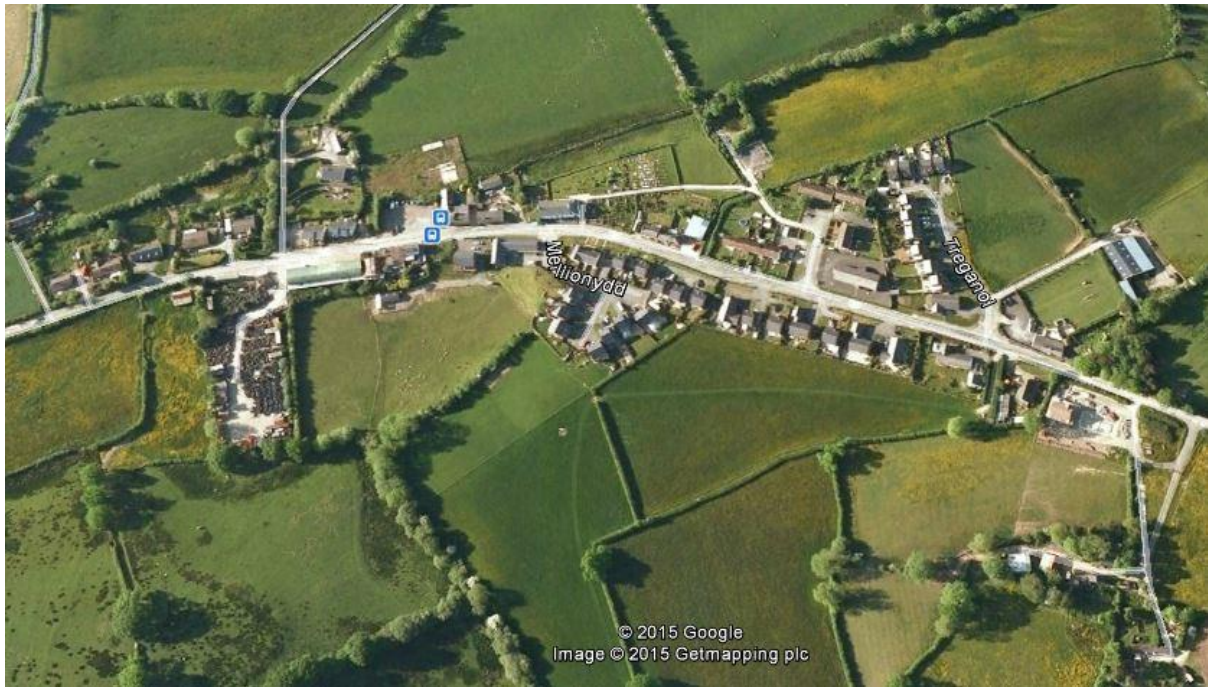


Figure 4.2: Aerial view of Adfa, 2009 (from Google Earth)

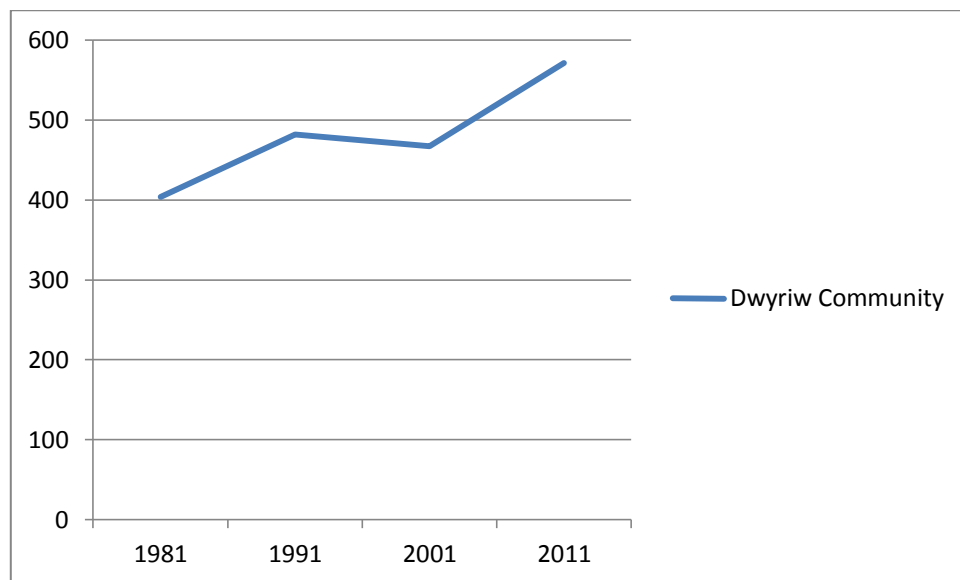


Figure 4.3: Population of Dwyriw Community, containing Adfa, 1981 – 2011.



Figure 4.4: Map of Adfa, with areas designated for housing development during the 2000s marked in red (from Powys Unitary Development Plan).

4.6 The development in Adfa poses an interesting question concerning the order of the construction in the village. In this respect, Adfa is an anomaly in Montgomeryshire as a large number of dwellings were constructed without the development of any amenities. However, introducing amenities before dwellings is equally unviable due to the lack of the presence of a community and, therefore, service demand. Subsequently, dwellings and amenities usually need to be developed in unison for successful development, but in Adfa the “development was more out of necessity than desirable” (Interview 06) according one observer, responding to a shortage of available housing in Newtown. Subsequent amenity development has also been limited, although a children’s play area was built in 2004, reflecting the changing demographic characteristics of the village population with immigration.

4.7 Over the period 1980-2010, Adfa has been the best-selling location in comparison to the other study villages, in part encouraged by its competitive pricing level (for example, equivalent houses cost 10% less than those in nearby Tregynon). The recent expansion of Adfa can be attributed to the zoning of land in Adfa due to “simplicity” as the new buildings were not extending the village in terms of boundaries, instead opting for an ‘infill’ approach (Interview 05), which although seemingly successful in Adfa, has been controversial in the other study villages. The larger houses built in Adfa, consisting of three and four bed properties, were built due to economics as opposed to demand, compensating for the implementation of a

quota requiring a quarter of new dwellings to be 'affordable housing', typically two bed properties for first time buyers on which limited profit is made by the developer.

4.8 There have been no significant commercial developments in the village of Adfa itself over the study period, however within the wider local area a windfarm consisting of 17 wind turbines was constructed by Renewable Energy Systems Ltd at Mynydd Clogau to the south west of Adfa.

4.9 Migration to Adfa has been strongly associated with the attraction of its rural setting and thus with lifestyle migration. Over a third of residents completing the survey indicated that the rural landscape and environment were 'absolutely critical' to their decision to live in Adfa, nearly twice as many as indicated employment opportunities as being critical (Table 4.2). By comparison, participation in village activities and the diversity of the village population were regarded as less important, perhaps reflecting the degree to which in-migrants are tied into Newtown as a site of employment and social activity. The evidence suggests that a notable component of migration to Adfa has been the movement of people out of Newtown because of housing availability and differential property prices. This includes individuals who have family ties to the area around Adfa, whose families had moved to Newtown during the era of industrialization in the 1960s to 1980s.

ADFA	Not at all important 1	Quite important 2	Important 3	Very important 4	Absolutely critical 5	Unsure 6
Feeling part of a community	5 %	26 %	21 %	42 %	6 %	0 %
Participating in village activities	11 %	28 %	44 %	11 %	6 %	0 %
The rural landscape and environment	6 %	6 %	35 %	18 %	35 %	0 %
A diversity of age ranges and backgrounds	13 %	13 %	50 %	24 %	0 %	0 %
Easy accessibility to larger towns	9 %	8 %	42 %	32 %	9 %	0 %
Employment Opportunities	0 %	16 %	17 %	49 %	18 %	0 %

Table 4.2: Views of survey respondents on importance of factors as reasons for living in Adfa.

4.10 Adfa is categorized as a 'Smaller Village' in the deposit draft of the Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026. The LDP does not identify development boundaries or allocations of land for development for smaller villages, but notes that "a policy approach has been taken to enable the development of open market and affordable housing".⁷ As a principle, the LDP states that, "Housing growth (open market and affordable) is allowed in Small Villages in proportion to their size and facilities, and according to their capacity to accommodate growth due to environmental and infrastructure capacity constraints".⁸

Case Study 2: Llanfechain

4.11 Llanfechain is located between Llanfyllin and Llansantffraid in the Cain valley, near the English border. The community of Llanfechain is centred on a nucleated village of around 150 properties (Figure 4.5), where over half the population live, with the remainder in scattered farms and dwellings on the periphery as well as in the hamlet of Ffridd. In total, the community contains 227 households, with an average household size of 2.1 people, according to the 2011 Census.

4.12 The population of Llanfechain community increased from 372 residents in 1981 to 521 in 2001, with the most rapid growth occurring during the 1980s, but subsequently fell back to 465 in 2011, a decrease of 11% between 2001 and 2011 (Figure 4.6). Most of this population growth is accounted for by development in the village itself, which has been described as 'doubling' in population between 1980 and the end of the century. In particular, a small housing development of 9 properties (Mount View) was built off the B493 to the south of the old village in the 1980s, followed by two larger estates, Maes Dinas with 28 houses, and Pen-y-Maes / Maes Derw with 21 houses, in the 1990s. These developments effectively extended the village to the south to meet the B493, along with the earlier council estate of Maes Mechain, which includes sheltered housing for the elderly (Figure 4.7).

4.13 The key driver of development in Llanfechain has been cross-border migration and growth during the 1980s and 1990s has been linked to improved road connections to Oswestry, Wrexham and Chester.⁹ Lower land prices than in Shropshire were also initially a factor encouraging speculative development, however some observers have suggested that land prices in Llanfechain became over-inflated over time:

"The land in Llanfechain has been overestimated compared to neighbouring Shropshire. The people who wanted too much money for the land ended up stalling development. So [the slowing of development after 2000] was not a

⁷ Powys County Council (2014) *Powys Local Development Plan, 2011-2026, Deposit Draft*, paragraph 3.4.18.

⁸ Powys County Council (2014) *Powys Local Development Plan, 2011-2026, Deposit Draft*, paragraph 3.4.17.

⁹ Powys County Council (2010) *Powys Unitary Development Plan, 2001-2016*.

choice – this was dependent on what was available at the right price for development and the driver of willingness to sell land.” (Interview 06).



Figure 4.5: Aerial view of Llanfechain in 2009 (Source: Google Earth)

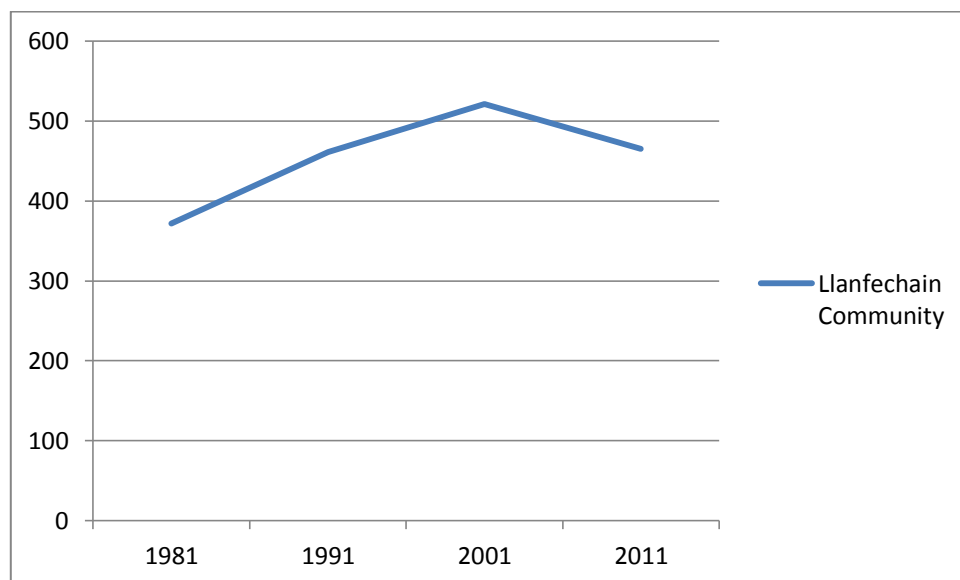


Figure 4.6: Population of Llanfechain Community, 1981 - 2011



Figure 4.7: Map of Llanfechain from the Powys Unitary Development Plan.

NB: The old village centre is hatched in purple. The post-war council estate of Maes Mechain is in the bottom centre of the map; the 1980s/1990s estates of Maes Dinas, Maes Derw and Pen-y-Maes are on the right-hand side of the map.

4.14 The effect of inflated prices on the supply of land in Llanfechain had the impact of slowing the rate of development in the 2000s, with some land designated for housing development not being built on, including land with planning permission. Development that has occurred in the village since 2000 has been focused on the modification and conversion of existing properties, including the conversion of a petrol station and shop into housing. The closure of this amenity has contributed to the erosion of local services in the village, despite the increased population. However, Llanfechain continues to maintain facilities including a community hall, church, primary school, children's play area, sports ground and public house. Moreover, following the closure of the village shop and the reduction in the post office service to a one-day a week operation from the village hall, community action led to the establishment of the Llanfechain Community Shop and Post Office as a community enterprise. The shop sells milk, bread, fruit and vegetables, meat, general groceries, frozen goods, newspapers and magazines, and is staffed by volunteers.¹⁰

4.15 In spite of the vibrancy of community activity in Llanfechain, none of the residents completing the survey for this study categorized participation in village activities as an 'absolutely critical' dimension of living in Llanfechain for them (although 39% described it as 'very important' – more than in the other case studies), and only 3% identified feeling part of a community as absolutely critical (Table 4.3).

¹⁰ www.llanfechain.org.uk/shop.html

The most important factor for the decision of residents to live in Llanfechain was the rural landscape and environment, cited as absolutely critical by 41% (the highest rating across the five case studies), whilst a third identified easy accessibility to larger towns as absolutely critical (again the highest rating across the five case studies). These figures reaffirm the positioning of population growth in Llanfechain as part of a wider trend of counter-urbanization, attracting in-migrants seeking a rural lifestyle but also continuing to work (and access services) in larger towns such as Oswestry.

LLANFECHAIN	Not at all important 1	Quite important 2	Important 3	Very important 4	Absolutely critical 5	Unsure 6
Feeling part of a community	0 %	17 %	38 %	42 %	3 %	0 %
Participating in village activities	0 %	34 %	27 %	39 %	0 %	0 %
The rural landscape and environment	0 %	0 %	13 %	46 %	41 %	0 %
A diversity of age ranges and backgrounds	15 %	14 %	10 %	56 %	5 %	0 %
Easy accessibility to larger towns	0 %	23 %	27 %	17 %	33 %	0 %
Employment Opportunities	7 %	21 %	35 %	16 %	21 %	0 %

Table 4.3: Views of survey respondents on importance of factors as reasons for living in Llanfechain.

4.16 The Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026 classified Llanfechain as a 'large village' (a designation challenged by Llanfechain Community Council) and hence as a priority settlement for development, and set an allocation for development of 25 new housing units (10% of which are to be 'affordable housing'). The initial consultation identified six possible sites in the village, including several plots where planning permission for housing had been previously applied for or granted, but which had not been built on (Figure 4.8). Llanfechain Community Council, whilst recognizing "the benefits of some development including the need for some low cost housing for local families which could provide for a better demographic balance with positive impact for the school etc.", objected to the inclusion of site 899, which incorporated the village recreation field.¹¹ Following consultation, site 711 was identified as the preferred site for development and designated in the deposit draft of the Powys Local Development Plan (Figure 4.9).

¹¹ Llanfechain Community Council Newsletter, April 2013

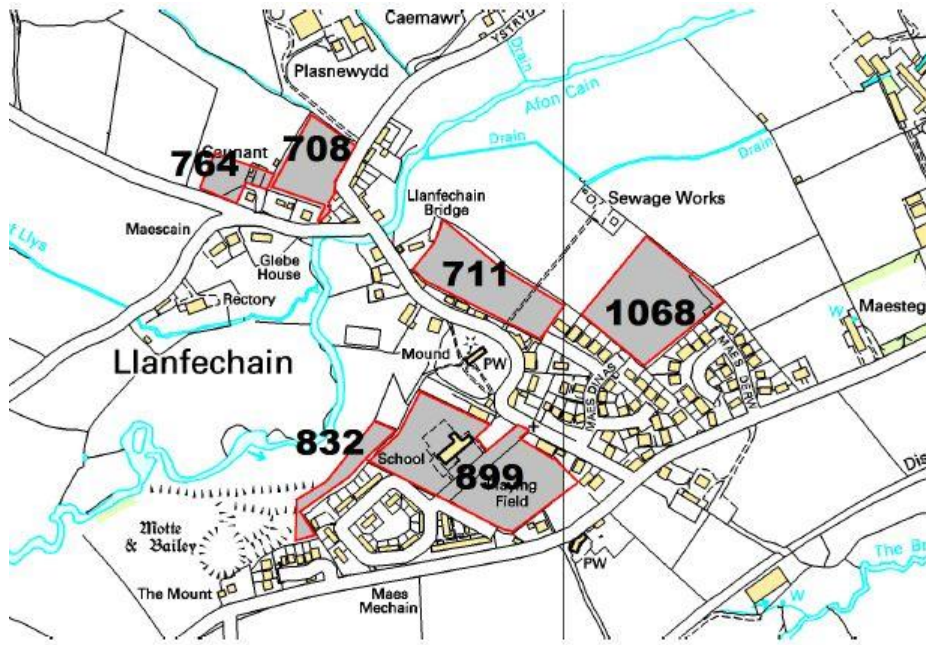


Figure 4.8: Potential sites for housing development identified in consultation for the Powys Local Development Plan 2011-2026. (Source: Llanfechain Community Council).

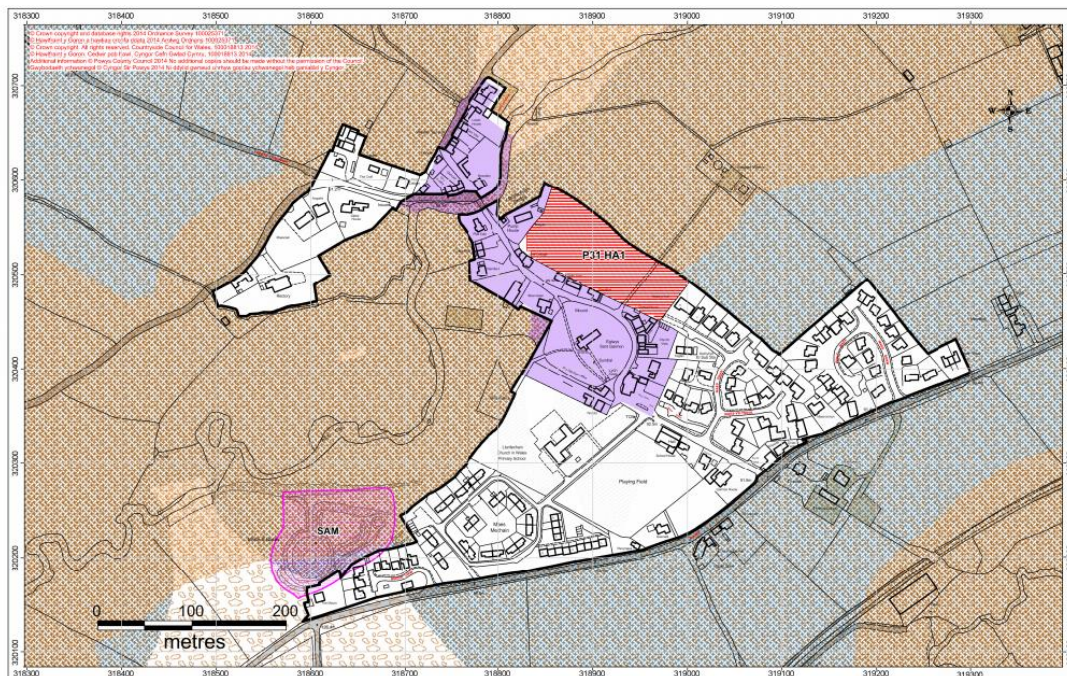


Figure 4.9: Inset map of Llanfechain from the Powys Unitary Development Plan deposit draft showing policy designations. The land allocated for new housing development is shaded red.

Case Study 3: Penegoes

4.17 Penegoes is situated in the Dyfi Valley and is comprised of several groupings of properties adjacent to the A489, approximately one and a half miles east of Machynlleth. The main section of the village is located around the junction of the A489 and the unclassified mountain road to Dylife, and contains around 60 properties. However, there are also a number of small clusters of housing strung along the main road towards Machynlleth which were included within the designated development boundary of the village in the Unitary Development Plan, notably around Trem-y-Felin. This village morphology reflects a historic dispersed settlement pattern that is typical of upland Wales, but which has been given a more nucleated form by infilling between the old turnpike road and the old drovers' road (Figure 4.10).

4.18 Penegoes is located within a strong Welsh language area, with 64.2% of residents in Cadfarch Community (in which Penegoes is located) recorded as Welsh speaking in the 2011 Census, up from 62.7% in 2001. The local economy is dominated by agriculture (which still employs over 15% of residents in Cadfarch Community), and by tourism. Two sizeable caravan parks are located to the north of the village, and Penegoes also boasts a hotel and bed and breakfast accommodation.¹²

4.19 Penegoes is the most difficult of the case study villages to establish accurate population figures for. In local government it forms part of Cadfarch Community, which covers an extensive area of 11,009 hectares (110 km² or 42.5 square miles) and also encompasses the villages of Aberhosan, Derwenlas and Glandyfi, and the hamlets of Forge, Glaspwll, Melinbyrhedyn and Pant-glas. This larger area has seen an increase in population from 662 people in 1981 to 855 in 2011, with most growth during the 1980s and 1990s. For Census purposes, the village of Penegoes unhelpfully lies on the boundary of two output areas. The older part of the village, along the A489, is the most significant settlement in an output area that also contains the hamlet of Forge. However, most recent development has fallen within another output area that extends to the south-east and also includes Aberhosan and Melinbyrhedyn. Although comparisons over time are complicated by changes to Census area boundaries, these smaller area statistics also point to significant growth in the 1980s and 1990s slowing in the 2000s (with Penegoes East and Aberhosan output area decreasing in population between 2001 and 2011) (Figure 4.11).¹³

¹² Powys County Council (2010) *Powys Unitary Development Plan, 2001-2016*.

¹³ Penegoes was in Enumeration District 53TLBJ04 for the 1981 Census and Enumeration District 53TLFC03 for the 1991 Census following a change of boundaries. Enumeration Districts were replaced by Output Areas for the 2001 Census, since when the village of Penegoes has been divided between output area W00002354, including the older village along the A489, hamlet of Forge and area west towards Machynlleth, and output area W00002352 including village properties in Glancrewi, Maesafallon and Pencaemawr and extending south-east to include Aberhosan and Melinbyrhedyn.



Figure 4.10: Aerial view of Penegoes in 2009 (Source: Google Maps)

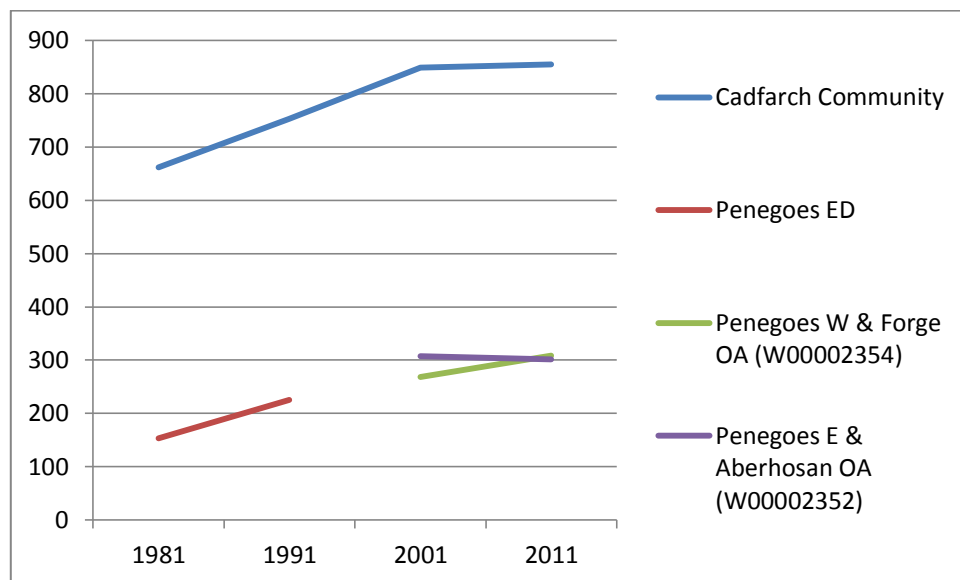


Figure 4.11: Indicators of population for Penegoes area, 1981-2011
See footnote 13 for explanation of areas

4.20 Penegoes was not identified for significant development during the 1980s and 1990s, due to its 'deep rural' location and distance from the growth pole of Newtown, which was viewed as more "lucrative by developers" (Interview 03). The Powys Local Development Plan for 2001-2016, however, designated two sites in the village for housing development (Figure 4.12), reflecting local business interest in speculative development responding to the vibrancy of the tourism economy in the Dyfi valley.

Planning permission for 17 dwellings was granted to local developer Arwyn George, and construction commenced in 2006. However, the larger site, Pencaemawr, was not completed before the housing crash in 2008, and construction was subsequently suspended (Figure 4.13). Only 6 houses were completed and sold in 2009, and land in Pencaemawr has more recently been put on the market as individual building plots.

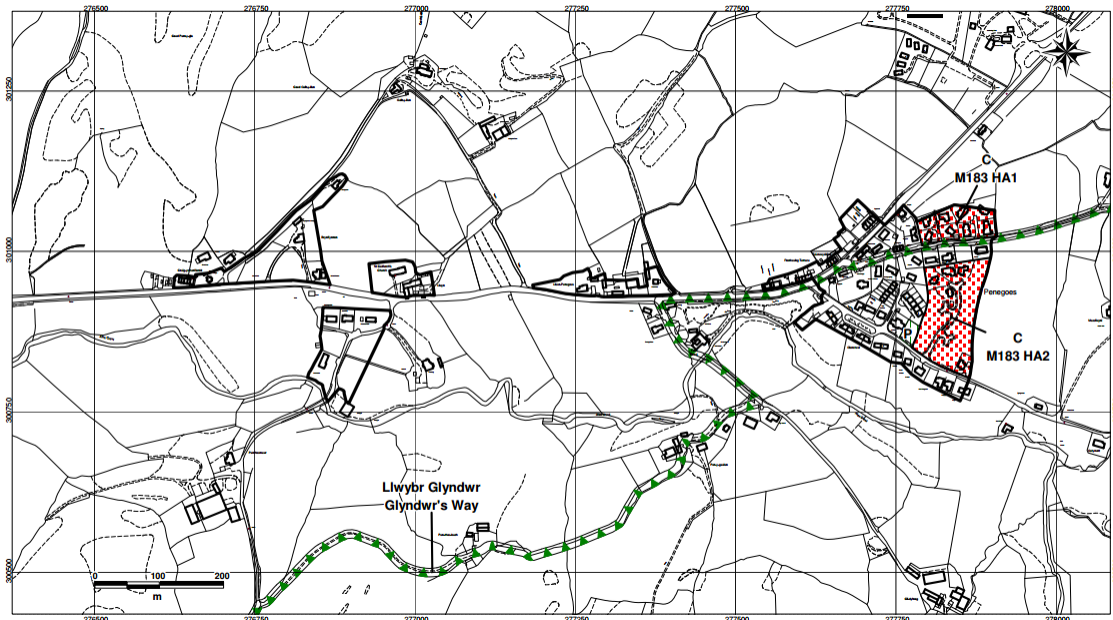


Figure 4.12: Map of Penegoes from the Powys Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016, with areas designated for housing development marked in red.



Figure 4.13: New housing developments in Penegoes in 2006 (left) and 2009 (right), with the incomplete development of Pencaemawr evident in the 2009 image (Source: Google Earth).

4.21 The increase in population of Penegoes has not been accompanied by an expansion of village facilities, and the new housing developments constructed in the 2000s were not linked to any amenity provision. The services available in Penegoes are the most limited of the five case studies, consisting of a church, a children's play area, visits by a mobile post office, and bus stops for services to Machynlleth. Commercial development in and around the village has primarily been focused on tourism, including proposals to build log cabins at one of the caravan sites as an initiative to generate year-round income from tourism.

4.22 There is a notable link between tourism and in-migration to the Penegoes area, with some in-migrants having initially been tourists to the district. The importance of lifestyle factors in migration decisions is evident in the high ratings given by survey respondents in Penegoes to the significance of the rural landscape and environment and feeling part of a community to living in the village (Table 4.4). However, economic factors are also significant, with nearly a third identifying employment opportunities as being 'absolutely critical' to living the village, and a quarter citing easy accessibility to larger towns as absolutely critical. These figures probably reflect the importance of employment opportunities in tourism, and/or in nearby Machynlleth, in enabling people to live in Penegoes.

PENEGOES	Not at all important 1	Quite important 2	Important 3	Very important 4	Absolutely critical 5	Unsure 6
Feeling part of a community	0 %	22 %	15 %	41 %	22 %	0 %
Participating in village activities	9 %	34 %	30 %	27 %	0 %	0 %
The rural landscape and environment	0 %	18 %	16 %	35 %	31 %	0 %
A diversity of age ranges and backgrounds	7 %	13 %	54 %	26 %	0 %	0 %
Easy accessibility to larger towns	8 %	17 %	17 %	33 %	25 %	0 %
Employment Opportunities	3 %	9 %	20 %	36 %	32 %	0 %

Table 4.4: Views of survey respondents on importance of factors as reasons for living in Penegoes.

4.23 Penegoes is designated as a 'small village' in the Powys Local Development Plan 2011-2026, and thus whilst appropriate development may be permitted, no quota for housing development has been allocated to village and no sites for development identified.

Case Study 4: Sarn

4.24 The village of Sarn is situated in the Vale of Kerry on the A489 road between Newtown and Churchstoke, approximately five miles from each, and three miles from the larger village of Kerry with which it shares a community council. Historically, Sarn had a dispersed settlement structure, but modern development has given it a more substantial core off the main road close to the former village school, consisting of around 45 properties (Figure 4.14). Smaller clusters of housing are present along the main road to the east and west of the main village, each with around 15 properties, and there are a substantial number of farms and isolated dwellings in the surrounding area.

4.25 The population of the community of Kerry, in which Sarn is located, increased from 1533 in 1981 to 2057 in 2011, with the most rapid growth in the 1990s when it was one of the fastest growing parts of Montgomeryshire. These figures include the villages of Kerry and Dolfor as well as Sarn, but development in Sarn has been key contributor to the population increase. The population of the smaller census output area centred on Sarn (and including the hamlet of City and dispersed farms and dwellings) decreased during the 1980s, but increased sharply from 227 in 1991 to 409 in 2011 reflecting new housing development (the boundaries of this area appear to have been relatively stable between censuses, with minor adjustments) (Figure 4.15).¹⁴

4.26 As the population figures suggest, there was little development in Sarn during the 1980s, however in the following two decades the village centre of Sarn experienced a doubling of its population with two substantial new housing estates constructed: Oak View and Spring Bank, the latter including 13 Housing Association properties. Housing development was driven by demand associated with the accessibility of Sarn to both Newtown and Shrewsbury, with average property prices in Sarn being the highest across the five case study villages.

4.27 Interviewees indicated that they expected demand for housing in Sarn to continue to be high, especially at the upper end of the property market. However, new development in Sarn slowed during the 2000s, restrained by the economic recession and by comparative land prices. The Unitary Development Plan for 2001-2016 designated three sites in Sarn for housing development, yet only one of these sites has been developed: the Oak View estate off Shop Lane, built in 2003-4 (Figure 4.16).

¹⁴ The village of Sarn was in Enumeration District 53TLBM05 for the 1981 Census and Enumeration District 53TLFM03 for the 1991 Census. Enumeration Districts were replaced by Output Areas for the 2001 Census, and Sarn has been in Output Area W00002384 for the 2001 and 2011 Censuses.



Figure 4.14: Aerial map of Sarn, 2009 (Source: Google Earth)

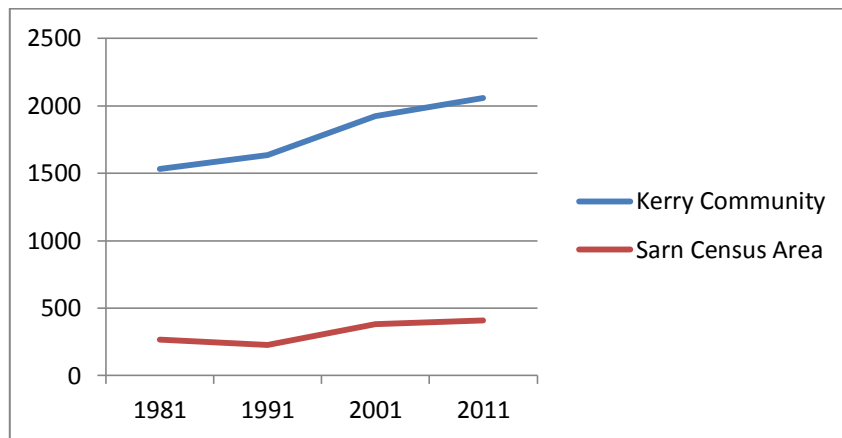


Figure 4.15: Population of Sarn Census Area and Kerry Community, 1981-2011

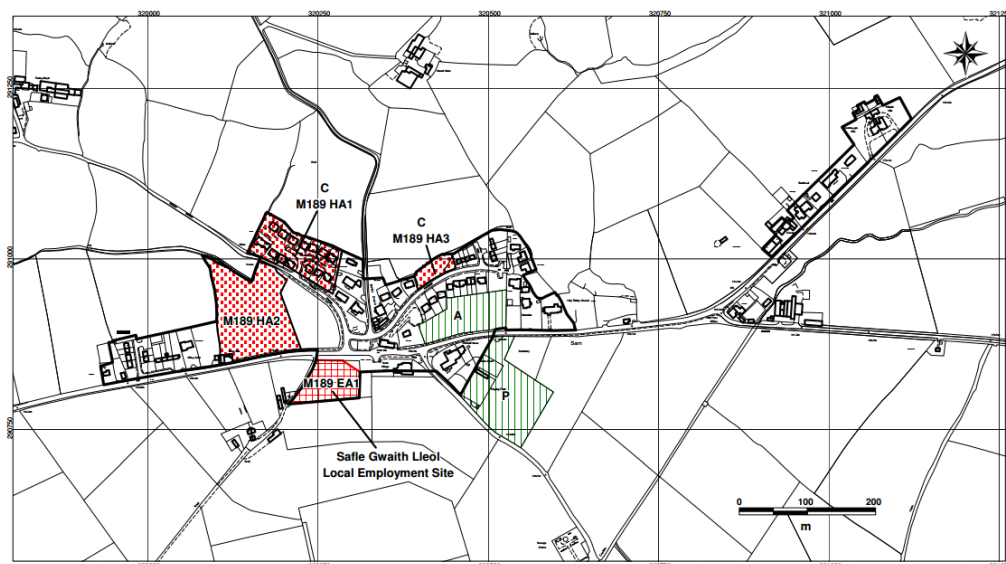


Figure 4.16: Map of Sarn from Powys Unitary Development Plan, 2001-2016

4.28 The Unitary Development Plan also designated an area south of the main road as a local employment site, but this has also not been developed. Commercial development in and around Sarn has focused mainly on agriculture and on the Ridgeway School. This was established as an independent mixed secondary school in 2004 and opened a primary department in 2008 in the former village primary school. However the school has a strict Exclusive Brethren religious foundation and does not serve as a local village school. Children from Sarn consequently travel to Kerry to attend primary school. Other village facilities in Sarn include a community hall, an Anglican church and a Baptist chapel, a public house, sports fields and visits by a mobile post office.

4.29 A substantial proportion of the farmland around Sarn is owned by Powys County Council as part of the county estate and let to tenants. In period since 1980 some of the larger county farms in the area were sub-divided into smaller holdings, thus also contributing marginally to the increase in population.

4.30 As noted earlier, population growth and housing development in Sarn has been associated with in-migration by commuters and this is reflected in the responses of residents to the survey for this study. Almost nine in ten respondents identified easy access to larger towns as being 'very important' or 'absolutely critical' for them (significantly higher than in the other case studies), whilst the rural landscape and environment was categorized as 'absolutely critical' by a lower proportion of respondents than in the other case study villages (Table 4.5). Interestingly, 'feeling part of a community', 'participating in village activities' and 'a diversity of age ranges and backgrounds' were all rated relatively highly as important in comparison to responses in the other study villages, possibly reflecting the importance of the mixed housing type and the presence of a public house to attracting residents to Sarn.

4.31 Like Adfa and Penegoes, Sarn is designated as a 'small village' in the Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026, and therefore does not have any allocations of housing development over the period, in spite of expectations by observers of continuing high demand, but in line with the preferences of residents. Seven in ten (71%) of respondents to the survey indicated that they thought between 0 and 25 additional dwellings would be an acceptable level of further development in Sarn.

SARN	Not at all important 1	Quite important 2	Important 3	Very important 4	Absolutely critical 5	Unsure 6
Feeling part of a community	10 %	10 %	25 %	31 %	24 %	0 %
Participating in village activities	22 %	12 %	35 %	18 %	11 %	0 %
The rural landscape and environment	0 %	0 %	24 %	64 %	22 %	0 %
A diversity of age ranges and backgrounds	13 %	42 %	0 %	25 %	20 %	0 %
Easy accessibility to larger towns	2 %	9 %	0 %	67 %	22 %	0 %
Employment Opportunities	4 %	33 %	37 %	12 %	14 %	0 %

Table 4.5: Views of survey respondents on importance of factors as reasons for living in Sarn.

Case Study 5: Tregynon

4.32 Tregynon is located approximately six miles north of Newtown, along the B4389 road towards Llanfair Caereinion. The community of Tregynon has 349 households, with an average household size of 2.5 people, most of which are located in the central village of Tregynon. The village is a nucleated settlement with around 250 properties, with the old village core to the north and new estates to the south and east (Figure 4.17). The wider community area does not include any other villages or hamlets, but does encompass a number of substantial farms and isolated dwellings, as well as the Gregynog estate, formerly home of the Davies family and now owned by the University of Wales as a residential centre.

4.33 The population of Tregynon community has more than doubled since 1980, increasing from 434 residents in 1981 to 892 residents in 2011. Although the increase in population during the 1980s was above average for the county, the rate of growth has accelerated over the ensuing decades, with a 45% increase in population between 2001 and 2011 (Figure 4.18).

4.34 Population growth in Tregynon has been driven by its proximity to Newtown and the initial expansion during the 1980s can be regarded as a spin-off from the Newtown development project, with commuters attracted by employment opportunities in Newtown. Subsequently, Tregynon has received in-migration from Newtown, with households moving to take advantage of larger new-build properties and lower house prices.



Figure 4.17: Aerial view of Tregynon in 2009 (Source: Google Earth)

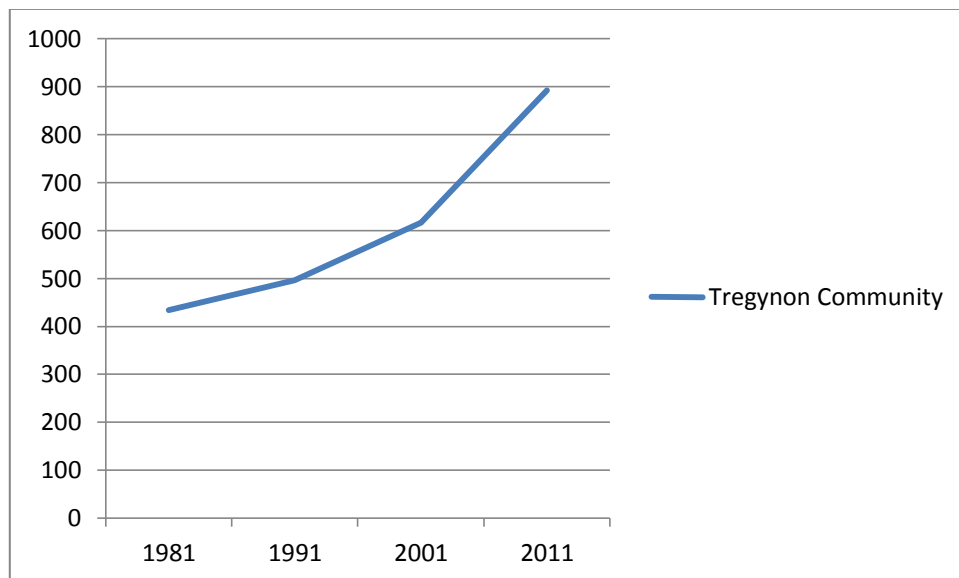


Figure 4.18: Population of Tregynon Community, 1981-2011.

4.35 The first substantial new housing estate, Tan-yr-Eglwys, was constructed to the west of the B4389 in the late 1980s and early 1990s, followed by an extension into Tan-y-Llan in 1997-98. This combined estate added around 40 new properties and significantly increased the population of the village. The development of the eastern side of the B4389 followed in the 2000s, with the construction of Rosemary Drive (1999-2000), Cae Melyn (2002-3), Parc Hafod (2003-6) and Llys Melyn (2004-6 and 2009-) (Figures 4.19 and 4.20). Much of the development was undertaken by a single firm, Merryland Homes, who repeated a model of building standardised three bedroom detached houses, and have since exported the model to other villages, including Adfa. In addition to the demand from in-migrants from Newtown, the scale of development in Tregynon has been facilitated by supply-side factors including the availability of suitable land and landowners' willingness to sell for development. The extensive housing development to the east of the B4389 during the 2000s, for example, was built on land sold by two farmers with minimal resistance.

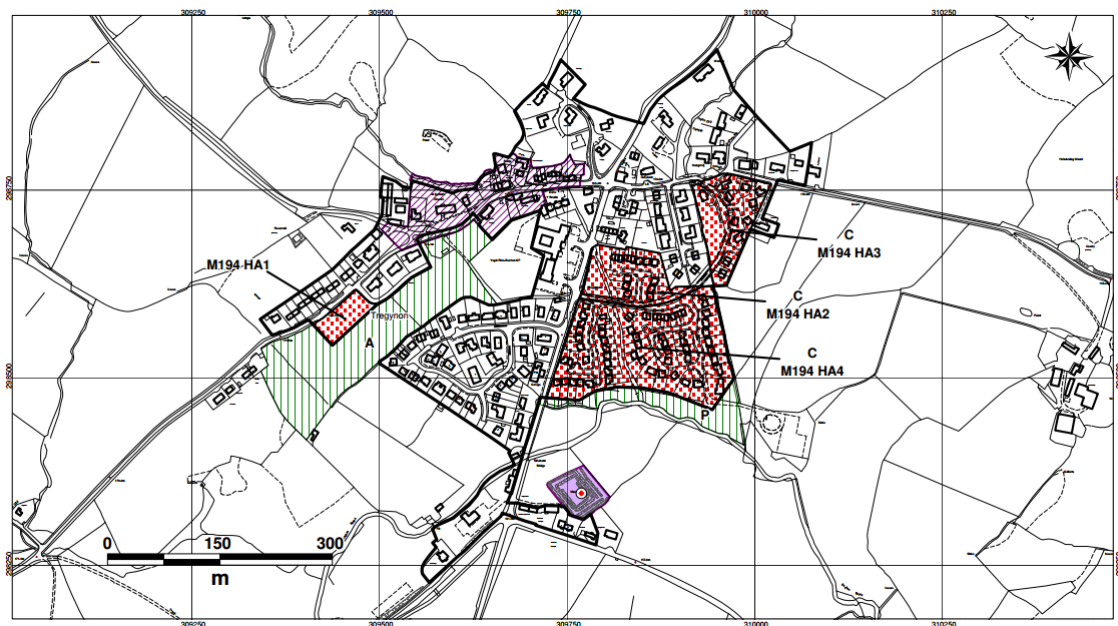


Figure 4.19: Map of Tregynon from the Powys Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016.

Areas designed for housing development during the period are marked in red. The purple hatched area in the middle top of the map is the conservation area of the old village centre.

Green hatched areas are open spaces protected from development.



Figure 4.20: Housing construction in Llys Melyn, Tregynon, in 2006 (left) and 2009 (right) (Source: Google Earth).

4.36 Housing development and population growth in Tregynon has been accompanied by some infrastructure improvements, notably the opening a new primary school in 1995 with expanded capacity in response both to population growth in the village, and the closure of the school in Adfa. Other facilities in Tregynon include a community hall, church, post office, garage and petrol station, children's play area and sports fields – the most extensive provision of the five case study villages. However, interviewees raised other infrastructure pressures that have been intensified by housing development, including the condition of both the B4389 road to the A438 at Aberbechan and the direct minor road to Newtown – which are narrow in several places – and flood risk to some new properties. Flash flooding in 2007 affected several recently built houses forcing the temporary re-housing of residents for up to 12 months, and although flood alleviation work was commenced in early 2015, there is concern that new housing is still being built on land at potential risk from flooding.

4.37 In contrast to the scale of housing development in Tregynon, commercial development has been limited, reinforcing the status of Tregynon as a dormitory settlement. No land was designated for new commercial or employment purposes in the Unitary Development Plan.

4.38 The dormitory status of Tregynon is also reflected in the views of residents on factors that are important to their reasons for living in the village. The rural

environment and landscape is highly valued, as is the diversity of age ranges and backgrounds in the village (more so than in the other case studies) – perhaps indicating the significance of families in the in-migrant population (Table 4.6). Conversely, less emphasis is put on the feeling of community and participation in community events than in the other case study villages, possibly reflecting the maintenance of social ties in Newtown by migrants. More surprisingly, employment opportunities and accessibility to larger towns were also not rated as highly as in the other case study villages. However, these results could be explained by relatively local migrants to Tregynon not changing jobs when moving to the village, and possibly by migrants from Newtown not interpreting the question about access to larger towns as including Newtown.

TREGYNON	Not at all important 1	Quite important 2	Important 3	Very important 4	Absolutely critical 5	Unsure 6
Feeling part of a community	0 %	19 %	34 %	36 %	11 %	0 %
Participating in village activities	3 %	31 %	42 %	19 %	2 %	3 %
The rural landscape and environment	0 %	6 %	18 %	39 %	31 %	6 %
A diversity of age ranges and backgrounds	3 %	25 %	31 %	16 %	25 %	0 %
Easy accessibility to larger towns	4 %	5 %	51 %	28 %	12 %	0 %
Employment Opportunities	0 %	19 %	31 %	43 %	7 %	0 %

Table 4.6: Views of survey respondents on importance of factors as reasons for living in Tregynon.

4.39 The rate of new development in Tregynon experienced during the 2000s is not expected to continue by planners. The deposit draft of the Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026 identifies only one area for new housing development in Tregynon in this period, with 22 new houses allocated including 4.4 affordable homes (Figure 4.21).¹⁵ This modest allocation is despite Tregynon residents being more willing than those of the other case study communities to accept further development, with 18% of survey respondents prepared to accept the addition of 51-75 new houses and 48% prepared to accept an extra 25-50 new dwellings.

¹⁵ Powys County Council (2014) *Powys Local Development Plan, Deposit Draft*.

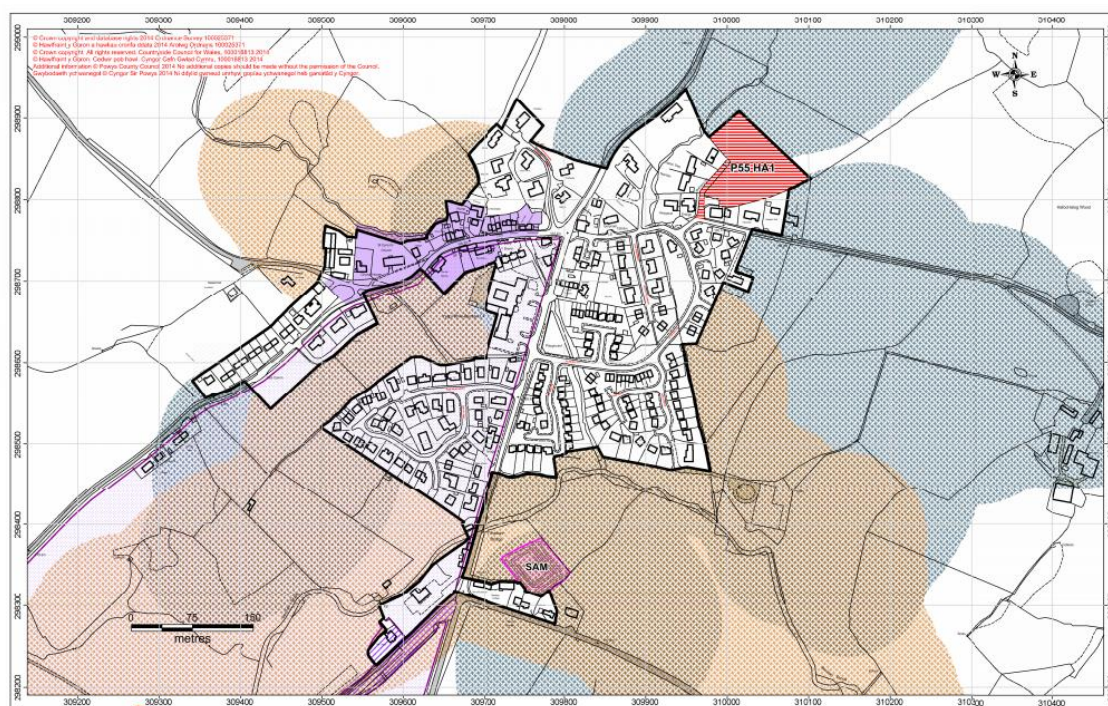


Figure 4.21: Map of Tregynon from the Powys Local Development Plan Deposit Draft with policy proposals. Land allocated for new housing is shaded red in the top right.

5. Discussion

5.1 The five case study villages examined in this research – Adfa, Llanfechain, Penegoes, Sarn and Tregynon – have much in common as relatively small villages located in rural settings in Montgomeryshire. Yet they exhibit very different dynamics of development over the period since 1980. In part this reflects the nature of new housing development in smaller villages, and the impact of new development on relatively small populations. In all the case study villages, significant new housing development has occurred through the periodic construction of housing estates with typically between 10 and 40 properties. This means that development, and population growth, has been precipitous rather than gradual, occurring in sudden jumps as reflected in the fluctuations in inter-Censal population change figures. Only Tregynon, out of the case study villages, has experienced consistent population growth as a result of the sequential development of several new housing estates since the 1980s.

5.2 As housing construction in the case study villages has been concentrated in specific estate developments, it has occurred at different times in different villages, responding to different drivers. Both demand- and supply-side factors are significant here. On the demand side the overarching factor has been in-migration into the case study villages, but this can be broken down into several different trends:

- In-migration from Wales and the West Midlands as a spin-out from the planned development of Newtown as an economic growth pole: significant in Tregynon as a commuter settlement for Newtown during the 1980s.
- Cross-border migration from Shropshire fuelled by land availability, lower property prices in Montgomeryshire and improved transport connections: significant in Llanfechain and Sarn, especially during the 1990s.
- Internal local migration, including out-migration from Newtown, driven by housing availability and affordability: significant in Adfa and Tregynon in particular in the 2000s.
- Lifestyle in-migration, especially from outside the region, attracted by the rural character of the villages: evident in all of the case study villages throughout the period, but particularly significant as a driver of development in Penegoes in the 2000s.

5.3 The significance of the rural character of Montgomeryshire as a key attracting factor for in-migrants is reflected in the importance ascribed to it as a reason for living in their particular village by survey respondents in all the case studies. The emphasis given to other factors, however, varied and again points to divergence within the cohort of in-migrants. Residents in Penegoes and Sarn place greater emphasis on feeling part of a community than those elsewhere, perhaps reflecting decisions to move to a smaller village. Access to larger towns was emphasized by residents in Llanfechain, Penegoes and Sarn – all of which are located on or close to

main roads. The diversity of age ranges and backgrounds in the village was particularly cited by respondents in Sarn and Tregynon – the villages with the most mixed forms of development and perhaps the most family-oriented. These observations support the conclusion that in-migrants select a village to move to for a variety of reasons, with different villages appealing to different migrants, and thus that population change even in geographically close settlements can be driven by slightly different migration dynamics.

5.4 On the supply side the key factors include land availability and price, infrastructure capacity and planning policies. In principle, the geographical distribution of development, and hence population growth, is regulated by planning policies that designated land for development, which in turn is informed by the capacity of local infrastructure. In general, the strategy has been to concentrate development in larger settlements with greater capacity to support growth. In the context of the case studies, this means that more development has been allocated to Llanfechain and Tregynon than to Adfa, Penegoes and Sarn. However, land use planning is not a purely technical process, but is the product of decision-making by local councillors, influenced by political campaigning and lobbying. Some observers suggested that developers were attracted to Montgomeryshire by a relatively liberal approach to the allocation of land for development in local plans in comparison to Shropshire, where anti-development opinion had informed a more restrictive approach to designating land for new housing in rural communities.

5.5 Moreover, in practice the translation of land allocated for development into housing is determined by the negotiation of landowners and developers, and assessments of the likely return on speculative development. As such, a key supply-side driver of housing development in Montgomeryshire in the 1990s, and especially in villages close to the English border including Llanfechain and Sarn, were lower land prices than in Shropshire. The rate of development encouraged a form of bubble in which the price of land in Montgomeryshire was over-inflated with landowners holding out for a higher price that developers were prepared to pay. As a consequence, new construction slowed in villages such as Llanfechain and Sarn, with some sites designated for housing in planning policy left undeveloped.

5.6 The global economic crisis and housing crash in 2008 similarly changed market conditions and affected developers' assessment of the likely return on speculative development. The most notable impact in the case study villages was in Penegoes where construction of the Pencaemawr estate was suspended incomplete, recognizing that growth in Penegoes was particularly dependent on earnings in the local tourism industry and lifestyle migration from other parts of the country funded by property sales elsewhere. In contrast, housing construction continued in Tregynon, where development is more closely tied to local migration dynamics and less vulnerable to changes in the economic climate. More broadly, some interviewees suggested that regional-scale developers had refocused following 2008

from Montgomeryshire villages to Shrewsbury and Oswestry, which were regarded as safer markets.

5.7 Notwithstanding the differences between the case study villages noted above, the research also revealed a number of common themes, which are discussed in further detail below.

Linked migration dynamics

5.8 The discussion above describes how the case study villages are particularly impacted by different patterns of in-migration, however all of the villages are also enmeshed in a set of linked migration dynamics within Montgomeryshire that reflect variations in individual's residential preferences and options at different stages of life and the ways in which these are structured by questions of housing affordability and availability.

5.9 First, there is a general trend of out-migration of young people from the case study villages, which is in line with a broader pattern across the country. Some of this movement is by choice, including moving away for education, employment or training, but some is compelled by a shortage of appropriate affordable accommodation for young people in villages. Across all the case study villages, the research indicated that around half of young people would prefer to stay in the village, but they are frequently prevented from doing so by a lack of appropriate and/or affordable housing. Although new development has increased the supply of housing stock in the villages, the level of demand and type of new housing constructed has contributed to substantial inflation in property prices, often pricing out young people and low income households. In each of the case study villages, average property prices are now above the average across the wider postcode area in which they are located, and in nearby towns.

5.10 Whilst quotas for affordable housing have been made a condition of planning permission for new housing developments, the volume of affordable housing provided through this mechanism has not been sufficient to meet real demand. Moreover, there is some evidence that affordable housing quotas can be counterproductive, as developers seek to off-set lost profits by focusing the remainder of developments on large detached houses with large profit margins rather than on middle-range properties.

5.11 Second, there is a trend of young couples and young families moving from towns such as Newtown to villages such as Tregynon and Adfa. This is in some cases influenced by house price (although average house prices overall are higher in Tregynon than in Newtown, for 3 bedroom detached houses current asking prices are £145,000 - £225,000 in Tregynon compared with £165,000 - £275,000 in Newtown),¹⁶ but also by preferences for a rural setting and village community.

¹⁶ Prices sourced from www.rightmove.co.uk

Differential property prices can influence selection of village and migration to Adfa during the 2000s reflected house prices on the new build Meillionydd and Treganol estates being approximately 10% lower than for equivalent properties in Tregynon (Interview 04). However the perceptions of rural life held by in-migrants were sometimes challenged by the reality of village life, with lack of infrastructure and unexpectedly harsh winter conditions, and Adfa has also witnessed the return of migrants back to Newtown for these reasons. Meillionydd in Adfa has the third highest turnover of property sales of all streets in the SY16 postcode area (with the highest turnover being for Rosemary Drive in Tregynon).¹⁷

5.12 Third, all of the case study villages attracted retirement migration, which in Montgomeryshire appears to be closely linked to return migration. Across the case study villages, at least 70% of retired or retiring in-migrants have previous attachments to Montgomeryshire (if not necessarily to the particular village), including individuals who had been part of the depopulation of rural Mid Wales in the post-war period as children or adults. The significance of prior place attachment is highest in Penegoes, where 85% of in-migrants have a long-standing connection to the area, including not only individuals with family ties but also long-standing regular tourists who have decided to settle in the district. The varying strength and significance of these pre-existing ties raises questions about who should be defined as 'local' when considering population change and access to housing.

5.13 Fourth, interviewees commented on the challenges faced by an aging population in rural communities and consequential late-life migration from villages to small towns, as has been noted in previous research on rural Wales.¹⁸ The supply of appropriate housing in smaller villages can be a factor in such migration, including limited 'sheltered' housing for elderly residents (for example, there are only two bungalows available as 'sheltered' housing for the elderly in Sarn), and the tendency of developers to build larger housing and to target smaller 'affordable houses' at first-time buyers rather than downsizing retirees (Interview 07). Limited facilities in villages, notably health services, and the depletion of infrastructure through the closure of post offices and shops and rationalisation of bus services, also present challenges for relatively immobile elderly residents, such that relocating to a town becomes the "logical solution" (Interview 09). For many retirement in-migrants this step might be anticipated, with one commenting that they "fully understand and expect that this will not be the for the rest of our lives, it is a mere pleasantry transition" (Interview 25); but for elderly residents who have lived in a village for most, if not all, of their lives, there is a greater preference for 'aging in place'.

¹⁷ Source: www.zoopla.co.uk

¹⁸ Walford, N. (2010) Connecting rural and urban places: enduring migration between small areas in England and Wales, in G. Halseth, S. Markey and D. Bruce (eds) *Next Rural Economies*. Wallingford: CABI; Wales Rural Observatory (2013) *Older People and Place in Rural Wales: Demography, Policy and Community*. Cardiff: WRO.

Social and community impacts

5.14 The most obvious impacts of development in villages is the physical change to landscape and appearance of the village, but the research also revealed impacts on social interaction and community life, both positive and negative. The positive social impacts of development were most readily acknowledged by long-term residents, some of whom attributed new developments and in-migration with revitalising the village after periods of depopulation:

“I think it’s a good thing as the more people living in a community the better it is! It adds some much needed vitality here, and helps to stir things a bit socially and economically. It basically means that the village is prepared for the next generations, it’s served me well and I’m probably not going to be here much longer so it’s best to move with the times.” (Interview 17, Penegoes).

5.15 In some cases, housing development was credited with bringing younger people into the village and helping to rejuvenate village organisations, as observed in Llanfechain:

“The age change here in Llanfechain can be shown by the WI, as when I joined it way back in the 1980s time the average age was 70 years old and now it is about 50. There are also a few 30 year olds joining in, so the WI is a good indication!” (Interview 13, Llanfechain).

5.16 At the same time, concerns were also expressed about the integration of in-migrants into village life, especially those commuting to work elsewhere who were sometimes seen as not being fully part of the village, and about increasing numbers of second homes, notably in Tregynon, which are vacant for large parts of the year. The loss of local services such as shops and schools was regarded as removing spaces in which the community had interacted, and a perception was articulated that some in-migrants equate the absence of such spaces with a lack of community and that if “they don’t see one [a community], they don’t try create one” (Interview 10). Conversely, other interviewees suggested that multiple communities of residents with similar socio-economic backgrounds had formed in the larger villages, whilst interviewees also credited effective local leadership in Llanfechain and Sarn with avoiding local/incomer or Welsh/English tensions by, for example, recruiting in-migrants to the community councils.

5.17 The impact of development and in-migration on the Welsh language has been a particular area of concern, but the evidence from the research points to mixed outcomes (Table 5.1). In Llanfechain, with significant cross-border migration from England, and the Dwyriw community containing Adfa, the proportion of Welsh-speakers in the population fell noticeably between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. In Dwyriw this can be attributed almost wholly to in-migration, as there was little change in the actual number of Welsh-speakers (149 compared with 154), but a drop in the

percentage of the population speaking Welsh of over 7% points. In Cadfarch (containing Penegoes), Kerry (containing Sarn) and Tregynon communities, by contrast, the number of Welsh-speakers increased between 2001 and 2011 in both relative and absolute terms. In Tregynon this was attributed to the bilingual policy of the village primary school, and indeed it is notable that 59.7% of 3-15 year olds in Tregynon were reported as speaking Welsh in the 2011 Census, compared to just 12.9% of residents aged over 65.

Community	2001 Census		2011 Census		Change 2001-11
	Number	% of population	Number	% of population	
Cadfarch (including Penegoes)	512	62.7%	538	64.2%	+1.5%
Dwyriw (including Adfa)	154	33.7%	149	26.6%	-7.1%
Kerry (including Sarn)	214	11.5%	259	12.9%	+1.4%
Llanfechain	117	22.7%	90	19.6%	-3.1%
Tregynon	127	21.2%	199	23.3%	+2.1%

Table 5.1: Residents of case study communities able to speak Welsh, 2001 and 2011 (Source: Welsh Language Commissioner).

5.18 Taking into account the above factors, development in a village appears to be deemed a success or otherwise by local residents by the type of in-migrants that it attracts, as opposed to the design or physical impact. For example, the 1990s housing development in Llanfechain tended to be viewed as unsuccessful by long-term residents as it did not attract young adults or families that could contribute towards the sustainability of the primary school.

Infrastructure and development

5.19 Some of the most frequent concerns about village development raised by participants in the research related to the impact of development on local infrastructure, and the limitations of local infrastructure on new development. These concerns referred both to physical infrastructure such as roads and sewerage systems, and to social infrastructure such as shops and schools.

5.20 The capacity of physical infrastructure including roads, water and electricity supply and sewerage systems is a critical factor in formulating planning policy and informs the allocation of development land in individual communities. The deposit draft of the Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026, for instance, proposes a settlement hierarchy approach, with development concentrated in larger villages that have been assessed to have the infrastructural capacity to support further development. As previously noted, only Llanfechain and Tregynon of the case study villages have been placed in this category. Moreover, even in these villages there is

concern about the pressure of further development on physical infrastructure, with the sewerage system in Llanfechain (as well as that in Sarn) cited as presenting a potential problem if not upgraded.

5.21 In general, the perception among research participants was that infrastructure improvements in the case study villages had not kept pace with new housing development and population growth. Developers in particular were criticised for not doing more to provide additional amenities, though implied criticism was also directed towards Powys Council for not securing more ‘planning gain’ amenity improvements as a condition of planning permission, with one observer commenting that it “takes a strong planning department to push a developer to do more than the minimum” (Interview 15).

5.22 Specific infrastructure pressures referred to by study participants included the road from Newtown to Tregynon, which narrows to single track in several places but has experienced a significant increase in traffic as a result of housing development in Tregynon (and to a lesser extent Adfa). The omission of proposals to upgrade the road from the Powys Local Development Plan was criticised by some interviewees, and cited as an example of the need for infrastructure improvement as a pre-condition for future developments:

“There needs to be government pressure to change policy behind development for forward-thinking infrastructure. By this I mean roads outside the vicinity of the village too, not just immediate. Without services, developing is *not* practical. The new LDP approach has *not* changed – it has the same approach as the [UDP]. It *really* needs forward consideration to infrastructure that needs to go with it!” (Interview 06).

5.23 Awareness of flood risk, and the requirement for flood alleviation infrastructure to protect properties, has increased with flooding events over recent years, including flash flooding in Tregynon in 2007 that necessitated the temporary rehousing of some residents. A Powys Council representative stated that “lessons have been learnt from the Tregynon floodplain” (Interview 04), and flood alleviation works were started in Tregynon in early 2015. Furthermore, the council has indicated that assessment of flood risk will be incorporated into the allocation of land for development in the Local Development Plan. However, the effectiveness of this measure was questioned by some participants who pointed out that land allocated for housing development in Llanfechain is on a flood plain, and criticised the council for “drawing up far too much from maps” (Interview 14) rather than taking account of site inspections and local knowledge.

5.24 Concerns were also raised about less visible infrastructure including mains electricity and water supplies, telephone land lines, mobile telephone reception and broadband. Assessment of the capacity and reach of these services was perceived to be missing from planning for new development. In particular, the unevenness of

broadband provision and speeds was considered to be a significant problem for residents who are self-employed, running micro-businesses or otherwise working from home. This is a substantial group with around a quarter of working-age residents in the communities containing Adfa, Penegoes and Sarn being self-employed, well above the average for Wales (Table 5.2). Self-employment and home-working are seen to be strategies that enable people to move to or remain in smaller rural communities where employment opportunities in the immediate area may be limited, and as such the provision of comprehensive and reliable telecommunications services, including broadband, is regarded as essential for enabling villages to continue to be places of work as well as residence.

Community	% Self-Employed
Dwyriw (including Adfa)	27.52%
Cadfarch (including Penegoes)	25.04%
Kerry (including Sarn)	23.82%
Tregynon	19.30%
<i>Powys average</i>	<i>17.39%</i>
Llanfechain	16.13%
<i>Wales average</i>	<i>8.6%</i>

Table 5.2: Percentage of residents aged 18-74 who are self-employed
(Source: 2011 Census)

5.25 In addition to pressures on physical infrastructure, concerns were also expressed about social infrastructure including schools, shops, post offices, public houses and community halls. All the case study villages have experienced a decrease in the number of local services present over the period from 1980 to 2010, in line with wider trends across rural Wales, with primary schools in Adfa and Sarn both closing during the period. The closure of facilities is associated by long-term residents in particular with the decline of the community:

“In Adfa the school closed in 1996, and the village shop closed as well after, and then the post office! Picking children up from school was a social occasion and we lost that which really was a great shame...” (Interview 08, Adfa).

5.26 Although new development and population growth has provide some support for remaining services, there is relatively little evidence of it leading to the resurrection of previously closed facilities (the one arguable exception being the Llanfechain community shop). Instead, there is concern about the combination of a larger (and aging) population and a loss of village facilities leading to greater reliance on travelling to access services elsewhere. Reliance on private transport and the cost of running a car were acknowledged as something “we accept as part of living in the countryside and have pre-factored in” (Interview 19), however other participants

raised questions such as “what if there comes a time when I am too old or ill to drive – the what?” (Interview 22).

5.27 In spite of such concerns, estate agents interviewed played down the impact of the loss of facilities such as primary schools on demand for property in specific villages, arguing that it has become accepted by potential buyers that “loads of village schools have closed anyway” (Interview 03). As such, it might be inferred that the closure of village services resonates more strongly with existing residents than with potential migrants.

5.28 The prospect for significant improvements to the physical or social infrastructure of villages in Montgomeryshire being made in the near future is not strong, especially given continuing reductions in the budgets of local authorities. Issues also arise from the dispersal of responsibility for infrastructure between different council departments, and different public and private agencies and the lack of coordination between these. The increased role of private companies in providing infrastructure including electricity, water and sewerage, telephones and broadband has further complicated the dynamics of coordination and has made it more difficult for planning authorities to have accurate information about infrastructural capacity in particular communities when developing policies.

Attitudes to further development

5.29 The development that has occurred in the case study villages in the period since 1980 has been largely accepted by residents and as noted above has been welcomed by long-term residents in particular for helping to halt decline and revitalise communities. However, there is widespread concern across all of the case study villages about the capacity of the village to absorb further new housing construction. A substantial majority of survey respondents in four of the villages – Adfa, Llanfechain, Penegoes and Sarn – indicated that they considered only minimal new development of up to 25 houses to be acceptable (Table 5.3). In Tregynon there was greater tolerance of new development, with the majority of respondents considering up to 50 new houses to be acceptable, probably reflecting the greater scale of development to date in the village and hence perceptions of the impact of different numbers of new dwellings. Proportionately, the addition of 50 houses in Tregynon is equivalent to 10 new houses in Penegoes or 15 new houses in Adfa.

	0-25 dwellings	26-50 dwellings	51-75 dwellings	76-100 dwellings	100+ dwellings
Adfa	88 %	12 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Llanfechain	74 %	25 %	1 %	0 %	0 %
Penegoes	69 %	28 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Sarn	71 %	29 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Tregynon	33 %	48 %	18 %	1 %	0 %

Figure 5.3: Acceptable thresholds of new housing development for survey respondents in the case study villages.

5.30 Attitudes towards development are fairly uniform across social classifications such as gender, but notable differences exist between the views of long-term residents and those of more recent in-migrants. Long-term village residents, who recall periods of dominant out-migration, generally have welcome the positive impacts of housing development in reversing depopulation and reviving community vibrancy. More recent in-migrants, in contrast, tend to be more opposed to further development, and more likely to express opinions about development that relate to the impact on them personally rather than to the long-term benefits or costs to the wider community. Such attitudes have been described as adhering to a NIMBY (Not in my backyard) outlook, as one interviewee acknowledged (with some qualification):

“I am against development in the village for a strong case of NIMBYism really, as my house backs on to a field that is up for development. But beyond my own selfish requirement, the school does need supporting, it needs a bit of balance of demographics in the village, and that’s what development would be good for.” (Interview 12).

5.31 Opposition to development is also responsive to the form of development proposed. The practice of ‘infilling’ – building on undeveloped fields and plots within the village itself – has generally been favoured in planning policy because it maintains the overall footprint of the village and does not extend built-up land into the open countryside. Yet, infilling is often unpopular with village residents because it increases the density of villages, erodes privacy and arguably detracts from the rural character of the community. One interviewee commented that residents “do not want houses that are built overlooking or so close that they look into adjoining properties” (Interview 18), whilst another reflected:

“This is one of the reasons I have always lived in Penegoes, in order to live in the countryside and be relatively removed. I guess I kind of accepted that the services here aren’t good, but I associate that with rural life, and I always have done. It’s our way of life. I don’t live here for the great bus service; I live here for the environment! I mean, I’ve always liked living here, and the amount of development that has taken place so far I have accepted, but

more... *Oh no!* I wouldn't like that! That may make me want to move house as I would be losing the seclusion I *value* so much." (Interview 16).

5.32 Thus, whilst previous developments have been broadly accepted, there is a risk that the case study villages are approaching a 'threshold of dissatisfaction',¹⁹ at which the balance of opinion will be tipped against further development. This may lead to greater conflict over individual planning applications, and could also prompt a new cascade of migration, as hinted in the quote above, as residents seek to move from villages that are the focus of development to smaller, less undeveloped communities.

5.33 Housing development in Montgomeryshire has not, so far, become as controversial a political issue as it has in parts of southern England – where there are concerns about the extent of urbanization – or in some areas of north and west Wales – where the impact on the Welsh language has been debated. Some individual proposals have been contested, in some cases successfully. In Penegoes, for example, residents successfully campaigned for one potential development site identified in consultation for the Unitary Development Plan to be converted into a children's playground instead. In other cases, research participants complained that developments aligned with government priorities have been pushed through without adequate local input, for example the construction of 'eco-homes' in Tregynon.

5.34 The frustration expressed by some residents at their perceived inability to stop controversial developments in large part reflects a lack of understanding of the planning system, and interventions that are made too late in the process, as one interviewee observed:

"When people protest against planning permission, that step is actually too late then. People don't understand the process. The zoning of land starts the process. Although local people have a say, their say comes too late. It is also hard to argue against the scheme for development if nothing is actually wrong with the plans apart from people not liking it." (Interview 03).

5.35 Indeed, the relatively low profile of housing development as a political issue in Montgomeryshire has meant that local community groups and campaign groups have not been geared towards participation in the consultation stage of planning policy as has been observed for equivalent groups in parts of England. As noted previously, this itself may have been a driver of development in Montgomeryshire with less restrictive planning leading to a greater availability of land for construction than in neighbouring Shropshire. However, there are signs that this may be changing, with for example Llanfechain Community Council actively encouraging local residents to express views on the six potential development sites in the village and respond to the consultation exercise.

¹⁹ Speare, A. (1974) 'Residential satisfaction as an intervening variable in residential mobility', *Demography*, volume 11, pages 173-188.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Montgomeryshire villages experienced considerable population growth driven by in-migration in the period between 1980 and 2000 which in turn has been associated with significant new housing development. Most villages have experienced some extent of new house-building, but the scale and timing of development has varied between communities, responding to different drivers, supply factors and migration patterns. Future planning policy development needs to be attuned to these local dynamics.

6.2 In spite of the role of the Powys Unitary Development Plan in setting targets and designating land for housing development, there is a perception that actual housing construction has not been strategically managed, but has been largely determined by developers and landowners. Certainly there is evidence from the case study villages that speculative development has been important, and that decisions by developers and landowners have been critical in determining which particular sites have been developed, and which have not.

6.3 While housing development in the case study villages has been broadly accepted to date, there is widespread concern about the capacity of the villages to accommodate additional future development. In particular, concerns have been expressed about the impact of development on village infrastructure.

6.4 The deposit draft of the Powys Local Development Plan for 2011-2026 indicates the adoption of a more targeted approach, with a settlement hierarchy introduced to concentrate new development in larger villages. Housing quotas and land allocations are only detailed for these larger villages, including Llanfechain and Tregynon, and not for settlements classified as 'small villages', including Adfa, Penegoes and Sarn. This strategy reflects infrastructure constraints and addresses some of the concerns expressed by village residents about the impact of previous development.

6.5 However, the statements in the LDP draft deposit that "housing growth (open market and affordable) is allowed in Small Villages in proportion to their size and facilities, and according to their capacity to accommodate growth due to environmental and infrastructure capacity constraints" and that "a policy approach has been taken to enable the development of open market and affordable housing" in small villages, raise questions of process and accountability. If these statements imply that decisions on planning applications for housing development will be considered on a case by case basis, there is a danger that opportunities for community input will be limited, and in particular that communities will not have had the opportunity for strategic discussion about the scale and location of development in the village as part of the consultation phase of the LDP.

6.6 Alternatively, if the adoption of the 'settlement hierarchy' approach in the LDP is interpreted as a presumption against new development in small villages, with new housing developments only permitted as exceptions, there is equally a risk to village sustainability. The analysis of housing development and population growth in the case study villages shows that construction of new housing estates is associated with jumps in population, whilst decades without significant new housing construction are associated with limited population increases or decreases in population, with implications for the viability of local services. Rates of new development that are below the rate of demand can also contribute to property price influence and hence to problems of housing affordability.

6.7 The LDP may also be critiqued for its emphasis on where new housing is built rather than on what is built. Whilst this is in line with the conventions and constraints of planning legislation, it differs from the way in which village residents tend to think about development. As well as where new housing is built (and particular the impact of 'infilling'), village residents are also concerned about the type and cost of housing that is built, and therefore the type of new residents that are attracted and their contribution to the village.

6.8 Although there has been substantial new housing development in the case study villages between 1980 and 2010, new commercial development in these villages has been very limited. Indeed, most of the villages have experienced a decrease in service provision over the period, including the closure of both private services (shops, petrol stations etc) and public amenities (schools and post offices). There is more broadly a perception that infrastructure improvements have not kept pace with the rate of housing development. At the same time, public expectations of infrastructure enhancement as a precondition for development will be difficult to meet in the context of cuts to public finance and with a lack of coordination between agencies responsible for different elements of infrastructure, including the local authority, Welsh Government and private businesses.

6.9 In response to these issues, it is important that the future development and implementation of planning policy in Montgomeryshire recognizes both the benefits of appropriately scaled housing development to rural communities and the pressures of development on village infrastructure and seeks to balance the demand for new development with the concerns of local residents, taking into account the variegated drivers of migration patterns in different parts of Montgomeryshire. This may in turn require more detail to be specified about the policy principles that will be used to determine the outcome of applications for new housing development in places designated as 'small villages' in the Local Development Plan. These principles should allow for a modest amount of new development in order to support local services and maintain positive population growth, and should be developed with appropriate community input.

6.10 Additionally, it is desirable for planning policies to encourage the provision of a full range of housing types and affordability as part of new developments, using all available mechanisms. There is an evident need for housing that includes affordable and appropriately sized properties to enable both young people and elderly residents to remain in small and medium-sized villages, and which enables retirees to 'downsize' and release larger properties for younger families. Similarly, planners should be encouraged to fully employ 'planning gain' policies to require developers to contribute towards the upgrading of amenities and infrastructure as a condition for major developments, as well as to develop partnership approaches with other agencies and private utility providers to coordinate infrastructure improvements with housing developments.

6.11 Perhaps most importantly, the concerns expressed by participants in this study point to the need to enhance public engagement in the planning process in Montgomeryshire at all stages. This in part requires improved information to educate the public about the planning process, the criteria employed in making planning decisions (and inadmissible considerations), and the points at which interventions can make a difference. It also may involve the introduction of mechanisms to encourage direct participation, including community planning exercises, as well as an expanded role for community councils. There are a number of examples of good practice for the engagement of community councils and other local organizations in community planning elsewhere in Wales, as well as advice and support available from organization such as Planning Aid Wales.²⁰

6.12 Finally, given the proximity of Montgomeryshire to the English border, it is likely that the dynamics of village development and attitudes towards development will be increasingly influenced by policy divergence between England and Wales. It has been suggested that changes to building regulations in England have already encouraged developers to shift attention away from Montgomeryshire back to Shropshire; whilst cross-border comparison of planning systems may contribute to dissatisfaction in Montgomeryshire at opportunities for public engagement in the planning process relative to the mechanisms for community planning introduced by the Localism Act in England.

²⁰ See: Independent Advisory Group (2012) *Towards a Welsh Planning Act: Ensuring the Planning System Delivers*; Woods (2014) *Developing a Comprehensive Understanding of Community and Town Councils in Wales*, Welsh Government.

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