

Community No. B03 – BUILTH WELLS

Community No. B04 – CILMERY

Community No. B07 – DUHONW

Introduction

1. The three communities of Builth Wells, Cilmery and Duhonw are located in north-western Brecknockshire, in a landscape that is defined by the eastward flowing rivers Chwefru, Irfon and Duhonw that join the river Wye near to the town of Builth Wells. These rivers form several of the natural boundaries of these communities. The town of Builth Wells is the area centre for northwestern Brecknockshire and for southern Radnorshire. It is an important centre for the local agricultural industry and for tourism. It has a limited industrial base and the majority of employment is in the service sector. The town retains a district hospital and a good range of social and health services as well as a wide range of financial and retail services.

2. The small community of Cilmery is located in the hill and valley country to the west of Builth Wells, and its boundary with the town is the river Irfon as it turns northwards to join the river Wye. The main settlement in the community is the small village of Cilmery, and nearby is an unclassified small settlement at Rhosferig. However, the settlement boundary of the neighbouring town has already spilled over the river Irfon and into Cilmery community; the Parc yr Irfon, Golf Links Road, Golf Links Lane and Golf Club Lane estates with some 140 resident electors are located in Cilmery community.

3. The more extensive community of Duhonw is located to the south of the town of Builth Wells. There is considerable upland in this community, with its south bounded by Mynydd yr Epynt and Banc y Celyn, and a further spine of upland traverses the centre of the community to Moelfre. Settlement in this community comprises scattered farms and dwellings in the valleys of the rivers Irfon (which forms the community's northern boundary), Duhonw and Wye (which forms the eastern boundary), with the two main groupings of dwellings being in unclassified settlements at Maesmynis and Llanddewi'r Cwm.

4. The A483 and the A470 converge at Builth Wells, and these are routes of regional importance, linking North and South Wales. The B4520, however, is a route of more local significance, linking the area with Brecon. The Mid Wales Railway line passes through and has a halt in Cilmery community.

5. Builth Wells has a population of 2,352, an electorate of 1,894 (2005) and a council of 10 members. The precept required for 2005 is £29,250.00, representing a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £31.62.

6. Cilmery has a population of 438, an electorate of 357 (2005) and a council of seven members. The Community is warded as follows: Llanganten with

224 electors and five councillors; Rhosferrig with 133 electors and two councillors. The precept required for 2005 is £1,500.00, representing a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £7.31.

7. Duhonw has a population of 300, an electorate of 260 (2005) and a council of seven members. The precept required for 2005 is £1,200.00, representing a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £8.80.

8. In the 1985 Review the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales made a small adjustment to the boundary of the community of Builth Wells to take in development that had strayed across the community boundary at Oaklands and Oak Farm. No further changes were felt necessary at this community at that time, and the Commission made its final recommendations for a community council of ten members in an unwarded community.

9. The Commission then turned its attention to the small communities in the hinterland of the town of Builth Wells, applying its policy of the time of amalgamating the very small communities of central Brecknockshire. Various schemes of amalgamation were considered. Four small communities – Llanddewi'r Cwm, Llangynog, Llanynis and Maesmynis were brought together to create the new community of Duhonw with its community council of seven members. Two further small communities – Llanganten and Rhosferig – and the north-eastern part of the then community of Llanafanfychan were brought together to form the new community of Cilmery in a warded community of two wards and seven councillors.

10. These amalgamations followed several proposals put forward by various councils and organisations, and it is worth revisiting the principles that guided the Commission at the time. Firstly, the Commission considered “that the river Irfon effectively divides the communities on its north bank from those on its south bank... the river is an effective barrier, the only bridges being at Garth and Builth respectively.” It therefore rejected any proposals to merge the communities to the north of the river with those to its south. Secondly, the Commission rejected a proposal to merge the community of Rhosferig with the town of Builth Wells: “we are satisfied that the inhabitants of Rhosferig favour our Draft Proposals [that they should be transferred to the new community of Cilmery];... a transfer of part only of the community of Rhosferig to the new community of Builth would deprive the proposed community of Cilmery of much needed rateable value”, and the Commission considered that the river Irfon “effectively divides the communities” of Cilmery and Builth Wells. Thirdly, much as the Commission had considered that it would be appropriate to merge the small and “weak” rural communities of Llanynis, Maesmynis, Llangynog and Llanddewi'r Cwm with “the larger and richer Builth Wells community”, “the strength of opposition to the proposals from the inhabitants of these communities is such that we feel we ought to accede to it”. Finally, much as the Commission had wished to include a small part of the community of Llanellwedd, immediately to the north of the river Wye in the proposed community of Builth Wells, this matter was lifted out of the Commission's hands by the decision letter of the Secretary of State for Wales

dated 18 August 1980 which rejected this proposal: “He has taken note of the local opposition to the proposal... and considers that the river Wye makes a satisfactory boundary in this area.”

11. In the 2000 Review, these principles were revisited when Powys County Council considered a request from Builth Wells Town Council to revise the boundaries of Builth Wells, particularly to include the housing estates at Parc yr Irfon, Golf Links Road, Golf Links Lane and Golf Club Lane. The County Council reiterated the contents of the decision letter of the Secretary of State for Wales. It also recognised that any such transfer would inevitably result in the community of Cilmery becoming unviable and would probably also be strongly resisted by the residents of the area. Following a joint meeting of representatives of the County Council, Cilmery Community Council and Builth Wells Town Council on 12 June 2000 at which these points were made, the town council withdrew its proposals.

Summary of representations received prior to preparation of Draft Proposals

12. A submission has been received from Builth Wells Town Council, requesting that the area of the Rhosferig ward of the community of Cilmery which is within the settlement boundary of Builth as defined in the Unitary Development Plan be transferred to the town, as this area is considered to be part of the town and the transfer would meet one of the current review objectives as laid out in paragraph 6.2 of Powys County Council’s Practice and Policy Document. Likewise, there is a request that all those properties in Newry Road as far south and including Sunnybank be transferred from the community of Duhonw as this area has more of an affinity with Builth than the rural community of Duhonw. The Town Council requests that its allocation of councillors remains at ten unless the area of Rhosferig is transferred in which case the number of councillors should be increased to 11.

13. A letter and form of submission have been received from Cilmery Community Council requesting that no changes be made to their community. “Llanganten and Rhosferig form a close knit, balanced community which works effectively for the benefit of the local electorate. This mainly rural area shares our church, chapel, public house and community hall. It is enhanced by the inclusion in Rhosferig ward of the small development of Parc-yr-Irfon, which integrates well and is of benefit to and a necessary part of this ward, the two representatives on our community council residing here. We believe it is important to preserve the local ties which have for generations bound these two communities together.”

Assessment

14. We have looked once more at the settlement boundary of the area centre of Builth Wells. We are mindful that at Parc yr Irfon, Golf Links Road, Golf Links Lane and Golf Club Lane the settlement boundary crosses the river

Irfon into the adjoining community of Cilmerly. In our Practice and Policy Document we stated that we would look carefully at the county's towns, which are often contained within small geographical community areas, to ensure that settlement boundaries as defined in the Unitary Development Plans are within community boundaries and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

However, in this particular case we do not consider that an amendment to the community boundary should be made as many of the principles which guided the decisions of the 1985 and 2000 Reviews still hold good: the river Irfon forms a clear, physical community boundary at this location; an amendment would unduly deplete the community of Cilmerly of electors and resources and this community would become unviable; a merger of the remainder of the Cilmerly community with Duhonw community would not be appropriate as there is no bridging point over the river Irfon between them and they are separate communities, and last but not least we consider that there would be strong resistance from the residents of the estates to such a change.

15. We have looked also at the southern boundary of the town, where it follows field boundaries and Newry Road. We are mindful, as with the community of Cilmerly, that any depletion of electors and resources from the community of Duhonw might lead to that community likewise becoming unviable. However, we find that at this location, there are properties that are in very close proximity to the settlement boundary of the town which are in Duhonw community, and there are properties that are in more open countryside to the south which are within the community of Builth Wells. We consider that a more appropriate boundary can be drawn here, which will meet our joint objectives of ensuring that the settlement boundary remains well within the community boundary without unduly depleting the adjoining rural community. We propose that the community boundary should be redrawn at this location to transfer the properties known as Newfound Well, Jowayne, High Meadow, Westfield, Awelon, Larbourne and Sutton to the community of Builth Wells and to transfer the properties known as Newry Farm, Newry Cottage, Little Newry Cottage, Erwhelm, Erw Gilfach and Cnwcyлло to the community of Duhonw.

16. The electorate of Builth Wells has increased from 1,328 in 1979 to 1,894 in 2005. The Powys Unitary Development Plan allocates six sites in this area centre for 203 dwellings. However, we estimate that about 61 of these dwellings have already been built and have had their effect on the electorate. There may be further opportunities for infill development in the town. We note that this community's electorate will rise further, therefore, to about 2,130 electors, suggesting an entitlement in accordance with Table 5 - Councillor Allocation and Powys's Towns to twelve or thirteen councillors.

17. In the community of Cilmerly at the small village of Cilmerly there are no allocated sites, and there are only opportunities for infill development and affordable housing adjacent to the settlement development boundaries here and at Parc yr Irfon in accordance with policy HP8 of the Powys Unitary Development Plan. There will also be some opportunities for a limited number of dwellings in the open countryside in accordance with Policy HP6 of the Plan, and for conversions in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Plan. We

note that this community's electorate will remain stable, therefore, at about 360 electors, suggesting a continued entitlement in accordance with Table 7 - Guide to Allocation of Councillors to Community Councils to seven councillors.

18. In the community of Duhonw the only development that will take place in the foreseeable future will be of a limited number of dwellings in the open countryside in accordance with Policy HP6 of the Plan, and conversions in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Plan. The electorate of this community will remain stable at about 260 electors for the foreseeable future, suggesting a continued entitlement in accordance with Table 7 - Guide to Allocation of Councillors to Community Councils to seven councillors.

19. The only community in this group that is presently warded is Cilmery. We have given careful consideration to the question of whether this community should continue to be divided into wards. We are required to apply the criteria in Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act in our consideration of this matter, and these are that (a) the number or distribution of the local government electors for the community is such as to make a single election of community councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (b) it is desirable that areas of the community should be separately represented on the community council. We do not consider that the number or distribution of the local government electors for this community is such as to make a single election of community councillors impracticable or inconvenient; indeed, all electors in the community currently vote at the same polling station which is Church Hall, Cilmery. Likewise, we do not consider that it is any longer desirable for areas of this geographically small community to be separately represented on the community council. Other than the properties at Parc yr Irfon, Golf Links Road, Golf Links Lane and Golf Club Lane, the Rhosferig ward of this community is very sparsely populated, and therefore the small village of Cilmery, the main settlement in the community, is centrally located to the whole community.

Draft Proposals

Builth Wells

20. That there should be a community of Builth Wells comprising the present community of that name together with part of the community of Duhonw at Newry Road;

The community should have a council of 12 members.

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
	1894	12	158

Cilmery

21. That there should be a community of Cilmery comprising the present community of that name;

The community should have a council of 7 members.

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
	357	7	51

Duhonw

22. That there should be a community of Duhonw comprising the present community of that name together with part of the community of Builth Wells at Newry Road;

The community should have a council of 7 members.

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
	260	7	37