

## Community of Abergavenny

### Current Community Format

1. The current community arrangements in Abergavenny consist of five wards, Cantref, Grofield, Castle, Lansdown and Priory. The community has a total electorate of 7990 and is represented by 15 community councillors. The electorate per ward and number of councillors is as follows:

Community Ward	Electorate	Number of Councillors
Cantref	1695	3
Grofield	1413	3
Castle	1607	3
Lansdown	1721	3
Priory	1554	3

### Natural Boundaries / Key Features

2. The most prominent natural boundary surrounding the community of Abergavenny is the River Usk at the south of the community. The River Usk provides a boundary between Abergavenny and Llanfoist with access only available via The Heads of the Valleys road and the Usk Bridge adjoining Llanfoist and Abergavenny.
  - 2.1. To the West of Abergavenny, the A465 main road provides a natural boundary between the urban area of Abergavenny and the rural areas of Llanover and Llantilio Pertholey.

### Electorate Forecast

3. Within the current boundary of the community of Abergavenny there are no development plans which will increase the electorate within the area.

### Representations Received

4. A number of representations were submitted by various stakeholders which effect the current arrangements within Abergavenny. Abergavenny Town Council made representations that the current arrangements within Monmouthshire are not fit for purpose and are open to radical redesign. Abergavenny Town Council proposed that the area of Abergavenny should expand to include the areas of Llanwenarth Citra, Croesonon, Mardy and Llanfoist. The reasons for merging a number of communities in to a larger one is summarised as follows:
  - Communities will need to ensure that they have the will and the administrative resources to supply services that without the community council would not be otherwise carried out locally
  - Whilst some communities may keep its activities and costs low to behave appropriately, if the council is not doing anything for its community then it can be argued that its not fit for purpose.
  - Financial resources will also ensure that communities are fit for purpose and communities that do not have a significant number of properties will be unable to raise

the necessary precept to deliver services and have access to economies of scale that large communities have.

- That it should be considered to reflect the public's perception of the community that they are represented by. The council provide examples that electors assume that they are represented by the larger town council when they are represented by a different community.
- They also state that they believe that their proposals will assist the community in preparing for the powers contained in the Local Government Wales Measure and any potential future devolution of services by the County Council.

4.1. Llanfoist Community Council submitted a response to the proposals put forward by Abergavenny Town Council objecting to the proposal of including wards within its area in that of Abergavenny. In particular Llanfoist objected to the inclusion of Llanwenarth Citra due to the historical links that the area has with another Llanfoist Community Council ward, Llanwenarth Ultra, and that the Llanwenarth Citra ward is predominantly rural compared to the other wards of Abergavenny. Llanfoist also stated that it had developed a relationship with the Brecon Beacons National Park through its planning applications which it believes Abergavenny Town Council doesn't. In terms of the Llanfoist ward, Llanfoist council make representation that the ward prides itself on being an active, attractive village which is not part of Abergavenny Town Council.

4.2. Llantilio Pertholey Community Council also submitted representations in relation to the wards of Abergavenny which adjoin their council area. These include the removal of Heol Hamelin and adjoining streets to the Priory ward of Abergavenny Town Council. Other representations included a redesign of the arrangements within Llantilio Pertholey Community Council. The Council also submitted further representations in response to Abergavenny Town Councils recommendations of including a number of its wards in Abergavenny Town Council area and strongly objected to that proposal along with a number of negative effects that those changes may have.

## **Recommendations**

### **External Boundary**

5. The working group considered and discussed all the representations it received for the areas of Llanfoist, Abergavenny and Llantilio Pertholey. The proposal submitted by Abergavenny Town Council proposed radical changes to the existing community arrangements and whilst the group understood the points put forward by Abergavenny Town Council it believed that the proposals submitted were contrary to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, particularly in relation to the proposal for the Llanfoist ward, to ensure that boundaries are easily identifiable.

With the River Usk and the A465 surrounding Abergavenny to the south and east of the community, the working group believe that these provide natural, easily identifiable boundaries between Abergavenny and its surrounding communities. Therefore, the working group did not

agree with the representation submitted by Abergavenny Town Council to merge the community of Abergavenny with that of Llanfoist.

However, the community of Llanwenarth Citra of Llanfoist Community Council is situated on the opposite side of the river Usk to the other wards of Llanfoist Community Council. Whilst there is bridge access to Llanwenarth Citra crossing the river, this is situated in the Gilwern ward of Llanely and requires residents to cross the local authority boundary into Powys before returning to Monmouthshire. All other access to the Llanwenarth Citra ward requires electors to pass through the community of Abergavenny before returning to the community of Llanfoist. This means there is no physical or geographical link between Llanwenarth Citra and the rest of the community of Llanfoist. For these reasons and that of the river being the natural boundary, the working group propose that the Llanwenarth Citra ward of Llanfoist be moved into the community of Abergavenny.

The working group however note from the submission of Llanfoist Community Council that the Llanwenarth Citra ward is unique and is of a rural nature compared to the other wards of the community of Abergavenny. Whilst the number of electors within the Llanwenarth Citra ward is slightly less than 150 electors per councillor ratio and significantly less than the proposal for the rest of the Abergavenny wards, given the unique nature of the ward the working group propose to retain Llanwenarth Citra as its own ward, with its own representation of one councillor, within the community of Abergavenny.

- 5.1. The working group also considered representations received by Abergavenny Town Council and Llantilio Pertholey Community Council in relation to the proposal by Abergavenny to merge some of the Llantilio Pertholey wards into its area. The working group conclude that whilst there is very little geographic separation between the communities of Abergavenny and Llantilio Pertholey, in particular the wards of Croesonen East and West, there are differences between the two communities that require the need to maintain a separation between the two areas, particularly in relation to Sgyrrid East and West and Pantygelli where there is little link with these wards with the community of Abergavenny. In their representation, Llantilio Pertholey Community Council provided the working group with a comprehensive submission of the work that the council in its current format provides to its residents. The working group do not believe that a large community consisting of Llantilio Pertholey and Abergavenny would be able to continue to provide the services unique to the individual areas as they currently do in isolation. It is therefore proposed that the current boundary between the communities of Abergavenny and Llantilio Pertholey remain with small alterations to the existing boundary to ensure there is a clear definition between the two communities and that the proposals are in line with the Terms of Reference for the review.

The group accepted a number of points in the Abergavenny submission, particularly in relation to the economies of scale and advantages that a large community can deliver to its community. However, the representation submitted by Llantilio Pertholey Community Council highlighted a number of key services that the community council deliver unique to the area of Llantilio

Pertholey, that may not necessarily be delivered by a community covering a large geographic area.

### **Internal Boundaries**

- 5.2. The working group considered the current arrangements within the community of Abergavenny and identified anomalies that could be amended to ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability whilst ensuring boundaries are easily identifiable. These include a number of instances where boundaries follow a main road, predominately Brecon Road, Park Crescent and Llwynu Lane. The area of housing including Heol Hamelin and Clos Bury Capel being divided by a boundary through the housing and the town centre area being covered by three separate wards.

### **Cantref**

- 5.3. The current Cantref ward remains largely unchanged. However, a small number of amendments have been made to its boundaries to ensure they are easily identifiable. The current boundary between Cantref and Grofield follows the A40 Brecon Road to Brecon Road Car Sales garage where it leaves the A40 at the fork in the road.

The working group believe that the natural boundary should follow the A40 up to the boundary of Llanwenarth Citra, with all properties south of the A40 included in the Llanwenarth Citra ward following the changes as stated above. Additionally, as mentioned above, the boundary between Cantref and Grofield will follow the rear of the properties of Brecon Road to ensure that the whole street is contained within a single ward.

### **Grofield**

- 5.4. In considering the existing arrangements for the Grofield ward, the working group consider that the town centre area should be wholly contained within a single ward to ensure clear administrative processes and local responsibility. Currently the town centre area is divided in to three community wards, Grofield, Castle and Priory which ensure that the current ward boundaries are not easily identifiable and do not lead to clear lines of accountability for the area.

It is therefore proposed that the whole town centre area is contained within the Grofield ward with the new boundary running along Park Road at the southern edge of Bailey Park where it will join the proposed Pen-Y-Fal boundary at Lower Monk Street.

The working group also identified the boundary between Cantref and Grofield that follows Brecon Road which splits the properties along this street between the two wards which is contrary to the criteria of the Terms of Reference for this review. The working group therefore propose that all properties of Brecon Road are included in the Grofield ward.

The working group also consider that Nevill Hall Hospital is a key feature of the ward that acts as a natural boundary between the wards of Grofield and Llanwenarth Citra. The group propose, taking into consideration the alteration to the boundary already made in respect of Brecon Road, that the western boundary of the Grofield ward should follow the edge of Nevill Hall Hospital and adjoin the external community boundary in the River Usk.

## **Castle**

- 5.5. It was brought to the group's attention in the representations received of the anomaly with the boundary between the community of Abergavenny and Llantilio Pertholey in the Heol Hamelin area that intersects the estate. The group believe that this group of properties would be better suited to the Priory ward as it is accessed via Grosvenor Road and Hereford Road. It is therefore proposed that the northern boundary of the Castle ward will be amended to follow the rear of the properties at Maple Avenue.

The eastern boundary of Pen-Y-Fal will follow the external boundary of the community of Abergavenny along the A465 road. This will result in the property Green Acres Farm no longer situated within the community of Abergavenny and moving to the community of Llanover.

The group considered the arrangements for the Castle ward and consider the River Gavenny which runs north/south at the western edge of the ward should be the natural boundary between this ward and the adjoining Priory & Grofield wards. The group believe that this easily identifiable natural feature, will improve the current arrangements that follow the rear of properties on Ostringen and Holywell Close. The exception to this is to retain the properties on Lower Monk Street east of the river, that are currently in the Priory ward, within the Priory ward rather than include these in the Castle ward. This is in line with the Terms of Reference for the review that where possible, whole streets will be contained within a single ward.

Under this proposal the boundary of the ward will follow the River Gavenny south to the River Usk thereby no longer including the Castle within the Castle ward. It is therefore proposed that the Castle ward be renamed to Pen-Y-Fal ward as it contains the original site within its ward. The working group however welcome suitable alternative names for this ward.

## **Lansdown**

- 5.6. The working group propose a number of small amendments to the boundary of the Lansdown ward to ensure that boundaries are clear and easily identifiable.

The first being an amendment to the southern boundary of the ward which currently follows Park Crescent, splitting the properties of this street between the Lansdown and Priory wards. The group propose that the whole of Park Crescent is included in the Priory ward with the new boundary following the rear of properties of this road.

Similarly, Llwynu Lane is divided between the Lansdown Ward of the Abergavenny community and Croesonen West of the Llantilio Pertholey community. All properties of Llwynu Lane and streets accessible off it including Vale View are to be included in the Lansdown ward.

### **Priory**

5.7. As stated above, the town centre shopping area of the Abergavenny community is currently divided between three wards, Grofield, Castle and Priory. To ensure boundaries are easily identifiable and clear areas of responsibility exist, the Council consider that the town centre should be contained within a single ward. The group believe that Park Road adjacent to Bailey Park is perceived as a natural boundary which ensures all of the town centre is contained in a single ward. Therefore any area of the town centre south of Park Road currently situated in the Priory ward will be included in the Grofield ward.

As stated in 5.7 above, the group also propose an amendment to the boundary between Lansdown and Priory moving the boundary from Park Crescent to the rear of the properties along that road.

Also, as stated in 5.6 above, it is proposed that the whole of the Heol Hamelin and Clos Bury Capel housing area is included in a single ward rather than split between Castle and Croesonen East. With access to the area via Grosvenor Road and Hereford Road of Priory ward the group consider that this area would be best represented by the Priory ward.

The existing name of 'Priory' ward emanates from the remnants of the Priory of St Benedict being situated within the ward. Under the new proposal, the Priory is no longer situated within the ward and therefore a new name is required. The Council propose the name of 'Park' for the new ward with Bailey Park being a focal point of the ward. The Council welcome views and alternative name suggestions for the new ward.

### **Llanwenarth Citra**

5.8. The Llanwenarth Citra ward will remain largely unchanged other than amendments to its boundary between Cantref and Grofield as stated in 5.1 and 5.2 above.

The Llanwenarth Citra ward will have an electorate of 139 and be represented by one councillor. Whilst the Council acknowledge that the electorate is significantly below the average of the rest of the community of Abergavenny, the Council believe that the unique nature and positioning of the ward as well as the different characteristics of the area compared to the rest of Abergavenny community require the ward to have its own representation with the community.

### **Proposed Community and Community Ward Names**

6. The working group propose no name change to the existing community of Abergavenny. As stated above a number of changes are proposed to ward names due to alterations in the

boundaries. The six new wards will be Cantref, Grofield, Pen-Y-Fal, Lansdown, Park and Llanwenarth Citra. The group welcome proposals for suitable alternative names for these wards.

### **Proposed Electoral Arrangements**

7. The working group consider the Abergavenny community to fall within the Urban category for elector/councillor ratio resulting in an ideal ratio of 500 electors per councillor. The above changes to the community boundaries will result in the following electoral arrangements for the community.

<b>Community Ward</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>
Cantref	1578	3
Grofield	1861	4
Pen Y Fal	1532	3
Lansdown	1747	3
Park	1528	3
Llanwenarth Citra	139	1

### **Working Group Individual Member Comments**

8. All members of the working group approved the proposals for the community of Abergavenny.