



ELEMENT
URBANISM

Llanfair Caereinion

Town Centre Placemaking Plan

Baseline & health check

August 2024



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1. PURPOSE

Llanfair Caereinion, like most towns, is having to respond to changes in the economy, operational business models and consumer behaviour. It is a small rural town, with its own highly localised economy that relies on its importance for day-to-day shopping and services and a seasonal visitor economy. The town is also co-dependent on nearby larger and 'higher order' town centres, such as Welshpool and Newtown, which provide for most of the main shopping, leisure and cultural needs of the local population.

The purpose of this Placemaking Plan (the Plan) is to build on existing initiatives and the work already undertaken to help regenerate Llanfair Caereinion, to set out a vision for the future of the town centre, and to provide an investment plan to help deliver this vision.

Llanfair Caereinion also has significant assets that exist outside of the centre that are integral to the future of the town centre, such as the schools and Light Railway attraction. These wider opportunities provide diversity as well as meeting the needs of the community and its visitor, and so they are considered as part of this Plan's broader picture.

Baseline and Health Check Report

This report provides the findings of the town centre analysis phase of the Placemaking Plan development process. It contains an assessment of the town centre's performance and sets out the key issues and opportunities to be addressed by the subsequent Placemaking Plan.

2. MAKING A GREAT PLACE

Places are more than a collection of spaces, buildings and roads – places encourage feelings. People use places; they move through places; and they form memories, bonds and attachments to places.

Historic places like Llanfair Caereinion have been a focal point for communities for centuries, and this contributes to their individual identity and that of the wider area and its population. Places shape us and we continue to shape them.

This Plan provides the opportunity to help celebrate and grow the best areas of Llanfair Caereinion whilst reinvigorating the less-loved ones. And the town centre also has a local role to play in helping to address the interlinked challenges of the climate and ecological crises with adapting places for the future and planning new places that excite us.

A great place needs to deliver on several fronts simultaneously. The Placemaking Wales Charter describes of these as six key themes which work together to make a great place. In the following pages, we go through each of them in turn to understand how Llanfair Caereinion is performing today and what challenges it faces.

Table 1: Placemaking Wales Charter – Six Placemaking Principles

LOCATION Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment, leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.	PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.
MIX OF USES Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.	MOVEMENT Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network, and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.
IDENTITY The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location, including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes, are identified and responded to.	PUBLIC REALM Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

3. INTRODUCING LLANFAIR CAEREINION

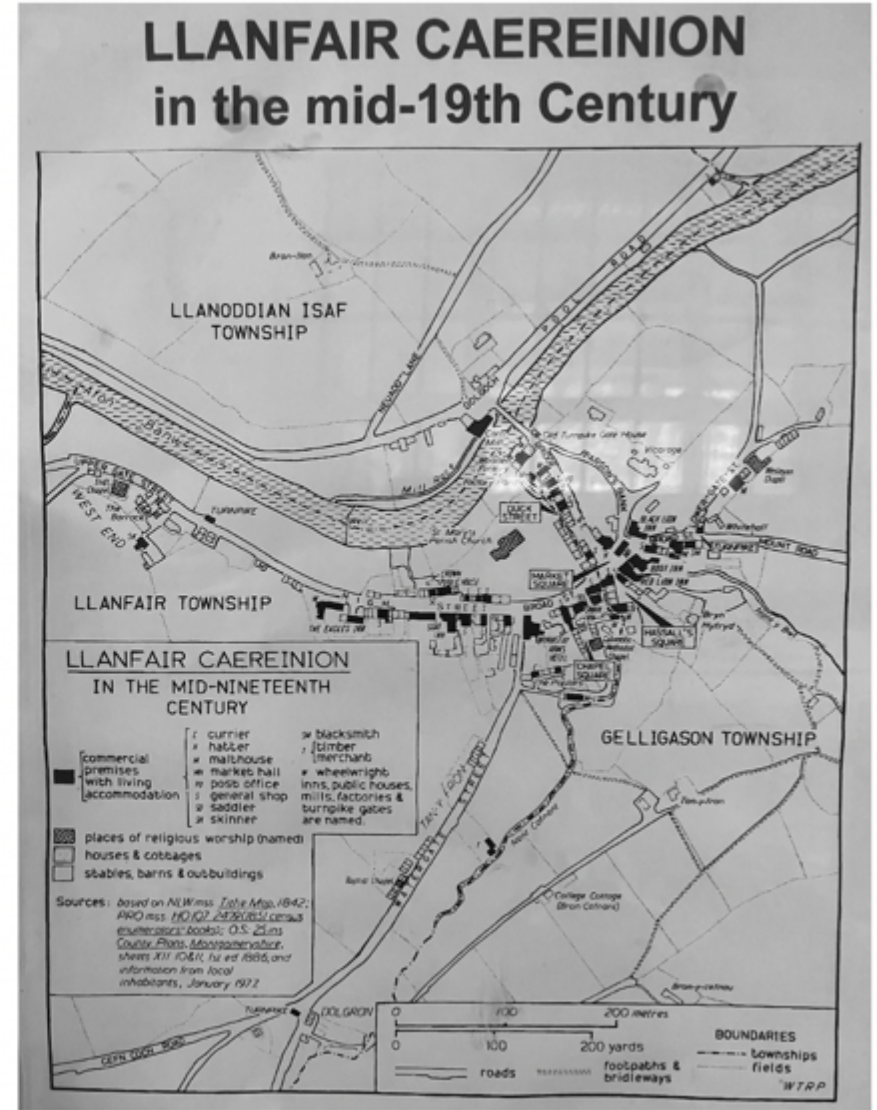
Llanfair Caereinion is a small town in the historic county of Montgomery in northern Powys. The town is situated on the River Banwy and the A458 road that connects the west coast of Wales with Shropshire and the Midlands.

Historically, Llanfair Caereinion was an important centre for the rural community surrounding it as it hosted livestock sales and housed a market hall (demolished in the late nineteenth century). Today, with its medical and dental practices, an all-age through school, pubs and a small number of useful shops, the town remains a service centre for the hamlets and villages around it. Despite its size, the town is better known across Wales and further afield for its popular light railway attraction – the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

Like many smaller towns, particularly those in rural areas, Llanfair Caereinion has lost businesses and services in recent years, including its banks, a standalone Post Office, and a café, and there is a strong sense that the town centre's vibrancy – particularly in the daytime – has decreased.

Looking to the future, with the shift to shopping and banking looking set to remain and pressure on public sector budgets continuing to increase, there will almost certainly be further change in Llanfair Caereinion. A potentially significant change known to be happening soon is the transition of the all-age school from dual-stream to Welsh medium, starting in September 2025.





4. STRATEGIC & LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Strategic Policy Context

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

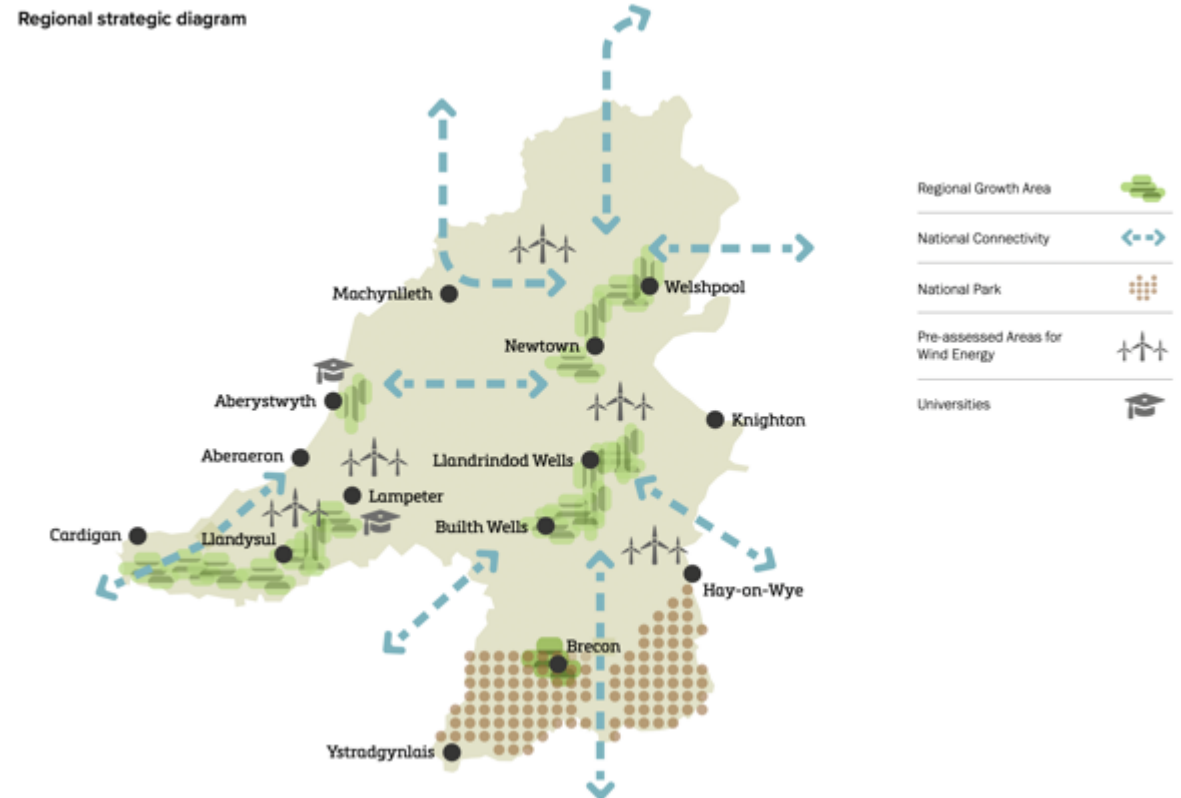
Future Wales identifies a Regional Growth Area in mid Wales that includes the towns of Welshpool and Newtown and the corridor between them. Regional Growth Areas are focal points for the region's social and economic activities and have a significant foundational economy. Development in these areas will ensure they continue to provide jobs; leisure, retail and cultural opportunities; and education and health services.

Llanfair Caereinion's position within the corridor of this Growth Area means it is unlikely to be a focus of development, but it may feel the knock-on effects of it, with both towns being less than 10km away.

Vision for Growing Mid Wales

The Vision is for growth in the Mid Wales economy in a way that is sensitive to its social and natural environment through pursuing a balanced approach – raising ambition alongside reducing inequality. Amongst its eight priorities are strengthening the tourism offer, digital, energy, transport, supporting enterprise, and agriculture, food and drink.

Figure 1: Regional Strategy



Local Policy Context

Sustainable Powys

Sustainable Powys is Powys County Council's approach to how it plans and delivers public services in the future whilst facing considerable financial challenges.

Its recently announced programme principles include dividing the county into four 'core areas', centred in Brecon, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Welshpool, providing a hub for delivering council services in each of these areas and providing anything else only if supported by an approved business case.

Llanfair Caereinion has been placed within the proposed North West and Central Powys core area, suggesting that residents would access a hub in Newtown for Council services – although the option to use the Welshpool would also exist as it is closer.

Stronger, Fairer, Greener – Powys Corporate Plan

The Powys Corporate Plan identifies three core aims:

- **Stronger** – We will become a county that succeeds together, with communities and people that are well connected socially, and are personally and economically resilient.
- **Fairer** – We will be an open, well-run, Council where people's voices are heard and help to shape our work and priorities, with fairer, more equal, access to services and opportunities. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.
- **Greener** – We want to ensure a greener future for Powys, where our well-being is linked to that of the natural world, and our response to the climate and nature emergencies is at the heart of everything we do.

Powys Local Development Plan (2011–2026)

Llanfair Caereinion is categorised as a Town within the Settlement Tiers of the Powys Local Development Plan, and a 'Welsh Speaking Stronghold' within Policy DM12, which means that development proposals for 10 or more dwellings are subject to a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

The Plan contains two residential development Housing Allocations within Llanfair Caereinion with a total of 60 units and 3.5 hectares – neither have yet been developed.

Within the Plan's retail hierarchy, Llanfair Caereinion is classified as a Local Retail Centre, with a lesser catchment area, a very compact retail area or dispersal of several shops, and limited range of facilities and services. Nearby Welshpool and Newtown are Area Retail Centres, and so their catchment area includes Llanfair Caereinion.

'Llanfair Caereinion Into the Future 2021–2027' Town Plan (2021)

Llanfair Caereinion's Town Plan, produced by the Council in June 2021, sets out its stance on various subjects and its plan for improving the town for its residents. It was partly based on the findings of a consultation exercise undertaken by the Town Council in 2018.

The Plan includes nine high-level objectives for the Council for 2021–2027, as well as eighteen more specific objectives, each with accompanying Actions and information on how they will be achieved. Many of these specific objectives focus on the Council's ways of working, but others are more outward-focused, such as the objective 'to attract investment in both public and private sectors to ensure the economic well-being of the residents of Llanfair Caereinion and District' and to provide 'grants and donations to local organisations.'

'Tourism – A Way Ahead for Llanfair' (2022)

This report on tourism from early 2022 was commissioned by the Town Council as part of an Arwain-funded project to examining ways of increasing the number of visitors to the town and their spend. Its production involved desk research and consultation sessions with local stakeholders.

The report characterises the town's 'tourism position today' (early 2022) as 'small but stable', and highlights the importance of the Railway, impending relocation to Llanfair of the Cloverlands Model Car Museum, and visitor facilities in the town centre and around the town.

Reflecting on the findings of the public consultation exercise, the report states that events were the most popular and frequently suggested way of encouraging visits to the town, along with celebrating the town's heritage and culture, promoting the beautiful scenery in which it sits, and promoting it as a place for visitors heading to more popular tourist destinations on the coast to break their journey and use the facilities and amenities. Reflecting on the consultation process, the report suggests that there was little engagement from town centre businesses and suggested that this might reflect their scepticism about the potential for increasing tourism in the area.

Tourism - A Way Ahead For Llanfair



Produced for Llanfair Caereinion Town Council



Written by Oliver Edwards

28th February 2022

5. LOCATION

Llanfair Caereinion is located off the A458 trunk road that connects the Shrewsbury area with the south of Eryri National Park (including Dolgellau and Barmouth).

Despite its rural setting, Llanfair Caereinion is close to two large towns and the wider range of services and retail they provide: it is less than 10 miles from Welshpool, 11 miles via the most direct route from Newtown, and less than 30 miles from Shrewsbury.

Llanfair Caereinion is largely surrounded by farmland and individual properties, but the village of Castle Caereinion and its population of around 600 people lies four miles east of Llanfair Caereinion, whilst Llanerfyl (the location of local authority-owned workshops) is five miles west.

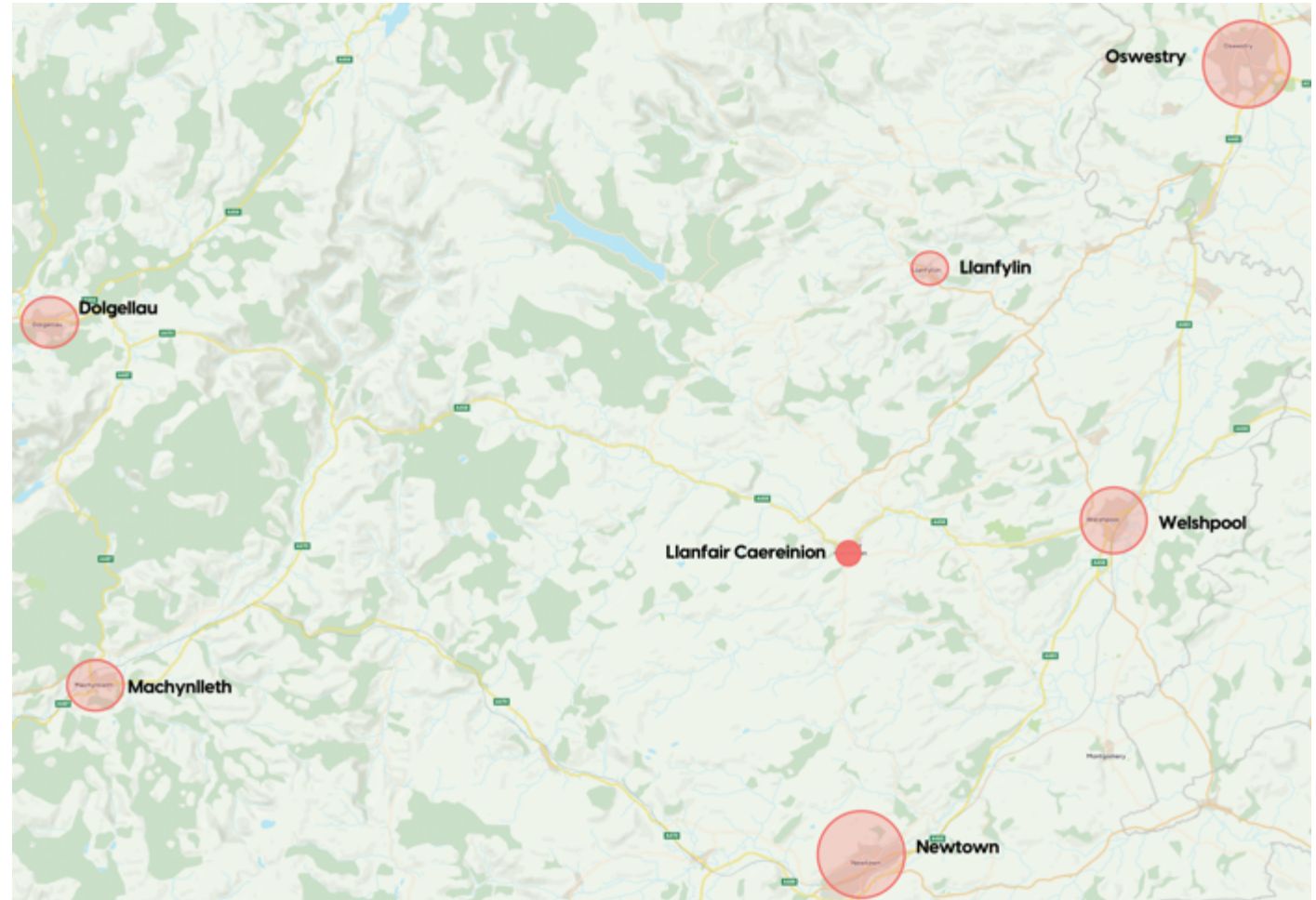


Figure 2: Maps showing Llanfair Caereinion strategic location and location in relation to nearby settlements

Town Centre

The map in Figure 3 identifies the town centre and provides the main intervention area for the Plan. It covers the traditional town centre and related facilities and attractions including the churches and other faith buildings, parking, access to Goat Field/Deri Woods, the Health Centre and nearby playground, tennis and bowling green. The key streets include Bridge Street, Broad Street, High Street, the west end of Mount Road, and Parsons Bank.

Outside of the centre are other important economic and community infrastructure that has an influence upon the centre and supports placemaking. Examples include the school and leisure centre campus, garage/petrol station, Mount Field sports ground and the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway.

Figure 3: Map showing the town centre



Environment & Infrastructure

Llanfair Caereinion's town centre and the western end of High Street is a designated Conservation Area, meaning extra planning controls and considerations are put in place by the local planning authority to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place feel unique

The River Banwy, a tributary of the River Vyrnwy, flows north-eastwards through Llanfair Caereinion, separating the historic centre of the town and the A-road and the houses and school campus that sit above it. Areas of the town, town centre and the Banwy Industrial Estate to the north east of the town are at risk of flooding.

The river is crossed by three bridges in and near to the town: the main bridge connecting the A-road and town centre has a carriageway slightly too narrow to have a centre line but segregated pedestrian ways on each side; a pedestrian-only bridge connects the Banwy Industrial Estate and Light Railway with the town centre via a necessarily indirect 'riverside walk'; and a footbridge in Deri Woods connects it to the A458's pavement.



Figure 4: Map showing the flood risk area of the River Banwy



Digital infrastructure

Llanfair Caereinion's digital infrastructure was explored in-depth in the Llanfair Caereinion Digital Place Plan produced in 2023.

Most premises in Llanfair Caereinion are currently covered by Openreach's Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) **broadband** network and so have access to 'superfast' broadband with download speeds of **up to 80 Mbps** (depending on the distance between the property and the nearest street cabinet). Welsh Government's 2022 Public Review of broadband provision suggested that a small number of premises at the edge of the town cannot achieve 'superfast' (30 Mbps or greater) speeds.

Currently, there is no 'ultrafast' full-fibre broadband (Fibre to the Premises, which supports download speeds of up to 900 Mbps) available in Llanfair Caereinion. Data from the Welsh Government's 2022 Public Review suggested that this might change for some parts of the town in the next three years, although no provider (Openreach or an 'altnet') submitted firm plans.¹

Outdoors, **4G coverage** is available in Llanfair Caereinion across all four of the main mobile network providers (O2, Vodafone, Three, and EE). Coverage is less reliable indoors. There is no 5G coverage in Llanfair Caereinion or the surrounding area on any network.

As part of Powys CC's Town Wi-Fi Programme, a **town Wi-Fi network** was installed in the town centre in the spring of 2023. The network comprises five Wi-Fi access points (installed on Primrose Cottage, Crown House, Holly Cottage, the Railway Station and at the Football Club) and provides coverage of the town centre (the top and bottom of Bridge Street, and parts of High Street) and two of the town's main attractions: the Railway and the Football Club on the public Mount Field recreation ground.

¹ Some clusters of premises in the town were classified as 'under review', meaning suppliers have reported planned commercial broadband coverage but the plans have

Figure 5: Map showing the location of wi-fi points



As well as providing a reliable and free means for people to get online, the system also collects 'smart footfall data'. This data, accessible via the Patrwm platform (app.patrwio.io), could be used by local businesses and stakeholders to review their opening hours, staffing, and marketing. The data and functionality of the town Wi-Fi system represent a major opportunity with the potential to grow the local economy, attract more visitors, and create a more inclusive and accessible town centre.

Powys CC has invested in **LoRaWAN**, a Low-Power, Wide-Area Network technology that enables the use of low-cost sensors for monitoring and managing buildings, green infrastructure, and a wide variety of other

been judged as being at risk or not being completed, but others were classified as 'white', meaning no qualifying infrastructure exists and none is likely to be built within three years.

applications. LoRaWAN coverage is provided by a LoRaWAN gateway, which receives data from sensors and uploads it to the internet, where it can be processed and analysed. Each gateway can support hundreds of sensors.

A LoRaWAN gateway operating on The Things Network is located above the town on Ysgol Bro Caereinion. This provides reasonable coverage of the town centre and the surrounding area. Any gaps in coverage could be addressed by installing further outdoor or indoor gateways; this would also provide redundancy, should the main gateway go offline for some reason.

6. PEOPLE & COMMUNITY

Understanding the nature of the people who live in Llanfair Caereinion and surrounding it ensures proposals are shaped to help to meet their needs as well as to create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community.

The 2021 Census data suggests that around 970 people live in the built-up area of the town itself (the area of focus for the analysis in this section), whilst a total of 2,137 people live in the area surrounding it (Llanfair Caereinion and Llanerfyl electoral ward).

Although not directly comparable with the 2021 Census data, data from the 2011 Census data suggests that the population of the area did not change significantly in the period 2011-2021 but there was a modest increase from 2001.

Recent Studies carried out for the review of the Powys CC Local Development Plan indicates the north central part of the County is likely to experience a small increase in population over the period to 2037.

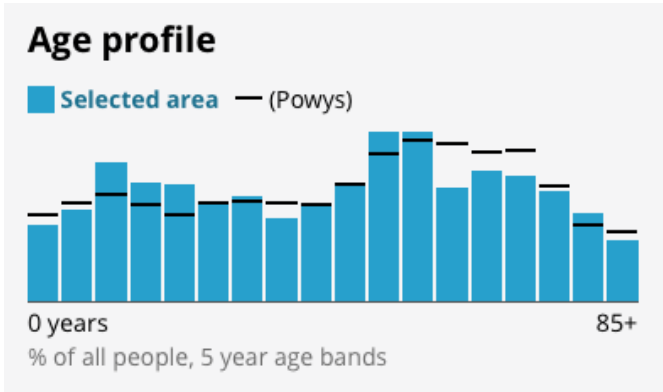
Population characteristics

Llanfair Caereinion has more school age children, young people, and people aged 50 to 60 than on average in Powys, likely reflecting the presence of the all-age school in the town.

Almost a third of the population (33%) can speak, read or write Welsh, significantly higher than the average in Powys (19%) and across Wales (20%).

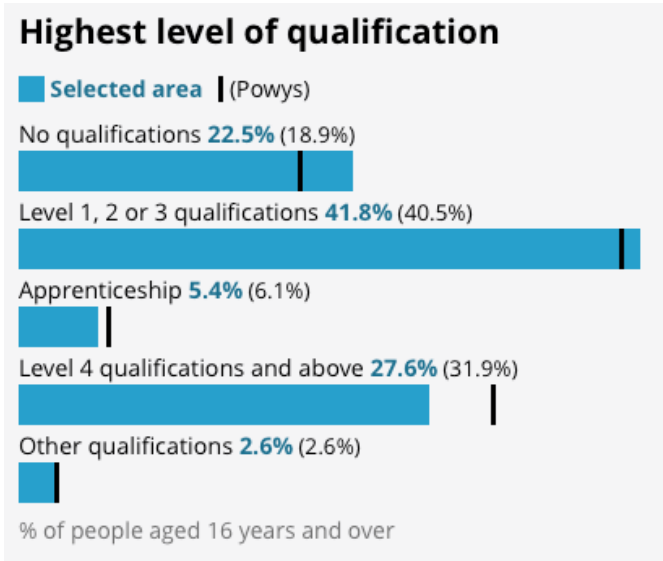
As with elsewhere in Powys, the population is predominantly (99%) white, and there are slightly more women than men.

Figure 6: Age profile, Llanfair Caereinion (blue) and Powys average (black bar)



Source: Office for National Statistics

Figure 7: Highest level of qualification (% of residents aged 16+)



Source: Office for National Statistics

Skills and employment

Nearly six in every ten (58%) residents of Llanfair Caereinion are in employment, higher than the Powys (55%) and Wales averages (54%), and so a smaller proportion are economically inactive (not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or unable to start work within the next two weeks, when asked as part of the 2021 Census).

In line with the Powys average, slightly over half (52%) of residents work full-time (31-48 hours per week), 15% work 49 or more hours, 22% work part-time 16 to 30 hours, and 11% part-time 15 hours or less.

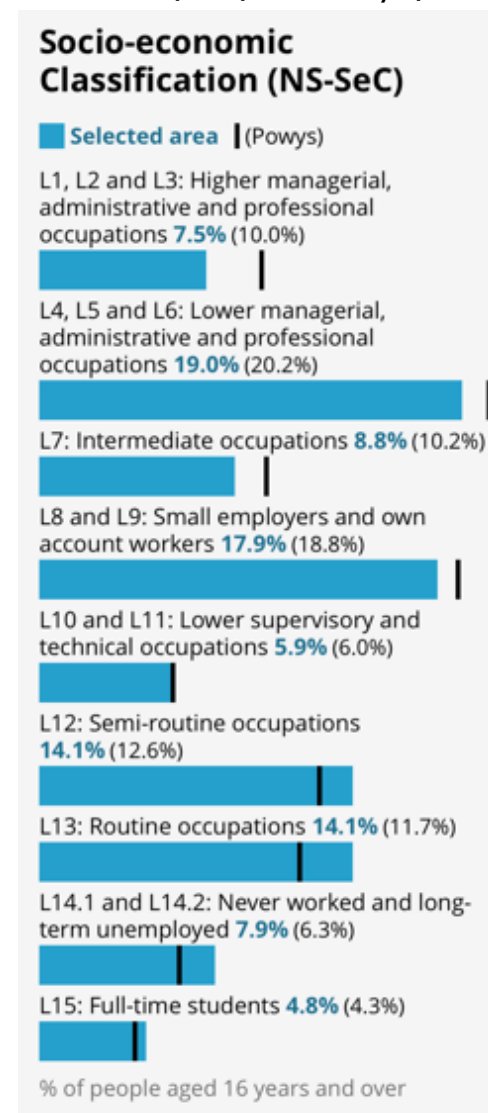
A greater proportion of people in Llanfair Caereinion work in semi-routine or routine occupations than on average across Powys and Wales (28% compared to 24% and 26%), and this aligns with a smaller proportion of the population having Level 4 qualifications (higher apprenticeship, level 4 National Vocational Qualification etc) and above—27% compared to 32% across Powys—and a high proportion having no qualifications: 23% compared to 19%. This likely reflects the rural and agricultural nature of the area.

Commuter patterns

As Census 2021 responses were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible that the disruption to everyday life during that period affected how respondents answered travel to work questions. Nonetheless, as is common with a rural town, the data for Llanfair Caereinion suggests that residents are far more likely to travel between 10km and 30km to work (including larger towns like Welshpool and Newtown) than the average resident, with nearly a third (32%) doing so compared to 17% for Powys and 18.2% across Wales, and a far smaller proportion travelling less than 10km to work.

A quarter (25%) of residents work mainly from home, in line with the Wales average but lower than the Powys average (30%).

Figure 8: National Statistics Socio-economic classification, Llanfair Caereinion (blue) and Powys (black bar)



Source: Office for National Statistics

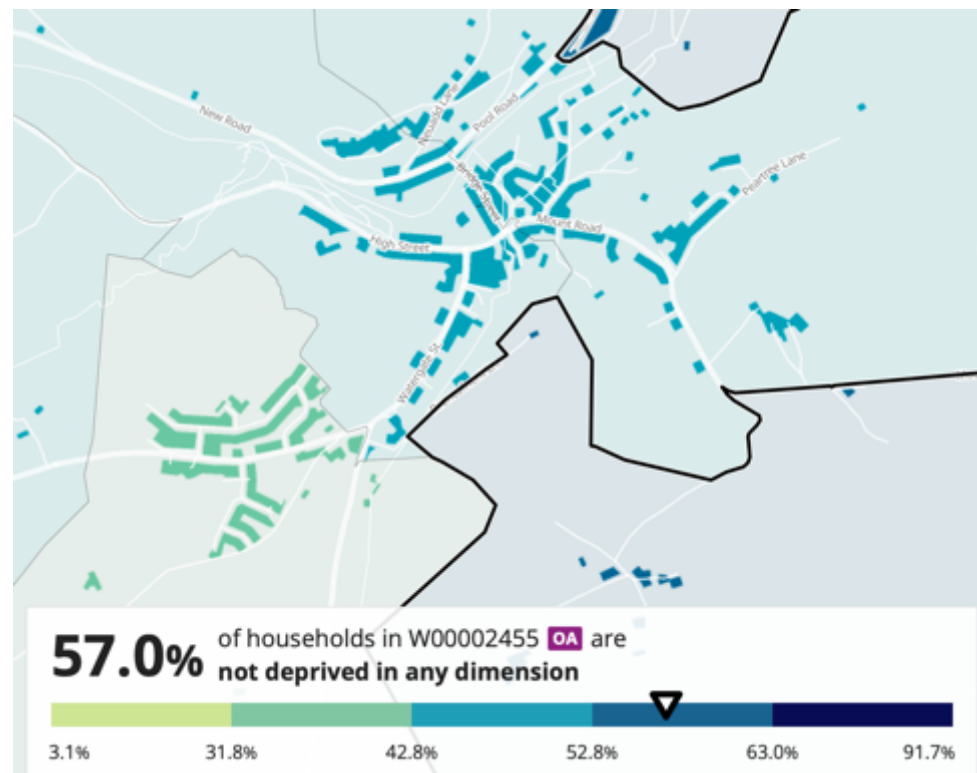
Prosperity & deprivation

Data from the 2021 Census shows that a smaller proportion of households in Llanfair Caereinion were not deprived in any dimension² than on average for Powys and Wales, at 43% compared to the Powys average of 49% and the Wales average of 46%.

The levels of deprivation appear to vary between different areas of town, with a slightly lower proportion of the population living outside the town centre on Watergate Street being not deprived in any dimension, and a high proportion being deprived in one and three dimensions. One in four of the population living east of Bridge Street was deprived in two dimensions, ten percentage points higher than other areas, likely reflecting the health of those living in the sheltered properties in that area.

Data from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) shows that Llanfair Caereinion and the area surrounding it is overall among the 50% least deprived areas in Wales, but within the 10% most deprived for access to services (indicating that a high proportion of households are unable to access physically or online a range of services considered necessary for day-to-day living) and 10-20% most deprived for housing (in terms of inadequate housing, including physical and living conditions and availability).

Figure 9: Map of households not deprived in any dimension (2021 Census)
Lighter colours indicate a higher proportion of households deprived in one or more dimension.



Source: Office for National Statistics

² Dimensions are indicators based on four selected household characteristics: education, employment, health and housing.

Community governance and organisations

There is a high level of community and organisational activity in Llanfair Caereinion led by the Town Council that manages two trusts (Mount Field and Deri Woods) and currently financially supports the maintenance of Mount Field Recreation Ground, Deri Woods, the public toilets (behind The Institute), playground and tennis courts, war memorial, and Chapel of Rest and Erw Ddwr Cemetery.

The Council has a published Town Plan have and produces and shares Annual Reports and agenda and minutes of recent meetings on its website.

In addition, there are a number of community organisations including groups:

- providing a forum for sharing updates and coordinating local activity: the Llanfair Partnership
- maintaining or operating local assets, such as the Friends of Deri Woods, Llanfair Institute Committee and Llanfair Caereinion Community Library
- discussing sharing interests, such as the Historical Society, and Women's Institute
- bringing people together to socialise, such as the Community Café and Knit & Natter
- organising events, such as the Llanfair Caereinion Carnival Committee
- coordinating sports teams, such as Llanfair United Football Club, Llanfair Hockey Club, and the bowling and tennis clubs.

Key findings

- The population of the town is stable.
- The area has more school age children and fewer older people than on average in Powys.
- Almost a third of residents can speak, read or write in Welsh.
- Almost a third of residents have a sizeable (10 to 30km) rural commute to work.
- Few residents are unemployed and looking for work.
- Levels of deprivation vary across the town, but access to services and housing are the greatest issues.
- High level of community organisation and capacity.

7. MIX OF USES

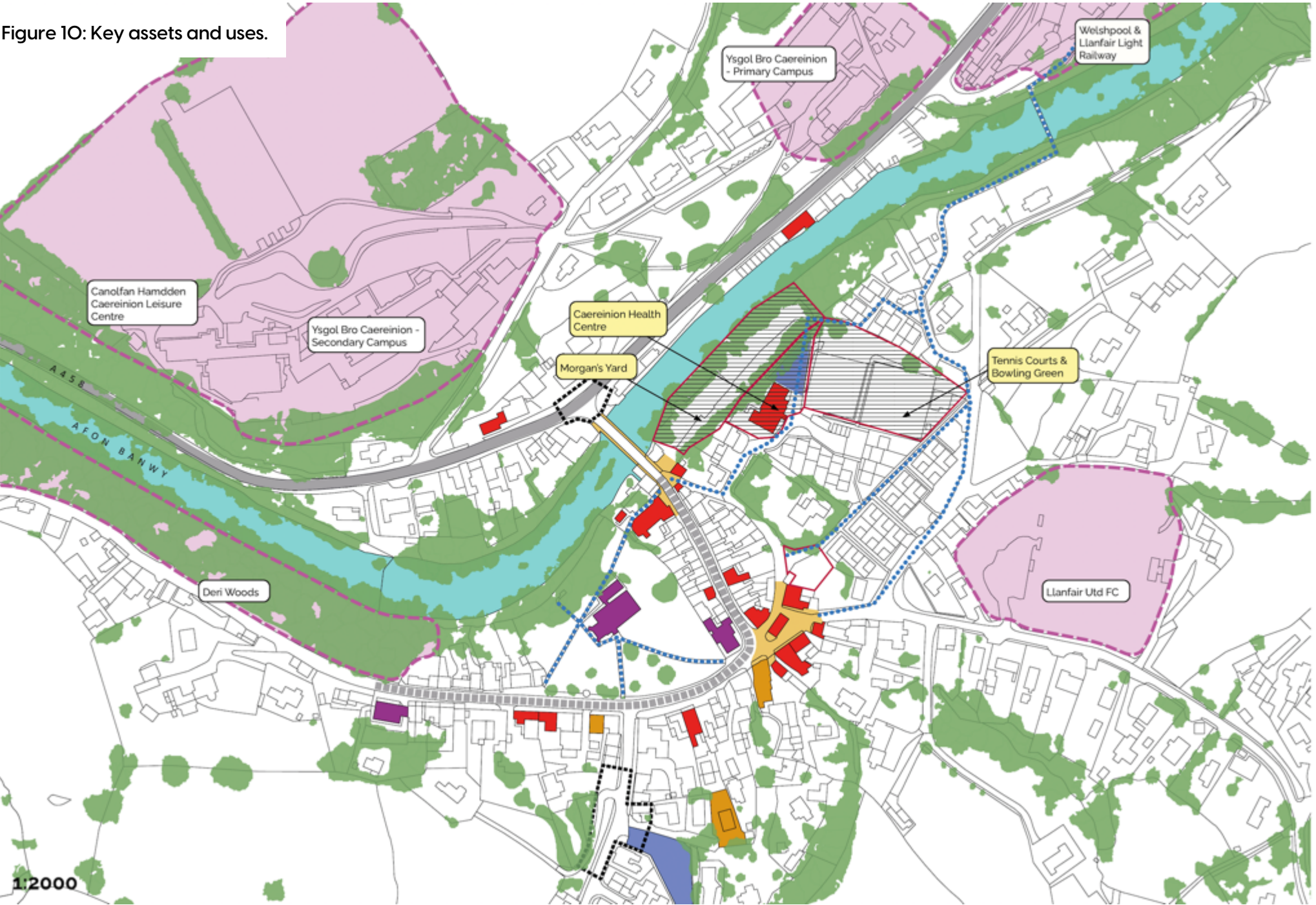
Town centres thrive when they have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for businesses, community and cultural activity, access to jobs, services and facilities. This can be strengthened by a range uses and activities close to the centre with the potential for encouraging linked visits.

Llanfair Caereinion is in the fortunate position of retaining many of the key services that have been lost from similar rural towns in recent years. They not only help make the town an attractive place to live, particularly for families, but help sustain the business, social and cultural activities supporting the town.

Table 2: Key services and facilities

Key services and Facilities
• Primary and secondary education • Leisure centre • Medical centre & dentist • Post Office • Bus services • Institute – community centre • Library • Public toilets • Sports facilities/clubs • Churches • EV chargers • Town Wi-Fi

Figure 10: Key assets and uses.



Shopping & commercial activity

Commercial activity in Llanfair Caereinion town centre is small and dispersed across the historic centre, with the additional activity across the river on the A458 adding to the town’s overall offer.

Within the centre there are small pockets of business activity clustered around the junction of Broad Street and Bridge Street interspersed alongside residential uses. With the closure of the towns two banks and other businesses over the last 10 years, the present-day centre lacks a critical mass that would be expected from a traditional shopping and service centre.

Shopping and retail

Llanfair Caereinion has a small but practical commercial offer, reflecting its proximity to two large retail centres (Welshpool and Newtown) and role as a local service centre. Its ‘essentials’ offer includes two convenience food stores, Post Officer services (within the Spar), a high-quality butcher/deli, and a hardware shop. The centre has a particularly strong services offer, containing a GP surgery, (NHS) dentist, barbers and hairdressers, beauty and complementary therapy businesses, and a rural insurance brokers. Llanfair also has a reasonable hospitality offer, predominantly aimed at residents and those living nearby, comprising two pubs, a small hotel with restaurant and bar, and two takeaways. There are no banks remaining with services in the town centre available at the Post Office counter in the Spar.

Businesses in the centre are a mix of independents (including the hospitality businesses) and national franchises (the two convenience – Spar and Londis stores located as part of the garage), and most are open throughout the week.

In the past decade, the town centre has lost two banks, a café, another hair salon, and a small food store. However, with just one unit being vacant, the centre is providing what is required by its catchment population.

Table 3: Llanfair Caereinion town centre’s commercial offer

Essential	Services /other	Hospitality	Visitor
Butchers/deli	Health Centre	Pubs	Hotel
Convenience	Dentist	Takeaway	Self-catering
Hardware	Barber shop		
Post Office	Hair salon		
Petrol Filling Station	Insurance		
	Beauty		

The role of the centre is not expected to change significantly in the future and population growth will be small. It would therefore be expected that the centre will continue to act as a top up centre providing for the day to day needs of its catchment. Higher order retail goods and services will be provided in the nearby centres of Welshpool and Newtown.

The recent Powys Retail Needs Assessment Study (2024) indicates available expenditure for convenience goods in the Llanfair locality was £16.89m in 2021 decreasing to £15.34m by 2030 and £15.64m by 2037. Comparison expenditure is expected to increase from £18.12m in 2021 to £21.46m in 2030 and £26.29m in 2037.



With limited population growth expected in the area and the proximity of two Area Retail Centres, it is considered that, in addition to very limited quantitative need, there is unlikely to be any clear qualitative need for further retail provision. It is therefore considered that there is no requirement to allocate a site for the expansion of town centre uses, although a flexible approach should be adopted should any proposals for improving the retail and town centre offer in the centre come forward.

In comparison with the average for Powys towns, Llanfair Caereinion has a greater convenience and service offer, reflecting its role as a place serving residents of the town and the rural areas around it.

Only one vacant commercial property in the town centre, the former HSBC bank on Broad Street, is actively marketed for let; others appear to have been converted into residential dwellings.

Table 4: Types of businesses in Llanfair Caereinion as proportion of occupied units (excluding vacancy)

Type of business	Proportion of occupied business units (%)	Wales CLG average (%)	Powys average (%)
Comparison	0	29.3	35.4
Convenience	21.4	4.3	10.1
Leisure	21.4	25.6	25.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	9.0	2.5
Service	42.9	31.8	27.0

Other services and facilities

Visitor accommodation is limited in Llanfair Caereinion itself: there is one small hotel (the Goat Hotel, a 17th century coaching inn with four guest bedrooms) and around half a dozen room or whole-home holiday lets listed on Airbnb.

Situated in the countryside around the town, however, are multiple caravan and lodge parks. Within a five-kilometre radius of Llanfair Caereinion, there are over 10 parks with an estimated 800 static pitches.

Community facilities: for a town of its size, Llanfair Caereinion has a good range of community facilities within and close to the town centre, including:

- **Caereinion Leisure Centre**, operated by not-for-profit company Freedom Leisure in partnership with Powys County Council, is located on the Ysgol Bro Caereinion site. The centre has a gym, squash court, hall for group classes and Redgra sports pitch (refurbished in 2023).

- **Glanyrafon Playground and tennis courts**, next to the town's tennis courts and Bowling Club, was refurbished in 2022.
- **Ysgol Bro Caereinion** is the primary through to secondary school and will become a Welsh-medium school on a phased basis from September 2024 and will serve north Powys as the designated Welsh-medium secondary provision.



- **Llanfair Institute** is the main community venue in the town. Opened in 1913, it was extensively refurbished for its centenary using a Big Lottery Grant, and now comprises a Main Hall, Youth Room, office (leased by the Town Council), a 16-track recording studio and public toilets. The Institute is run by a voluntary Committee and hosts a wide range of events throughout the week and year, from music gigs to plant sales and coffee mornings to dances to a community café. The main weakness of the venue is the lack of nearby parking and the limits this place on the use of the building, particularly by people with mobility issues or the elderly.

- **Llanfair Caereinion Community Library**, based on the ground floor of the Institute, is volunteer run as a partnership between Powys Library Service, Llanfair Caereinion Community Library Group, the Town Council and the Institute. As well as lending service, the library offers free Wi-Fi and use of its computers.



Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, a high-quality visitor attraction on the edge of Llanfair Caereinion, first opened in 1903 to transport coal and cattle, but re-opened as a heritage railway in 1963. Today, the Railway is visited by 26,500 people a year and is a major visitor attraction for Mid Wales.

The attraction

The attraction is multi-layered and includes the railway journey, café and gift shop and two museums. Currently, around 60% of journeys start at Llanfair Caereinion station, which has more attractions and amenities than the Raven Square station in Welshpool.

The journey is 8-miles between Welshpool and Llanfair stations and takes around 45 minutes each way, and on peak days (midweek during August) there are four departures from Llanfair Caereinion between 10.30 and 15.30. The Railway organises frequent special events, including Fish and Chips Evenings, events for children including 'Santa Specials', a Beer Festival, and an annual Steam Gala celebration.

Tickets are return as standard, and visitors book an outward departure and can return on any later train that day. Visitors can become a member of the Railway providing free travel on most trains throughout the year. A small number of local people have membership for routine travel between Llanfair and Welshpool.

The Llanfair Caereinion station houses a tearoom (open 7 days a week and open to non-Railway customers) and gift shop, Llanfair Connections railway museum (usually open on weekends and during school holidays), the Cloverlands Model Car Museum, extensive free car parking, as well as the engine sheds, extensive workshops, and a 10-room bunkhouse for accommodating volunteers.



Most visitors to Llanfair focus on the heritage attraction, spending the hour between journeys at the station. Few wait to return on later trains, which provides an opportunity to explore the town centre. The primary chance for linked trips to the town centre occurs after visitors finish their railway visit.



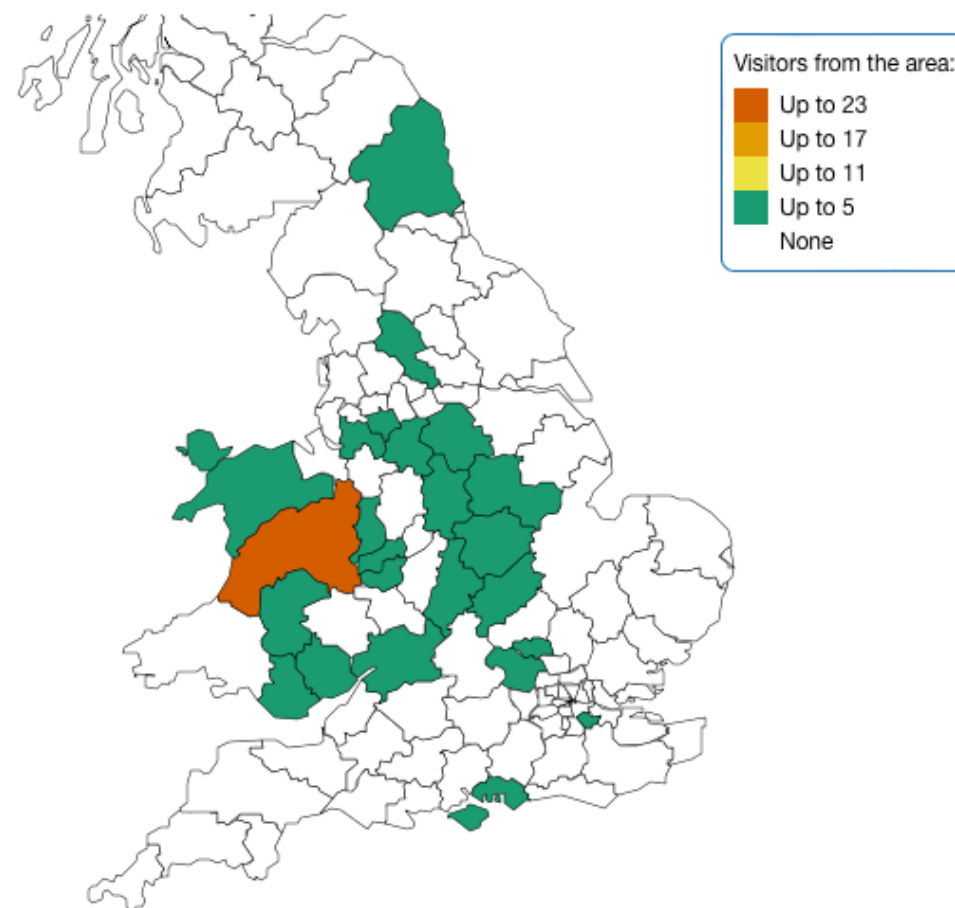
Economic and social impact

The Railway is a major attraction for mid Wales and places Llanfair on the map for visitors and railways enthusiasts from across the UK, as shown by data collected through the town's public Wi-Fi system, which shows that in July 2024, visitors to Llanfair came from the Midlands, south coast, Greater London and north east of England.

The railway employs 9 Full Time Equivalent staff but is reliant on a pool of over 300 volunteers, of which 120 are regularly and active. Fewer than 10% of the volunteers live within 30 mins of the Railway, and so many come from across the UK for days at a time and stay in hotels and B&Bs around Llanfair Caereinion, with some thought to spend thousands of pounds a year on travel, accommodation and local food and drink – a significant contribution to the local economy.

Where feasible, the Railway uses local supply chains, ranging from raw materials to repair the trains and track, to printing leaflets and other materials. The Railway also provide work experience and volunteer apprenticeships for local students.

Figure 11: Home postcode area of Llanfair Caereinion public Wi-Fi users, July 2024



Source: Patrwm.io

Key issues and opportunities

The success and long-term viability of the Railway depends on enthusiastic and experienced volunteers. Most of the existing volunteers are over 60 years old which is becoming an issue for running the Railway, maintenance, repair and other operations. The recently appointed Community Development Officer will be working in the local community to improve its local ties and volunteer support

In future, the Railway would like to make changes to the Llanfair site, including potentially improving the visitor experience and workshops, but these are 5-10 years away from being realised, as well as make more of the on-site railway museum attraction and building and promote the Model Car Museum to motoring enthusiasts.

Whilst the railway station is only 400 metres from the town centre the linkages between them are generally poor, indirect and difficult to navigate giving the impression of a much greater distance.

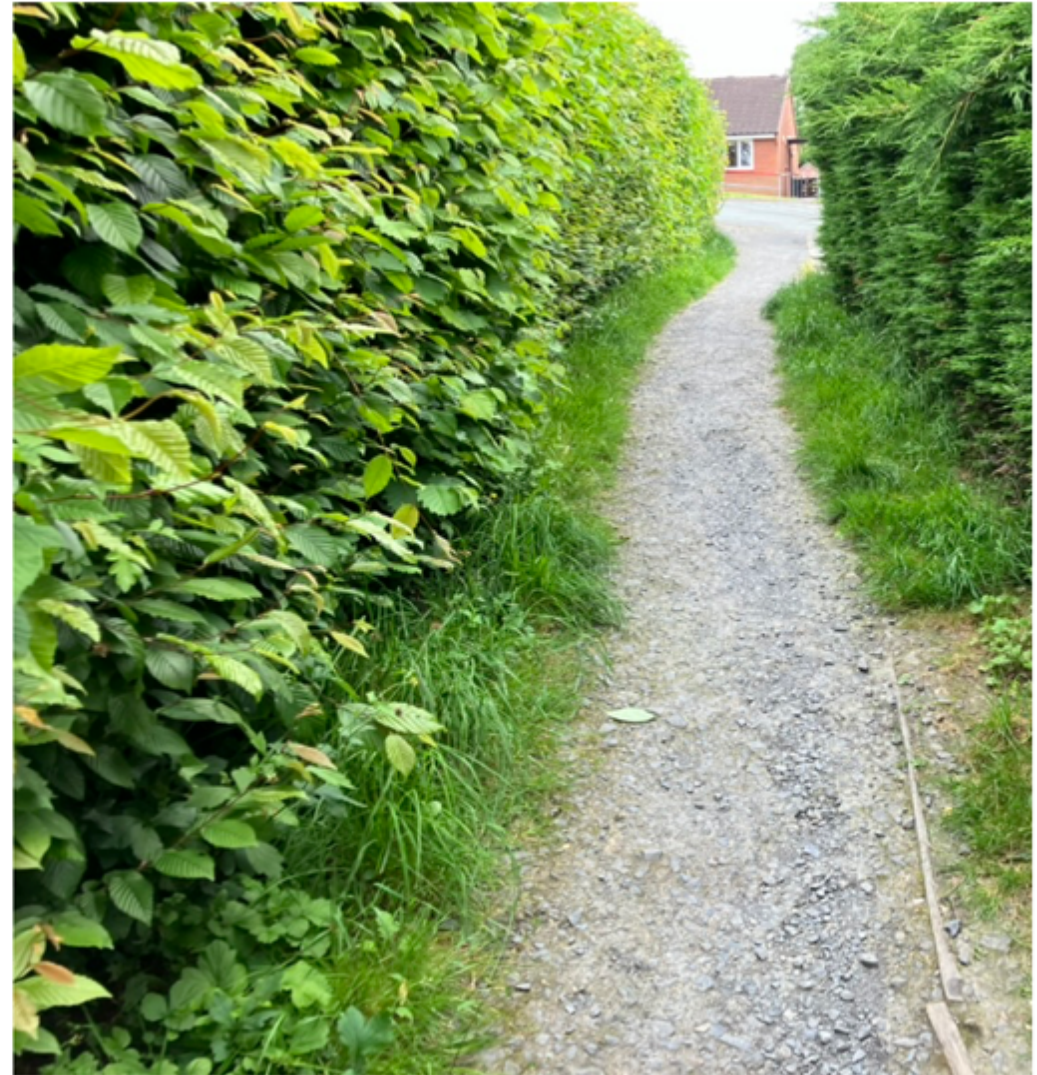
Visitor information and signage encourages visitors to take the traffic free riverside route across the river to the centre as part of a town trail. Despite an interesting start with a river crossing via a wooden footbridge (in need of some repair), the route quickly becomes less interesting and convoluted along a narrow path, through a housing estate before dropping down into the town centre by the Black Lion pub. Unsurprisingly, few railway visitors make it as far as the town centre. The alternative route along the busy A-road is less attractive again.

The economic benefits felt from having a successful tourist attraction nearby are a subject to wide discussion among stakeholders, with the ambition that more visitors also visit the town centre.

The challenge is multifaceted. Visitors to the railway who have paid for a heritage experience find plenty to occupy them at the station, museum, café and gift shop, with the added option of a short walk to the bridge

over the river. Furthermore, the current appeal of the town centre is insufficient to draw most visitors, especially given the unappealing footpath and route. Additionally, upon reaching the town centre, many hospitality venues, including pubs and hotels, only open in the mid-afternoon, further diminishing the centres appeal.





Plans for new Medical Centre

Caereinion Medical Practice is part of the North Powys Primary Care Cluster with over 5,000 patients. Long-established and well regarded by residents, the Practice is an important feature of the town centre and one of the last remaining services that brings large numbers of people into Llanfair daily. The Practice is also a significant local employer: with around 30 employed staff, and various Health Board teams.

The current building located on Parsons Bank, owned by the partner GPs, is too small, its size restricts the number of patients and range of primary and secondary care services the growing Practice can offer.

In addition to the building, the site has limited parking on an unsurfaced area owned by Powys County Council and vehicle access via Market Square and Parsons Bank is narrow, particularly for larger vehicles like ambulances.

New Medical Centre

Prior to the Covid pandemic, the Practice, Powys Teaching Health Board and a developer were in the process of finalising plans to build a new Medical Centre off Watergate Street, located 0.5 miles outside of the town. Following a public consultation in late 2019, the final proposals were for a two-storey building including over 14 clinical rooms, 54 patient parking spaces, a further 28 staff parking spaces.

It is understood that following the pandemic, and with escalating build costs, the new build project has been on hold; although no planning application has been submitted, the intention remains to deliver a new centre. In the meantime, the Practice received funding from the Health Board to make alterations to the existing building such as converting administrative rooms into new clinical rooms and adding an external automated prescription collection unit.



Source: Caereinion Medical Centre 'New Surgery Development Update' May 2021

Whilst new investment in larger and modern health services in Llanfair Caereinion should be welcomed, the potential relocation out of the centre raises a number of complex policy and regeneration issues for this placemaking plan.

Welsh Government's Town Centre First position statement (May 2023)

The Welsh Government identifies significant challenges between town centres and out-of-town developments, which have led to the withdrawal of services and businesses, reducing footfall and local spending. These challenges are not solely due to changing shopping habits; a town centre's success relies on factors such as civic functions and the location of education and health facilities. The interdependency of these functions creates diverse towns, offering multiple reasons for people to visit. This balance has been disrupted not just by the decline in retail but also by the reduction in health and education institutions, further diminishing footfall and the viability of remaining businesses.

The Welsh Government's position statement also highlights that out-of-town developments, with ample parking and often poor public transport links, reinforce car dependency. Commitments to decarbonisation targets necessitate maximising the use of existing town centre infrastructure.

The development of a new Medical Centre in Llanfair town centre faces cost and complexity issues due to site constraints and the difficulty of finding suitable locations. The Welsh Government acknowledges that the Town Centre First policy can pose challenges for public bodies, as financial frameworks might lead them to consider out-of-town locations as the only viable option. It is committed to working across government to align health spending and procurement frameworks with the Town Centre First policy.

In Llanfair town centre, relocating the Medical Centre is complex and could significantly impact the area. Although the specifics of the level of commitment to a new location are unclear, the question for the Placemaking Plan is whether it should explore alternative town centre sites

and leverage new medical service investments to benefit the town centre?

Land known as 'Morgans' Yard

Figure 13: Location of Morgans Yard and adjoining sites



The land known locally as 'Morgans' Yard' was until 2003 an ironmonger's depot and builders' merchants. The 0.5-hectare site is accessed from the bottom of Bridge Street and runs north east alongside the river. It is currently overgrown and fenced off from the road.

Since it first became disused, Llanfair Caereinion Town Council have been interested in using the site to town centre car parking due to its location close to the A-road gateway into the town centre and potential to support the town's Institute and visitor economy.

The site is currently owned by a private developer who originally sought planning permission back in 2003 and the planning permission was conditional on signing a SIO6 agreement in relation to leisure facilities. This was not signed, and work started on foundations, without an extant planning permission during 2004, at which point the Local Planning Authority advised that all work should stop on the site.

A new planning application was submitted, and Planning Permission was granted (part retrospective) in July 2019 (after adoption of the LDP) subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement relating to a financial contribution of £10,000 towards recreational facilities and the provision of a footpath link to Glan-yr-Afon.

However, as the site lies within the C2 flood zone and is highly vulnerable development, one of the conditions of the 2019 permission was that NRW required a Flood Consequences Assessment to be completed before work could progress. This assessment demonstrated that the site would be liable to 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000-year flooding risk and further that there were issues with river bank stability which would need to be addressed.

To progress developing the site, NRW would require the whole site level to be raised and for extensive flood mitigation and compensation measures to be installed. In its current state, should the existing foundations be used, it has been advised that any properties constructed thereon would be considered uninsurable.

From a Planning Policy perspective, the site is recorded as commenced so planning permission is extant. However, it is not included in the housing land supply for the Replacement LDP as there is no recent activity and given the known issues, there is no certainty that the site is genuinely and viably deliverable.

For the Placemaking Plan, the site presents an opportunity to examine alternative and mixed uses, including the potential of the land to achieve wider regeneration objectives in relation to the adjoining Medical Centre site.

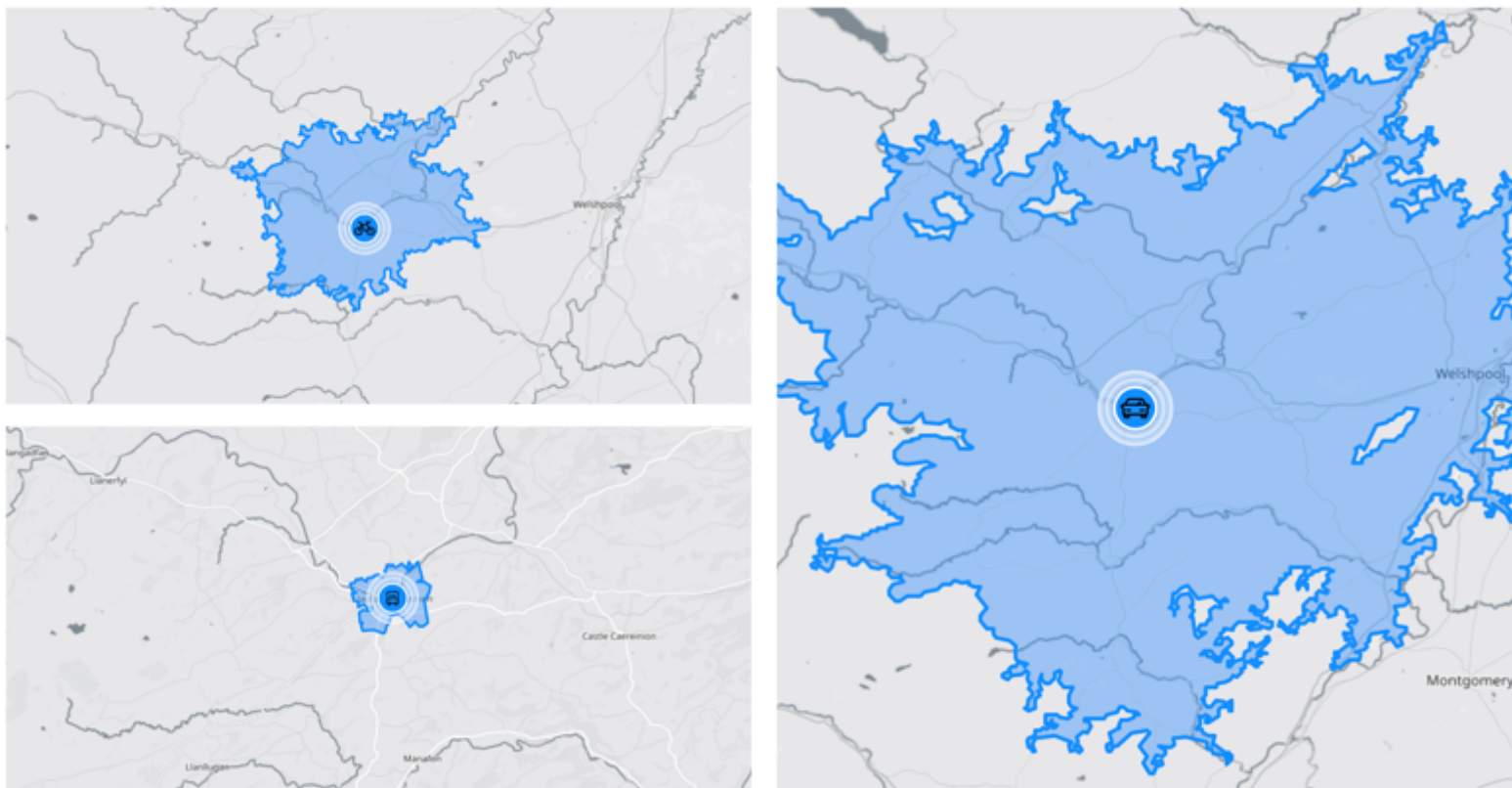
8. MOVEMENT

Places in which most of people's daily needs can be met within a short walk or wheel (active travel) have a range of benefits: people become more active, improving their mental and physical health; traffic is reduced, and air quality improved; local shops and businesses thrive; and people see more of their neighbours, strengthening community bonds.

Well designed and safe active travel routes that connect the centre to the wider active travel and public transport network are important. For example, the 20-minute neighbourhood has become a nationally recognised benchmark for liveable places.

Movement also examines whether there is a decent bus service and are there opportunities for electric vehicles to charge at appropriate points in town centres

Figure 13: Distance travelled within 20 minutes by cycling, bus & car



Llanfair Caereinion is a compact town, and so walking or wheeling between places within it is practical. This is made more challenging, however, by the topography of the town, as the land on which the town sits rises steadily between the bridge to the old Market Square, and then from there more steeply in all directions.

Within the town centre, pavements are generally reasonably sized, and feature dropped kerbs, but there are areas – for example between the old Market Square and the Health Centre on Hafan Deg – where the narrowness of the road means there are no pavements.

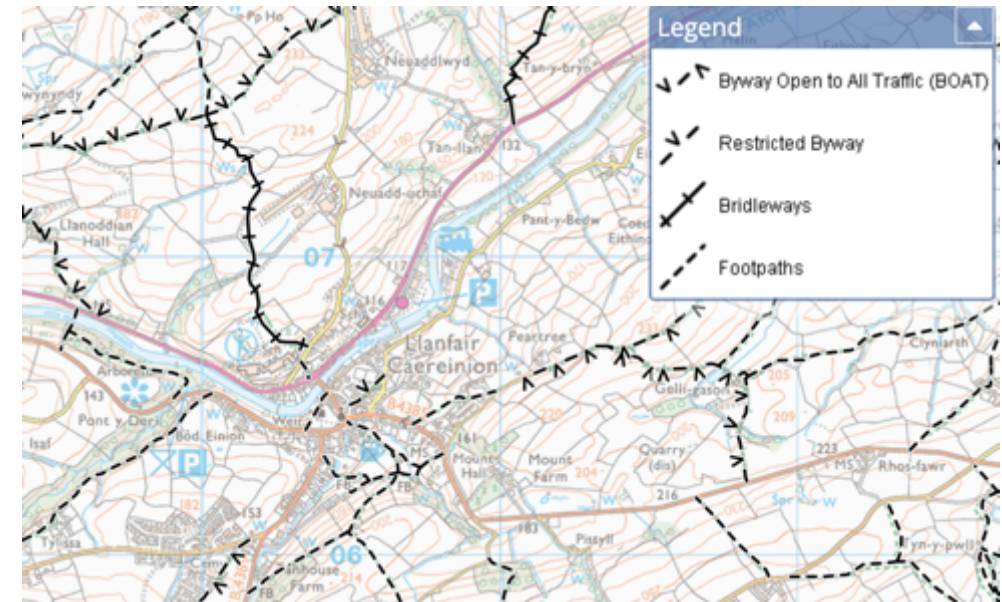
Cycling between hamlets and visitor accommodation (including the numerous holiday parks) near to the town is possible, but the topography of the area makes this strenuous and the frequent large agricultural and industrial traffic on the narrow minor roads and speed of vehicles on the trunk road makes this more dangerous. Perhaps as a result, there are no obvious public cycle stands in the town centre.

Should a new Medical Centre be constructed on land off Watergate Street, this will make it closer for those living south west of the town centre, but significantly further away for those living in and around the town centre itself. The only pedestrian route from the town centre to the previously proposed site is already served by a pavement most of the way but does involve crossing various minor road junctions and more significantly crossing over the B4389 in a place where cars may be accelerating/decelerating due to the change between the national speed limit and urban 20mph zone just 50 metres further along.

Footpaths

Formal rights of way link the town centre with the wider countryside network of footpaths, including those running through Goat Field and Deri Woods. The footpath between the railway and the town centre is regarded as particularly convoluted and difficult to navigate.

Figure 14: Public Right of Way



Buses

Bus services connecting Llanfair Caereinion with other towns are limited. A service between Foel and Welshpool via Llanfair runs between two and four times a day, Monday to Saturday, a service to Oswestry runs once a day on a Wednesday and Friday, and services to Newtown operate once a day on weekdays.

Trains

The Light Railway provides a service between Llanfair and Welshpool, and it is understood a small number of local people have membership for routine travel along the route. There is a 20-30 minute walking connection between the Light Railway station to the Wales and Borders train station at Welshpool.

Parking and traffic

The town's main public car park, located off Watergate Street, has approximately 30 spaces, including new public EV charging points installed by Powys County Council using Welsh Government funding.

There is additional public car parking available behind the Health Centre on land owned by Powys County Council, but this is poorly signed, tricky to access and in poor condition, and locals also use the unsigned car parking area at the Town Council-owned Mount Field. The car parks by the Light Railway on the edge of the town are privately-owned and designated for use by customers and staff only.

Along Bridge Street and Broad Street, the on-street parking bays have a forty-minute maximum stay restriction during the daytime, likely reflecting when the town centre had a larger number of businesses, and this is regularly enforced by the local authority. There is very little parking near the town's main community venue, the Institute, which restricts what events it can hold, particularly for older generations, and dissuades some groups from booking it regularly.

As a rural service centre and a town with only one through road, large agricultural machinery and school coaches often move through the town centre, necessitating wide junctions. The on-street parking on Bridge Street that narrows the carriageway makes vehicles only able to move up or down it in one direction at a time, requiring drivers to give and take and sometimes causing traffic to back-up if larger vehicles are involved.

The town's location between the A458 trunk road and significant swathes of countryside, along with the narrow winding nature of many of the surrounding lanes, means that larger industrial vehicles often need to pass through Llanfair Caereinion town centre to access the A483 and travel further afield. This includes heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) moving between a quarry some 10km south west of the town, which pass through the town frequently during working hours.



Finding a feasible alternative HGV route that avoids the town centre is difficult. Current suggestions include reinstating and adopting a temporary bypass on land off the B4385 near Cwm Golau that once allowed construction traffic for a windfarm to avoid a narrow bridge. If this occurred, traffic would still need to pass through the top end of Llanfair town centre.

Key findings

- The compact nature of Llanfair Caereinion means it should be easily to move around by walking or wheeling, but its topography makes this more challenging and less accessible.
- The roads around Llanfair Caereinion are either a fast and busy trunk road or narrow country lanes heavily used by agricultural vehicles, making them less attractive for walking along or cycling on.
- The town is well connected to the surrounding countryside via public rights of way.
- The town is linked with nearby larger towns by buses, but these do not provide a comprehensive service.
- Parking near the town centre is limited and present a challenge, particularly for first-time visitors, and limits the use of some key community assets like the Institute.
- The potential relocation of the Medical Centre might provide opportunities to improve and extend parking in this area.



9. PUBLIC REALM



Townscape

Llanfair Caereinion is a compact town that sits on the steep sides of the hills that rise up from the River Banwy. St Mary's Church (thought to have been founded in the 11th century but largely rebuilt in 1868), which sits on a low spur, is the most prominent building, and the historic town centre sits around this.

From the A458, the town centre is reached by crossing a fairly unattractive bridge, which is wide enough for two smaller vehicles to pass and has fenced-off pedestrian walkways on either side.

Once across the bridge, Bridge Street gently rises up the hillside, past the town's Institute, towards a handsome 19th century Presbyterian Chapel, Capel Moriah. Although many of the 19th and early 20th century buildings were clearly once commercial premises, most are now residential, with some in need of repair.

Near the top of Bridge Street, a number of the buildings on the east of the street are Grade II listed due to their relatively unaltered state and townscape value.

At the top of Bridge Street, it meets Parsons Bank, Mount Road, Hassel Square, and as the road bends it becomes Broad Street. At this junction, now the remaining commercial heart of the town centre, once sat the town's Market Hall, but this was demolished in the 19th century and replaced by a hotel and shop. The most prominent building remaining in this space is the currently empty former bank building (with apartments above it), which has a stone frontage and Tuscan-columned main entrance. The town centre lacks an obvious 'heart' and gathering space and this area known as Market Square offers the potential for creating one.



Broad Street continues up the hillside and runs alongside the large churchyard of St Mary's Church before turning into High Street, on which sits a couple of commercial premises, including the Grade II-listed Goat Hotel.

Most buildings in Llanfair Caereinion town centre appear to date from the 19th century, and whilst many are intact and handsome, with a number of fine Victorian shopfronts remaining. Many older buildings were lost because of a major fire in 1758.

Gateways

The main gateway to the town centre for vehicles is north of the river at the junction of the A458 New Road and B4389 Bridge Street. Partially due to the location of a repair garage and petrol station next to it, this space is cluttered and visually unappealing, and although signposted there is little to tell a passing driver that they have reached the entrance to a town of interest and persuade them to turn off and visit.

On the east side of the junction, there is a broad paved area for pedestrians that connects with the bridge and provides a view across the river below to the town centre and the church. Although the space contains benches, they are facing away from the river and towards the A-road and the garage across it. Understandably, many of the town centre businesses put out promotional boards in this space, adding colour and a sense of activity but also cluttering the space.



10.IDENTITY



Type: Town
Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21 0SQ

♥ Add to Planner



Do

Places to see, ways to wander, and signature experiences.

See all

Blue Valley Light Railway
★★★★★ 13
Scenic Railroads

Andrew Logan Museum of Sculpture
★★★★★ 14
Art Museums

The Poles Meeting House
★★★★★ 7
Points of Interest & Landmarks

Stay

A mix of the charming, modern, and tried and true.

See all

The Goat Hotel
★★★★★ 107

The Secret Yurts
★★★★★ 14

Noddla House B&B
★★★★★ 14

Eat

Can't miss spots to dine, drink, and treat.

See all

The Goat Hotel
★★★★★ 107
££ - £££ • Pub, Bar, British

Welshpool Golf Club bar
★★★★★ 9
£ - British

The Kings Head
★★★★★ 170
££ - £££ • British, Pub, Welsh

41

Searching online, Llanfair Caereinion is presented as a small, scenic town known for its historic railway, charming streets, and natural beauty. Although limited in attractions, it offers a peaceful retreat with a touch of history and nature.

For residents, it provides a close-knit, distinctly Welsh community ideal for families. The town boasts active community organisations, sports clubs, school and leisure facilities, fostering a vibrant community. These amenities ensure ample opportunities for recreational and social activities, appear to make Llanfair Caereinion a fulfilling place to live.

Brand and marketing

Llanfair Caereinion does not have a unified visual brand, but the range of public materials around the town (for example, related to the Town Trail) and online (for example, the Town Guide) are fairly similar in appearance. The Town Guide, produced by the Town Council as part of an Arwain-funded project to promote tourism, provides a directory of businesses and services in and near the town, but has not been updated since being produced in 2022 and is now out of date.

The town newsletter, the Llanfair Chronicle, was first published by the Town Council in October 2021 and has continued to be produced bi-monthly since.

Activities and events

Like many smaller rural towns, events provide a rare opportunity for the wider community to come together. In recent years, the main event in Llanfair Caereinion has been the Llanfair Carnival, taking place on a weekend in June, but in 2024 this did not run due to increased costs like insurance and volunteer fatigue. The Llanfair Caereinion Show, first held on Mount Field in 1973, is now held on the August bank holiday on fields at Llysun, around 5 miles north west of Llanfair Caereinion.

The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway organises various special events throughout the year at both termini, but the biggest event, the annual Steam Gala celebration, and the Christmas events are based at the Llanfair station.

Culture & sports

Llanfair Caereinion is a sporting hub for the area. Its football team, Llanfair United FC has three senior team, as well as a big junior section, and its 250-seater ground is situated on the Town Council-owned Mount Field. The town's hockey club, Llanfair Hockey Club, is also popular but trains at The Flash Leisure Centre in Welshpool. Llanfair Bowling Club and Llanfair Caereinion Tennis Club both use facilities owned by the Town Council. Although its ground is in nearby Meifod, the successful COBRA Rugby Club is also associated with the town.

Llanfair Caereinion Young Farmers Club, open to young people aged 13 and 26 and with around 40 members, is an important feature of life for young people in and around Llanfair. Llanfair Institute's Main Hall seats 150 people and has a fully equipped stage with sound and lights, as well as kitchen and bar area. It is regularly used to classes like yoga and events like plant sales, but also sometimes for larger events like concerts and town events like those celebrating the Jubilee.

Online presence

The town's bilingual website, llanfaircaereinion.org, provides information about the town for visitors, but is not regularly updated. The Town Council's website, llanfairtowncouncil.org, provides information for residents, including agenda and minutes of Town Council meetings and copies of plans and strategies, and is used to share short news messages.

Many of the town's organisations and businesses use Facebook pages to share information, and a 'Llanfair Caereinion Town community' private group has around three thousand members.

11. SUMMARY SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Proximity to larger towns (potentially future services hubs) and busy trunk road connecting the Midlands with south Eryri. Attractive town centre with largely good quality buildings. A significant tourism asset (Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway) close to town that contributes to the local economy year-round in various ways. Good range of services in town centre, along with the school on the edge of town, that bring in residents from surrounding areas. Close-knit community and good range of voluntary organisations.	Long-term decline of retail offer and loss of some services like banking. Large vehicles – agricultural and industrial – move through the relatively narrow streets of the town centre. Public car parking is limited, poor quality, and poorly located to access to the town centre’s services and businesses. Limited connection between the town centre and river, despite its proximity. Walking and wheeling links between assets are indirect, particularly between WLLR and the town centre. Lack of daytime vibrancy discourages visitors.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Create a stronger sense of connection between the town centre and river. Make the main ‘gateways’ into the town centre - the A-road/Bridge Street junction and Watergate Street car park – more welcoming, engaging and informative. Make the historic Market Square space more interesting and vibrant to support the businesses located around it. Capture more of the spend from the users of the hundreds of caravans and lodges within vicinity of town.	Further loss of services and businesses from the town centre – this might include the Medical Centre. Younger generation of people do not step up to organise voluntary activity.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis above is based on the analysis presented above. It reflects what is currently working well and not so well in Llanfair Caereinion, whilst also suggesting how the town might wish to develop and what might stop it from doing so.



ELEMENT
URBANISM