cyswllt celf
arts connection

Y Dolydd | Llanfyllin | Powys | SY22 5LD

Ffôn | Phone 01691 648 929

Ffôn Symudol | Mobile Phone 07814 523 521

E-bost | E-mail

sian@artsconnection.org.uk
https://artsconnection.org.uk

Registered Charity | Elusen Gofrestredig 1135641 Limited Company Registered in England and Wales |
Cwmni Cofrestredig yn Lloegr a Chymru 02911716

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI LOTTERY FUNDED

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Future Designs - Community Food Growing Project

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This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund

UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU

Powys

Introduction

We live in fast changing times; Our planet is suffering as a consequence of human development and the massive increase in demand for resources, and it is safe to say that the earth cannot sustain our current way of life. Therefore, we need to find ways to live with more respect for our environment.

One easy solution to leading a more sustainable way of life, available to all people, is to connect as communities to grow food locally, and to increase the biodiversity in our neighbourhoods. Projects like these not only benefit our environment, they benefit the people involved. Mental and physical health is more fragile since the Coronavirus pandemic, and the current austere times are doing nothing to improve this. Our older generations came through times of great hardship but remember well the quality of life and happiness that came from being more caring of their neighbours.

Therefore, cohesion within our rural communities has become a new focus. There is great joy to be found in working as a team. The friendships and connections that we have lost in our modern way of living can be rebuilt through community projects. In addition to this, food grown locally provides better nutrition and reduces the network of negative environmental effects caused by transporting food and people over vast distances.

During the summer of 2022, Arts Connection – Cyswllt Celf ran art workshops in 11 villages in North Powys as part of the Future Designs project funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund, a UK Government programme for 2021/22. In these workshops, participants were asked to express their wishes and desires for things they want to see in their village. There was a large demand for green spaces, trees, community gardens, allotments and forest gardening (trees and shrubs with an emphasis on diversity and fruit and nut production). This feedback showed there was a need to help locals with setting up such community projects, where possible. This report identifies areas of land within each of the villages that could be made available for community use, if even on a temporary basis. It also provides useful information and maps to assist village communities with accessing these areas of land. There will be a contact list available to interested parties.

It can sometimes be difficult to maintain community garden projects, but there is local expertise in creating low maintenance methods of gardening and food production. Help can also be found to get funding and to develop initial infrastructure. There are plans to create an overarching group that can pool resources and expertise between these villages, more information about this will be given at a later date.

Please note that this research is an ongoing project - more information will be added to the report for each village as and when we receive it. We are expecting to receive some further details from contacts but it could take a few weeks for them to gather the information they

would like to send us. For example, we are waiting for more maps to be sent by our contact at Powys County Council.

Sue Dolman (BRACE)

Mapping

Llanfechain

Would like: school mentioned a community orchard as part of the park; more trees (more involvement in community garden / fridge but no expression of wanting a new one) / wood sharing scheme.

Contacts: Margaret and Nita, Alan Duff

School contact: Catherine Heart

Contact feedback / observations

Llanfechain has very few verges or corners of "waste ground". The school has a neglected veg patch and large grounds (black border in map below) that could have more trees to encourage an increase in biodiversity. The local Gardening Club members are trying to find out if the school needs help with managing these areas, and if the school would like to work with them. The churchyard (general area marked with blue border on map below) is informally developing into a wildflower meadow. There is an elderly man who maintains this but he struggles to manage the grounds.

The village hall car park is already full of trees and wildflower verges and a local volunteer is working on these to make them more attractive to pollinators. One bed is earmarked for planting a community herb bed.

The population of Llanfechain is quite small and it is difficult for the community to find enough interest to maintain plots, so any planting needs to be low maintenance.

Areas of land with potential for community use

Two pieces of land are already in use by the community. No new areas of land have been identified that could potentially also be used.

Figure 1A (Blue border on map): Church Grounds

Figure 1B (Blue border on map): Church Grounds

Figure 2A (Black border on map): School veg plot. Very run down, has potential to be much improved

Figure 2B (Black border on map): School Grounds

Figure 2C (Black border on map): School Grounds

Figure 2D (Black border on map): School veg plot, potential to be used much more productively

Llangynog

Would like: a community garden / orchard / need for allotments and more wildflowers in the verges. They have been in touch with PCC regarding allotments, only available space in village belongs to Powys – they've been out to look and are surveying residents now.

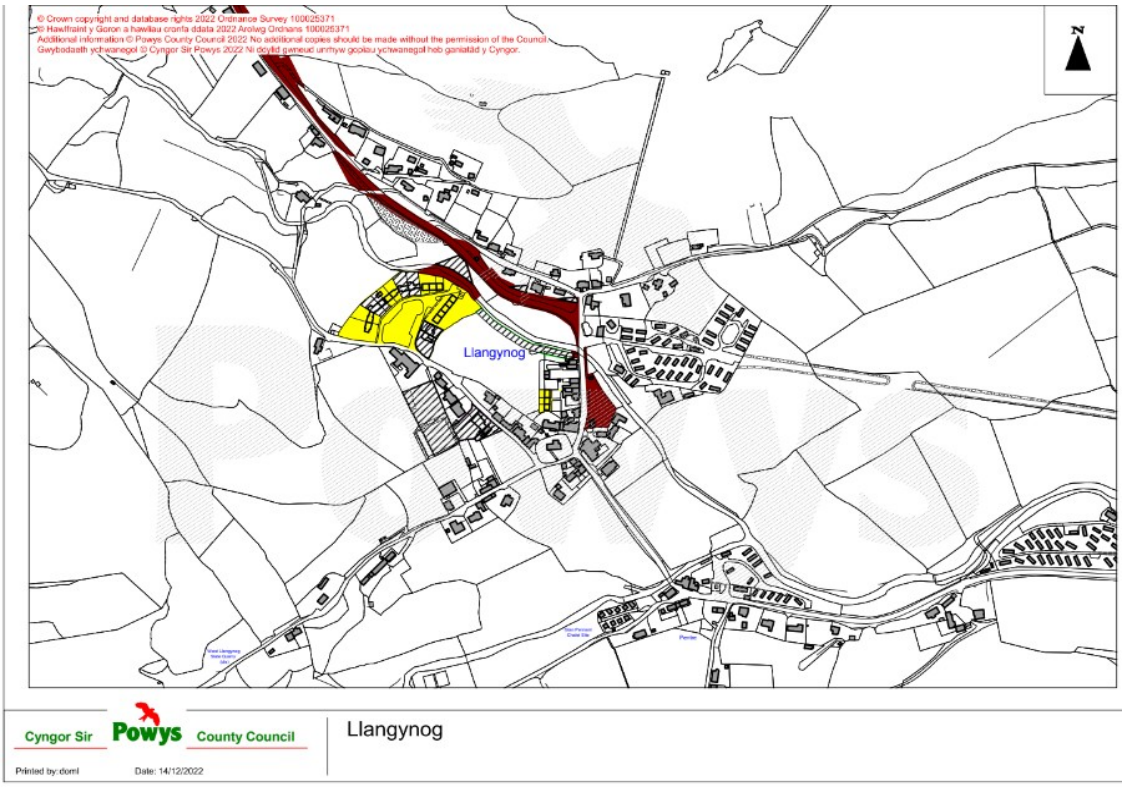
Contacts: Sarah at the vicarage farm

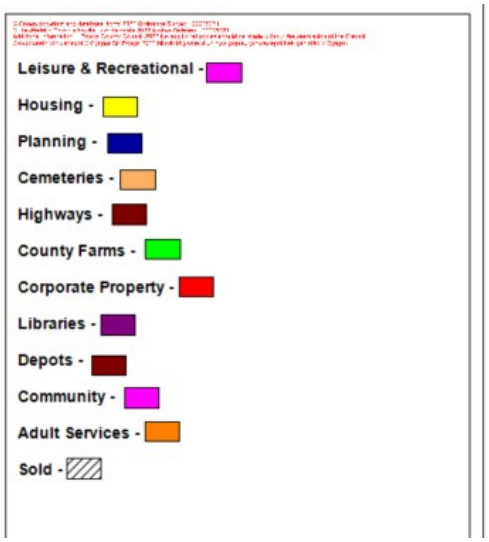
Rhian Briscoe, Councillor - they have been in touch with Powys County Council (PCC) regarding allotments, only available space in the village belongs to Powys – they've been out to look and are currently surveying residents.

Contact feedback / observations

Rhian Briscoe pointed out a field owned by the Church of Wales. The community asked if they could grow food etc. on the land but were met with resistance from the church (the church may have plans to build on the land). She says that the council parks man has suggested raised beds on the central green; He wants it to be easy to maintain and to look tidy. They had a meeting with a PCC representative (Clare) who was keen to help.

Dom Lloyd, Property Data Officer at PCC, provided us with the map below, showing PCC land and its uses.





Areas of land with potential for community use

Two areas of land have been identified as having potential for community use. The land next to the church (as mentioned above, not pictured here but marked with a blue border on the map below), and a central green.

Figure 1 (Red border on map): Central green - Raised beds have been suggested by the council for this area. They want It to be tidy and easy to maintain

Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant

Would like: a community garden, more allotments, more trees / wood park, desire for a forest garden.

Contacts: Clerk - Ann Klages.

Paul Stocking - local, involved with a lot of planning for community land use.

Contact feedback / observations
Villagers have very limited access to green spaces to sit in, walk around, or just interact with nature. There are footpaths, but the area is surrounded by steep hills and the roads have no pavements.

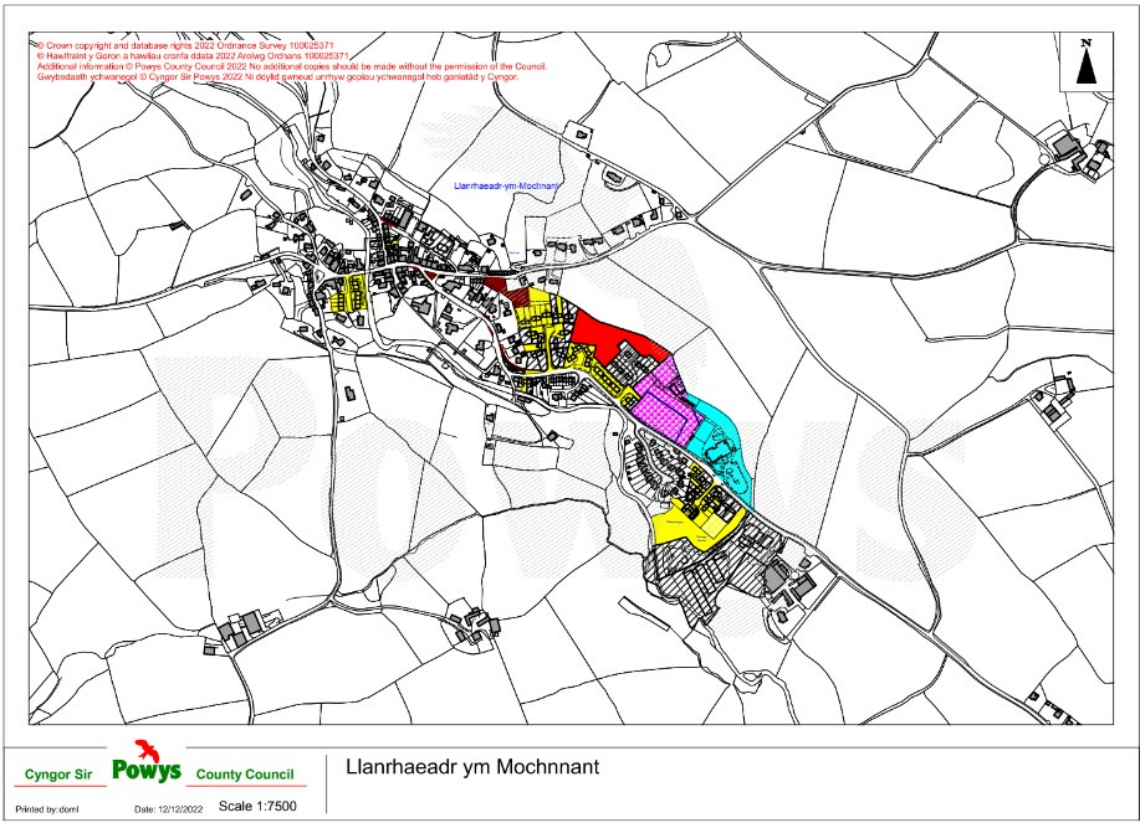
Money was raised to plant trees but only a small area of land was released for planting. Some money remains for any future tree planting around the village, for further information on this, contact Llanrhaeadr garden club.

Allotments (red border on Figure 1 map below) are in need of extending as they are quarter size. The land around the allotments (blue border on Figure 1 map below) belongs to Powys County Council (PCC); It is currently used for grazing but there is an idea to extend the allotments into this land and plant trees. The farmer who owns the animals grazing on the land is resistant.

Paul Stocking is pursuing a plan to get permission from the same farmer to make a wooded avenue pathway from the village to the cemetery for use as a recreational walk, not just as a practical path. He has marked part of his proposed route (shown in Figure 2 below) but thinks it could be a circular route if the farmer allows it. It has been suggested that the path could follow the hedge line and be planted with trees, the farmer could access funding to help develop this resource.

The residents at Plas yn Llan have been fundraising for tree planting.
Castle Fine Arts plans to knock down the largest chicken sheds (purple border on map) that they purchased in previous years; They want to plant trees there and make a sculpture park. This would be a wonderful addition to the village and an attraction for tourists. It would also encourage walking along the proposed footpath. This part of the river is very attractive and could have benches and diverse planting. We can provide a list of contacts for people to follow up and give support to these projects.

Dom Lloyd, Property Data Officer at PCC, provided us with the map below, showing PCC land and its uses. The red area marked as Corporate Property has great potential for community use, please see details in Figure 3A below. The land around the allotments is marked as ‘Housing’ but is currently used for grazing, as mentioned above.



Areas of land with potential for community use

At least three areas of land have been identified as having potential for community use.

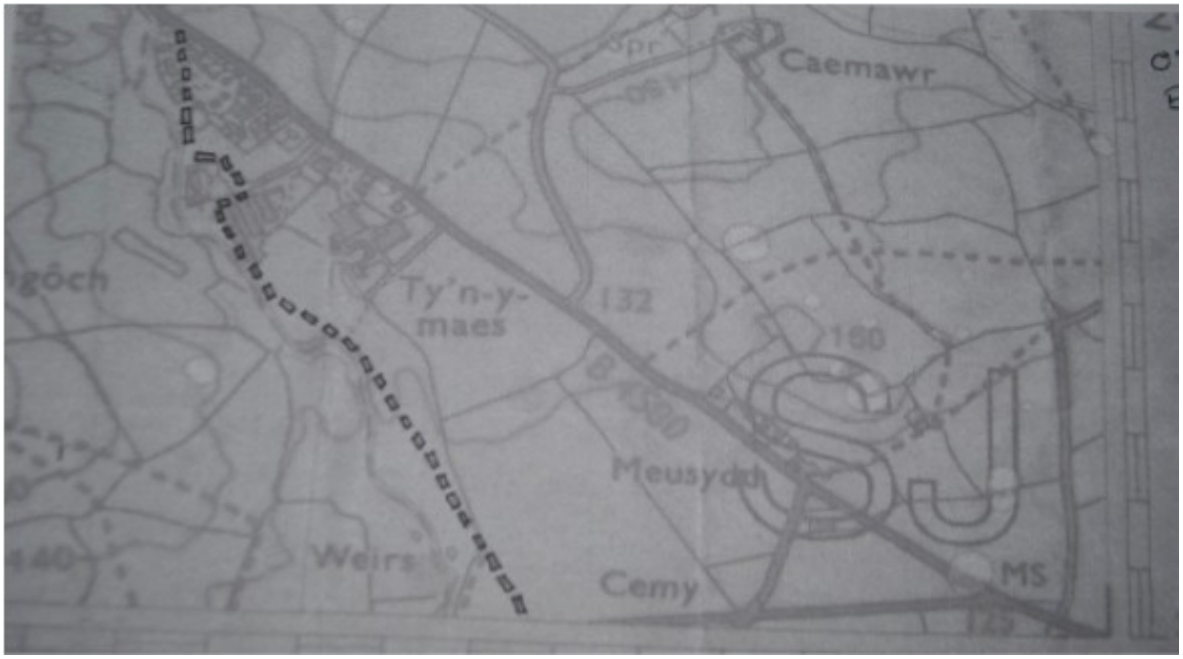


Figure 2: Map of the proposed walking path between the village and the cemetery. This path will improve the safety of pedestrians, because currently the only option is to walk along the road. It would also provide a much needed recreational walk

Figure 3A: This is labelled as "Corporate Property' on the PCC map above so may not be available for use. It could potentially be used until it starts being built on. If Powys decide to sell this piece then there is Interest among the community in purchasing the plot. It has been suggested that it would provide a safe route to and from school and could have a boardwalk and community garden. The road to school from the village is dangerous in places and this would be a safe alternative

Figure 3B: Land suitable for gardening. This is marked as Corporate Property' on the PCC map above. See details under Figure 3A

Llansantffraid

Would like: more people involved in allotments / make them nicer → involve young people, more wooded areas/trees – community vegetable garden.

Contact feedback

No responses.

Areas of land with potential for community use

Two areas of land have been identified as having potential for community use. Owners unknown.

Figure 1 (Red border on map): Council estate verge

Figure 2A (Blue border on map): Land next to a housing estate

Figure 28 (Blue border on map}: land on the housing estate view from other direction

Llansilin

Would like: a strawberry picking field.

Contacts: Eirian Glennie from the organic shop (she is the sister of Councillor Bryn Davies)

Ann Edwards, councillor

Arthur James, hall person

Contact feedback / observations
Councillor Ann Edwards replied to our email saying the best person to contact would be County Councillor Aled Davies. No reply from Councillor Davies as yet.

Areas of land with potential for community use

Four areas of land have been identified as having potential for community use.

Figure 1 (Red border on map): Land next to playing field

Figure 2 (Blue border on map): Open ground on the new estate

Figure 3 (Black border on map): School verge

Figure 4 (Black border on map): School verge, other side

Llanwddyn

Would like: Community orchard and/or a community garden preferably to be at the back of the old playground.

Contacts: DiDi Thomas on Facebook and Ruth from Llanwddyn community centre

Contact feedback / observations
Information about land was given by a local during our visit to the village.

Areas of land with potential for community use

Four patches of land have been identified as having potential for community use. Two of these are privately owned, the owners of the other two are unknown.

Figure 1 (Blue border on map): Central verge - suggested by a local. Owner not known

Figure 2 (Red border on map): Land to the side of the football ground (Across the field, in front of the building in the background of the photo). Land owned by someone who has moved away from the area. Owner does not wish to be contacted

Figure 3 (Pink border on map): Hard-standing land. Owner by the same lady who owns the land by football field. Land owner does not wish to be contacted

Figure 4 (Green border on map): Llanwddyn playground - the land mentioned by locals during the Arts Connection workshop. Owner unknown

Meifod

Would like: School orchard (applied but didn't get funding – too green...) / veg patch in front of town hall (marked with blue border in map below).

Contacts: Councillor - Cath Prichard

Ineke Swankhuisen

School headmaster - Arwyn Jones

Hall: Meifod Recreation Association Treasurer - Nigel Baldwin

Contact feedback / observations
Arwyn Jones, school headmaster, replied to our email. He said maybe the school could help because it has a piece of land by the old school-house. He also suggested that the King's Head may have some land and highlighted that there is a small area of land by the tennis courts run by the Meifod Recreation Committee.

Areas of land with potential for community use

Four pieces of land have been identified as having potential for use by the community.

Figure 1A (Red border on map): Church ground

Figure 1B (Red border on map): Church ground

Figure 1C (Red border on map): Church ground

Figure 2 (Black border on map): Land next to the rugby club

Figure 3A (Purple border on map): Playing field next to the King's Head

Figure 3B (Purple border on map): Playing field next to the King's Head

Pen-y-bont-Fawr

Would like: a wood sharing scheme, community gardens / allotments (used for local produce) / organic corn field

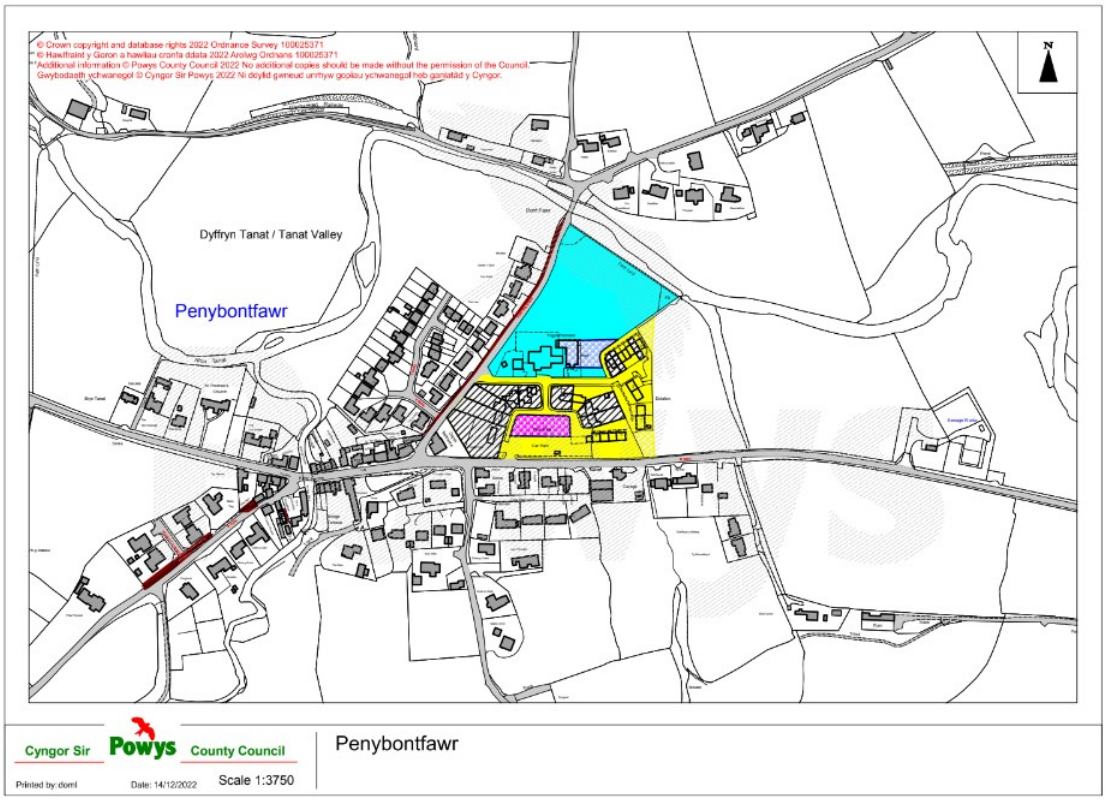
Contacts: Clerk - Rhian Briscoe

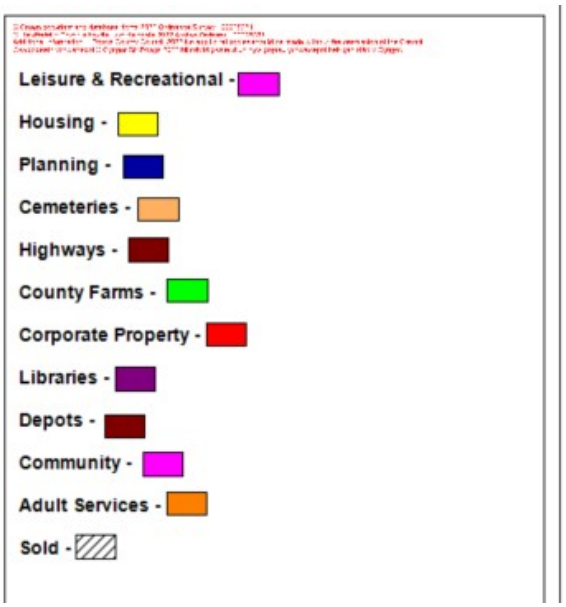
People interested in wood sharing scheme specifically - Wynn Thomas and Martin Peck

Contact feedback / observations

Rhian Briscoe, Clerk to Penybont and Llangynog, informed us that the old bowling green was earmarked for a community garden. People also wanted the green for a meeting place, a place to sit and for community activities. Unfortunately, it is owned by a trust and there are difficulties in renting it from them due to insurance issues. The bowling green would be a move forward if it could be owned by the community but this would require funding to buy it.

Dom Lloyd, Property Data Officer at PCC, provided us with the map below, showing PCC land and its uses. Most of the land we have marked out as having potential is marked as housing or recreational, so there is potential.





Areas of land with potential for community use

Six areas of land have been identified as having potential for community use. The old bowling green has potential for a community project, some edges and verges shown below have the potential to be used for raised beds.

Figure 1A (Yellow border on map): Old bowling green - trust owned. Tried to use for a project in the past but difficulties arose with renting the land due to insurance issues. Would need funding to buy the land for community use

Figure 1B (Yellow border on map): Old bowling green other side

Figure 2: Verge leading to the old bowling green. Has potential for raised beds or could be a 'Helping hand garden' - offering assistance to residents with their space design and veg growing

Figure 3 (Pink border on map): Verge on housing estate. Has potential for raised beds

Figure 4 (Purple border on map): Verge on housing estate. Has potential for raised beds

Figure 5 (Green border on map): Verge on housing estate. Has potential for raised beds

Figure 6 (Red area on map): Ground next to play area

Figure 7 (Blue border on map): Waste land next to a road. Has potential for raised beds. The PCC maps mark this area as sold so it may not be available for use

Future

- Powys Green guide – add mapping to the website
- Funding:
    - https://www.foodsensewales.org.uk/food-for-life-get-togethers-grants-available-for-plant-and-share-activities-in-wales/
    - https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Community-Gardens
    - https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-work/conservation/nature/development-packages/food-growing-garden/
    - https://www.fflgettogethers.org/
    - https://www.foodsensewales.org.uk/
    - https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/your-area/wales
    - https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/coronavirus/funding/
    - https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/
    - https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/local-places-nature
    - https://www.backyardnature.org/green-microgrants-2022/
- Community councils to support