

The Ebenezer Story

Cefn Community Council (virtual) public meeting Tuesday 04/05/21 18:30

This presentation, originally made in **2019**** is an overview of action taken which was to involve partnership working of suitable organisations to establish if Cefn Community Council could take over the Ebenezer Building.

The Ebenezer Story



The Ebenezer Building closed in around 2014, it was placed for auction in 2019, after much publicity and differing bids it was taken off the market prior to the auction.

At the beginning of May 2019 local County Councillors, the Chairman & Clerk of Cefn CC were invited to a meeting with WCBC Officers and the Leader of the Council.

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- This was called due to an unsuccessful bid by a local businessman to buy the building without it going to auction.
- The offer made was substantial, though the bidder was unwilling to pay a nonrefundable deposit of £20000 imposed by **WCBC which was part of stipulations required by the Heritage Lottery THI fund.**
- The requirement for any deposit has now elapsed as the building's clause of claw back from the THI fund has expired.

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At the meeting with WCBC Cefn CC were offered the building lock, stock and barrel, on a 25 year lease for a peppercorn rent. Taking on all insurances and maintenance of the building.

At this stage WCBC insisted all discussions relating to this business is carried out outside the public domain, this is due to sensitive financial information and members code of conduct. PART II

Cefn CC resolved to do everything to investigate if taking over the Ebenezer is possible.

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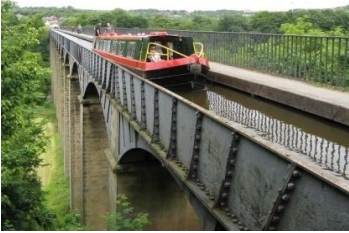


Cefn CC asked at the meeting to be given the costs of running the building, which was provided by WCBC.

We took all this information to June 2019 Cefn CC meeting, where Council agreed to proceed with the investigations.

We started this process and here are the results of what action was taken.

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The running costs (estimated) were £30000 for utilities only, with staffing etc to run the building for a 10 year period was £800,000

Unfortunately this is way more than we as a Community Council can afford with our annual budget.

Council decided to look for possible partners to run this with us and investigate what funding is available and take it forward to our next Cefn CC.

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Possible Partners to work with Cefn Community Council

- Canal and River Trust*
- Eastman's*
- WCBC
- Wales Museums
- Wales Tourist Board
- Cefn Museum and Historical Society
- AONB
- Tesco
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Llangollen Rural Community Council
- Sustrans
- North Wales Wildlife Trust

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- There were plans to build a visitor centre in Trevor at the Canal Basin, there is no money available to do this.
- Options to house the Visitor Centre here in The Ebenezer, with a canal museum and other attractions.

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- This in our view would relieve some of the pressures on Trevor and its residents.
- Possible visitors could then spend more time in the area.
- Set up a viable link between Cefn village centre and the WHS.

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Pros & Cons

- There is no parking provision at Ebenezer Centre – Cefn CC have a large car park behind GEH with plans for more in the village at Crane St, Well St and Health Centre
- Funding – Cefn CC had a very positive meeting with Cadwyn Clwyd, they advised council they could fund all costs up to the doors opening of Ebenezer, structural surveys, business plans, feasibility studies etc.

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- Cefn CC explored every avenue which has been exhausted
- Cefn CC had a site visit on 25/10/19 with representatives of BCUHB, Patel's and Caritas Surgeries, all of whom agreed the Ebenezer building was unsuitable for the New Health Centre.
- Following this meeting WCBC were informed Cefn CC could not take up their offer
- Even Wetherspoons were asked (in 2014) to take over the building, they refused as there was not enough trade to sustain one of the enterprises in a village.

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- Just to reiterate:
- Extensive talks took place with both The Canal and River Trust, and separately with Eastmans (Flexsys/Monsanto.)
- Although they were supportive of Cefn CC plans unfortunately they could not support us financially to the required level of funding.
- Without this financial support for Cefn CC to have taken over the Ebenezer building, it would have incurred a substantial increase in Council Tax for our residents of our community, which includes all the wards not just Cefn. We on CCC have kept Council tax to the minimum possible with no increase in 2019 & 2020 and a 1% increase this year.

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Questions from
Councillors
please

