

People and Communities

- The AONB's population has increased by 4% since 2001 and now stands at 6,108.
- The AONB's population reflects an ageing population, with most people between 60-74 years of age.
- There was a 12.6% reduction in the number of those born in the AONB between 1981 and 2011.
- House prices reduced in the AONB, except in the Morfa Nefyn and Tudweiliog areas.
- The number of families with dependent children in the AONB has remained stable since 2001.
- The level of people with a limiting long-term illness has reduced in the AONB since 2001, in line with the national decrease.
- The AONB has seen a small reduction in the levels of deprivation since 2005.

Introduction

What is an area without its people? Local Llŷn people and the society that they form are a core part of the area's character. As with the naturally beautiful landscape and the wealth of wildlife, the society and its people are a unique feature of the Peninsula and the Management Plan recognises this. The aim is for the Plan to play a part in protecting and maintaining the native Llŷn communities as well as aiding incomers to learn about the history, culture and language and to become part of the community.

As well as maintaining the area's unique language and culture, the society has also added to the area's natural environment such as cultivating the land, maintaining trees and building stone walls and "cloddiau". Also, local building craftsmen such as carpenters and stone masons are important, being the people who have built and maintained the area's traditional buildings.

Of course the wellbeing and living conditions of local people are important. Therefore this part of the Management Plan also pays attention to basic needs in terms of homes, services and facilities – matters that affect the wellbeing and quality of life of Llŷn's residents.

Main Aim

PROMOTING MORE VIABLE COMMUNITIES WITH THE PROVISION OF HOMES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

Special Qualities

The General Population

As stated, Llŷn's people and the society that they form are an integral part of the AONB's character. It's important therefore that this Plan pays due attention to people's circumstances and the key issues that affect them.

With 71.8% of the population in the AONB's communities being Welsh speakers, they maintain the language and the area's unique culture. The society also maintains and adds to the area's natural environment with many craftsmen and workers with specialist skills.

A recent report to the State of the AONB (2014), found that the population had increased by 4% since 2001 and now stands at 6,108. The population is characterized by an ageing population, with the most numbers between 60 and 74 years old. The fact that many people live for longer is partly responsible for this but also the nature of the area is changed due to migration. There is a constant migration from the area from young people born and bred in the area. The main reasons for this were highlighted in the previous Plan, in a study by Bangor University to migration in Gwynedd and Môn. No changes are foreseen in the following reasons:

- a reduction in jobs in traditional industries
- lack of new work opportunities
- lack of education opportunities
- a wish to live a different way of life (e.g. in a town)
- a wish to live in a specific place.

Many factors attract people who are born and bred here to leave – such as education, jobs, city life and family/friends connections.

On the other hand, people and families move into the area. Figures show that a high proportion of people who move into the area are people who have retired but recently and increase was seen in the number of families or middle-aged. In 2011, it was stated that 65.9% of the AONB population were born in Wales – this has reduced over the past three censuses, thus showing an increase in migration into the area.

People from other parts of Wales or Britain are those who mainly move to Llŷn but there are some ethnic minorities also. In general there are two caravans of people who tend to move into the area – older people who have retired and families who chose to change their way of life and leave urban areas to live in the countryside.

Social Capital in Llŷn

The term used to summarize the patterns and connections that exist in societies and the various values that unite people are “social capital”. The stronger the interrelation between people, then the stronger the feelings are of community spirit.

These community connections include a feeling of relation and neighbourhood, social

patterns and participation in events. A study has shown that social capital is very important and that there is connection between this and people's health, educational achievements, success in employment and crime levels. Measuring social capital can be complicated and usually this is done by opinion polls that ask questions such as:

- levels of trust, is the neighbourhood safe?
- levels of membership in groups, societies or clubs;
- connection with friends and families

Whilst reviewing this Plan, it was not possible to hold specific surveys to research the strength of social capital in Llŷn but general information suggests that it is very strong. The main factors to suggest this are:

- On the whole, the neighbourhood works well together and there is a high level of trust between residents. Crime levels are low in the area.
- There are a high number of members in groups, societies and clubs – such as Merched y Wawr, Chapel/Churches, Young Farmers Clubs, Sports Clubs, Literature and Social Clubs etc.
- There is a strong connection between people, friends and families and many people know each other and are aware of family connections;
- There are certain obvious caravans in Llŷn. This is especially true in smaller villages where everyone knows each other and there is a strong feeling of belonging. Also, there is a strong relationship between people in the same line of work – such as farmers, builders, teachers etc.

Maintaining language and culture

It is the Llŷn residents who have been responsible for maintaining the area's special culture over the centuries and maintained the Welsh language – which are in themselves important characteristics and matters that have been recognised as some of Llŷn's special qualities in this Plan. Culture is a very varied of course, and includes traditions, stories, tales and superstitions. Detailed attention was given in the last Plan to language and culture as part of Llŷn's prominent qualities.

Practicing and maintaining skills

As well as this, Llŷn's people have key environmental and rural skills that are transferred from generation to generation and also nurtured from new. These skills have been vital in creating and supporting the features that are appreciated today – such as the “cloddiau”, stone walls, buildings and traditional structures.

The main rural skills are:

- Building and maintaining “cloddiau” and dry stone walling
- Building and adapting historical buildings – carpentry, lime mortar, re-roofing with slates etc.
- Traditional farming methods e.g. maintaining hay fields, wetlands, hedges and

woodlands.

- Generally maintaining fields and managing invasive species.

Community Facilities

Sufficient facilities and service are important to nurture a society and maintaining social capital. At the moment, there is a good provision of traditional community facilities such as village halls and buildings for public use (e.g. religious buildings) in the area. These are important for holding activities such as meetings, training courses, entertainment, fundraising events etc.

Recently much of these buildings have been improved and made more energy efficient. It should be aimed to preserve these buildings for the future due to their importance to the area's community life. Also, it needs to be ensured that that buildings and facilities are suitable for disabled use and that there are efficient facilities for certain modern activities such as computers and the internet.

There are many leisure facilities in the area – for the local populations and visitors. They include the all-weather fields at Ysgol Botwnnog, Clwb Chwaraeon Bodegroes and Canolfan Hamdden Dwyfor. They offer various leisure activities including a swimming pool, fitness room, badminton, tennis and squash courts, football pitch and training field.

There are examples also of successful cooperative ventures in the area that provide community service such as Tafarn y Fic and Siop Pen y Groes in Llithfaen. Greater details regarding this issue can be found in the chapter on Work, Produce and Skills.

Key Issues

Young People Moving Away

This is a subject that greatly affects the area. Young people are drawn away from the area for many reasons. Amongst the most obvious are lack of jobs, lack of suitable jobs, studying and also the appeal of living in a town or city. Due to the lack of any further education establishment in the area and the increasing emphasis on qualifications, it is foreseen that young people will continue to leave the area for education reasons – with quite a high percentage not returning to the area.

Also it is foreseen that the tendency to leave the area to search for work will continue as opportunities decline further in the traditional industries and with it being unlikely that any production industry will establish in the area.

If young people wish to live and work in the area, it is important to try and ensure that opportunities are available to them and a variety of suitable jobs and course. More attention is given to this in the chapter in Work, Produce and Skills. It is believed also that there is an opportunity to raise awareness amongst young people about the advantages of living locally, or returning to the area after a period living away.

Moving into the Area

People have moved into this area at certain times for years and that has created diversity in the community. Historically, people moved here to work in mining or quarrying and some came during the war but recently people have been moving here as they have chosen a new way of life. Moving to the area is something that can influence a community and influence the use of the language and the culture which is part of the area's unique character.

Measures need to be taken to raise awareness of the area's history and culture amongst people who move into the area and try to assimilate them into the community.

Holiday homes and house prices

Ensuring suitable homes for residents is important. Difficulties in finding a home or suitable accommodation can be part of the reason why people move from the area.

Second/holiday homes form a significant part of the area's housing stock. Naturally, the numbers vary between different areas with the numbers in the popular holiday areas such as Llanengan and Llanbedrog being very high. Also, holiday homes create additional competition for homes in the area and influences house prices. Certainly, the fact that Llŷn is such a beautiful area appeals to have a second home here.

Although figures show reduction in house prices in all areas in Llŷn between 2008 and 2013, apart from the parishes of Aberdaron, Morfa Nefyn and Tudweiliog, house prices continue to be high – especially considering local wages. Some plans have been put in place however to help local people by agencies such as Gwynedd Council and private developers to provide affordable housing. Helping local people to gain local homes is important and promoting plans to assist to purchase or rent for reasonable prices is part of this.

Between 1997 and 2003, there was a 96.9% increase in house prices in Gwynedd, compared to 84.8% for the whole of Wales. More recent information shows that house prices in Llŷn has reduced in some areas – in line with national trend. More recent information was not received for local house prices but the impression is given that prices have increased gradually in most parts and increased significantly in popular coastal areas.

Empty Homes

Information in the State of the AONB Report (2014) shows that two areas in the AONB (West and East) have on average more empty homes than Gwynedd and Wales. Also there is a great difference between empty homes in the East (19.7% without regular occupants) and West 36.7% without regular occupants). Gwynedd Council have implemented an Empty Homes scheme and perhaps there is an opportunity to promote such scheme specifically in Llŷn due to the high percentage of empty homes and the potential to provide homes for local people.

Rural Deprivation

A reduction was seen over recent decades in service and facilities in the area – such as shops, post offices, pubs, garages etc. especially in villages and in the most western areas. Also, there were financial cuts in the public sector to provide service and facilities, in an attempt to achieve savings.

Nefyn, Abersoch and Pwllheli are the main centres that offer opportunity for AONB residents. Places such as Botwnnog, Morfa Nefyn and Llanbedrog offer a moderate level of service, whilst service are very scarce in very rural areas such as Ceidio, Dinas and Llangwladl. Detailed information about specific service in each area can be found in the Joint Local Development Plan (2015).

In terms of the services available, they are undoubtedly affected by the area's rural nature. Statistics in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2014) shows this. With a scattered and ageing population, access to important services can be difficult and there are schemes in the area such as the O Ddrws i Ddrws which is an important resource to meet the demand.

Fuel Poverty

According to recent estimates, around 23% of all households in Wales suffer from fuel poverty and it's important that the area's residents receive every support to use energy more efficiently in their homes and help to deal more effectively with any increase in energy prices in the future. Relevant schemes such as the Warm Homes Nest Scheme by Welsh Government are important in this context and again there needs to be enough information and support available locally. This is especially true following the end of the Communities First projects in the area.

Policies

CP 1. SUPPORTING PLANS TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MAKE THEM SUITABLE FOR DISABLED USE AND MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

It's important that local communities have convenient places to meet and hold social events. Through hard work, many improvements have been undertaken over the last few years but there is room for improvement yet again and the AONB Service and other partners will support plans to improve the condition of buildings and make them more energy efficient as well as improving access/facilities for those with disabilities.

CP 2. EMPHASISE ON GETTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO CARING FOR THE LOCAL HERITAGE INCLUDING VOLUNTARY WORK

Communities certainly have an interest in history and local heritage considering the amount of talks, exhibitions etc. are held and how many participate. However, not much practical or voluntary work is currently undertaken even though some features such as holy wells genuinely need constant maintenance. The AONB Service will work with others to encourage interest in this area with the hope of establishing a Society or similar organisation to lead on practical conservation work here in Llŷn.

CP 3. EMPHASIS ON RAISING AWARENESS AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER ADVANTAGES OF LIVING LOCALLY

Figures show that many young people leave the area for reasons such as education, work, new experiences etc. It is of course important for young people to gain education and new experiences but it is believed that there is a need to raise awareness of living locally and returning here in the future.

CP 4. SUPPORT PLANS TO RESTORE AND RE-USE EMPTY HOMES IN THE AREA

It's certain that young people find it difficult to compete on the housing market due to high prices and limited stock. Research has shown that there is higher percentage than average of empty homes in Llŷn and these houses could contribute to meet the local need for homes. Gwynedd Council have had an Empty Homes scheme for years by now, and provides advice, grants, loans and VAT reductions. Also, Welsh Government has a Houses into Homes scheme that provide interest-free loans to restore and re-use empty homes and Home Improvements Loans. There is scope to raise awareness and promote the scheme in the area.

CP 5. PROMOTE NEW PLANS TO MAKE HOMES MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT, SAVE ENERGY AND CREATE DOMESTIC RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Many homes in the area are historic and not very efficient in terms of energy use. As a result, they are more costly to heat and many rely on oil, coal or fire wood to heat them, thus contributing to CO2 emission. High costs of energy contribute to rural deprivation. The AONB Service and other partners support plans to save energy and create domestic renewable energy as long as they would not impair the character of historic houses or

the landscape.

- CP 6.** WHEN THERE IS A GENUINE NEED, NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES WILL BE SUPPORTED TO MEET LOCAL NEED, AS LONG AS THE PROPOSAL KEEPS WITH THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND THAT THE DESIGN IS SUITABLE FOR THE SITE

Preferably, local people could buy or rent houses from the current stock and the hope is that empty homes can contribute to this. In some cases however, especially in communities where houses for sale are scarce, new affordable homes can be justified. The AONB Service support initiatives to build new affordable homes when there is genuine need and when the plan suits the AONB's special landscape in terms of location and design.

- CP 7.** SUPPORT INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS THAT HELP PEOPLE WHO MOVE TO THE AREAS TO LEARN ABOUT THE AREA'S HISTORY AND CULTURE AND LEARN THE WELSH LANGUAGE

People have moved to Llŷn at certain periods and this has contributed to the creation of the community today. It is important to raise awareness amongst people who move to the area about the area's history, culture and tradition by various means. Also, emphasis should be put on learning the Welsh language which is an important part of the area's character. Already, there are many good plans and ventures in this area including Gwynedd Council, which puts emphasis on educating through the medium of Welsh.