

Dear Petitions Committee

Thank you for email of 16th January regarding our Petition for a 30mph limit through our villages of Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais. You suggested that we respond on the following issues:

What are your thoughts on the attached document:

The attached letter from Lee Waters suggests that a review of speed limits will be undertaken on the A487 through our villages of Ffwrnais and Eglwys Fach following the publication of the new Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales (SLSLiW) Guidance. As a community who have been fighting to reduce speed limits through these villages for nearly 50 years, we welcome this review. However, having read the SLSLiW currently in place, and a number of other existing Strategies and Policies we consider that the Welsh Government is **NOT** meeting its commitments to its **current** Policies and Strategies, let alone any updated ones. We have explained why below. We are prepared, as a community, to take this to judicial review if the evidence is not used appropriately to make the decision on a speed limit reduction.

Our Community Council and others in the community have responded to the Road Safety Strategy consultation which states that roads should be safe for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, wheelchair users as well as car drivers- all of which are *unsafe* currently on the main road through our villages.

Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

No, we do not think it adequately addresses the issues that we raised, against current or emerging future policy.

Further questions

Please see below our evidence to illustrate that the current situation does not meet Policy requirements. Our questions to Lee Waters are *‘Why can our 30mph speed limit request not be considered under current policy requirements? Why does it have to wait until new guidance is in place? Further, we would ask Lee Waters “Would you consider that the road situation in the villages of Ffwrnais and Eglwys Fach meets current Policy requirements?”*

Evidence

1. Safety

These villages are cut through by the A487. The speed limit is 40mph and 60mph in places, but cars and lorries often go faster than this. There is no pavement through the majority of the village.

We have a number of vulnerable users of the road in the village, including children, the elderly and wheelchair users, though the nature of the road makes all pedestrians and cyclists vulnerable.

There are 3 bus stops in the villages for the school bus. Each of these requires children to walk ON the main road on stretches with no pavement, with traffic travelling at 40mph, and in some places 60mph. They also need to cross the A487 to access the bus stops.

Everyone, including the elderly has to walk ON the main road to get to the community centre (the Iron Room - where a number of events are held each week), bus stops, and church, and to see friends in the village. Many older people choose to drive within the village because walking is not safe. The community centre in particular, is on a blind summit.

There have been 3 fatalities and 1 life changing injury within the village due to fast traffic since 1982: this includes the death of a child, an older resident trying to drive his car out of his drive, and a motorbike rider. A resident in his 30's suffered life changing injuries whilst trying to get to his car on the main road outside his house. He can no longer engage in his work as a builder and joiner.

Over 100 people came out to protest about the road on Saturday 18th November 2023.



The above situation contradicts the following policies: (italics added)

- **SLSLiW** Section 3.5 The following factors should be assessed “The conditions and facilities for *vulnerable road users*, *the level of public anxiety* “*the potential collision and casualty savings*”.
- Section 3.6 “the underlying aim of speed management policies should be to achieve a safe distribution of speeds which reflect the function of the *road and the needs of the local community*”.
- Section 3.7 “the estimated *collision and injury* savings should be an important factor when considering changes to a local speed limit”.

- Section 3.8 “the characteristic of the road, including its geometry ...should be a key factor when setting a speed limit”.
- A number of points of section 3.9 are also contradicted. E.g. the following factors are important: “road users’ composition (including existing and potential levels of pedestrian, cyclist, horse rider,” “road geometry (width, sight lines, bends level of adjacent development”
- 3.10 – the *needs of vulnerable road users* must be fully taken into account in order to further encourage their mobility and improve their safety “

The above situation also conflicts with the ambitions of **the Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021:**

- pg 26 Confidence and safety- “we want everyone to feel *confident safe, secure* and welcome using the sustainable transport mode of their choice”.
- pg 18 “upgrade our existing infrastructure to meet our legal obligations on *accessibility and safety...*”

2. Community Coherence, Wellbeing, Isolation and Anxiety

The A 487 currently cuts through our community, and residents are unable to walk safely to visit friends and neighbours within the villages, attend community events in the community centre or church. This seriously curtails community cohesion and means that there is little interaction. Older community members in particular feel isolated and are unable to walk, even to their relatives’ a few houses up the road. When they are unable to drive, this isolation becomes extreme. Some residents with small children have moved out of the village due to the dangerous road.

This situation contravenes the following policies:

SLSLIW

- 3.5 and 3.9 Important factors include the need to satisfy the following: “the level of community severance by moving traffic”.

The Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021:

- pg 24 “transport services and infrastructure accessible and inclusive by aiming to remove the physical, attitudinal, environmental, systemic, linguistic and economic barriers that prevent people from using sustainable transport.”
- pg 32 Cohesive communities: “ensure that planning and transport solutions are tailored to the needs of different communities and different parts of Wales *including rural communities*”.

3. Healthy living

Residents cannot walk or cycle safely from their houses in their village. As a result, they get in their car if they have one, or if able to drive. There is no safe cycling or walking route to the bus stops or to the local train station (Dovey Junction).

Whilst the Active Travel Fund was utilised recently to provide a safe walking/cycling route from Waun Fawr to Commins Coch (Also on the A487), we feel our community is being left out.

This situation contravenes the following policies:

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021:

- pg 23 A transport system that contributes to a more equal Wales and to a healthier Wales, that everyone has the confidence to use.
- pg 25 Health: We will contribute to higher activity levels through more people walking and cycling.

4. Sustainability

Residents will get into their cars rather than walk e.g. to the community centre within the village as there is no safe passage. This creates greater CO2 emissions and other pollution.

This situation contravenes the following policies:

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021:

- pg 28 Greenhouse gas emissions – “we will deliver a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport”.
- pg 17 “.....Actively aim to achieve a shift away from private car use to more sustainable transport modesthat enable more people to walk, cycle and use public transport ...”
- pg 19 the sustainable transport hierarchy of a) walking and cycling, public transport, ultra-low emissions vehicles, other private motor vehicles.

The above situation also conflicts with the law enshrined in the **Well Being of Future Generation Wales Act (2015)** particularly around the requirements of decisions that support cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and a Globally Responsible Wales.

We look forward to your response

Yours Faithfully

Dr. Ruth Stevenson (on behalf of the Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais communities)