



The Future of Community Day Centres Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

April 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the consultation.
- The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the 4 Community Day Centres and to explore opportunities for alternative service delivery.
- The consultation period ran for 6 weeks from the 21st January to the 4th March 2019.
- 331 responses to the online consultation were received.
- 89.4% of respondents to the survey attend one of the Council's Community Day Centres.
- The main reason people stated they use the Day centres was to meet friends and socialise (82.7%).
- Over half of the respondents who attend Teifi House and Brynnar Jones are a member of a group that is based in the Centre.
- There seems to be little group activity in Nazareth House, with this day centre used solely for socialising and having lunch.
- Over half of the people who attend Gilfach Goch do so to take part in an activity that is provided at the day centre, as well as the high levels that use the centre for socialising and having lunch.
- Around half of the service users who attend Teifi House do so to have lunch, which is lower than the average across all of the centres.
- Only 17.4% said that they would access alternative community facilities
- Respondents were asked what impact any closure of the day centres would have on them. The following themes emerged;
 - Travel / Transport Links are a concern
 - No Alternatives in area
 - Loss of social interaction
 - Hot meals (nutrition issues and unhealthy alternatives)
 - Loss of activities
- Respondents were asked for any other comments/suggestions or alternative proposals. In addition to a large number of comments asking for the centres to remain open, the following themes emerged;
 - Some people are prepared to look at alternatives, although this often has some caveats, such as the provision of transport.

- The centres should be promoted and advertised more.
 - The centres could be used for multiple purposes, including intergenerational activities.
 - There were some concerns about how the proposals would impact upon the Learning Curve service
 - There was concern about the location of the day centres and the impact of any closures on communities, particularly for Teifi House, the community of Maerdy and the Rhondda Fach as a whole.
- A number of common themes emerged from the drop in events at the day centres.
 - **Social Isolation/Loneliness** - The centres are seen as a central meeting point that allows the older community to socialise and maintain friendship groups. Loneliness in old age was a common theme that emerged and all users felt that having a day centre to attend for socialising was important to their well-being.
 - **Accessible to whole community/More activities** - most people agreed that the day centre buildings could be better used to open up facilities to the wider community. The feeling that there should be a change to the current model rather than losing the service altogether.
 - **Advertising/Promotion** -there should be more advertisement of the current services and activities available at Day Centres.
 - **Accessibility/Transport** - having a centre that can be accessed by public transport
 - **Provision of a hot meal** - the ability to access a hot meal was a common theme that emerged as being an important factor to most day centre users.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a consultation on the future of the 4 Community Day Centres located across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.2 The consultation aimed to ask service users for their views on the current service delivery model and to explore opportunities for alternative options either through developing Community Hubs or through existing third sector/voluntary organisations.
- 1.3 Section 2 outlines the background to the proposal and the proposed new charges that were consulted upon.
- 1.4 Section 3 details the methodology used.
- 1.5 Section 4, 5 and 6 present the consultation results.

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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are 4 Community Day Centres located across the County Borough. These provide daily hot meals and a programme of activities for people over 50 years of age. The numbers of meals provided are very low and the cost to the Council is gradually increasing as usage declines.
- 2.2 The usage levels at these facilities have either remained static or slowly declined with relatively few meals now being provided each day. The net cost per meal to the Council is significant at all centres and in one case is nearly £17 per meal. There is a programme of activities held at Teifi House and Brynnar Jones (one afternoon each week) and Gilfach Goch although these programmes are generally quite limited. There are no activities held at Nazareth Day Centre in Williamstown.
- 2.3 The repair and maintenance requirements for each building have been assessed by Corporate Estates and it is estimated that over the next five years repair requirements of all four buildings would cost the Council approximately £500k. The low usage and ongoing cost to the Council is not sustainable.
- 2.4 It can reasonably be argued that the existing model no longer caters for the needs of the majority of older people in our communities. Therefore the Council needs to explore opportunities for alternative service delivery, either through the developing Community Hubs or through existing third sector/voluntary organisations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The consultation period ran for 6 weeks from the 21st January to the 4th March 2019.

3.2 A total of 8 drop in engagement events were held in the 4 day centres.

Community Day Centre	Dates	
Teifi House	30 th January	8 th February
Brynnar Jones	6 th February	22 nd February
Nazareth House	13 th February	1 st March
Gilfach Goch	15 th February	27 th February

3.3 The events used paper questionnaires and FAQ booklets as discussion prompts and notes were taken. The events were facilitated by the consultation team, along with the Manager of the Day Care service.

3.4 Easy read versions of the proposals were provided for all service users, including those service users in the Learning Curve.

3.5 In addition to the face to face engagement drop in events, an online survey was created and placed on the Consultation pages on the Council's website.

3.6 331 questionnaire responses were received (online and on paper). In addition, an email from a service user and a letter from the RCT Older Persons Advisory Group were also received.

3.7 A petition was received in support of Gilfach Goch Day Centre with 488 signatures.

4 CONSULTATION RESULTS

Results – Online Survey

- 4.1 89.4% of respondents to the survey attended one of the Council's Community Day Centres.

Analysis % Respondents	
Base	100.0%
Q1 Do you attend one of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Community Day Centres	
Yes	89.4%
No	10.6%

- 4.2 The highest number of responses to the survey was from people who attend Teifi House in Maerdy.

Analysis % Respondents	
Base	100.0%
Q2 Which day centre do you attend? (Select all that apply)	
Teifi House (Maerdy)	43.1%
Brynnar Jones (Gelli)	22.1%
Nazareth House (Williamstown)	10.0%
Gilfach Goch	26.2%

- 4.3 The main reason people stated they used the Day centres was to meet friends and socialise (82.7%).

Analysis % Respondents	
Q3 What are your main reasons for using the day centres?	
To meet friends / socialise	82.7%
To have lunch	68.0%

I'm a member of a group that is based in the day centre	43.9%
To take part in an activity that is provided at the day centre	35.4%
Other (please state)	19.0%

4.4 Of the 19% who stated 'other', responses included;

- Learning Curve

"Day Service - Gilfach Goch learning Curve"

"We use the Day Centre for Treforest learning Curve Monday - Friday as our Base"

"My Daughter is a service user in the Learning Curve Group. I use the base for Gilfach Goch learning curve - Monday – Friday"

"We are part of Gilfach Goch Learning Curve"

- Activities/Classes

"OAP Guild"

"Meetings"

"Teach an adult education class"

"I've facilitated 5x 3Cs (Conversation, Companionship and Creativity) projects"

"Adult Education RCT. Teach Students with learning disabilities."

- Information/Recycling bags

"We use this for my recycling bags"

"Find out what is going on locally, recycling bags"

"To pick up recycling bags"

- Drop In/Other

"I am the local PCSO and attend on a weekly basis to talk to the individuals that attend."

"To see my work coach DWP"

“To vote”

“Use the shower 5 days a week”

“I am autistic and attend 4 days a week as part of my routine.”

4.5 The table below shows a breakdown of the reasons people stated that they use the day centres, by the 4 Day Centres.

In summary;

- One of the main reasons that all Day Centres are used, is for people to meet friends and socialise.
- Over half of the respondents who attend Teifi House and Brynnar Jones are a member of a group that is based in the Centre.
- There seems to be little group activity in Nazareth House, with this day centre used solely for socialising and having lunch.
- Over half of the people who attend Gilfach Goch do so to take part in an activity that is provided at the day centre, as well as the high levels that use the centre for socialising and having lunch.
- Around half of the service users who attend Teifi House do so to have lunch, which is lower than the average across all of the centres.
- The higher figures for ‘other’ in Brynnar Jones and Gilfach Goch can be attributed to responses from residents who use the Learning Curve service that takes place within these 2 centres.

Break % Respondents	Total	Which day centre do you attend? (Select all that apply)			
		Teifi House (Maerdy)	Brynnar Jones (Gelli)	Nazareth House (Williamstown)	Gilfach Goch
What are your main reasons for using the day centres?					
To meet friends / socialise	83.3%	81.6%	81.0%	93.1%	85.3%
To have lunch	68.4%	50.4%	74.6%	89.7%	86.7%
I'm a member of a group that is based in the day centre	44.4%	58.4%	52.4%	3.4%	32.0%
To take part in an activity that is provided at the day centre	35.4%	38.4%	25.4%	3.4%	52.0%
Other (please state)	18.4%	9.6%	17.5%	10.3%	37.3%

- 4.6 Respondents were asked if they would access alternative community facilities, if the day centres were to close. Only 17.4% said that they would.

Analysis % Respondents	
	Base 100.0%
Q4 If the day centres were to close, would you access alternative community facilities?	
Yes	17.4%
No	82.6%

- 4.7 Of those respondents (17.4%) who stated they would use an alternative community facility, the following are some of the responses received;

General

“Local fish and chip shop”

“I no longer drive so if facilities is easily accessible by means of public transport possibly”

Teifi House Responses

“Maerdy Hub”

“Other groups meet at the hub”

“To my knowledge there are no other facilities available”

“Occasionally- Aberdare St Mairs”

Brynnar Jones Responses

“Llwynypia learning curve”

“The nearest to Treorchy”

“The one most convenient to Ystrad Rhondda”

“Trebanog Activity centre”

“Treorchy hotel”

Gilfach Goch Responses

“Gilfach Community”

“Friends tried every centre in the area and always returned to Gilfach Goch stating that this is the best.”

“Service users will always access other venues. Talbot Green Llwynypia Treforest Day Centre”

“Social Services would hopefully find an alternative.”

“Unsure as yet. We'd have to source a building to relocate our group.”

Nazareth House Responses

“As local as possible”

“Within the Community (Porth)”

“As near to the bus stop”

“Taylors Café, Fish and Chip shop - more expensive and not a good diet”

“Pubs / Cafes Would be acceptable but would be disappointing”

“If services were moved elsewhere. Preferably close by (but prepared to travel).”

Impact of any closures

4.8 Respondents were asked what impact any closure of the day centres would have on them. Overall, a number of themes emerged;

- **Travel / Transport Links to current centre**

4.9 There were a number of comments and concerns regarding the difficulties with travel arrangements and the current centres being part of a local bus route and/or close to where they live and therefore accessible. Some comments included:

Brynnar Jones

“As a small group we wouldn't be able to find anywhere else to go. Brynnar Jones is local to all of us as some of us are disabled and would find it difficult to travel elsewhere.”

“..My current day centre is on the bus route and easy to access with my limited mobility and disabilities.”

Nazareth House

“I wouldn’t go to any other centre simply because they aren’t convenient for travelling.”

“I am not in very good health and the day centre I go to is very near to where I live.”

Gilfach Goch

“I don’t drive and the bus service in Gilfach is not that reliable to wait about in the cold.”

“It would be a bad day if this centre were to close. It is so convenient on a bus route which is vital for us old folk.”

“I would find it difficult to meet up with my friends and I would find it difficult to travel long distances.”

Teifi House

“I will be unable to travel to other day centres.”

“I suffer with mental health issues and make an effort to go to Teifi House on a daily basis. To lose this centre would have a massive impact on my life as I use a mobility scooter I would find it extremely difficult to use any other provision offered to me.”

“I can’t travel so Teifi House..... is my lifeline.”

- **No Alternatives**

- 4.10 Another theme that emerged in the comments provided was that attendees felt closing the day centres would leave them with no alternative venues to use and the impact this could have on the community. This came across strongly in the comments relating to Teifi House and the Maerdy community as a whole.

Teifi House

“It would be another nail in the coffin of Maerdy and the older population would have nowhere to go.”

“Maerdy is a community that likes to keep in touch with what’s going on, what’s happening, new people in the community. Maerdy could become a very isolated place.”

“Maerdy is falling apart and the Council don’t seem to care. Without the community centre at Teifi House there would be nowhere for older people to go for food or somewhere to meet, not everybody can travel to Ferndale.”

“There will be nothing in Maerdy if Teifi House were to close. Maerdy has already lost railway, factories, chapels, Maerdy Hotel, Maerdy Hall, infant school, betting shop, café, Post Office, Library, Church, Bank, Teifi House hours cut, Bus Service cut, Colliery, Butchers, Newsagent, Street lights, Surgery and prescriptions to Ferndale.”

“This is the only day centre we have left in our little valley – Rhondda Fach.”

Brynnar Jones

“Would not be possible to attend elsewhere. Please keep open.”

“The closure of Brynnar Jones day centre would be a big loss. To our community and the people I get to socialize with every day. We don’t have much in the valleys and it would be a big loss for me and my friends.”

Gilfach Goch

“Nowhere local to have dinner.”

“Due to the geographical location and lack of facilities in Gilfach, I don’t see how these elderly people will attend elsewhere and I will lose a vital link with a big group of my community. I have seen first-hand how a vulnerable group from the community come together and be happy to have company and have a warm meal.”

- **Loss of social interaction**

- 4.11 One of the most common themes that emerged from all 4 centres was the impact any closure would have on the social interaction of the people who use the centres. This was evident in a high number of comments and was equally weighted amongst all 4 centres showing this to be an area of great impact for attendees. Some comments included:

Brynnar Jones

“A significant loss of being able to meet friends or just to have the ability to socialise or attend meetings.”

“I would have no social life, this is the only contact with people (other than family) that I have.”

“If the day centres were to close I would lose my only opportunity of socialisation and become isolated.”

“Lonely, depressed, hungry and angry.”

“Loss of a community forum to meet friends.”

Nazareth House

“A lot. We used it 2-3 times a week. Chance to get social, don't see anyone otherwise.”

“I suffer with anxiety. Helps me socialise with people.”

“I would be in my own house if it was not for Nazareth House.”

“To close this centre will be terrible for me and the people coming here. First thing is the social side of it, most of the people come at least one hour early to have a talk and a laugh which otherwise they'd be on their own looking at four walls because most of the people that come here are on their own like me.”

Gilfach Goch

“My social well-being would have a huge impact as this is the only social place that I go to have a meal which is excellent and to meet my friends.”

“I know everyone around Gilfach, it’s my hometown and I like socialising with them. If we were further away, I wouldn’t see enough people.”

“I would be at home all day. I don’t live far from the Centre so it’s not far to travel and have a lovely meal, spend a couple of hours there. Breaks the day up and meet friends.”

“If I can’t access the day centre will be isolated at home.”

“This is the only place we go to get out of the house.”

Teifi House

“As I live alone it affords me an opportunity to meet and chat with people of my own age group which perhaps I would not otherwise do on a regular basis.”

“Be confined to my home. It’s where I go to meet friends so closing Teifi would have a big impact on my social life.”

“Devastating” As it’s the only socialising I do!”

“I live alone and I depend on Teifi House to meet friends and enjoy a superb meal. It enables me to leave the house a number of days.”

“I would become more isolated and not want to go out. I go there to meet up with friends.”

“Would impact on social interaction and independence.”

- **Hot meals**

- 4.12 The provision of a hot meal was another theme that emerged in this section. The impact of this on attendees was equal across all centres with the meal provision proving to be an important service to those who access the centre. The comments highlighted that this service provides them with a nutritionally balanced meal and that possible alternatives could be unhealthy. There were also comments that indicated the

financial impact of having to go elsewhere for food would be high.
Comments included:

Brynnar Jones

"It would be devastating for my father as he is unable to cook for himself."

"It would mean we lose contact and we will miss having a lovely hot meal made for us."

"Unable to make my own dinners."

Nazareth House

"As I live on my own, to make cooked dinners like I get over the day centre would be too expensive to buy the meat and veg."

"I would change my eating habits totally as my wife works shifts, I am not the best of cook. I rely on this day centre for regular meals."

"Lunch would cost more at local cafes/pubs."

"We would have to look into what cafes are around and that would mean either cooked breakfast type meals or meals with chips, not very appetising all week and not exactly a place to socialise are cafés."

Gilfach Goch

"I would miss the nutritious meals that your staff prepare."

"If I can't come to the centre for lunch it would mean extra shopping trips to superstores for food etc."

"Shocking. Many people rely on the centre for dinner. Unable to cope at home."

"Would miss going for lunch would find it very hard to have to cook every day when you can't stand for a long period of time."

Teifi House

"It would cost much more a week to eat."

"Lunch would cost more at local cafes / pubs."

- **Loss of activities**

- 4.13 There were also a number of comments indicating that the loss of the activities provided by the day centres would also have a big impact on attendees. Implications on health and well-being as well as the social aspect these activities provide were the main reasons provided. Some comments included:

Brynnar Jones

“I would not be able to meet friends and go to education classes.”

“It would mean that our group would have to move after being here for 13 years and we would have to readjust activities and look for alternative premises and deal with the effect these changes would have on our group.”

Nazareth House

“As for activities in this centre which you said in your letter is not being used, it’s up to the council to put things on which they haven’t done over the years. There’s a lift for disabled and older people and a fire escape and a lovely hall.”

Gilfach Goch

“I would miss the lovely meals prepared with love by a dedicated and friendly staff, also the coffee morning and afternoon bingo.”

Teifi House

“A great impact. I meet friends there for a coffee etc. and attend line dance class every Monday morning.”

“Because our group is small we would not be able to go elsewhere. As a result the Rhondda Fach will lose one of the few, if not only, place to practice the traditional art of Welsh quilting. We also make lap quilts for stroke victims and wall hangings for Ysgol Hen Felin.”

“I attend the dancing on a Wednesday. This allows social contact with other couples and helps to keep me active both physically and mentally. There are no other similar activities in the village.”

"I have a meal in Teifi twice a week and ran a dance afternoon on a Wednesday. All surveys report dance is an important activity for OAP's."

"The classes I attend are really important to my health and getting me out of the house every day. It will be a big setback to me."

Other Comments/Alternatives

- 4.14 Respondents were asked for any other comments/suggestions or alternative proposals. In addition to a large number of comments asking for the centres to remain open, the following are a selection of the other comments received.

Positive Responses

- 4.15 A number of the responses to this question show that some people are prepared to look at alternatives, although this often has some caveats;

"As long as there are alternatives provided. To shut down and not have anything would be sad"

"If some sort of travel arrangements were made, it would make it easier as now the day centre where I go is very near to where I live."

"Most town centres have cafes, why not just signpost people there?"

"Any other groups that is suitable for my needs, however can't see this being a solution as they would probably cost the same to run."

"Suggest Hub moves to Teify House."

- 4.16 A number of **ideas** were suggested;

"Why not run Cafe style facilities in Town Centres. Possibly renting much smaller buildings than the underused Day Centres. People could drop in as required. Facilities would still be available for disabled and elderly in a much more "normal" setting. This could help regenerate town centres and maybe generate a profit or be self-sustaining"

"You need to consider what other groups do/could operate in the community and find ways to attract them to the centre, which is well located and in good condition. Leisure centres have seemed to have thrived by looking at what people want and adapting to meet the needs"

- 4.17 A number of respondents suggested that the Council should **promote the centres** to increase their usage and

“Be a shame to lose it. A lot of people should come here, but they see it as below themselves. Societies - restroom. It’s not well advertised and should be”

“Bring back more activities in the day to encourage more people in.”

“do more to promote the facilities. I have not seen any interest shown by council staff to encourage new activities or the extent on the meals provided

“I can understand where the council is coming from but I feel more effort should be made to attract residents to use the facilities. There are a people in the village who do not know/understand what goes on in the building.....”

- 4.18 A number of people suggested that the centres could be **multi-purpose** use, including **intergenerational activities**.

“I think the centres need to adapt. Try including misc special needs and able bodies, various ages together. Providing a safe place for them to socialise and interact and provide a nourishing meal in a safe, hygienic environment”

“This centre has many rooms, a large hall accessed by a lift and stairs which could accommodate large groups where many venues fail to do so. The hubs are too small for the activities that Teifi accommodate”

“Open door to the community all ages”

“Perhaps the day centre could be open to all ages and not 'age' related e.g. parents and toddlers 9am-11am, elderly 11:30-2pm and River Forum meetings could be held there in the evenings”.

“I think perhaps you could encourage younger people to come to Teifi even though I am in my mid 80's I still like to converse with people of all ages. It's what keeps me young at heart and we as pensioners have a lot to teach younger people with age comes a lot of wisdom and experience”

“Could use empty rooms for a play group or the dining area to be open to the public as a place for mothers to meet after dropping children off to school.”

“Kitchen staff could cook on demand also night classes or use rooms for meeting and children's parties use the building as a community centre”

“More multi-age group facilities”

- 4.19 A number of alternative **specific activities** and uses were suggested, including;

“Computer Classes Digital Photography Internet Support and Social reasons Armchair Aerobics”

“Crafts”

“Maybe some exercise class during the evening. Maybe learning Welsh or other hobbies such as a gardening or photographs, a book club maybe.”

“Keep centres open and provide more centres for groups such as mental health support groups, and such as Alzheimer services. We need to support the community - not detract from it.”

- 4.20 A number of respondents were concerned about how the proposals for the community day centres would **impact upon the Learning Curve service** that has a presence in Gilfach Goch and Brynnar Jones Day Centre.

“There is also a disability group who depends on Gilfach Goch Day Centre on a daily basis. Closing said Centre would greatly affect these peoples’ lives.”

“The learning Curve have been moved a few times already and it’s not fair to them”

- 4.21 There was concern about the location of the day centres and the impact of any closures on particular communities, with this being especially noted for Teifi House day centre, the community of Maerdy and the Rhondda Fach as a whole.

“Why are all amenities being closed in Maerdy we pay the same council tax as Rhondda Fawr and all our money seems to go there as a more prosperous valley”.

“Why Maerdy yet again? RCT is a really big area so why us!!”

“Teifi house is the only day centre left in the Rhondda Fach as it is vital for the elderly, the lonely, carers to socialise. I suggest that the council look at closing buildings in other areas e.g. Cynon valley etc. as the Rhondda Fach has nothing left - deprived area.”

Equalities Impact

- 4.22 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics.

Respondents reported the following impacts, exemplified by some of the comments received;

Age

“We are an ageing community in Gilfach Goch and the loss of the centre will leave very little in that part of the community.”

“I am 94 years of age and this centre closing would have a big impact on my life”.

“my age and mobility...w would be an obstacle for me to go anywhere else should you close Teifi House”.

“As an elderly person, I would find it difficult to travel outside the area to find things which I have an interest in”

Disability

“people with special needs don’t like a change in routine”

“disability issues, lack of mobility, inability to travel far, mental health issues.”

“It’s a worry as we need an accessible building for our service, due to the disabilities we work with”.

“Learning curve disabled people who use the centre have been moved around a few times already.”

Gender

“This quilting group is all female so it does more than one thing for me. I am able to socialize with like minded people... I am able to speak about issues affecting me and vice versa, so it is helpful for mental health”.

“For older women in the Rhondda Fach there are few places to meet...”

Relationship status

“Single males suggesting that they cannot cook for themselves.”

- 4.23 Under the Welsh Language measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards, the Council has a duty to look at how its decisions impact the Welsh language. With regards to the Community Day Centre proposals the following are a selection of comments made;

“I don’t see the Welsh language provision would be impacted upon. It is the social impact that will have the most detrimental impact”

If the venues would shut it would definitely affect the Welsh language. People will not be able to speak Welsh as the centres if they were to close”.

“This would be a negative impact, as one of the groups that use the centre is for Welsh learning.”

“If the building closes it will have an impact on the Welsh language, as people who converse in Welsh at the centre (Teifi House) will not be able to do so.”

“The Group that meets in Teifi House i.e. Bore Coffi is the only place or group that speaks Welsh as National language in the Rhondda Fach”

Respondent Profile

- 4.24 In total 331 people took part in the online survey. The breakdown by type of respondent (Gender and Age) is shown below.

Gender

Analysis % Respondents		
Base		100.0%
Q7 Gender:		
Male		35.3%
Female		64.0%
Prefer not to say		0.6%
Other (please state)		-

Age

Analysis % Respondents		
Base		100.0%
Q8 Age:		
Under 25		0.6%
26-35		4.1%
36-45		5.6%
46-55		11.3%
56-65		20.6%
66-75		29.7%
75+		28.1%

5 Other Responses received

- 5.1 A petition was received in support of Gilfach Goch Day centre, with 488 signatures.

For older people to have a good meal, company and the staff know each Other and every one of us, it's a 5 star, well run, purpose built and we have, special needs, its wheelchair friendly and near a post office, shops, bus stops. The village, because of its terrain in winter, many roads to leave the valley are closed. We can as golden oldies be safe in our communities, please sign to keep our vital day centre open....

- 5.2 A response was received from the Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG), including;

- *Whilst we appreciate the need to close some of the day centres, we do not see the need to close them all.*
- *The Welsh Govt. has just sent out a consultation on Loneliness and Isolation. We are well aware that these day centres serve to address this by providing a meal and chance for older people to meet and socialise.*
- *... there is a percentage of child poverty in the valleys.... The day centres should be open for parents and children to meet for a meal and to socialise in these centres during the school holidays. Move from calling them day centres primarily for older people an opening them up to all residents.*

- 5.3 A letter was received by Cllr. A Roberts in support of Glifach Goch Community Centre.

- 5.4 An email was received from the parent of a service user in Gilfach Goch Day Centre, expressing concerns regarding the proposed closure of the centre, in particular the impact on the Gilfach Goch learning Curve.

6 Results - Face to Face Engagement

- 6.1 A number of drop in engagement events were held at each of the 4 community day centres. There were 2 events arranged in each centre.

Overall there were a number of common themes emerging from all of the day centres. These are outlined below.

Social Isolation/Loneliness

- 6.2 In each of the centres, the importance that attending had on users was evident with all those we engaged with wanting to highlight how the social side of the centre was vital. The centres are seen as a central meeting point that allows the older community to socialise and maintain friendship groups. Loneliness in old age was a common theme that emerged and all users felt that having a day centre to attend for socialising was important to their well-being.

Some comments included:

“It would be a big impact if this place were to close- it’s the only way to keep in touch with friends and be sociable.”

“The social side is the main benefit- opportunities for people to meet and talk.”

“Loneliness, everyone should have something to look forward to.”

“If no centre, wouldn’t go out at all.”

“We wouldn’t see each other, can’t afford to go anywhere else.”

“People won’t meet up, will miss the social side/interaction.”

Accessible to whole community/More activities

- 6.3 When asked about possible alternatives, most people agreed that the day centre buildings could be better used to open up facilities to the wider community. The feeling that there should be a change to the current model rather than losing the service altogether came through in these comments with most people agreeing that the buildings should be better used with more community activities to attract new people to them. There were suggestions provided about additional activities that could attract more people to use the centres.

Some comments included:

“More than happy to take part in intergenerational activities and share our skills with young people.”

"We should have more community buildings with no age limits."

"Open the facility out for a wider usage."

"Make it more of a Community Centre- not limited to older people. Lots of people with drug and alcohol problems in community. Could there be wider benefits?"

*"Lots of support for opening the facility out to wider groups, generations."
"There shouldn't be age specific buildings, this could be open for all ages and be a community building."*

"If this was a community building, we could have the police based here."

"Could do with more things going on- we have dancing, exercise class and fat club but it's more like a drop in."

"New clubs/classes are needed to attract people but recognise the Council can't do it all."

"Activities in the evening would be welcome."

"Majority of people are coming here to be fed. If there were other activities that might attract more people."

"Place is underutilised. Could benefit people with disabilities."

"Could put on other activities that older people could engage in e.g. discussing politics, watching sport/rugby etc. Social events where people can stay a while."

"Exercise classes- could link in with Leisure to provide in the Community."

Advertising/Promotion

- 6.4 A common theme from all engagement events was that there should be more advertisement of the current services and activities available at Day Centres. There was a consensus that the Council should provide more advertising services to the Day Centres and make use of the marketing team to target new members to use the facilities.

Some comments included:

"More advertising for people to come here for food/classes is needed. The council has a marketing department that should be used to promote this service."

“Could we advertise for new groups to come into the centre?”

“Centre is not well publicised- people don't know it's there.”

“Council should put more effort into putting things on. Cannot expect people to run these themselves.”

“Try and promote the facilities more widely. People have got the wrong impression that the place is just for old people.”

“Advertise the centre more. The council doesn't market these services, more people would use them if they were advertised.”

Accessibility/Transport

- 6.5 Of great importance to users of the Day Centre is accessibility and having a centre that can be accessed by public transport would be important to current users who rely on public transport.

Some comments included:

“The bus stop is a 300 yard walk from the new Ferndale Hub.”

“There will come a time when we can't drive. Need to have services locally to be able to access them.”

“Have to be able to access services by bus.”

“Would be prepared to go elsewhere if there was an alternative but needs to be nearby. Don't want to feel trapped.”

“Public transport is terrible to get to anywhere else.”

“Parking is good here at Brynnar Jones.”

“Bus stop outside, accessible/flat, disabled user friendly.”

“This building is in perfect location for bus users.”

Provision of a hot meal

- 6.6 The ability to access a hot meal was a common theme that emerged as being an important factor to most day centre users. There was acceptance of costs being high for the council and some users agreed that they would be prepared to pay a small increase to ensure the provision still continued.

Some comments included:

“Meals are so important, it makes sure users have a hot meal, get out of the house and socialise.”

“Meal provision is very important – open to pay extra if needed.”

“It’s somewhere for the older people to go to access a meal.”

“We would be happy with an increase in price, we would pay a couple of bob more.”

“Living on my own, come here every day, very beneficial. Nothing else around, no hot meals around unless you go to a pub.”

“Lots of widowers who can access a meal and get company.”

- 6.7 In addition some of the comments were more specific to the day centre we were visiting, including;

Specific concerns- Teifi House

- 6.8 Attendees in Teifi House felt strongly that they would be affected negatively should the day centre close. People felt like Maerdy as an area has declined in recent years and that there were limited services remaining in the local area, particularly that the elderly can access.

Some comments included:

“This Valley loses everything, nothing in Maerdy. Communities First has gone as well.”

“Maerdy has nothing you closed the library.”

“We have lost a lot in this area including the library and swimming pool.”

“Everything is taken from Maerdy, we feel like we’re the forgotten village.”

“Feeling that Maerdy and this valley comes off worse than other areas of RCT. Loss of banks, shops etc.”

“Many things have been lost to Maerdy. Day centre would be another loss.”

“This is one of the areas with least provision. There is enough deprivation in the area.”

“Things have been gradually taken from the area and it’s enough.”

“Take Teifi House out of Maerdy and that’s another nail in the coffin of Maerdy.”

Specific concerns - Brynnar Jones

6.9 Attendees in Brynnar Jones felt strongly that there was great potential for the building to be used for alternative purposes and to run extra classes. Some of the suggestions for additional/alternative uses included:

- Bingo
- Flower arranging
- Needle work/crafts
- Baby crèche
- Welsh classes
- Coffee mornings
- Speed dating for the over 70’s
- Armchair aerobics = sports and leisure links
- Rent the rooms out
- Would be interested in computer classes as they do not know how to use them, they commented that everything seems to be done online these days

Specific concerns - Nazareth House

6.10 Attendees in Nazareth House voiced specific concerns over the promotion of the current centre and felt that this was having an impact on the number of people who attended. They believed that improved awareness of the centre and what is on offer would encourage more people to attend.

Some comments included:

“Promote more to the over 50s”

“Centre is not well publicised- people don’t know it’s there”

“Council should put more effort into putting things on. Cannot expect people to run these themselves”

“Try and promote the facilities more widely. People have got the wrong impression that the place is just for old people”

Specific concerns – Gilfach Goch

- 6.11 The location and geography of the surrounding area was a strong theme in the event attended at Gilfach Goch. People felt that there would be a significant impact to the local area if the centre were to close due to there being no alternatives and issues with local transport.

Some comments included:

“One way in and one way out, the geography is unique here and provides the case to retain a day centre in Gilfach Goch.”

“Any alternative would involve a bus ride that can take 50 minutes to Porth, with 2 stops.”

“The centre covers more than Gilfach.... Evanstown, Pontyclun, Porthcawl.”

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