

The Old Mill Newport SA42 0PL

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25<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Tegryn Jones

Chief Executive, PCNPA

Dear Mr Jones

Report No 10/18

You will recall that since last September, you have requested that correspondence concerning Newport Visitor Centre is through you.

I am writing now as an individual.

Over this weekend, I have visited Castell Henllys and Cardigan Tourist Information Centre to ask what information they have on Newport, to be told at both, "None". We were not offered the newly updated *Newport Discovery Trail* that you tell Members about. I telephoned Fishguard Information Centre who said they kept an accommodation list and had various flyers on the area around, but nothing on Newport itself. The Cardigan and Fishguard staff were unaware that visitors to Newport were being directed to them.

The Report on behalf of the Projects and Property Group currently being brought to the Authority (with its 21<sup>st</sup> century punctuation and spelling) states, at Appendix A, that over the Easter period, visitors to North Pembrokeshire will be directed to the existing network of visitor centres. The Easter period is upon us, and I had hoped that your "*ongoing tourism support*" would be more evident in this respect for the many visitors who are used to the excellent service you have provided over the last 9 years, from the Long Street building.

Instead, Newport Visitor Centre is looking drab and forlorn, badly in need of the coat of paint that you originally budgeted to provide, and unwelcoming with its single aggressively emphatic notice - "THIS CENTRE IS NOW PERMANENTLY CLOSED". This continues with advice that information can be obtained from the above Centres, which seems not to be the case, giving their landline telephone numbers but no directions to them.

As for your “*famous Coast to Coast publication*”, which is suggested to provide *ongoing tourism support*, I have found no copies in Newport, but was able to pick one up from the Centres visited. Have you looked at it to see how this has been designed to in any way mitigate against the loss of the Visitor Service in Newport, so as to justify your officers’ mentioning it to Members in Appendix A? We obviously no longer have an “i” on the cover map against Newport – and I take the opportunity to point out again to you that that means we are the only Tier 3 Centre and Tourism Hub in the Wales Spatial Plan in this National Park, the strategic nature of which you are supposed to support, not to have an information service.

What is happening here until the Summer Ranger is employed? What has happened to the schemes which both Members and this community were told would replace, and improve upon, the then current service of information delivery, to be more appropriate to a digital world? (In asking this, I do not wish to imply that I agree that face-to-face advice, with well-designed and updated interpretation from a static centre in a strategic hub, can be bettered in satisfying the needs of visitors and residents, and supporting the local economy)

We have had occasion to enter the building to collect the mediaeval pottery, together with some articles which we had lent for display, and the tennis club records. The interior, as it is being stripped, is also now looking and feeling very sad. I hope you will leave (or return to the building if they have already been taken away) as many of the beautifully constructed fixtures and fittings as will continue to be required, should the Town Council succeed in leasing the premises from you.

You have a statutory duty to foster the economic and social well-being of communities living within the National Park. I suggest you could be doing a lot more to mitigate against the adverse effect on Newport and the surrounding area’s economy due to the current loss of the Visitor Centre.

I should be grateful for a reply.

Kind regards Yours sincerely,

*Sandra Bayes*

Sandra Bayes (Mrs) Cc Mrs Gwyneth Hayward, Chairperson, PCNPA; County Councillors Paul Harries, Mike James, Bob Kilmister, Di Clements; Mrs Lowri Evans, Clerk to Newport Town Council; Byron Rees, Acting Chairman, Newport Chamber of Trade and Tourism