

I have read the responses in Have Your Say with interest, and hope that the various points raised will be addressed in due course. I would like to focus this response on the issue of development in Trefonen, with specific reference to comments to the varying needs of different age groups and the school.

It would appear from the responses that most people who have expressed a view are in favour of some housing development. It is where, what sort and how many that views diverge. As a new comer and one of the older generation it seems to me that the type and size of the most recent housing developments are causing concern and suspicion among the people who live in the village and who have commented on the VDS. The planning process does not allay these fears either, as outline planning permission is no guarantee of what the final outcome will be. I understand that people with a vested interest, i.e. land owners and developers are seeking to maximise their investment and in the past people who live in the area have had little say in what is built around/near them, if it is compliant with planning laws. Therefore this is precisely why the draft VDS was drawn up, and it should be noted that this document is not new. It is an updated version of the 2006 VDs which was agreed in principle by the Parish Council. The inspector when dismissing his appeal on the land off Chapel Lane cited this document in his report.

I am aware that there has been adverse comments about the structure of the steering group, but as this was an updated version could it not be deemed reasonable and efficient for those who were familiar with the work to carry on into this phase, provided it is offered as a consultative document, which it has been.

Therefore would it be feasible for landowners, developers and people with opinions about future housing developments, whatever their age, not to be adversarial (as some comments are in, Have Your Say), but rather work together to sustain the village in the short, medium and long term. It is commented on that older people are living in houses that are too big for them. Could it be that these people may like the opportunity to move out into smaller homes in the village? Therefore the size and quantity of any houses need to be considered to meet the changing needs of the community.

Again commenting on past developments, most houses built on the Galliers estate are of the larger type and maybe it would have been more advantageous for the community to have built smaller homes, semis etc.? Was this an opportunity missed, but have the aspirations of landowners and developers changed in the interim? This could be adding to the concerns expressed in the current comments about future developments. Unfortunately, we the public, can do little about the cost of houses. These reflect the market value.

Obviously people will have different priorities due their immediate needs, whilst others may place more emphasis on the preservation of the rural and heritage. Squaring this circle will not be easy. Some comments cite age as a divider. This is possibly too simplistic. However, it should be possible if all sides of the debate respect the views of others and try and work together to bring about any changes in a controlled way, which will make Trefonen a more vibrant and place to live into the future.

Rural areas are facing many threats to their preferred way of life, which in part is a reflection of their position within the environment, and Trefonen, Nantmawr and Treflach are no different. Trefonen is the only village now of the three with any significant facilities. There is a well-known saying-use it or lose it, so it is up to everyone in the village to utilise these as much as possible. This is one immediate way that we can all contribute to the sustainability of Trefonen.

The school with its wide, but sparsely inhabited catchment area is facing added threats, but these are no different to similarly situated schools. I am sure there is a lot of goodwill towards the school in the village, but does it make the most of this and utilise the talents and experience of local people? If people are involved in school activities and likewise, the school involved in village activities and events then any threat of closure is more likely to be robustly fought against. My understanding is that there is evidence that demonstrates that building houses to the extent that would be feasible in Trefonen, would still not be enough to sustain the school in the long term.

One of the themes running through the comments are the needs of the young generation and that these are being drowned out by the views by the older generation. I can only comment on those who have expressed an opinion. Most of those have welcomed the draft VDS and the principles behind it. At least it has opened a debate and this is how it should be in a democracy. Hopefully now the village can go forward and be developed in line with the majority opinions of its inhabitants. I have made a few suggestions. What do you think should be the next steps should be?