

APPENDICES

A. Case studies

The following case studies have been selected because they are similar to The Old Stables in the following ways:

- An historic building, which has been at the centre of a community and in some cases has listed building status
- Community take over and ownership
- A mix of uses
- A sustainable income from some, if not all, of those uses
- Offers services to the local community
- Employs local people and contributes to the economy

Information has been obtained by searching websites, such as www.independenthostels.co.uk, www.bedsforbikes.com, by consulting individual websites and through visits to several of the case study sites.

Y Dolydd, Llanfyllin Old Workhouse www.the-workhouse.org.uk

“Llanfyllin Workhouse is a developing community centre and venue for the arts, music, creativity and education. The Workhouse is owned, managed and supported by the Llanfyllin Dolydd Building Preservation Trust (registered charity no. 1091097)”.

Built as a workhouse in 1837, it later became a local authority institution before closing in 1983, although briefly re-opened as an out-door centre. It was unused from the mid 1980s until the Trust was formed in 2008. Work then began on restoration and development of the buildings and associated land.

“The aim is to strive to be a leading force in the integration of education, arts, entertainment and employment using a holistic and sustainable approach based upon sound social and environmental principles. The Workhouse is developing as an exciting hub for education, music, local produce, green crafts and arts”.

Refurbishment of the building continues with work carried out partly by volunteers and with recycled materials. A Conservation Management Plan exists, ensuring that all work fits with the listed status of the building.

Y Dolydd has been awarded grants from the Pilgrim Trust and HLF for specific parts of the project and raises money through its own fund-raising campaigns. There is currently a bid to Powys Community Regeneration Fund for money to create up-market accommodation in 2 holiday flats.

Llanfyllin Workhouse provides a range of activities, including courses and space for local community enterprises and training e.g. green skills, gardening, creative skills; educational provision, tailored for school needs, including an education pack and DVD as a learning resource; arts events including festivals and paranormal investigation weekends.

A history Centre opened in 2016, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This comprises a museum and interactive displays, film and education pack. The centre is free to enter, and is open daily from 10.00am to 5.00 pm. A guided tour of the building and site in collaboration with school staff is offered. The interpretation includes a 30 minute dramatised documentary film in English: 'Ghosts of the Workhouse' or in Welsh: 'Ysbrydion y Wyrwys'.

Provision includes bunkhouse accommodation, open all year. The bunkhouse has 24 beds in 3 rooms (6 bunks/12 beds, 4 bunks/8 beds and 2 bunks/4 beds) and a self catering kitchen/dining room that can seat 12-15. The charge is £15.00 per person per night with possible discounts for groups. Toilets and showers are mixed sex, and the shower operates on a token. Quilt, pillow and linen are included.

The 6 acres of gardens and grounds include a play area, fire pit and cob oven.

The Workhouse is also marketed as an events venue for conferences, private events and functions. Facilities include 2 indoor venue/meeting rooms, a 5-star professional catering kitchen and a fully licensed bar. Breakfasts, dinners and lunches can be provided. The cafe seats 20 people.

Income is about £2,000 a month from unit rentals, which include a music studio, leather designer, upcycling/deco outlet and an Escape Room. There is also income from events and the bar and café that is run in relation to them.

Gross income from the bunkhouse, including providing accommodation for the paranormal events was expected to be around £12,000 in 2019.

The estimated total account for 2020 shows £67,554 (Income); £62,502 (Expenditure); £5,052 (Profit)

Y Fron, Nantlle [www.canolfanyfron.org]

Canolfan y Fron was a school until 2015. In 2016 a community project won a £1 million Big Lottery award to transform the building. Y Fron is in the Nantlle Valley that is at the heart of the Snowdonia mountains and in the middle of a previous slate quarrying area. There are many outdoor opportunities, including a Fron trail.

"Canolfan Y Fron is our community owned and run centre, housed in the former village

school, which dates from 1844. It hosts a variety of community and visitor events throughout the year in the three community rooms, has a cafe, an 18 bed Llety (deluxe visitor accommodation) a community shop, a treatment room, secure storage for outdoor equipment and four electric vehicle charging points. It is an ideal venue for almost any event”.

The building is open 9:00 – 16:00 Monday to Friday. It comprises:

- A cafe opens every day 9:30 to 15:30
- A shop open and staffed 09:00 to 10:30 and 15:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 17:00 Saturday and 13:00 to 17:00 on Sunday.
- A bunkhouse open all year
- Meeting/activity spaces and treatment room



Llety y Fron Bunkhouse is suitable for groups up to 18 in number and for individuals and families.

Rooms are en-suite. There is a shared communal area, including a kitchen, changing rooms, outdoor equipment store, electric car charging points and free Wi-Fi

- The entire 18 beds can be booked from £375 (2019 prices)
- Catering facilities are available in the Cegin Bach (self-catering) or may be catered through the Caffi kitchen (light snacks, buffets and sit-down meals).
- Rooms are available for community events, private functions, meetings,

Room	Per Hour	Half Day	Full Day	Capacity
Main Hall 2 (North)	£11	£30	£50	60
Main Hall 1 (South)	£11	£30	£50	40
Large Hall (1 & 2 combined)	£22 *	£60	£100	120
Meeting Room	£11	£30	£50	10
Use of Communal Kitchen facilities (non-exclusive)	£2 *	£5	£5	--
Treatment Room	£11	£30	£50	4

conferences, exercise classes and treatments.

Y Llety Arall, Caernarfon www.lletyarall.org

Y Llety Arall occupies a previous town house in the centre of Caernarfon. It is a Grade II listed building. A community benefit society was established in 2017. People can invest by buying shares at £250 a share.

There is a Board that includes people with a wide range of local experience ranging from architecture to culture. The Chairman is Selwyn Lloyd.

The project uses the strap line: *Accommodation, Culture, Heritage*

Accommodation comprises

- 8 en-suite bedrooms (one with wheelchair access)
- Multi-purpose meeting space
- Small kitchen
- Shop – franchised out

Approximate current prices. Depending on the time of the year:

- Room with 2 adults + cot £225 for 3 nights (Winter)
- Room 4 sharing £81 a night £240 for 4

Craig y Nos Castle

Craig Y Nos Castle is situated on a sweeping mountain road that crosses the Brecon Beacons. Once a celebrity palace and then a sanatorium providing the fresh air cure, the castle has always been chosen for its location.

Craig Y Nos Castle has different types of accommodation to suit everyone, from couples requiring a romantic midweek or weekend break, through to family apartments and group accommodation for a party of friends looking for a base for local activities.

B&B accommodation including evening meals charged at £70 per room per night, 2 rooms have disabled facilities. There are also dog friendly rooms. The Castle has 67 rooms of which 64 are en-suite.

The Nurses Block bunkhouse has 21 rooms. Sole use of the Nurses Block Bunkhouse: 1 night £350, 2 nights £500, 3 nights £600, 5 nights £700. The Nurses Block has a lounge, a small self-catering kitchen, 10 twin rooms, 1 single room, showers, loos and a disabled bathroom. All the beds are made up with fresh linen and duvets. The kitchen has a 2-ring hob and 2 microwaves. Visitors are asked to bring their own plates, cutlery and pans.

- Inexpensive budget style accommodation for groups

- book on a per room basis, or book exclusive use of the whole block. The nurses block budget accommodation has free Wi-Fi, a lounge and small communal kitchen.

Stackpole Centre, Pembrokeshire

Stackpole Estate is owned by the National Trust. The Stackpole Centre is in the mansion at the centre of the estate.

Stackpole Outdoor Learning Centre can host up to 140 guests with a choice of Visit Wales four-star rated accommodation. Rooms range from single and double rooms to bunkhouse style.

The properties have recently been extensively upgraded to provide spacious and stylish accommodation with excellent modern facilities. There is a choice of self-catering or catered accommodation, with a full range of locally sourced, homemade meals.

Prices from £24 per person per night

Denmark Farm, Lampeter

Denmark Farm was established by its parent charity, The Shared Earth Trust, in 1987 in direct response to the national decline in wildlife habitat and biodiversity of farmland. It is currently undergoing a change in management structure to form a CIO, dissolving its charitable status.

Its primary remits are to increase the biodiversity on its 40-hectare site and to provide opportunities to connect people with nature, through courses, allowing access to its nature reserve and by offering onsite accommodation – bunkhouse, eco-lodges and camping facilities. The vision of Denmark Farm has changed over its history but its objectives have not.

There are 2 paid members of staff plus 3 casual cleaners for the accommodation and people who are paid to run courses. The majority of residential visits are made by people with little interest in nature conservation. It often accommodates groups or families who use it for celebratory events. However, due to its location it is not viewed as a tourist destination as it is not near the coast and there are no long-distance paths nearby.

Denmark Farm is currently controlled by 2 bodies, a limited company and the Shared Earth Trust, both have a board of trustees. Initial funding (7-8 years) for the project

came from the Big Lottery Fund and smaller grant funding bodies; this included revenue funding. There is currently 2 years revenue funding for an extra member of staff from the Landfill Disposal Tax.

There is a mortgage on the ecolodge and the farmhouse on site was re-mortgaged to raise funds when there were difficulties 7 years ago. The farmhouse is tenanted and provides income. They are currently looking for new funding specially to continue with the land management work.

An initial marketing budget of £5k was spent on adverts in magazines focussed on eco issues, permaculture, Green Parent. This wasn't very successful and it has become apparent that online marketing is the most and most bookings for the accommodation have been gained from their link with www.groupaccommodation.com. Annual fee of £200 but each of the 10+ bookings made per year are worth over £1000 each.

Courses have been run for over 10 years. The majority are run purely by Denmark Farm, with a focus on rural skills and craft and nature education. In the early years around 30 days per year were dedicated to course, now it is 80+. A small profit of "a few thousand pounds" is made each year with each course aiming to create its own profit after all costs of £100. Course leaders are paid the majority of the fee. Each course has around 10 places available and cost around £45 per day, including a soup lunch, teas and coffees.

The vast majority of courses attract local participants, the furthest travelling from Machynlleth and Haverfordwest areas. One full week course is run each year by a friend of Denmark Farm, Roundwood Timber Framing. This course mainly attracts people from further afield. Partnership working is important to the ethos of DF and that they host meetings for groups such as Coed Lleol and the Woodland Trust.

Aberystwyth School of Lifelong Learning (ecology and art) run courses of one to days at a cost to the university of £125 per day – this includes marketing and refreshments and staff time. It is noted that CAT also host ecology courses and have effectively stolen business from Denmark Farm. The Stables Project need to be aware of this in any future collaboration with the University.

Accommodation is in a mix of a traditional bunkhouse dormitory space with 8-10 beds and shared facilities and in a group of 3 eco-lodges that have been recently built. The latter offer flexible spaces, allowing all the lodges to be used by a sharing group or even for individual rooms to be separated with their own access. They include accessible accommodation, large kitchens and communal sitting space.

B. Local bunkhouse accommodation

The viability of bunkhouse accommodation at the Old Stables will depend on several factors. One of these will be the level of need in relation to existing provision of this kind. A survey of existing similar accommodation has been done and a summary and analysis is provided. The analysis shows that there is a range of options, ranging from quite small enterprises with an intimate environment, to much larger ones that accommodate higher numbers in a more communal atmosphere.

We have gathered information on a variety of types of holiday accommodation in the area immediately around Machynlleth. As well as bunkhouses we have included Guest-houses, Airbnb, self-catering and hotels as well as some more unusual places to stay, such as tree-houses. We have surveyed bunkhouse provision a bit wider afield including the Ceredigion coast as far as Aberystwyth. It is believed that individuals or groups might decide on the exact location for their stay in relation to what accommodation might be on offer. We have also looked at some bunkhouses that are much further away in order to get some comparative prices for this kind of accommodation.

Bunkhouse experience in Machynlleth

A bunkhouse existed in Machynlleth until about 2013, which was especially set up to cater for cyclists. It was run by Jon Isherwood and he has given us the information and suggestions below. There was a strong personal feeling about the bunkhouse with staff happy to give advice, information and to talk to visitors.

The accommodation totalled 24 beds and they were charged £19 per person per night with a 10% reduction for longer stays. This included:

- 1 x family room with a double bed, 2 singles and pull out single – very popular
- 1 x 4 single beds
- 1 x 8 bunk beds

Experience suggests that bunk beds would have been more economic than the single beds as they took a lot of space that could have been used more effectively. Single/twin rooms would have been valuable as they were often asked for.

The bunkhouse was cleaned by the managers. This was a lot of work and they would recommend paid cleaners.

Booking was initially through a mobile number but changed to more efficient online booking. There were no live-in staff in the hostel so there had to be a 6pm cut-off time for bookings each day. However, there had to be a flexible system for visitors to come in and out because they arrived at very varied times during the day and night.

Payments should always be taken up-front, although there needs to be a method for processing 'drop-by' bookings

The bunkhouse was situated in the centre of Machynlleth and catered for mountain bikers, walkers, visiting workers. Because there was no dedicated parking it failed to attract general tourists due to lack of car parking. However, visiting workers at CAT, Dulas, Network Rail and other places did use the hostel.

Marketing improved during the life of the hostel but they would like to have had a flier that went into tourism outlets and to create more links with other hostels (joint promotions) including linked networks e.g. for people walking the Glyndwr Way.

Groups riding the MTB Trans Cambrian Route used the hostel.

- Independent Hostel Guide (<https://www.independenthostels.co.uk>) which provided a lot of business
- Hostel World
- National Trails (<https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/glyndwrs-way>)
- Beds for Cyclists (<https://www.bedsforcyclists.co.uk>)
- MTB (<https://www.mtb.wales/booking>)

The bunkhouse had good facilities and local information that included:

- Local books and guides
- A large wall map of the area
- List of local pubs
- Towels for hire plus spare cycle inner tubes, a cycle pump and basic cycle tools
- Bike wash area
- BBQ and outside tables
- Clothes line but no laundry (nearby town launderette)
- Showers, drying room (well-used)
- Kitchen with cutlery and crockery supplied -needed to be larger to allow more people to cook at same time
- Locked bike store for 10 bikes (could have been larger)
- Common room with TV and Wi-Fi
- Carpets but no footwear allowed upstairs

Suggestions:

- Each bed has a power socket and USB charger
- Put in as many power outlets and network points as possible – treble what you think you need. Use wall sockets with built in USB and Wi-Fi. Important to fit from start. Network points need to be wired to a central point (patch panel) and a switch-the-phone line/fibre connection needs to be in or near this

- Central heating essential
- A dishwasher
- Auto door lock with key fob entry/passcode works better than individual keys
- Camping often asked for and would be good to provide some
- Fliers in local pubs and restaurants
- A sign on the main road – potential from passing tourists- and one on the Glyndwr Way as it passes through the car park

Llwyn Bunkhouse at Penegoes www.stayatllwyn.co.uk

Llwyn was an 18th century inn that has been converted to a family home and accommodation for cyclists and walkers. It is about 3 miles east of Machynlleth.

There are up to 8 beds in twin and triple rooms plus a self-catering kitchen. There is a garden for use of visitors. A continental breakfast (£6) is available by arrangement and local sourdough bread can be ordered. There is a shared kitchen.

Accommodation includes:

Double room with attached shower & basin	£75 per night
2 x triple rooms en suite	£30 pp/per night
Camping (tents only) May to October. Cookhouse, showers and toilets	
Adults £10 Children over 5 £6	

Toad Hall Bunkhouse

Toad Hall, Railway Terrace, Doll St, Machynlleth

Toad Hall is a family run hostel in the middle of Machynlleth town. The accommodation is above the owner's home. There is a 3-bedroom flat with twin and double rooms, a small self-catering kitchen, shower room and a large sitting/games room with a open fire.



The small garden can be used for camping. Well-behaved dogs accepted.

Price is £18 per person per night with reductions for groups. Advance booking necessary.

Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris

Braich Goch is in what was previously a 450-year-old pub in Corris, about 10 minutes by car from Machynlleth and on a bus route. As well as providing bunkhouse type accommodation, the project aims to work with the local community and to bring people, especially migrants, to the countryside from urban areas. It is a centre for learning and sharing and for creative activity.

There is a garden in front of the building with sitting space. A large lower garden area includes a small woodland with *politano*, seating and BBQ area.

There is bunkhouse type accommodation for up to 18 people. This is in:

- 1 en-suite bunk bedroom sleeping 6 people
- 2 separate en-suite bunk bed rooms sleeping 4 people in each room
- 1 bunk bed room sleeping 4 people with an external bathroom and toilet.

There is a large shared lounge, a shared kitchen, a dining area, a communal area for meeting and performance, a small workshop space and laundry and drying facilities

Prices:

- Community Groups (space hire only) from £15 per person per night
- Room hire (Air B&B) from £25 per person per night
- Residential workshops (including accommodation, food and workshop facilitation) £30 per person per day

CAT Bunkhouse Accommodation

Bunkhouse accommodation £15 per person per night

CAT also has 2 turf-roofed Eco Cabins each of which have 18 beds in bunkhouse style. Single or shared rooms cost £80 per night per person. Each cabin has a communal seating area and kitchen heated by a log burner.



Hot water for the cabins is generated by solar thermal panels on the grass roof as well as via the wood-stove for heat and hot water. There is a contained water recycling system.

A range cooker with hob and two ovens can be used for cooking.

Ty' n y Berth Outdoor Centre, Corris Uchaf

<https://www.bedsforcyclists.co.uk/Accommodation/gwynedd>

01654 761678 & 0845 600 6567

Ty'n y Berth and Bryn Coedwig are 2 Self-Catering Mountain Centres offering bunkhouse accommodation, close to the village of Corris, between Machynlleth and Dolgellau, on the southern edge of the Snowdonia National Park.

Accommodation is available for groups buildings, sleeping up to 45 or 35 people in warm, comfortable bunkroom style accommodation. The buildings are hired on a **sole occupancy, group accommodation basis** priced at from £36 per person.

They are open 24 hours and have the following facilities:

- Parking
- Children Welcome
- Secure Bike Lockup
- Dry Room
- Bike Washing
- Breakfast
- Evening Meals



Independent Hostel (previous Youth Hostel) in Corris, Snowdonia

Corris Hostel, Old School, Corris, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9TQ

Call Faye, Michael or Debbie on [01654 761686](tel:01654761686)



Accommodation for 40+ bed venue for group activity and families and celebratory events:

- 43: 1x10 1x18 1x4 1x6 1x double+1 1x double+2
- All day and all year (groups only in winter)

- Adult £20, child £13
- Breakfast £4.50
- Private rooms extra

Facilities include:

- Terrace and landscaped gardens with barbecue and camp fires
- Single sex dormitories
- Private rooms and family rooms
- Bedding
- Central heating
- Meals with notice
- Self-catering facilities
- Lockable or unlockable bike/equipment store
- Drying room and clothes wash
- Showers
- Computer with internet and WIFI
- Dogs by arrangement

YHA Borth

Borth is about 13 miles south of Machynlleth and is on the coast. The Youth Hostel is privately owned but is affiliated to the YHA. It has two classrooms. It is in a large Edwardian house fronting onto the sea wall and beach.

It caters for school and other groups but also is popular with families and individuals walking the Wales Coast Path.

There are 60 beds in 11 rooms, which include some private and en-suite rooms.

Breakfast and evening meals can be provided.



Aberystwyth University Bunkhouse

Aberystwyth University Campus is 19 miles south of Machynlleth and is situated on Penglais Hill above the town. It is downhill walk of about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the town and seafront. The bunkhouse is in a modern building at the top of the campus and is managed through the University Conference Office.



The bunkhouse had 90 individual bedrooms, which are self-catering. Prices (inc VAT) start from £36 per person per night. There is a reduction for two nights or more, reducing to £24 for more than 14 nights. There is also a catered option. It is ideal for large groups.

Visitors have access to the sports facilities and other campus facilities, such as the Arts Centre. There is WIFI throughout.

Plas Dolau Country House Hotel, Aberystwyth

Plas Dolau is a large country house set in gardens a few miles east of Aberystwyth. There is accommodation for 45 people with a mix of dormitories and family rooms. There are two kitchens and lounges. Its facilities include central heating, en-suite rooms and shared bathrooms.

The farmhouse kitchen has an Aga, gas cooker, microwave, dishwasher and fridge/freezer. The lounge-dining room has sitting space, a TV, video and piano. There is also a downstairs washroom and shower that provide for people who are camping.



The Main House has five dormitory rooms mix bunks and some beds:
The Fern suite sleeps 15 in interlinked rooms with a washroom area containing 3 showers, 3 toilets and 3 washbasins with an extra 3 washbasins in the bigger bedroom.

Prices vary depending on where the rooms are situated and if catering is required, Y Gelli is typical of the prices at Plas Dolau

Bed and full breakfast:

En suite	£37.50
Full size bunks in family suite (per bunk)	£22
Standard double	£32.50
Supplement for double as single	£17.50
Standard single	£40
Cot free	£0
Bed chair for smaller child	£8
Two course evening meal with coffee	from £13
Packed lunches	from £5.50

There is a Backpacker rate (shared rooms, including bedding and towel) that is £22 with a continental breakfast and £27 with a full cooked breakfast. Group rates depend on the size of the group, duration of stay and style of meals required. Rooms can be rented to non-residential groups at £50 a room per day and £10 for lunch

Festival and Event Accommodation

The Comedy Festival is held annually over the first weekend in May. It attracts a lot of people who stay for the weekend and require accommodation. A temporary centre town campsite is provided with the following facilities:

24-hour security / reception

Private hot showers

Executive flushing toilet units

Drinking water

Complimentary phone/tablet charging facilities

Campsite coffee and snack stall

On-site parking at £10 per car. Camper vans and trailers £40 plus camping charge per person.

Waste/recycling points

The charge for camping is £40 per person for the 3-night weekend with no restriction on tent size. People under 18 accompanied by an older adult are charged £20.

Fred's Yurts are pitched in a corner of the campsite.

Canvas Bell tents (2 sizes) sleep 2-6 from £220 for the weekend

Luxury Yurts (5 sizes) sleep 2-8 from £335 for the weekend

C. Courses and workshops

Overview

The Old Stables has the potential to become an ideal place for running a range of courses that would bring an income, involve local people with skills to offer and to make use of the bunkhouse accommodation.

There is generally an expanding offer of courses and workshops covering a range of skills that expand learning into areas that are associated with a desire for more sustainable life habits and also for seeking a connection with traditional and vanishing skills and lifestyles. These include traditional rural skills, such as willow weaving, dry stone walling, blacksmithing, food growing and bee-keeping. There is also an appetite for learning the more conventional skills, including writing, music and crafts. Story-telling is another aspect of creativity and communication that has become popular.

Research has shown that skills learning can be offered at several levels of the cost spectrum. Day and weekend courses are often not residential and rely on fairly local participants, who will pay a day rate that may include refreshments. One-day courses (10.0 am – 4.0pm) at Denmark Farm near Lampeter cost between £35 and £50 and include some refreshments. A two-day course in learning to build a cob oven costs £120 with food but the price doesn't include accommodation. The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) charges £70 for a day course and between £650 and £750 for a five-day course with full board. The Rural Skills Centre near Cardiff charges £55 for half-day courses and between £90 and £120 for a full-day course. The latter includes accommodation. Acton Scott Historic Working Farm, owned by Shropshire County Council charges £60 for most 1-day courses and £230 for a two-day course on decorative blacksmithing.

Some places have courses in quite specialist and unusual skills and these can be more expensive and are at the high end of the market. Alison Hastie of *Green Shoes* in Devon charges £325 for a day in which participants make a pair of shoes. "This fun workshop is suitable for complete beginners and gives all the support, tuition and materials you need to make your very own pair of simple shoes or sandals from our range". *Siop iard* near Caernarfon offers courses in silver and slate working at a cost of £70 for a basic day learning to silversmith. The same centre offers a two-day course that includes a tour around old slate mines plus the chance to learn some slate working skills. This doesn't include accommodation on site. *Humble by Nature* runs courses in dry-stone walling that cost £115 for 1 day and £195 for two with accommodation extra.

Food and cookery courses occupy another niche. Examples range from an introduction to making vegan lacto-fermented foods at Denmark Farm as two half-day courses (£45 for both days) run by a local producer to bread making at Abergavenny Bread Makers, as a day course for £125 with refreshments. *Humble by Nature* are at the gourmet end of the offer with day courses in Spanish and

Italian Charcuterie for £130 and a Biltong making course for £165. Acton Scott Farm run courses in working with herbs and in preserving with honey.

Centres with accommodation

There are a number of centres that focus on specialist skills learning. They may offer models for some aspects of courses that could be run from Old Stables Machynlleth.

West Dean College near Chichester, offers a range of courses but mainly specialising in traditional buildings skills and in crafts. A 1-day course, such as *Preserving Historic Photographs* costs £147. However, many of the courses are residential in very up-market accommodation. *Managing Wildlife in the Historic Environment* is 4 days for £828 and *Conservation and Repair of Plasters and Renders* costs £726.

Ty Newydd near Criccieth is the long-established Writing Centre for Wales. The courses last from 3 to 5 days and are mainly directed at people who want to stay at the centre. The range of courses is wide and well-known writers are employed to lead them. *Writing to Heal* is a 3-day course costing £240 - £325. *Writing with Yoga* is a 6-day course costs between £400 and £550 per person and *Writing Wales*, also 6 days, costs £550 - £675. The higher charge is for a single room. Otherwise, two people share.

CAT (the Centre for Alternative Technology) runs a range of courses open to the general public. The courses range through topics from aspects of sustainable building, environmental topics and crafts. Many of them are 1-day courses, such as *Build you own stool* at £70 and *Willow Baskets* at £65. A 5-day course on *Build a Natural House* is £650 with full board and *The Science of Sustainable Food Production* at £750.

CAT has accommodation of both bunkhouse and bed and breakfast types. CAT is very close to Machynlleth and so any courses offered at the Old Stables would need to be complementary to those run by CAT rather than in competition. CAT have also cornered the market in courses for the Aberystwyth University Centre for Lifelong Learning. Recently taking courses away from Denmark Farm. The Old Stables would probably not be able to compete in this field.

Specialist courses

The Old Stables Project could be an ideal centre for running specialist courses in Mid Wales. The attraction would be linked with the opportunity to explore and experience the town and the area around Machynlleth and to stay in an exciting traditional building that has been tastefully renovated. Skilful marketing would offer opportunities for economic advantage to individual skills practitioners and to the town in general.

Oriel Seren is an Art & Craft Gallery exhibiting and selling work by professional artists and craftspeople mainly from the Machynlleth area. It is situated in the centre of the town. Some of the Oriel Seren artists and craftspeople might want to offer skills based on accommodation at the Old Stables.

Blacksmithing *Spike the Blacksmith* (www.spiketheblacksmith.co.uk) is based at Llanbrynmaur about 10 miles from Machynlleth. Her Artistic Blacksmithing business began in 2003. "As my reputation has grown, so has the demand for unusual and individual pieces of work". She already teaches a residential artistic blacksmithing course at Mid Wales Art Centre at Caersws and has mobile forges that she uses for the purpose.

Shoe-making *Ruth Emily Davey* (www.ruthemilyfavey.co.uk) is a shoemaker who has a shop and workshop in Machynlleth. Her shoes are made to order from a wide range of styles. She is interested in the idea of running a shoe-making course, which could use accommodation at the Old Stables.

Slate working *Dave Buchan* (www.davebuchan.co.uk) uses grey slate that comes from Aberllefenni Quarry, near Corris. Heather slate comes from Penrhyn Quarry in the north.

Felt making *Sue Terry*, who manages Oriel Seren, is a felt maker, whose work is often based on the landscape around Machynlleth and South Snowdonia.

Writing *Penrallt Bookshop* is a thriving business in the centre of Machynlleth. The proprietors, Geoff and Diane, also run a photo gallery and are involved in many literary activities in Machynlleth. They run occasional writing courses, which are usually on a once-a-week or once-a-month basis. However, there might be scope for organising longer courses that could be linked with the Old Stables accommodation and work space. Discussions with the Owain Glyndwr Centre suggest that there could be an interest in organising Welsh language writing courses based at the Centre, but which might also require suitable accommodation.

Bags *Jones & Ginger* is the creation of Claire Fowler, who had a career shift in 2018 and decided to use her long-standing love of sewing and of up-cycling materials to establish a business. Her main products are bags of all kinds that are made from recycled fabrics. She loves to work with Welsh fabrics obtained from mills or second hand. Claire is based in Tal-y-bont, which is about 11 miles south of Machynlleth.

Cooking (Bread) *Rye & Roses/Rhyg a Rhosod* (www.ryeandroses.co.uk) is a bakery run by Jane and Tom Baker at Penegoes, about 4 miles from Machynlleth. They make a wide variety of sourdough bread, which is sold locally. They already teach one day courses in making sourdough bread at their own bakery.

Accommodation can be had at nearby Llwyn. There is the possibility of running more extensive courses and of using additional local accommodation.

Food and Growing

Our research has identified a significant interest in growing and producing fresh and local food in the Machynlleth area. While the Old Stables would probably not be suitable for developing as a commercial kitchen centre for these businesses, it might be appropriate for running courses and workshops associated with the activities of Mach Maethlon and Gerddi Bro Ddyfi Gardens and Green Isle Growers, as well as other local green or environmental activities.

D. Consultation and engagement

Machynlleth 5th November 2019

Attended by Simon Morpeth, Andy Tack, Shelagh Hourahane, Charlie Falzon.

1. Does the town council claim VAT? Discuss with clerk.
2. Contact Paul Evans structural engineer – have done an initial survey.
Estimated Fee for structural condition and survey – £1240.00.
3. Agreed management fee £14, 746.00 including expenses. Money will be paid into the Council's budget and then invoices will be paid through Simon/Andy. Thinks that Council will pay and then send invoices to AHF Money - NOT ring-fenced for specific bits of the feasibility.
4. Arwain is giving a bit less because more coming from AHF – same total. Haven't stated a time limit.
5. Timescale – start November – measured surveys – meet with Dafydd Tomos. Alex & Paul Evans to do structural survey – need their contacts. Completion 7 months from now – May 2020.
6. Liaise with Simon/Andy in visits to other projects – bunk houses etc - Shelagh pull in basic info and then make visits in early spring. Contact John Isherwood about info on the Cycle bunkhouse that was in Machynlleth. Looking at 53 percent use – Llanfyllin; Borth; Y Fron; Smaller bunkhouses in and outside Wales
7. Feasibility of community ownership – situation if Powys decides to pull out. Also advantages to being a CIC. Simon - primary object is to keep it within council's remit so that any income comes to council.
8. Scope of what Falzon Associates will prepare.
9. Owain Glyndwr Centre? – ask Dafydd Tomos; MOMA
10. Ann McGarry - no moves on Planning for Real yet.
11. CAT MSc students did a town survey – Head of Education – (Andy will get contact).
12. Bowling Club
13. Want an organised workshop along Planning for Real lines.
14. Apply for CRN number – need to talk to Rachel Lewis (RDP programme assistant). Shelagh/Charlie to do this
15. Shelagh to do a short presentation to the next Council meeting – last Monday of November.
16. Adam Hutchings (HLF) – very keen on project – he has made 2 site visits – we need to talk to him soon. Seemed to think that all the money might come from HLF. Could be talking about £2 million – including all sustainable measures. Need to look carefully at HLF criteria.
17. Access – part unlocked – part locked – screwed shut – officially condemned but not really. Need a trip around the building. Possible community project – to clear the courtyard.

18. Publicity for project – could go on Town Council Facebook page
19. Town Council stall - 13th Nov – Charlie/Shelagh to come along – do a couple of A3 posters for that.
20. Want to put out build tenders to local builders – with possible apprenticeship.
21. Talk to Ann McGarry about an event.

Machynlleth market 13th November 2019

General responses: Workshops; speak to the Building Preservation Trust; bunk house; collection and redistribution of produce and natural products e.g. apples and pears; heritage centre; indoor play area for children; certified kitchen/processing hub – open to the community – for adding value to local produce; space for cooking training for the general public and their local produce; some workshops for a variety of crafts; as many functions as possible – some small units and 1 or 2 large spaces.

Heritage centre for [especially] Mabinogion links with Welsh mythology – incorporating community rehearsal space/performance space/maybe workshop space; restore the stables as heritage/museum.

Repair & Share event 17th November 2019

General responses: Free Space for exchange; promote the gift economy and the local economy; people will not want to pay anything for the use of space.

In December can be a ‘winter wonderland’ using the beauty of the trees to frame an ice rink as a tourist attraction, with genuine magical aspect.

We need to preserve what we have left of our heritage. This building is in a prime position on entry to Machynlleth and well worth preserving.

Community Hub that involves youth and elderly. Bunkhouse with community involvement across diversity of people. Projects, functions, skills sharing.

Meeting Plas Machynlleth 20th November 2019

Phil Wheeler, Sabrina Cantor and John Cantor.

About 3 years ago Phil Wheeler undertook a survey to find out if there was a need for workshop space in Machynlleth, which might be satisfied by using space in the Old Stables. The conclusion seems to have been negative but there isn't a record of who Phil spoke to or if there was any paper survey.

Phil created some sort of website linked to this but there appears to be no trace. He had discussions with Cadw – Lisa Fiddes (lisa.fiddes@gov.wales) and with Debra Lewis, Powys Historic Buildings. (debra.lewis@powys.gov.uk). This meeting considered the historic garden and whether the fountain might be included in the project

Phil also spoke to the Town Council - the ex-mayor. He raised the issue of the charge that Powys have on the sale of the building.

Spoke to the Landmark Trust who didn't have any interest in the building.

Phil's fantasy – to have a glass-domed space, like an indoor conservatory, in the large barn area.

Also, ideas about a museum of some sort and a camper van park.

Question – who owns the main car park?

Phil raised the issue of the Bandstand proposal. Zöe Matthews is also a member of the group. She has experience in event management and has been involved with the Lantern Procession.

The idea is to have an open sided but roofed performance area that has storage space below. It could be of a traditional metal frame design or could be a locally designed timber building – Jenny Hall has an interest in the latter.

An off-the-shelf structure would cost about £160,000 plus VAT Plus cost of foundations and installation.

The Town Council are interested but say that it should be maintenance free – assumption that they would not undertake to look after it. They also raised the issue of potential vandalism.

It would be:

- 8 metres in diameter (25 feet)
- Free to use

Potential users:

- Carnival Committee
- MOMA – outreach for Music Festival
- Comedy Festival
- El Sueno Existe festival
- Lantern Procession
- Wedding space
- Drama groups
- Scouts
- Wind band
- Swing dance
- Leisure Centre – outdoor exercise e.g. Pilates, Tai Chi

It isn't clear if any of the above have been consulted formally. They would need to provide letters of support.

Climate Festival 23rd November 2019

General responses: Some groups would expect to have rent free space in the Plas e.g. the Carnival and a Foodbank. Not clear if they already have this space; need to get income from Yr Hen Stablau; bunkhouse would work.

A sauna and hot tub in the Stables courtyard – welcome for cyclists and walkers.

A Saturday Farmers Market. Pointed out that some people can't get to the Wednesday Market and anyway it would be good to encourage a local produce market.

Gerddi Bro Dyfi – would like an indoor space for training. They do run short courses.

Also interest in an area for a tree nursery – they are running out of space at the Gerddi itself.

The renovated Stables should be an attractive building and one that is a model for environmentally sustainable historic buildings. Machynlleth could be more attractive if it has a building that demonstrates the climate crisis ideals.

Building work could include training opportunities for people in the building trades – paid apprenticeships.

Machynlleth 19th December 2019

The meeting in offices of Tomos & George was attended by: Dafydd Tomos, Arwyn George, Paul Evans, Simon Morpeth, Andy Tack, Shelagh Hourahane, Charlie Falzon.

1. The measured drawings were presented. It was noted that there is first floor space than anticipated There would also be ideal ground floor spaces for disabled accommodation.
2. Reference made to a radio programme 'Making and Fixing Community'
3. A Real Food Centre for Mid Wales was discussed:
 - Look at the Lampeter organic food centre
 - Contact Kath at Mid Wales Food and Land Trust, Newtown
 - Newtown Market Hall
4. Check on Traws Cymru Horse Trekking
5. Discussed idea of a Recording Studio – Sam at Red Lion proposal – not likely to be used enough
6. Discussed idea of training for heritage building training and rural crafts:
 - Check on Dinefwr project
 - Shrewsbury – training for historic building
 - Ironbridge – rural crafts centre?
 - Look at Landmark Trust for use of historic buildings
7. Surveys
 - Ecology Survey
 - Don't need survey for initial planning application

- Dafydd suggested that we ask for an preliminary survey that should cost between £400 - £500 and would sufficient for planning
- Charlie and Dafydd to contact Chris (surveyor) on this

Asbestos Survey:

- Dafydd to contact someone for a survey – needs to happen BEFORE Paul does the structural survey
- Get the full asbestos survey if possible, within the budget

Paul Evans warned that there could be rot or an infestation that could require a specialist survey

8. Bunkhouse

- Need to work with an optimal number of bed spaces
- Andy/Simon talking about £15 per night per person
- Talk to Nick Saunders/Caroline because he has a bunkhouse with an industrial size kitchen
- Push the idea of accessible holidays – for disabled people. Contact DASH Ceredigion who organise holidays for disabled young people. Nothing similar exists in Powys

9. Potential Users from other projects:

- Mountain Biking – the Athertons
- CAT – may need overspill space
- Cycle Hire
- John Isherwood – said to be happy to share his books – only had 2 years to run his project

10. Historic Building Issues:

- Look at Landmark Trust for use of historic buildings
- HLF Round 1 would be the next stage
- Get Adam Hitchings to a meeting in the New Year
- Judith Alfrey to revise the listed building description

11. Links to Machynlleth Events:

- Comedy Festival
- MOMA Music Festival – Wynnstay is important for accommodation for this
- Dyfi Endeavour
- Mark Bond for summer events

12. Review existing accommodation provision in the area:

- Air B&B
- Bunkhouse
- Hotels & Guest Houses
- Caravan parks
- Alternative accommodation – Tree Houses, Yurts, Camp sites

13. Actions

- Simon and Andy proposed running a People and Places type of visioning exercise for Machynlleth
- Proposed organising some ground clearing session in early 2020

Machynlleth Market 22nd January 2020

Discussions with a range of individuals:

Milly Cain, Ian Wright, Caroline de Carle and Corinne about ideas for skills courses that might be appropriate e.g. drystone walling, green chair making, charcuterie.

Tom of 'Roses and Rye' about possibility of running specialist food and baking courses.

Talked with Joe Hope and Bob Shaw about link with Plas woodland – need to manage woodland for wood to make objects – skills courses e.g. make a chair – and create an arable area for growing traditional crops for use in bread making

Meeting Machynlleth 31st January 2020

Meeting with Simon Morpeth, Diane Isenburgh and David Freeman

1. Agreed that we need accounts from previous Mach bunkhouse – Shelagh to contact Jon Isherwood
2. Contact needed for Rachel Atherton – Shelagh to get from Simon
3. Look at Osprey project and what they will be offering in new build
4. Explore idea of setting up a Trust NOW
5. Produce a banner for outside Old Stables – Simon to check permission from Town Council
6. Check on forms of governance e.g. CIC
7. Diane talked about 'test' kitchens in the USA – allows people who want to set up a food business to try things out first. People pay to use the kitchen for this.
8. Could think of creating a Dyfi Valley brand (the Biosphere Brand?) Could this lead to a small factory?
9. Check on Bowling Club kitchen – how equipped and how much people pay to use it.
10. Do we have enough core people to make the food thing happen?
11. Diane refers to a mushroom grower who says that the demand for mushrooms is currently insatiable.
12. David insists that the Stables project MUST be attractive to all parts of the community- no one should feel excluded or in competition.
13. Outlined architect plans.
14. Need to look at what accommodation is ALREADY available in Machynlleth.
15. Need to find out more about governance and outgoing costs from other studies.
16. Need to look at RISK –at what occupancy rate would it be uneconomic – would start to lose money? If it did so – how would the business be able to contract?

17. Is there an algorithm that would help to do a check on sustainable occupancy rates at different times of the year?

Meeting at the Plas 5th February 2020

Two meetings were held during the afternoon and early evening to bring together people who have expressed a specific interest in the future of the Old Stables.

Present: Ann McGarry, Michael Williams, Paul Whitaker, John Owen, Ann Owen, Bob Shaw, Cindy Harris, Sabrina Cantor, Simon Morpeth, Arwyn George, Rhys Lewis, Katie Hastings, Anna Lloyd-Adey, Jian Lloyd-Adey, Ian Gregory, Judith Alfrey, Iain Wright, Kate Fenhalls, John Cantor, Jane Lloyd Francis. Charlie Falzon, Shelagh Hourahane, Caroline de Carle (Minutes)

The group was given a tour of The Stables by Charlie Falzon and Simon Morpeth followed by an overview of the purpose and aims of the project and a PowerPoint presentation based on information and ideas developed so far from discussion with local people. It was explained that the feasibility study had been commissioned by Machynlleth Town Council.

A number of options for the future of the Old Stables were discussed. These notes record the main points that arose from that discussion.

The architectural and heritage status of the Old Stables

Judith Alfrey (Cadw) asserted that from a Cadw perspective it is important to understand the nature of an historic building and that changes need to be appropriate to that building. She also asserted that Listing does not mean that no changes can take place but that they must be considered and appropriate. An example might be the use of secondary glazing rather than double glazing or retaining existing floor surfaces if possible. Cadw wants to help to restore historic buildings and to give them a new use. In this context, some future uses might have a lighter touch than others.

There was some discussion about the possibility of ground source heating, although this would require a great deal of outdoor space for trenches. Other projects that had restored old buildings, including for bunkhouse use, were mentioned. These included the Old Workhouse (Y Dolydd) at Llanfyllin and the Old Lombard Bank in Dolgellau.

Suggestions were made to gain help from various organisations such as the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA www.stbauk.org).

Building costings

The actual costs involved with the refurbishment of The Stables were raised. It was explained that it would possibly cost 2 to 3 million pounds.

Paul Whittaker felt that the building work should be as green/carbon-neutral as possible but realised the constraints with a listed building. Arwyn George explained the difficulties of making “green” changes such as insulation, installing solar panels and installing heat-saving measures.

All changes would need listed building approval by the local authority, and Cadw would then be notified if they are minded to approve any proposal. Lining walls with eco-friendly materials such as fleeces would lose the building a lot of space. It was agreed that the look of the building should not be changed.

It was strongly recommended that any building work should showcase The Stables as a first-rate example of eco-refurbishment and Green living, and to fit in with the general ethos of Machynlleth and its environs. It was generally agreed that it would be a green tourism attraction and needed because more people are choosing to holiday in the UK.

It was stressed that whatever was decided for the building, the community must want it.

Bob Shaw explained the role of SPAB – the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Their role includes training people in skills to repair old buildings. He felt that volunteers could be trained to help with the restoration of The Stables on site. He was keen to be involved in the teaching of traditional skills. During his tour of the building he had seen many opportunities for the use of such skills and the materials to carry them out.

The brief for the feasibility study focuses on the need to explore the viability of bunkhouse accommodation in the Old Stables. This option could be the central use of the restored building and it could also be the prime way in which a sustainable income could be established.

It is perceived that there is a shortage of this type of accommodation in the area with only a couple of small bunkhouse type facilities and a larger one at Corris Uchaf and nothing of this kind in the centre of the town. The feasibility study will give detailed information about what does already exist in respect of all types of holiday accommodation. An overview of the percentages of annual use for various types of tourism accommodation in Wales was given. Figures for Mid Wales are low in all respects.

The PowerPoint provided an estimated costing of the outgoings that might be involved in running a bunkhouse with a probable 50% uptake. These were calculated at between £80,000 and £90,000 annually at 2020 figures. These costings will be tested against information from other accommodation providers that is being obtained through case study research. It was agreed that maintenance costs might need to be higher and people present were given a copy of the estimated costs and asked to feed back any further observations.

Points raised:

- Mid Wales Housing had already rejected the idea of developing the building
- Idea of one permanent occupancy unit to provide live-in caretaking
- A living-working unit with accommodation and a workshop space
- Demand for accommodation during festivals
- Lessons from the experience of the Mid Wales Food and Land Trust at Newtown – that units rented to small/new businesses could fail through lack of business planning and experience – had undermined the vision for the project
- Would there be sufficient space for both accommodation and for community uses?
- Any actual profits made should go into a community Trust and be recycled for community benefit.

Kitchen/Food Hub

The idea of including some kind of food hub that could serve growing and food related activities was discussed at length. Conversation initially centred around assessing what is already on offer. The Bowling Club kitchen is hired out to users at £10 a half day and is considered to be well used. There was differing opinion as to the standard of the kitchen, but generally agreed that it is limited. It is possible to cook in the Bowling Club kitchen for an event taking place there. There was mention of a smaller kitchen space at St. Peter's church.

It was generally agreed that a multiple use cooking space may work. It could be a viable element if there is close attention to cross-subsidies and the ability to at least break even with costs. Agreed that this should not happen at the financial detriment of other local providers.

Points raised:

- Would a commercial standard kitchen at the Stables cause duplication of what already exists in the town?
- Do plans for the new school include a kitchen for teaching pupils? Could there be a cross-over use for one in the Stables? Edible Mach currently use the school kitchen but the facility is poor and shared with other activities.
- A community kitchen could provide meals for elderly residents of Machynlleth, using local produce. This was felt to be a good idea
- Cooking produce – a big problem to scale up to a communal scale of production
- Kate Fenhalls “All of us who grow locally can make it financially viable if there is a secondary process to use the grown food”
- Ann Owen said that Fresh and Local would be interested in a kitchen to prepare bread, preserves, cakes, etc.
- Jane Lloyd Francis “Need to make sure that any local business e.g. the Plas café, also has the same level of local/sustainable production as would be the Stables ideal”
- A kitchen would have different seasonal uses
- Could run cooking courses

- Dyfi Dairies need refrigeration for milk products/bread – could expand

A Food Hub for Vegetable collection/exchange

It is clear that there is a need for a permanent space where the Veg Box scheme can operate. This is a once a week activity and requires space for collecting and sorting vegetables and a bank of up to 100 wall-mounted boxes to place vegetables for each member of the scheme. All the activity can happen in the same space. It was pointed out that because a veg bag can only be re-used by the same customer, there is a need for the individual boxes for people to collect from with their own bag/box.

Although a Pay and Display scheme was planned to be introduced to the old Celtica car park, it wasn't thought that this would affect people delivering and collecting veg boxes.

Repair/Share Space, Mens' Shed, Library of Things

A further idea that had been suggested was to provide a space in which a variety of activities relating to making and repairing could take place. A number of strands have emerged in this area.

A Library of Things is the phrase used to describe a space where objects/machinery/tools etc can be stored for lending out at a small cost. The idea has been established in many places, such as the town of Frome in Somerset. There could possibly be a dedicated space where activities of this sort could take place.

Points raised:

- A Library of Things may be difficult to run and that a study of similar facilities would be helpful.
- A similar facility in Ghent is very successful but that is a larger place and that the tool library was manned all the time
- Sabrina Cantor said that the existing Repair/Share Café was growing in popularity and could use a larger space. It was generally felt that not enough was known about a Library of Things to envisage its place in The Stables.
- These projects work best nearer to a larger population
- A tool library might not be used enough – not enough people around
- Tools/equipment have to be in good condition and tested constantly

A tourism focused heritage attraction

It has been suggested that some attention could be given to using the Old Stables as a focus for interpreting the history and heritage of the building. There are some features, for example the horse stalls, that still remain. Discussion was initiated

about whether a wider heritage project might be preferable, that would include the Plas and even the whole town.

Points raised:

- Anni Lloyd-Adey felt that a more tourist-focussed attraction/museum could be profitable. It was pointed out that Celtica had been such an attraction and had failed due to a £1million loss in revenue over 9 years.
- It was felt that the Plas itself or the Owain Glyndwr Centre may provide a better location for this kind of attraction.

The land around

The work on the feasibility study has drawn attention to the fact that the future of the Old Stables can not be seen in isolation from the whole of the Plas estate. The relationship to activities within the Plas, especially the café and the meeting spaces is being considered. However, several people have raised the issue about use of the land around, which is a part of the Plas estate. There is a sense that it could be used for purposes that might better benefit the community.

Points raised:

- Kate Fenhalls has asked Powys (through Freedom of Information) about who owns the land around the Plas. Machynlleth Town Council referred the question to Powys CC. Powys not able to give information because it is all let to commercial businesses and they can't give that information out.
- It was suggested that Machynlleth may have lost a number of events because the rented-out Council field can't be used
- Question – can that sort of lease be changed or challenged?

What Next?

Charlie explained that the feasibility study must prove to funders that the project has the best vision of a mix of use to be a viable business prospect. He said that Stage 1 (the feasibility study) would be completed by the end of May 2020. This would be followed by a bid for funding by the Town Council or another entity to enable management of further phases of the Project, likely in spring 2021. No building work was likely for at least 3 years. Cindy said that it is a difficult stage as there needed to be a degree of flexibility in terms of end use.

Agreed that there needs to be an overarching vision for the town

Simon stressed there must be synergy in that the Project must fit well into the town plan. Any ideas need to take into account existing facilities and developments in the town – The Bandstand Project, the school rebuild, the Owain Glyndwr plans. As a Town Councillor he felt that the Project must maintain momentum in assuring

that it would be a success, no costs incurred and not give the council a reason to give up on it.

The attendees were asked to take away the “key questions” section of the PowerPoint (inserted into this report) and to add comments and suggestions, to pass on to friends and family and to feedback as much as they could to Charlie or Shelagh, particularly on the costings section.

Meeting 18th February 2020

To discuss in more detail ideas about heritage interpretation voiced at February 5th Plas meeting.

Present: Shelagh Hourahane, Anna Lloyd-Adey, Jian Lloyd-Adey (teenaged).

1. Anna Lloyd-Adey outlined her own ideas for interpreting the heritage of the Old Stables building, especially its importance as a link with the use of horses in traditional rural living
2. The possibility of using the previous stalls as an area for telling the story of the horse in Welsh legend and culture was discussed.
3. There was further discussion about the Victorian history of the Plas and whether this might be interpreted through having a ‘Victorian’ kitchen or at least one of the bedroom spaces be decorated in a ‘Victorian’ style.
4. Jian presented her relief silhouette of the Old Stables building and it was decided to try this a logo for the project.

Meeting with Canolfan Owain Glyndwr 26th February 2020

To liaise with members of the Owain Glyndwr Centre, and to discuss common ground between the two projects associated with historic buildings in Machynlleth, which are in the process of looking for funding for development

Present: Annie Morgan-Suganami, Cllr Elwyn Vaughan, Charlie Falzon, Shelagh Hourahane

Annie Morgan-Suganami (Chair of OGC) summarised the progress of the OGC bid to improve the building in order to develop activities there. They have had a Feasibility Study written by Jim O’Rourke, which outlines the historical background of the Centre and explains its historical interest and its role as a centre for Welsh language activities in the town.

The study did not look at the wider picture of what is going on in Machynlleth but it was agreed that there should be liaison with the Old Stables project.

It was agreed that it is important that the two projects should be complementary and that the Stables could offer accommodation for activities in the OGC.

It was suggested that the OGC plans for renewing the interpretation of the Owain Glyndwr story could be looked at in the context of a broader town-based interpretation.

It was agreed that liaison between the two projects should continue.

Meeting with Mid Wales Tourism 4th March 2020

Val Hawkins (CEO) and input from Zoe Hawkins

To discuss relevance of the Old Stables project to the work of Mid Wales Tourism in general; to gain information on demand for bunkhouse tourism accommodation in the area; and to discuss potential role of the Old Stables project in Machynlleth.

Mid Wales Tourism is a membership organisation with around 600 businesses and organisations on its books. It was pointed out that Machynlleth Town Council is not a member of Mid Wales Tourism and that the development of a strong tourism profile/offer does not appear to be a priority for the Council.

It was recommended that we should talk to various bunkhouse and other accommodation providers in the area to find out their opinion on possible competition from an Old Stables bunkhouse. It was indicated that some of these providers e.g. CAT and Plas Talgarth might be thinking of expanding their provision.

It was noted that Visit Wales publish online criteria for bunkhouse and other types of accommodation.

It was pointed out that it is not the role of a town council to run a commercial bunkhouse and that there could be opposition if such an enterprise is publicly funded. It was also pointed out that *Cultivate* in Newtown had encountered problems over the issue of competition.

This confirms the idea that an independent organisation, probably a social enterprise, should be established to take ownership of the Stables and to manage the project.

Mid Wales Tourism are working to extend the market to 27-40-year-old market and would like to see a strategy that would bring more visitors in that category to the area.

It was suggested that we should be looking at projects such as *The Walking Project* and walkers on the *Welcome Walkers Tour* and people who are using *Visit Wales Wales Way*.

The main recommendation was that the Old Stables would be an ideal centre for a town- wide interpretation project. This should tell the story of Machynlleth from

its earliest days through to recent developments, such as the story of CAT and its influence on the town and recent activities in relation to the Climate Crisis and localism.

Key sites in the town, such as the Plas, the Old Stables, MOMA, Canolfan Glyndwr should be brought together in an overall interpretation plan and linked to a central interpretation hub. The latter could be the Old Stables or the Plas itself.

It was suggested that we should be looking at the whole of the area around the Plas, to include the gardens and the linking the Plas itself with the Old Stables building. It would also be appropriate to include the fields and woodland and to promote short local walks from the Plas/Old Stables.

Meeting 6th March 2020

To consider the possibility of space for local vegetable boxes project and other issues. Present: Phil Wheeler, Sabrina Cantor, John Cantor.

- A Men's Shed that might be linked to Repair and Share, although the latter doesn't need a permanent space
- Steve Solomon is the contact for Men's Shed
- Idea of a Tool Library
- Local Food Surplus group – could use a space to store and process food. Michael Sverdlov is the contact
- Veg packing space – needed once a week to store/pack/collect local veg. Need a cupboard to store packs
- Use for lantern workshops – annual event

Ideas about:

Museum of traditional skills/traditional

Library of Things

Community woodland –

Courses - tree nursery and orchard training- trad crafts in woodland –

what were the woodlands traditional y used for?

Dyfi Valley Boat Building – 'orca' – build your own canoe or kayak (see project in Lake District)

Similar conversation about woodland skills with Joe Hope and Bob Shaw

Conversations with Avi Allen (Y Capel, Eglwys Fach) and Nick Jones (Cory Gors, Borth).

To discuss the issue of a recording studio.

Avi Allen hosts experimental musicians at Y Capel. Some of them do require some level of recording but she doesn't see a real need in the area. She might be interested in some collaboration with The Old Stables and could value accommodation.

Nick Jones does sometimes use recording facilities in the area. He referred to several existing facilities:

- Studio space is available in the centre of Machynlleth. Used by Phil Wheeler on recording and with other groups including young people.
- Studio space near Carno – not used much by locals but by groups from London etc.
- Studio space in Llanrhystud.
- Planned recording studio adjacent to Seren y Môr in Borth.

Other engagement by phone and email.

Javier Sanchez – Braich Goch Hostel, Corris 12th March 2020

“In regards to the stables being converted into bunkhouse accommodation, we have no problem with it or perceived it as a threat. We are trying to develop a critical learning and residential centre, which means that the groups we bring to the Braich Goch are people with whom we have established a relationship with, or are in the process of doing so.

We do provide bunkhouse accommodation for hikers or countryside enthusiast, when we haven't groups staying with us. But I don't think having extra bunkhouse in the area will harm us.

Sheila Simpson, Wynnstay Hotel 9th March 2020

The purpose of the phone conversation was to obtain feedback on the Old Stables project from a leading accommodation provider and a business that is central to the economy of Machynlleth. The following is a record of Sheila's comments. She was already aware of the proposed renovation of the Old Stables.

This could be an interesting project would be timely because there is a big shortage of accommodation in Machynlleth town. There is a definite need for something that caters for younger people who are on a limited budget. People do call at the Wynnstay looking for bunkhouse accommodation and refer to the previous bunkhouse in the town.

It would be good for the town and for the wider economy. It will have wider consequences than simply providing accommodation.

It is important to save our historic buildings and it would be a great loss if the building went. However, a listed building takes a lot of money to maintain. Wynnstay is an historic building. It has 23 rooms and has been reckoned to

contribute 1.5 million to the local economy annually. This includes general spend in the town by visitors staying at the Wynnstay.

If public money is being used it will need to have a slightly different slant to it. There is a need to attract younger people to stay in the area and they might be attracted by something a bit quirky.

Suggests that the bunkhouse should be towards the higher end of that offer and that it should be SPECIAL – DIFFERENT. Refers to a hostel chain in Amsterdam -Hans Brinker Hotels – that are VERY quirky and fun.

Needs some lateral thinking to make it work.

Old Stables project should not estimate that it will make a profit in the first few years. Wishful thinking that the Stables could be profitable from day one. This can take a long time to establish for the following reasons:

- People often think that Wales is a cheap place to stay but costs are high because we are at the end of the supply chain
- Important to get top-class marketing – needs to be well advertised. This can be difficult and needs money and someone who knows what they are doing. Needs a smart marketer
- Needs at least 5 years to get a product to the right market – a niche market

Some advice:

- Need to consider the noise factor – residential nearby
- Need to consider rubbish disposal
- Must be kept immaculately clean
- Needs a manager to ensure that it is safe and clean

Gareth Vince, Maenllwyd Guest House, Machynlleth 9th March 2020

There isn't enough tourism accommodation in Machynlleth. A bunkhouse would be the best way to provide this -there is a need for a bunkhouse in Machynlleth. It wouldn't threaten his own business.

There are a number of specific events that create a need – Comedy Festival, Music Festival

He would recommend 2-3 person rooms with shared bathrooms. This would keep the cost down to an affordable level.

He does get groups of walkers and cyclists who always ask about the cost before booking.

Engagement with Machynlleth businesses, Heol Maengwyn, Machynlleth, 13th March 2020

The purpose of visiting the Machynlleth businesses was to inform them about the feasibility study and to obtain any comments or suggestions. It was also to ascertain whether any of them might have a specific interest in the project or have any suggestions about activities and developments in the town.

In general businesses showed interest and some enthusiasm. There were some specific contributions.

This engagement process was cut short by the imposition of coronavirus restrictions which made it impossible to carry out with the remaining high street businesses.

Businesses visited and engaged with were:

Gegin Fach [café assistant]; Dyfi Wholefoods [Jonathan Gross]; Deco Shop [Lily]; Dyfi Roastery [Al & Caroline Taylor]; Rag & Bone [James]; Karen Hind, hairdresser; Number 21 [Daniella Wheeler]; Shoemaker Ruth Emily Davey [Margo]; Red Lion pub [Bar staff]; London House [Aaron]; Blodyn Tatws [Mair Tomos]; Lloyd Williams Butchers [Will Lloyd Williams]; Bedwen [Camilla].

Survey Monkey Results

Yes/Good idea/great idea/OK/excellent/fine X 59

Possibly X 2

No X 3

- Something should be done rather than let such a historic building fall down profound loss.
- That it is potentially a good idea - who would earn the money though - who owns the stables? I am guessing it is owned by the Town Council so the money would come into the town?
- Good idea. But even better if you also had some facilities that could be used by touring camper vans rather like an Aire de Service in France.
- For walkers but not cyclists
- If it provides jobs and brings the building back into use it's not a bad idea but is it economically sustainable? The small bunkhouse in town closed down and there are so many air b n b's around.
- There is a gap in affordable accommodation for people travelling through sharing with strangers. Simple private rooms with good shared facilities would appeal more broadly, I think. Might be worth speaking to others who have tried to make bunk room accommodation work locally, (Tegid for example)
- It would be a shame for it to remain empty and unused. It isn't a terrible idea
- Even better, a bothy.
- I don't think you will get good occupancy rates
- A lot of money involved in the upkeep. Who will pay for that?
- Something for the youth would be nice
- If no other use could be made of it this would be a good idea

- I think there is sufficient accommodation in the town and the space could be used for other residential accommodation like supported living for people with learning difficulties etc
- There are several providers in the area that already supply this service
- How about doing something with it that would benefit the people of Mach instead?
- Would be a great asset to the town
- Bringing money into the area
- Would rather it be turned into a youth club or something for the kids to do
- Would be good to see it renovated and used for the community
- Potential for tourism would be good
- Airbnb accommodation. Employment opportunities? As Town Council declared Climate Emergency would then expect any conversion to be of the highest green credential e.g. passive house like the school - great opportunity to educate visitors about the community then.
- Good, but perhaps this should not be the exclusive use
- Reasonably good idea, I guess a business then makes some money for maintenance
- More outdoor specific accommodation needed in the area
- Good idea if done right
- Good idea for bringing revenue into the community
- Great idea. Used to use Tegid's bunkhouse regularly until he sold the building a few years ago.
- Simple and inexpensive plus being dog friendly would help.
- Need some serious money spent on it
- If feel this would be a great asset to Machynlleth.
- There is demand for reasonably priced accommodation suitable for cyclists
- Why only walkers and cyclists?
- Yes, we've been looking for a while for a bunkhouse in Machynlleth. Such a good place to ride
- Low cost accommodation always good
- Good, but be wary of pitching too far down market.
- Great idea, especially since the other bunkhouse closed down. Economical and central location

No...plans fine X 47

Hotel X 3

Museum/heritage X 2

Kids or day centre X 4

Workshops X 12

B and B, Tearoom X 2

Community space X 8

Youth facility X 6

Affordable/assisted housing X 5

Charity shop X 1

Kennels? Cattery? Kids camp? X 1

A free bothy X 1

- What about a wellbeing centre where we could provide therapies like those at Covent House, but on a larger scale, as well as yoga, meditation, thai chi and other classes? Also, an information area for activities in and around Machynlleth. If there's enough space, maybe somewhere that sells package free goods, non-perishables like washing up liquid and dried goods like rice, pulses etc, possibly linked to Dyfi Wholefoods?
- Leaving it to rot helps no-one.

- Workshop space that can be hired to local craftspeople Use the square for craft fairs linked to the workshops Training in crafts and arts Shared facilities
- Should the council sell? That would depend to who it is sold. Needs to be a community benefit
- A venue for short courses, workshops and community events, with some limited accommodation: e.g. yoga workshop weekends, drama and theatre and music workshops or courses.
- Affordable housing for locals who work
- Craft workshops with retail / shops at front like Corris Craft Centre? But so think the bunk house idea is fine too.
- Good idea. But even better if you also had some facilities that could be used by touring camper vans rather like an Aire de Service in France.
- Make something of it to support the teenagers and younger generation of Machynlleth
- attached washrooms could be bunkhouse or work spaces. Smaller rooms could be offices or
- workshops.
- Provide some facilities for Gerddi Gardens.
- Artists Centre, community rooms, soft play for kids!
- Could be a bike shop as well since the last one was forced to shut
- Not another cafe!
- Secure storage for bikes to be incorporated
- Sell it!
- Wellbeing centre? Local craft space, cinema?

E. People consulted

Consultees	
Name	Context
	Elected Representatives
Simon Morpeth	Town Councillor/Member of Network
Andy Tack	Member of Network
Ann McGarry	Town Councillor
Michael Williams	Town & County Councillor
	Professionals
Debra Lewis	Powys Historic Buildings Officer
Lisa Fiddes	Cadw
Judith Alfrey	Cadw
Val Hawkins	Mid Wales Tourism
Zoe Hawkins	Mid Wales Tourism
Arwyn George	Architect
Dafydd Tomos	Architect
Rhys Lewis	Architectural Technician
David Evans	Structural Surveyor
Neil Taylor	Ecologist
	Case Studies
John Hainsworth	Case Study Y Dolydd, Llanfyllin Workhouse
Tamara Morris	Case Study Denmark Farm
Cath Smith	Case Study Mid Wales Good and Land Trust
Jane Evans	Case Study Mid Wales Food and Land Trust
	Accommodation Providers
Jon Isherwood	Previous Machynlleth Bunkhouse
Sheila Simpson	Wynnstay Hotel
Gareth Vince	Maengwyn Guest House
Zavier Sanchez	Braich Goch Hostel
John Glasby	Aberystwyth University Bunkhouse
James Wallace	Aberystwyth University Bunkhouse
	Local Projects
Phil Wheeler	Bandstand Project
Sabrina Cantor	Bandstand Project & Veg Box Scheme
John Cantor	Bandstand Project & Repair Workshop
Zoe Matthews	Bandstand Project
Cllr Elwyn Vaughan	Owain Glyndwr Centre
Annie Morgan Suganami	Owain Glyndwr Centre
	Food and Growing
Anita Flynn	Gerddi Bro Ddyfi
Alys Fowler	Gerddi Bro Ddyfi

Katie Hastings	Edible Mach Maethlon
Jane Rigby	Edible Mach Maethlon
Jane Powell	Food Society Wales
Gwenllian	Yr Ardd Madarch, Llanerfyl
Tom & Jane Baker	Rye & Roses Bakery
Ann Owen	Enion's Garden
John Owen	Enion's Garden
Kate Fenhalls	Grower
Joe Hope	Crop Grower & Cultivation
	Local Businesses & Organisations
Liz Mutch	Llais y Coedwig
Rachel Kennedy	Dulas Engineering
Mark Bond	Tree house accommodation
Diane Isenburgh	
David Freeman	
Delyth W. Rees	Machynlleth W.I.
Andy Rowland	Ecodyfi
Annie Grundy	ArtiCulture
Julie Hughes	Plas Machynlleth Manager
?	Plas Café Manager
Nicola Burgess	Hospice Shop Manager
Geraldine Purcey	Save the Children Manager
Alison	Credu Manager
Cheryl	Gegin Fach Manager
Jonathan Gross	Dyfi Wholefoods
Lily	Deco Shop
Al & Caroline Taylor	Dyfi Roastery
James	Rag & Bone Antiques
Karen Hind	Hairdresser
Daniella Wheeler	No 21 Restaurant
Ruth Emily Davey	Shoemaker
Manager	Red Lion Pub
Manager	London House
Mair Tomos	Blodyn a Tatws
Freya	Blodyn a Tatws & Ecodyfi
Wil Lloyd Williams	Butcher
Camilla Bond	Bedwen
Dian Bailey	Penrallt Bookshop
Iain Wright	Public participant
Tara Morpeth	Public participant
Christine Conroy	Public participant
Caroline de Carle	Public participant
Corinne Salmon	Public participant
Jill Fletcher	Public participant
Brian Fletcher	Public participant
Cindy Harris	Public participant
Liz Lavelle	Public participant
Jean Napier	Public participant
Jean Pickup	Public participant

Sian Davies	Public participant
Michael Sverdlov	Public participant
Maureen Berry	Public participant
Karen Thomas	Public participant
Jeanette Davies	Public participant
Diann Hol	Public participant
Deirdre Raffan	Public participant
Lucy Stubbs	Public participant
Anna Lloyd-Adey	Public participant
Mark Lloyd-Adey	Public participant
Ann Tomos	Public participant
Bethan Lloyd Ingram	Public participant
Frank a. Bowman	Public participant
Sarah Reisz	Public participant
Carlos Alonso-Gabiton	Public participant
Bob Shaw	Public participant
Milly Cain	Public participant
Paul Whittaker	Public participant
Jian Lloyd-Adey	Public participant
Ian Gregory	Public participant
Charles Streater	Public participant
Jane Lloyd-Francis	Public participant
Charmian Saville	Public participant
Sue Colbeck	Public participant
Raymond Jones	Public participant
Avi Allen	Public participant
Nick Jones	Public participant
John Walker	Public participant

F. Machynlleth – a heritage project

One of the ideas that has arisen in discussion about the Old Stables, Machynlleth is that there should be some interpretation of the history of the Stables and indeed of the Plas. This could imply that the time is right for a wider interpretation/heritage project for Machynlleth.

Currently the Owain Glyndwr Centre has an element of interpretation of the history associated with Owain Glyndwr and plans to up-grade the building would include that aspect. However, there is nothing else in Machynlleth, other than a few panels, such as the one linked to the story of Glyndwr and the Glyndwr Way near the entrance to the Plas grounds on Maengwyn St., that tells the visitor anything of the history of this historic town. Many years ago, there was discussion about setting up a town trail, but this has never been implemented.

Machynlleth has been a market town since 12??? when the still active street market was instigated and given a charter. Since then the town has been an important market, centre for local farming and for the traffic of local goods, especially the lead mined in the hinterland. It is at an important point on the River Dyfi and is at the meeting of three county areas (Ceredigion, Montgomeryshire and Gwynedd). The Dyfi Biosphere and Snowdonia National Park are associated with Machynlleth and the area around.

A local heritage project could bring together the various strands in Machynlleth's history as a tourism and local heritage facility.

Where could this be situated?

There are several key buildings in Machynlleth that represent the history of the town and in which that story could be told.

The Owain Glyndwr Centre (the Old Parliament and Institute) has housed the Tourism Information Centre and still has a display about the story of Owain Glyndwr, which is only open for part of the year. A part of the plans to up-grade the Centre is to re-design the interpretation or Heritage Experience. This has been costed into the project at a figure of £50,000 to include expert fees to pay for a consultant to produce an Interpretation and Activity Plan.

The idea is to "...provide a more interesting visitor experience" with more activity resources and better interactive and digital interpretation. The displays would be solely "...to map and show the Owain Glyndwr campaigns and stories". However, the plan includes the idea that other local organisations could be invited to install temporary exhibitions to tell their stories.

MOMA Machynlleth mounts an ongoing programme of exhibitions throughout the year. It also has a performance space in the previous Tabernacl Chapel, which is extensively used, especially for musical events that includes the annual Music Festival. However, there is nowhere in the building where the story of this particular building, as a chapel and its conversion into a thriving arts space, is told. There could be an opportunity to explain the cultural significance of Machynlleth, including that of important cultural figures who have been associated with the town.

St. Peter's Church has opened its doors to members of the public through creating an activity space that has basic catering facilities. It therefore attracts local people. There is also a series of panels that tell the history of the church. This is a good way to attract visitors to learn about this aspect of Machynlleth's history and to visit one of its historic buildings.

The Plas is clearly at the heart of the town and the story of the landed family who owned the Plas has left its mark on the town itself. This includes the Town Clock, built to mark a gentry birthday, and a much-photographed feature.

The Plas has a foyer that is badly in need of a re-design so that it welcomes people to this important building. The foyer could be designed as a central hub for the interpretation of Machynlleth's story and a point from which the other significant places could be visited. One idea could be a costume film, about Machynlleth made by local people, similar to that in the Old Workhouse at Llanfyllin.



It could be compared with the way in which St. Michael's Church at Llandre is the central hub for the *Peaceful Places* project that takes visitors to 14 church sites through North Ceredigion.

The Old Stables project presents another opportunity to tell something of the story of Machynlleth. As well as the history of the building and its association with the horses and dogs used on the estate, it could be a focus for the history of land management and rural skills and crafts.

The Old Stables – telling its story

The Old Stables/Kennels is unusual because it remains as evidence of an aspect of estate history in rural Wales. It is distinctive and architecturally significant, as well as having a Grade II listing on the Cadw register. This project gives an opportunity to tell the story of the building and of the lifestyle that it represented.

Many of the original features of the Stables are lost but one of the ranges of horse stalls does remain in an almost intact condition. One of the themes that has been suggested is that of the horse in Welsh life and culture. This could include references to the mythological role of horses, such as Epona, the white horse goddess and to Rhiannon of the Mabinogion. The Mari Lwyd is another historic theme, which is a part of local tradition. The story of Welsh upland ponies and their role in working the land would also be relevant.

Other features of the building could be retained or re-introduced to remind visitors of its Victorian history. These might include having one of the bedrooms decorated as a

'Victorian Room' and a part of the courtyard garden could be based on a Victorian design,

Heritage, Interpretation and mobile events

Machynlleth is known for its autumn Lantern Procession and other individual events. The size and layout of the town could make it suitable for interpreting its history through a series of outdoor and individual space events, perhaps as a specific summer 'festival' or at points throughout the year.

A digital town trail

The use of apps for interpretation has been growing. This could be a way in which the story of Machynlleth could be told to visitors, while also guiding them around the town and introducing them to various places of interest and interesting local businesses.

Volunteering and the heritage theme

Volunteering is a feature of many local museums and interpretation centres. There might be a specific group of people in the area who are interested in the heritage theme and who might become volunteers. One volunteering opportunity might be to develop the Old Stables courtyard and help work on aspects of the restoration. Another opportunity would be to maintain the heritage pod and to provide occasional manning/first person interpretation.

A local example of volunteering in this context is at the Borth Railway Museum, a successful seasonal project. Montgomery Museum is run entirely by volunteers, as is the interpretation hub at Y Dolydd, Llanfyllin Old Workhouse. In another context heritage volunteers contribute to National Trust buildings, such as Llanerchaeron.