

12th Sept 2017

**Response to Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Application 17/0422/PA,
Chimney's Link (phase 2), concerning Transition Bro Gwaun,
Transition Community Cafe and the Surplus Food Project.**

1: Introduction

When Phase 1 of the above development was announced in Nov 2016, we were given assurances by PCC of help in finding alternative premises, but nothing to date has materialised that we feel adequately recompenses us for the disruption that will be caused by our eviction from the building we currently occupy, courtesy of the Co-op Group. While we would not necessarily expect to be able to continue on the scale that we currently operate, we do consider that our contribution to community well-being, as detailed in our Position Paper presented to the Council last December and quoted below, merits a more sympathetic response in the interests of the sustainable development of the Community. It is particularly ironic that the home of a project which has become a beacon in the search for sustainable solutions to the environmental challenges of the 21st century should be sacrificed to the needs of heavy goods transport, one of the more significant contributors to carbon emissions!



We wish to object to the Planning Application on the following grounds:

2: Environmental concerns

While we do not want to delay the long awaited road improvement, we do feel that the proposed scale of construction is unnecessary and excessively wasteful of

resources. This statement is prompted partly by recent observation of the construction of the new car park for the Co-op, where at least 1 metre of soil and rock has been replaced by crushed and graded stone - one might think it was destined as a parking site for jumbo jets! The serious point here is the cost, both financial and environmental. Given that the Welsh Government has a policy of carbon emissions reduction, we would expect there to be a prepared carbon budget for the scheme, incorporating adequate off-setting measures.

In terms of the local environment, we are concerned that the development will cause unnecessary harm to the distinctive character of the area. We refer specifically to proposed significant lengths of straight roads, which also constitute a health and safety hazard by making it less likely that traffic will abide by speed restrictions.

3: Economic concerns

As indicated in the introduction, we feel that the Authority needs reminding of the economic benefit that TBG, and particularly our Surplus Food Project has brought to the area, as detailed below. Over the last three months we have conducted a customer survey, and this has shown that 36% came specifically to Fishguard to visit Transition Cafe, and that their average spend in town was £29, given a total spend of £12000 over 3 months, a similar figure to our estimate of £45k below.

Estimate of annual economic value of TBG's activity per annum

Interest paid to local investors in Abergwaun Community Turbine	£13,000
Employment: 2 staff + sessional workers + consultant + on-costs	£55,000
Volunteering £145,000 over 4 years	£36,250
Project management: Trustee & others contribution	£20,000
Work placements: 4/year @ £500/placement	£2,000
Cafe sales	£18,000
Café customer spend in Fishguard: 25% customers = 2250 x £20	£45,000
Training courses: 10 courses at £ 300/course + meals	£5,000
Food diverted from landfill 11 tonnes (savings to both retailers and to local authority, based on findings from WRAP)	£30,525
Health & Wellbeing: difficult to quantify but approximately	£20,000
Organisational visits: 1/month for average 10 people + meals	£2,000
Local conferences, meetings and outreach work	£2,500
Spending by those visiting as a result of publicity & promotion: newspaper & media coverage, presentations at conferences	£15,000
TOTAL	£264,275

4: Environmental, Social and Community benefit:

Transition Bro Gwaun's premises have become a valued community hub since it opened in 2013. Having accessible premises has facilitated the development of a range of innovative projects addressing sustainability challenges, and provided many local organisations with a free venue for meetings and social events.

TBG's projects have won many awards, featured at national and international conferences, contributed to University research and development programmes, and received a considerable amount of media coverage, including on national TV and radio. As a result, our building is visited by many individuals and organisations from near and far. It has hosted many visits from community groups looking to establish similar projects, holds meetings and workshops and has books and information materials to promote our environmental message.

Having premises has also enabled TBG to provide volunteering, employment, work experience, and training opportunities for over 200 local people including many young and disabled people. This has enabled a number of people to gain the necessary experience and skills to get employment.

The building also has office space which serves as a base for two part time TBG project officers currently working in collaboration with Pembrokeshire County Council, community organisations and schools, to extend our Surplus Food Project across Pembrokeshire. This new project is titled '[Make a Meal of It](#)' and has a particular focus on reducing household food waste. The loss of our building and the lack of alternative premises will put much of this in jeopardy – we cannot believe Pembrokeshire would wish to lose such a valuable resource.

5 Disincentive to Community Investment

The establishment of the cafe facilities, during 2012/13, was achieved partly through grant aid, but to a greater extent thanks to donations of materials, talent and labour from a host of local individuals and organisations, valued at the time in excess of £40,000. If projects such as this can be shut down without any form of compensation through no fault of their own, it does not encourage the type of social investment in town centres which is seen as so desirable when the opportunities for traditional retail investment is being curtailed by the growth of internet marketing.

TBG trustees: Tom Latter, Chris Samra, Julia Moffett

For more information about our projects, the services we provide, and the significant contribution we make, please see www.transitionbrogwaun.org.uk and TBG's position paper 'Impact of Proposed Loss of TBG premises' – December 2016.