

Town & Around O Gwmpas y Dre

Special Edition
April / May 2024

The 'Eyes of Ruthin' since 2003 from the Ruthin & District Civic Association

Civic Association Welcomes 'Levelling Up'

Welcome to this special 'consultation edition' of Town & Around.

In what surely is the largest Ruthin-based engagement in Denbighshire's history, the County Council is consulting now on how to spend the town centre elements of the £11m Levelling Up funding.

The funding will give a once in a generation opportunity to better our town.

For over 35 years, the Civic Association has been pressing and hoping for change and improvement. In this special edition of Town and Around, we set out the Committee's views on Levelling Up and what we would prefer to see.

We would encourage members to reply to the consultation exercise. The deadline is short: May 12th, 2024. **If you agree with our views, we would ask members to mention some or all of the concerns in this newsletter in their responses.**

If there is anything you feel we should add, please let me know.

Anne Roberts MBE

Chair, Ruthin & District Civic Association

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Castle Street: missing out

The Civic Association asks that Castle Street be included into the Levelling Up transformational project. We've joined with the Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre, and Ruthin Castle to promote this.

Levelling Up is as much about improvements to heritage as it is economic regeneration. Castle Street is missed off. We feel strongly that Castle Street should be included in the plans.

To us, this is a key 'heritage' street. However important it is to improve Market Street, we feel that Castle Street is more important still. Market Street is desirable but Castle Street absolutely essential.

We feel that there should be treatment of the Castle Street road surface to the same standard as pedestrian areas on the Square and to



offer a 'shared space' pedestrian priority as an 'informal street'. There should be an environmental weight restriction on Castle Street (except for access). These are to:

- **Improve safety** (there are no or very limited width footways between Nantclwyd y Dre and the Square);
- **Set off the heritage aspect** of the street, with a finish similar to the proposed pedestrian areas of the Square;
- **Create a gateway** from the Castle end onto the Square; and
- **Complement past and future investment** (including Levelling Up) at Nantclwyd y Dre.

Access for businesses and to dwellings needs to be maintained.



Market Street

As stated opposite, the improvements for Market Street are welcomed as *desirable* but we feel that investment on Castle Street should be *essential*.

Market Street is safer than Castle Street, because Market Street has footways of good widths on both sides. Market Street's buildings are important but not as much as those on Castle Street.

The buildings on Castle Street are significantly older, grander, more numerous and, with its mix of architectural styles, unique.

The option for a cycleway on Market Street is probably unnecessary, especially as there are no measures at all to improve safety for cyclists on Market Street where cyclists are most vulnerable: off the Bric roundabout and up Market Street to Wynnstay Road, where traffic will be two way and where parked cars on the curve cause cyclists some issues. We feel option 1 is better than option 2.



Want to get in touch? Do you think we've missed anything? Please email the Chair (see details above)

Squaring the Circle

From the images the Civic Association Committee has seen, the improvements to the Square are substantial and to be welcomed.

We are particularly grateful for the removal of the roundabout and a reduction in space devoted to traffic.



St Peter's Square, its hated roundabout and the expanse of tramac

We wonder, however, whether the County Council is being creative enough, especially as regards the design of the Square on the side of the Myddelton Arms. Could the footway there perhaps be enhanced still further to ensure, for example, more

pavement space for summer diners or drinkers. Could the footway curve imaginatively so that it does not always parallel the line of buildings, widening towards the Post Office end.

We also wonder whether the balance in terms of parked cars is right. The Castle Hotel and bank frontages should be kept

clear of cars and much of that flank. There are possible parking gains on upper Well Street to compensate. There is scope for more better laid out parking in the middle. Above all, the street scene should be set off to the best possible advantage.

The highest priority in terms of parked vehicles on the Square should be accorded to disabled motorists.

We would urge the County Council to offer more free parking at all car parks (perhaps the first half-hour or hour free) to compensate for any reductions in on-street parking.

How to respond

countyconversation.denbighshire.gov.uk/survey/986

This includes a printable copy. There are drop-in sessions on:

- April 27th 10a.m. to 2p.m. in The Old Courthouse
- May 10th 2p.m. to 7p.m. at the Rugby Club.

The closing date is May 12th, 2024.

Pedestrian Priority

We are not anti-car and would wish to ensure that motorists who need to transact business in the town centre have the ability to do so—but not at the cost of safety when motorists then become pedestrians.

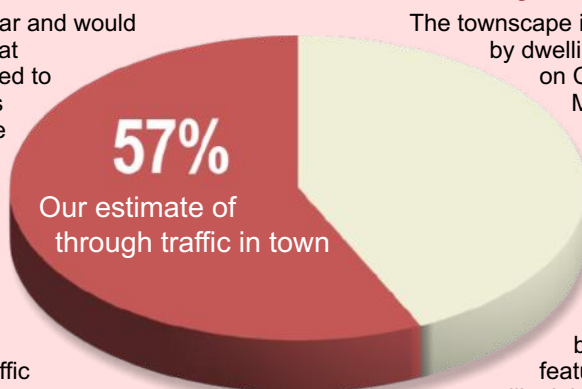
On the other hand, through traffic should always be encouraged to use alternative roads rather than those in the town centre.

The way in which St Peter's Square is configured will have a bearing on how traffic uses town centre roads.

We support the treatment of surfaces and one-way traffic flows as a means of reducing through traffic in the town centre.

We also feel that, without sufficient calming, traffic speeds on one-way roads will increase, to the detriment of pedestrians.

We should also recognise the number of people who live on otherwise busy town centre roads.



Our estimate of through traffic in town

The townscape is punctuated by dwellings, especially on Clwyd Street, Market Street and Castle Street.

We would urge the County Council to take care to build in features that will minimise through traffic, slow all traffic and to ensure the coexistence of pedestrians and vehicles, especially vulnerable road users.

57 per cent of traffic in the town centre is through traffic: see September 2021's Town and Around at v.gd/radca.



Cae Ddol

We also welcome the proposed improvements to Cae Ddol park. We would nevertheless urge the County Council to consider:

- The active travel route appears to end abruptly in the middle of the park. We need clarity as to where the route is going.



- It also goes through the recently installed outdoor gym but there's no

reference to that. What is happening to this recent addition?

- Additional play equipment needs to be suitably designed and not garish.
- The artist's impressions need to be clearer in identifying different locations of specific park uses. There's a lack of clarity in the visuals.
- There should be an events' space within the park.
- The Levelling Up funding at present includes refurbishment of the lavatories but that is not mentioned. We need clarity on what will happen to the lavatories in the light of possible Denbighshire closure of such facilities across the county.
- There should be adequate space reserved for bee-friendly meadows.