

Summary of the nine petitions received

Nine petitions were submitted which were broadly in relation to the consultation about the future of our in-house care services. However, five of these were submitted during the pre-consultation period, four of which were written before any options had been identified and presented to the public.

We have been advised (by the Consultation Institute) that a group of identical letters should be regarded as a petition. We have therefore included a group of 13 letters (see paragraph 4, below) as one petition; another group of 30 identical letters (see paragraph 5, below) as one petition; and 4 letters from tenants in War Memorial Court (see paragraph 6 below and also referred to in Appendix F) as one petition.

In summary, during the public consultation phase, we received petitions with a total of 1329 signatures:

- 1257 signed a petition opposing option 1 for Awelon
- 72 signed a petition opposing option 1 for Dolwen

In addition we received 30 identical letters submitted shortly before the consultation phase opposing option 1 for all 3 consultations. Other petitions submitted before the consultation phase are in relation to the prospect of all 4 establishments closing.

In chronological order, the following petitions were received by the council:

In pre-consultation phase:

1. In **November 2014**, we received a petition opposed to changes to any of the council's three residential homes. This contained approximately **5000** signatures, but appeared to assume that the proposal would be to shut all three homes. The Petition reads:

"Petitioning Denbighshire County Council. Do not close Awelon Dolwen and Cysgod Y Gaer!"

The two people who developed the submission, included the following letter as a rationale to encourage people to sign the petition:

"We, Sara and Ceri Bell, need your help to stop the closure of the local care homes which are an essential asset to their community they accommodate local elderly people who do not require nursing care. Their locations are very central to all outlying villages and the care in these homes is undoubtedly second to none. I can say this as my late Grandma was a resident at Awelon and so happy there and the care she had until her last day where outstanding. I also have my nain at Dolwen who is the happiest I have ever seen her. She has dementia and is deteriorating every day however she is in a lovely home with lovely friends there and feels as though she is in a luxury hotel she is so happy there. For people to be so happy somewhere at such an age to have to be moved now is just disgusting. Moving is enough stress for any aged person never mind the elderly whom are so settled and relaxed. To have to be put through such change will just be heartbreaking for them and their families. Also because there are many very elderly people in these homes it must be taken that their family members are no

longer young people and consideration has to be given for them and travelling to visit. For instance at Awelon there are several over 100 yrs old. I need as many people signatures as possible to please try and keep these fantastic homes open and the jobs of so many fantastic staffs to be secured. We can't see any more people lose jobs. Please share this and help me get everyone to support this essential petition. Huge thanks."

The (approximately) 5000 people who signed the petition provided no specific rationale for their objection, they just signed to say that they were opposed to the closure of Awelon Dolwen and Cysgod Y Gaer.

2. In **April 2015**, a petition was submitted in relation to **Hafan Deg**. This is also in relation to an assumed closure of the centre. **881** signatures were collected, and it was accompanied by letters from the family of those who attend, stressing its importance. This petition, which was presented to full Council is entitled:

"Save our/your Day centre from closure"; and it was supported by the following rationale:

"Hafan Deg is the only day centre in the North of Denbighshire, It is currently run by DCC but even this is too much for them. Prestatyn day centre has already been closed so please sign the petition and help us save this vital and essential community service for Rhyl and Prestatyn. Our residents in Prestatyn were not given notice of the closure and we have lost this vital service for our town. Our residents now attend Hafan Deg in Rhyl which is at risk of closure without your help!"

3. In **July 2015** a petition, signed by **1076** people, entitled 'Keep **Cysgod y Gaer** open' was submitted by Age Connects. Early in 2015, Plaid Cymru organised a public meeting on the future of Cysgod y Gaer where this petition originated. The petition was accompanied by 79 letters and comments ranging from simply "*keep open!*" to long, moving accounts of the importance of the home in the community and the excellent quality of care provided there. 104 people left name & contact details but no comments, while 82 have signed a photocopied letter giving reasons to keep the home open. In general, the comments suggest that those who contributed would be in favour of Option 1 for Hafan Deg, although the petition was submitted before the options had been developed. The rationale provided in support of this petition, which included the scarcity of alternative equivalent sources of care was taken into account in the pre-consultation phase, hence the closure of Cysgod y Gaer not being the council's preferred option.
4. Late in **July 2015**, 13 identical letters were received from tenants of War Memorial Court, asking to have lunch at **Hafan Deg** (treated as one petition with **13** signatures). The letter reads as follows:

"I write to enquire if it may be possible and the Council services may be willing and able to provide cooked meals for myself on the days when the staff are cooking for day care visitors."

I fully realise that all services are under potential threat and withdrawal because of financial constraints and would accept that if the above was allowed it would only be on a trial basis and could be withdrawn at any time. If this request was met with a favourable response I would be more than happy to pay a week in advance so that the catering staff could make provision to order sufficient supplies and prepare the same.

One would like to comment that on VE day this year the residents and day care visitors had a very nice meal together provided by your catering staff who coped admirably.”

Whilst this letter does not relate specifically to any of the 3 options it is clear that it will be important to include, and to consider, the tenants of War Memorial Court in discussions regarding the future of Hafan Deg, which is something the council intends to do.

5. In **August 2015**, we received **30** identical copies of letters from people saying:

“DCC intends to close Awelon, ‘privatise’ Dolwen & develop Cysgod y Gaer as I ‘support hub’. I am utterly opposed to the plans to change the current status of the above named care homes. This means that I am opposed to the closure of Awelon, I am opposed to the transfer of Dolwen to an external organisation and I’m opposed to Cysgod y Gaer being changed from its current status”.

The petitioners provided no rationale for their objection.

Consultation phase:

6. The following is the content of the letter written in December 2015, from tenants of War Memorial Court in relation to Hafan Deg. We received 4 copies:

“I am writing on behalf of the residents of War Memorial Court, to express our concern about the future of Hafan Deg.”

The rationale and evidence included is as follows:

“At the moment we residents are allowed to use Hafan Deg three time each week for community activities, and on other special occasions such as birthday parties, Halloween, Christmas and Easter parties. We have also joined with the service users of the centre to celebrate national occasions such as Royal Celebrations, VE day and MacMillan Coffee mornings. We are all worried that we will not be able to continue our activities if an external organisation takes over the running of Hafan Deg.

We are always being told that it is better for the elderly to remain in their own home, but if this means they sit alone all day except for 2-3 fleeting visits from uninterested ‘carers’ this is not improving their quality of life. We feel that our activities, held in Hafan Deg, give many of the residents company and friendship on their doorstep, and enhance their daily life.

I am sure that the service users (who are not just numbers but people in their own right, who could be you mother, father, husband or wife) will agree that their visits to Hafan Deg are probably the highlight of their week, and give their carers a much needed break.

It is not just the loss of our use of the centre that worries us, but what will replace it. War memorial Court is an ex warden controlled complex, providing accommodation for the elderly and disabled. There is considerable concern about whether it would be open in the evenings, who would be wandering round. There are plenty of dark corners on the court. Would there be noise and parking problems. These may be silly concerns to you, but to an 80 or 90 year old resident these points are important.

You may think you are saving some money but if Hafan Deg closes the whole heart of the community will be lost.”

Again, whilst this letter does not relate specifically to any of the 3 options, as mentioned in paragraph 4, it is clear that it will be important to include, and to consider, the tenants of War Memorial Court in discussions regarding the future of Hafan Deg, which is something the council intends to do.

7. One petition specifically relating to **Dolwen**, with **72** signatures. The petition reads:

“We the undersigned oppose the DCC plans to take Dolwen out of local authority control and move the emphasis on elderly mental health”.

The petitioners provided no rationale for their objection.

8. One petition, which had **1242** signatures and was organised through Plaid Cymru, expressed opposition to the closure of **Awelon**. This was presented at County Hall on 14th January 2016.

The petitioners provided no rationale for their objection.

9. Another petition was received from the English Presbyterian Church, in January 2015, containing **15** signatures “*against the proposed closure of **Awelon** care home*”.

The petitioners provided no rationale for their objection.