



FRIENDS OF LLANTRISANT GUILDHALL NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018

No. 1



GUILDHALL RESTORATION REACHES ITS FINAL PHASE OF £300k FUNDRAISING

A £1.4million transformation of Llantrisant's historic Guildhall into a heritage and visitors' centre is reaching its final phase.

Following a year of construction work, volunteers are raising a further £300,000 to complete the interior of the building.

As the centre of power for almost 700 years, the Guildhall has the opportunity to become central to the community of Llantrisant once again by boosting the local economy as it welcomes more visitors to the town and wider county borough. The 14th century court house is being restored to its Georgian period splendour when it was rebuilt in 1773.

It will house state-of-the-art exhibition space, research and IT suite, historic artefacts, documentation and photographs.

With a rolling programme of events, workshops and exhibitions, the Guildhall will create a major community hub. So far the project is being made possible due to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw, Garfield Weston Foundation, Welsh Church Act Fund, Visit Wales, Llantrisant Community Council, Llantrisant Town Trust and public donations.

Professional support has been given by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, which also granted listed building consent for the renovation.

Notes From The Hall

Welcome to the first issue of the Friends of the Guildhall Newsletter.

This is designed to bring you up to date with the many developments taking place as the restoration of the historic building continues.

It is our ambition to transform the landmark into a heritage centre which celebrates the remarkable story of Llantrisant.

The Guildhall has been largely redundant for a generation.

Six years ago Llantrisant Town Trust began the process of raising funds to fulfil their aspirations for the refurbishment of the entire building and the creation of a new tourist destination.



By working closely with the Royal Mint Experience, we hope to attract even more visitors to the hilltop. Since October 2016 the building has undergone widespread restoration and with continued fundraising and we hope to complete the Guildhall in the summer of 2018.

Thank you for your support!

VIEWS FROM THE GUILDHALL

Fundraising Concert

A Llantrisant Guildhall fundraising concert will take place at Llantrisant Parish Church on Friday March 23 2018. The event will feature Cowbridge Male Choir, The Richard Williams Singers, Gentlemen Songsters and the Lewis Merthyr Band. Tickets priced £6 are available from the Model House or by contacting dean@llantrisant.net

St David's Day Fayre

A fundraising fayre is being held at the Boars Head, Tylagarw to celebrate St David's Day. The event is taking place on Sunday February 25 2018 and all of the proceeds will go towards the Guildhall Scheme. There will be plenty of stalls, raffles and a hogroast. Admission is £5.00. To hire a stall contact dean@llantrisant.net

Coop Community Fund

Llantrisant Guildhall Project has been chosen to receive funding from The Co-op Local Community Fund.

Every time members shop at the Co-op, 1% of what they spend on selected own-brand products and services goes to the Fund.

Guest Speaking Programme

An impressive list of guest speakers have been approached to present their lectures at the completed Guildhall. With topics ranging from Edward II and the De Clares to Owain Glyndwr and the Bute family, the programme of speakers will enthrall.

DR PRICE COSTUME REPLICATED

Llantrisant Guildhall will house a permanent showcase celebrating the life of the famous Welsh surgeon and cremation pioneer Dr William Price.



A large exhibition cabinet has been kindly purchased by Freeman David Vernon Phillips of Talygarn in memory of his ancestor Ebenezer Davies who oversaw the funeral arrangements of the late doctor. The exhibition will display a large collection of personal items belonging to Dr William Price which has been donated by the Guildhall Manager Dean Powell who studied his life for a decade before publishing a full-scale biography of the archdruid and social healthcare reformer. It will include a replica of Dr William Price's colourful costume which is housed at the Museum of Wales in St Fagans. Llantrisant tailor Thom Botwood has been commissioned to undertake the work of creating the replica at his Heol Sarn shop, The Pin & Thimble.

HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

Llantrisant Guildhall is designed to tell the remarkable story of a hilltop town.

One element of Llantrisant's impressive history is the role of the Freeman and the legacy of their Charter of 1346.

As part of the internal fit out of the building a "Hall of Freeman" is being installed on the upper floor corridor.

This will include rows of framed images of past Freeman and information on their lives and achievements.

Families of late Freeman who wish to remember their loved ones with a permanent memorial in the Guildhall can apply to the Guildhall Manager.

Each framed & mounted image will cost £100 each and all proceeds will go towards the Guildhall.

For further details visit dean@llantrisant.net

‘LOST PORTRAIT’ IS COMING HOME

A missing portrait of a prominent Welsh Lord Mayor of London will go on permanent display in Llantrisant thanks to the generosity of the Lord Mayor of Cardiff.



The First Citizen of Cardiff Cllr Bob Derbyshire met members of the Guildhall Trust following the discovery of an unknown painting of a former Llantrisant resident.

Sir David Evans was one of Llantrisant’s most notable sons after becoming Lord Mayor of London in 1891 but no portrait of him has never hung in his hometown. When Cardiff City Council’s Mansion House staff discovered the portrait hidden away in their storage room, they agreed to a permanent loan.

It is believed that the portrait was gifted to Lord Bute – who was also Lord Mayor at the time – and hung for many years in Cardiff City Hall, although nobody knew of its identity. Since 1995 it has been carefully stored at Cardiff Mansion House. It will have pride of place in the Guildhall along with other items celebrating Sir David Evans’ fascinating life.

Join The Guildhall Volunteers Team!

Volunteers are invited to join the dedicated team behind opening Llantrisant’s Guildhall

Volunteers are needed to lend their support to the exciting project when completed.

The new heritage and visitors’ centre will house state-of-the-art exhibition space, research and IT suite for genealogy studies, historic artefacts, documentation and photographs.

But a team of volunteers, who will be trained for free by the Guildhall Trust, are also needed to support the centre

With a rolling programme of events, workshops and exhibitions, the Trust will create a major community hub bringing more visitors into the borough while also providing a first-class facility for people in the immediate area. Volunteers with a diverse variety of skills - regardless of their knowledge of local history – will help make the project a success.

For further information contact dean@llantrisant.net

VIEWS FROM THE GUILDHALL

Donors Thanked Online

All of those kind-hearted individuals who have donated to the Guildhall Project have been thanked online in our new website. The pages dedicated to the Guildhall also lists our “Friends” society members. See www.llantrisant.net

Wedding Venue Booking

Guildhall Trustees have met with the Registrar of the county borough to discuss the options of licensing the building as a wedding venue. The historic building will provide an ideal romantic location.

Newspaper Archives

A vast amount of research work has been undertaken to build an archive of Llantrisant history which will be housed at the Guildhall. The work has included a fully researched Roll of Freeman and also the copying of news stories about Llantrisant since the 1830s.

Guildhall chimney rebuilt

The original chimney has now been reinstated on the Guildhall more than 60 years since it was demolished.



The chimney is an impressive feature of the building and we are delighted to see it back!

The porch has also been rebuilt and the entire building is now wind and water tight – which is fortunate given the adverse weather we experienced in December!

CROESO ARCHIE!

Welcome to Archie, the Crecy longbowman who is taking up residence in the Guildhall.

Archie has been specially commissioned by the Guildhall Trust.



He has been created by Proportion, the London-based mannequin company who specialise in high-grade figures for leading museums. Archie is dressed in the unique green and white colours as worn by the longbowmen who fought for the Black Prince in 1346. A specially commissioned longbow and arrows with medieval arrowheads was made by Wiltshire-based Richard Head Longbows using Welsh yet and goose feathers.

The mannequin will allow visitors an insight into the uniform and weaponry of the archers who transformed British warfare.

'PRICELESS' MACE VISITS ROADSHOW

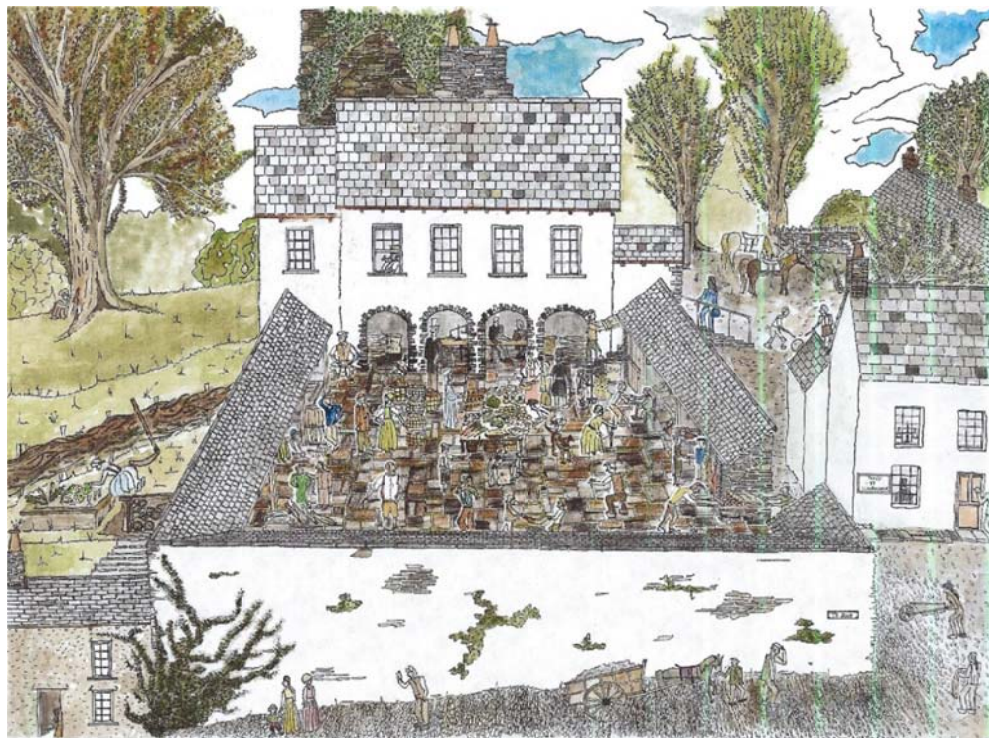
Llantrisant's Mace was taken to the Antiques Roadshow in Pembroke Castle for a valuation.



Trustees Martin Hooker, John Dickason and Dean Powell travelled with the Mace, dated 1633 for the television programme.

Silversmith and Mace expert Alistair Dickenson was delighted to view the treasured object and assured us it was worth in the region of £80,000.

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION REVEALED



Architectural illustrator Ffion Morgan of Heol Las has visualised how the Guildhall looked in 1773 when it was refurbished.

The Guildhall overlooked the former Market Square which was replaced in 1876 by the Police Station.

Below the Guildhall was a cornmarket. The Pwysty is situated on the right.

NEW TRUSTEE ROBES INTRODUCED

Llantrisant Guildhall Trust has commissioned thirteen robes to be worn at special ceremonies and events.



Llantrisant Court Leet was the only one known in the UK where members do not wear robes for ceremonies.

Trustees commissioned a tailor from Oxford to design the unique robes which depict the Llantrisant colours of green, white and black along with the Trust logo.

The colours were chosen because the longbowmen of Crecy wore a green and white tunic, while the colour black is associated with the young Black Prince who fought at the battle in 1346.

GUILDHALL FILM PRODUCTION

A short film telling the story of the Guildhall and its roll in the history of Llantrisant is being made by Colin Davies of Calan Films



Colin has filmed various residents of the town and different events and locations, including Beating the Bounds.

Guildhall Manager Dean Powell also visited The Glamorgan Archives to view the Llantrisant Confirmation Charter of 1424.

VIEWS FROM THE GUILDHALL

Crowdfunding Donations

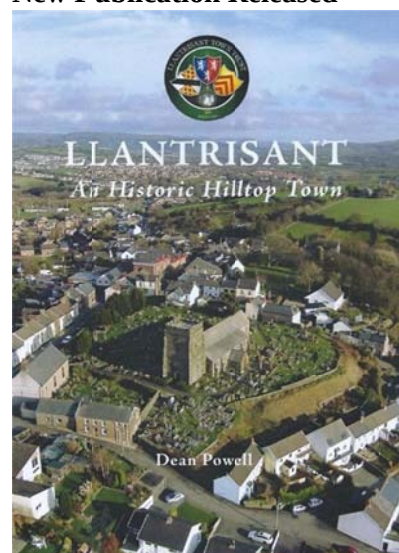
Thanks to all those who made private donations to the Guildhall scheme through our online Crowdfunding page. In total £1,029.00 was raised for the project. The page was shared on social media by actor Michael Sheen and singer Cerys Matthews.

Old Images Discovered



A selection of images depicting the Guildhall in 1937 have now been archived in our Accession Register. If you have any pictures contact dean@llantrisant.net

New Publication Released



The Trust has published a new colour history book of Llantrisant called "An Historic Hilltop Town". Priced £6 each, the book was launched in June and has been a huge success. For copies contact dean@llantrisant.net

GUILDHALL GIFTS

**Llantrisant Guildhall
Shop is open for business!**



A china mug featuring
seven images of Llantrisant
£5.99



Selection of six different
Llantrisant coasters
£2.99



Chrome keyring
£3.49



Limited edition cufflinks
£24.99



Five different postcards
40p each / 3 for £1.00



Bronze Black Prince
£18.99



Metal model of bowman
£11.99

**Find out more about
these many bespoke items
www.llantrisant.net**

FREEMEN'S LOVING CUP VALUATION

**For almost sixty years the Freeman of Llantrisant have used their
treasured Loving Cup at Court Leet Dinners.**



The Cup was presented to the Freeman by Trustee Sir Brandon Rhys Williams of Miskin Manor in 1960. Its origins stem from a British Rail deal to purchase part of the land at New Mill, Miskin.

Trustees recently took the Cup to Mappin & Webb of Regent Street, London for a valuation as it will go on show in the Guildhall and appropriate security cabinets and insurance need to be sought.

The Cup is engraved with "This Cup was made from the proceeds of the sale of land at Miskin, where by transport commissioners were empowered to close the Miskin Mill Race in the year 1960. It was presented to the Freeman of Llantrisant to acknowledge the ending of their rights at the Mill confirmed in the year of Crecy 1346."

The valuation revealed that the conclave base of the cup was actually created some years later than the cup.

The cup is hallmarked sterling silver parcel gilt London 1960 makers mark LWB for Burt Limited (Leonard William Burt). The base hallmarked sterling silver London 1964, makers mark W & W for Wately & Wheeler.

The cup will go on show in the Georgian Court Room of the Guildhall.

SPONSOR A MEMORIAL CABINET

**Llantrisant Guildhall will house a number of cabinets to showcase the
many artefacts relating to local Llantrisant history.**

The Trust has agreed to allow individuals to purchase a cabinet which will be dedicated to the memory of a relative of their choice.

Cabinets vary in price from £5,000 to £15,000 depending on size and security measures.

If you would like to know more contact dean@llantrisant.net



Llantrisant Summer Ball

A WONDERFUL EVENING OF CELEBRATION
IN THE ANCIENT HILLTOP TOWN



BANK HOLIDAY SUNDAY

- May 6th 2018 -

LLANTRISANT RFC CLUBHOUSE

BLACK TIE OPTIONAL • RAFFLE • AUCTION
FOUR-COURSE MEAL • LIVE MUSIC

- TICKETS PRICED £40.00 -

AVAILABLE FROM DEAN POWELL

07773 352962 or Email dean@llantrisant.net



RARE CLOCK DISCOVERED

A rare longcase clock made in Llantrisant in 1780 has been discovered at a dealer's property in Swindon.



The clock was made by Freeman David Thomas who is buried in Llantrisant parish church.

The rare antique clock has the name "Llantrissent" engraved on the face. It has been purchased by the Trust and will go on display at the Guildhall. What can be more perfect than a Georgian clock on show in a refurbished Georgian court room!

LLANTRISANT GUILDHALL: A BRIEF HISTORY OF A LANDMARK BUILDING



As the centre of power for almost seven centuries, a Guildhall probably existed before the town received borough status in 1346.

When de Clare established his administrative centre for the lordships of Meisgyn and Glynrhondda by building the Castle in 1246, the medieval courthouse may have also been included in the fortified enclosure.

The Guildhall was the seat of immense power and prestige, largely responsible for administering the Charter's 'Bill of Rights'.

The commercial aspect of the Charter not only emphasised the freedom of the Llantrisant tradespeople, but also stated that visiting merchants should pay tolls for the privilege, and such regulations were administered from the Guildhall.

The hall originally held a corn market on the lower floor, opening on to the market place through four archways. Windows on the upper floor faced north for the purpose of overseeing the market place below.

Nearby at Y Pwysty, goods were weighed to ensure they were priced accordingly. The Court Leet met at the Guildhall where their range of privileges, bye-laws and self-government were administered.

In 1699 Rev. James Harries established two charity schools, which were located at the Guildhall before it fell into disrepair. The Court Leet called on Lady Windsor, the Lady of the Manor, for financial support in 1773, but the rebuilding of the hall failed to bring long term prosperity to the town and by 1870 the market had closed and it provided the location for a new police station a few years later.

A library and reading room replaced the corn market in 1896 and the archways were replaced with windows. With the dissolution of the borough in 1883, the Guildhall fell into a period of redundancy.

However, with the establishment of Llantrisant Town Trust it enjoyed a new lease of life. Magistrates' Courts were still held there until 1956, when the Trust purchased the building, and it has been used by a variety of organisations.

POLITICIANS PLEDGE SUPPORT

Leading politicians visited the Guildhall recently to give their seal of approval to the enormous amount of work which has been completed.



Pontypridd MP Owen Smith and Mick Antoniw AM joined Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Cllr Andrew Morgan for a tour of the building. Mick Antoniw told the Trustees: "It has been fantastic to work closely with the Trust over the last few years and in particular to help secure funding for this important and exciting project. I'm supporting the Trustees in their final push to complete this project, which will provide a unique community facility to be enjoyed by the people of Llantrisant and beyond."

Owen Smith, MP said: "It's fantastic to see the Guildhall's exterior work completed and I want to congratulate the Town Trust and all those who've worked so hard to get us to this point."

"We need to press on now with the final stage and get the inside fitted out as soon as possible. The Trust can continue to count on my full support and I will do all I can to get the project over the line."

Leader of the Council, Cllr Andrew Morgan, added: "I am delighted to see the Guildhall being transformed through the hard work and dedication of all involved. This development has been made possible through close partnership working between a number of organisations, and I am sure that the Guildhall will become a prime attraction for residents and visitors alike."

MUSEUM ACCESSION REGISTER

Llantrisant Guildhall will house a large collection of artefacts and memorabilia of the old town in its archive collection.

A Museum Accession Register has now been compiled to catalogue more than 500 items already donated to the Guildhall.

If you would like to donate any items connected to Llantrisant – from a family photograph or postcard to a commemorative mug or souvenir book, then email dean@llantrisant.net

VIEWS FROM THE GUILDHALL

New website launched

Want to learn more about the history of Llantrisant and its Guildhall? Then visit our new website at www.llantrisant.net or follow us on social media

Let History Unfold

Guildhall Manager Dean Powell has led a number of guided heritage walks and presented history lectures to raise the profile – and funds – of the Guildhall. He has also met with more than 30 history societies and voluntary organisations to share the story of the building.

Cell Window Discovered

The original cell window (complete with iron bars!) from the basement of the Guildhall was uncovered during the restoration work.



Stories revealed that relatives of "inmates" would pass bread, cheese and even beer through the bars to their loved ones!

Big Picnic Success

The Guildhall Big Picnic event was a huge success as it welcomed several hundred to the Castle Green. Plans are now in place to organise a second Big Picnic in June 2018

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AT THE HALL?



A large extension has been built for the installation of a lift to ensure full disability access to both floors.

The entire building has been restored to the very highest conservation standards

The main floor has been rebuilt, and extensive timber repairs carried out to the roof structure

New and refurbished windows and doors installed

The exterior walls and porch have been completely repaired and renovated

The large medieval chimney has been rebuilt to its original height

The roof completed in new Welsh slate

Waterproofing, partitioning, underfloor heating and first fix electrics completed

Restoration of iron gates and handrails

Commission of a reception desk

Commissioning of a mannequin

Discovery of the painting of Sir David Evans and the David Thomas longcase clock

Completion of a 10-minute film of Llantrisant

GUILDHALL FIRST FLOOR: THE VISION

The upper floor of the Guildhall will be developed into a Georgian-style room for exhibitions, events and special occasions.



All four sash windows have been fully restored and the original fire place has been uncovered for the first time in generations.

The new ceiling will be several feet higher than previously and an oak floor will be installed.

A staircase linking the upper and lower floor of the building (for the first time!) will be installed along with a reception desk and counter.

Three glass exhibition cabinets will be placed inbetween the windows to house artefacts including the Loving Cup, Freeman's Roll and items on loan from the late Sir Cennydd Traherne's family.

The antique longcase clock made in Llantrisant in 1780 will also be installed in the main room.

Shields of De Clare, Despenser and the Earl of Pembroke will be suspended from the ceiling and the commissioned mannequin of a longbowman will be placed along with a large image of the Crecy battle scene.

A screen will show the newly produced Llantrisant history film on a loop system throughout the day along with old images from the archive collection.

Information boards telling the story of the Charter, Crecy, the Guildhall, Beating the Bounds and the Freeman will adorn the walls along with the portrait of Sir David Evans and other eminent former residents.

The centre piece of the Georgian court room will be the security cabinet housing the silver Mace of 1633.

The upper floor will also include a room for the Guildhall Archive Collection along with a disabled toilet provision and an elevator in the rear extension for access to the lower floor.

The upper room will be used for guest speakers, weddings, special events and the annual Court Leet ceremony of the Town Trust.

GUILDHALL LOWER FLOOR: THE VISION

The lower floor of the Guildhall will be developed into an education facility for visiting school children, family historians and researchers.



The basement floor has been adapted with the movement of the door way along with the refurbishment of the former cells into toilet facilities.

The staircase will be installed to link to the upper floor and a fully functional kitchen is being kindly donated by Howdens Joinery.

This will be ideal for community groups who want to hire the room for exhibitions or various activities.

The walls of the lower floor will have a number of information boards telling the story of the Castle, Church, Education, Sport, Public Houses and Culture. A large showcase will be installed exhibiting items belonging to Dr William Price along with a model wearing a replica costume as worn by the surgeon. There will also be two large information boards telling the story of his many achievements as a Chartist leader and pioneer of the Cooperative movement. An IT section will be available for genealogists and researchers along with a central area displaying a model of the town.



WHAT HAS YET TO BE DONE AT THE HALL?



Fundraising of around £300,000

Fit ceilings

Plaster and paint all the internal walls

Fit the kitchen - which has been kindly donated by Howdens

Install the toilets

Complete the electrical work

Complete the plumbing and drainage work

Install the lift

Install high specification security cabinets

Install a full exhibition display including information boards and activities

Fit out the Archive Room

Fundraising Activity

Letters requesting financial support for the Guildhall project have been issued to over 980 Freemen and 200 businesses and organisations. The Welsh Society of Georgia USA, are auctioning a donated piece of jewellery in aid of the project.

Christmas Fayre

The Guildhall Trust arranged Llantrisant's first "Christmas at the Castle" event with stalls, refreshments and a Santa's Grotto! Hundreds of visitors braved the weather to enjoy this community event.

FRIENDS OF THE GUILDHALL

Llantrisant Guildhall was the powerhouse of an ancient borough for almost 700 years. For generations it governed the hilltop town – from punishing offenders to managing markets and fairs.

Llantrisant Guildhall will shortly become a major heritage and visitors' centre based in the heart of one of the oldest communities in Wales. It will tell the remarkable story of a 1,400-year old town which boasts many landmark buildings, proud traditions and bewildering legends.

Famous for its Freeman and the role their "Black Army" played in the Battle of Crecy, Llantrisant played a pivotal role in the revolts of the Welsh against the early Norman overlords. Llantrisant Castle was an overnight prison for King Edward II while the eccentric Dr William Price's actions in the town led to the passing of the Cremation Act in the UK.

This fine medieval court house is being restored and new life will be breathed into its ancient timbers once more. Run by the Llantrisant Guildhall Trust, a charitable body of volunteers, the building will provide education facilities for schoolchildren and will act as a resource for family historians.

As a charitable organisation it depends very much on the kindness and support of the general public. It takes a surprisingly large amount of money to run the Guildhall, and trustees are always grateful for any support that is offered.

Become a **Friend of Llantrisant Guildhall** and join an exclusive group of supporters who are helping to shape the future of the organisation.

The annual cost of becoming a Friend is £20.00 and membership includes a copy of the new Llantrisant history book, "*An Historic Hilltop Town*". You will also be kept updated with the progress of the building in regular e-newsletters and will be exclusively invited to special events.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

EMAIL.....

Please return this form with a cheque for £20.00 (payable to Llantrisant Guildhall) to:
Guildhall Manager, 4 The Mews, Church Street, Llantrisant, Rhondda Cynon Taf, CF72 8SP
www.llantrisant.net