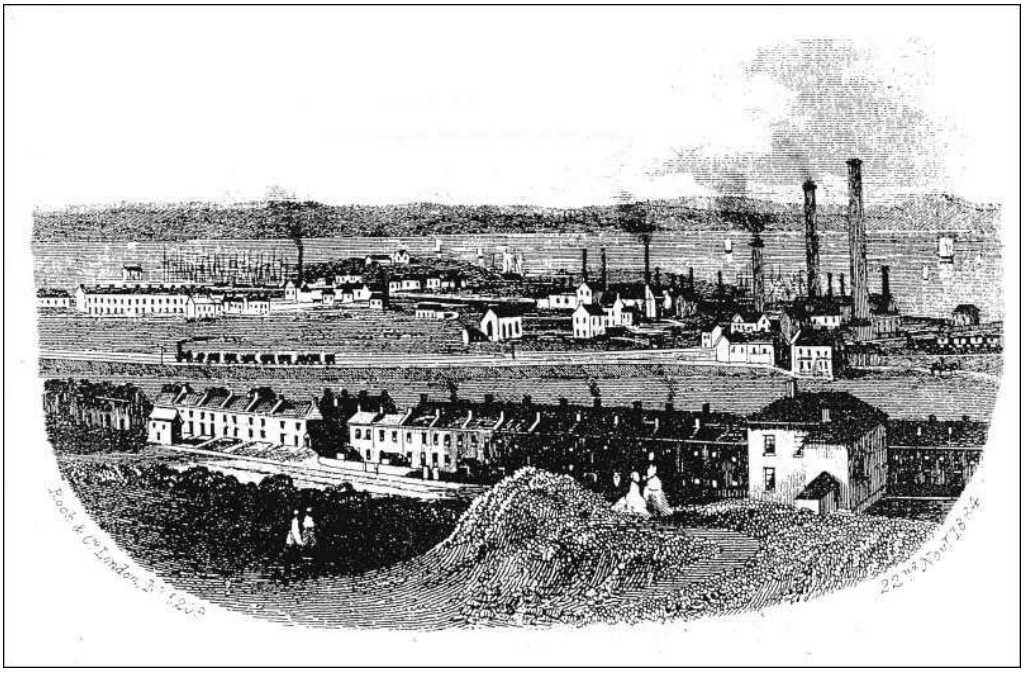
Kirsty Thomas.

Distinctiveness and Regeneration



(By Llanelli Community Heritage)

What is Regeneration?

Regeneration is to deliver a long lasting solution to help areas with investment. Certain towns and cities have empty land where the area looks run down and need improving for different reasons, one being to help the economy. This takes time and planning, where they need to consider what the area needs and to get as much advice from the people who live in that area to make sure they keep the locals happy and also to bring communities together..

To regenerate an area means they need funding, which could take years to complete. Regenerating an area can bring in so many career opportunities, and to create an improved living environment. (Weaver, 2001).

Regeneration could include new homes being built, education centres, shopping centres or museums. By doing this, it will help improve the physical, social and environmental condition.

Executive summary

This report is to review why it is important to regenerate an area and why it could change the lives of many and what regeneration ideas could benefit Llanelli itself. Part A of the report gives the history of the industrial revolution that happened in Llanelli in the eighteenth century when Alexander Raby, an ironmaster, crossed the Falcon Bridge to build his empire. He gave the town career opportunity and brought in the population to the area, such history as this is important to Llanelli and makes the town what it is today. It explains how his empire began and business was booming, to unfortunately losing it all and got himself into financial issues. Furnaces still stand in Stradey Llanelli, which keeps the history alive. Houses, businesses such as Stradey Park Hotel have been built nearby, but stradey isn't such a big area itself. Although there wouldn't be any room for regeneration plans in Stradey, Llanelli town centre itself and Llanelli docks have massive potential.

In the report you will find what regeneration plans Llanelli have in place already with a £9million funding scheme accepted in 2019. There are more regeneration schemes already in place, giving Llanelli residents career opportunities and a better living environment. Of course there is a lot of planning and organising before anything gets accepted with a lot to take into consideration. The report will also explain who would be involved in the regeneration plans and interest groups such as business owners and investors.

Part B of the report will give ideas on regeneration plans which I think would benefit the area such as Llanelli dock and Llanelli town centre that would suit all ages. With so much space and empty buildings. Regeneration in such an area like Llanelli would open many doors for the residents and change their way of living.

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Introduction

In this report I will look at the Llanelli area where the industrial revolution happened, and give information about the historical development of the place. Explain why the area had coal mines and steel works and what made the works close, with so many people losing careers and how this affected the area even years later.
Towns and cities have changed drastically and some urgently needs a change whether it's people desperate for more career opportunities in the area to the place looking run down which doesn't bring many people in to the area as appearance matters. Old buildings not being used or massive bits of land that have not been used for years are looking untidy are just going to waste.

Some unused land has history and still has some existing assets to the place. In this report it's important to look at the area carefully and see what the place already has and what the place is missing. It is also important to listen to the local people and figure out what they need and want in their area and to also think about what will bring more people in. Regeneration of an area takes years and needs to be realistic, when restoring an area where history already sits, it is important for the locals to make sure the history of the place is included in the new ideas and plans as locals are always proud of where they live for that reason. Also keeping the history is a great way for people to learn whether you're a student in school or university or someone who is just visiting the area. Great way to keep the history of a place alive.

Historical Development
Llanelli

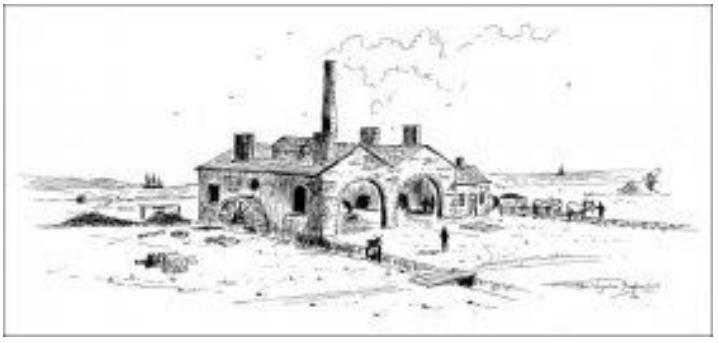
LLanelli's own Industrial revolution

In the eighteenth century a English man called Alexander Raby crossed the Falcon Bridge with his family and his possessions including a chest of gold. Alexander Raby was an entrepreneur and an ironmaster who put everything he had left into the coal and iron industry which became one of the biggest industries in South Wales.

Alexander Raby first financed John Gevers and Thomas Ingam who previously had an iron furnace on the Stradey Estate in 1791. The two men leased some farms who lived locally to them where there were ironstone kept. John Gevers and Thomas Ingam were unable to repay Alexander due to their business being unsuccessful. For this reason Raby came to Llanelli himself and foreclosed on them, which he then took over the iron furnace himself in 1796. Although the two men were not successful, John Gevers stayed and continued to work with Raby at Stradey furnace. Alexander Raby had business ideas in other places in Wales such as Swansea and Neath and many other parts. Reason being it would be better to be sited near sources of it's raw material. (John, 2019).

Raby had a couple of coal mines called Caemain, Caerelms and Caebad on the Stradey Estate. The estate was actually owned by Dame Mary Anne Masel, which she then left it to Thomas Lewis when she passed away in 1808.

Raby started to expand his business in the nineteenth century, he had a new forge at a place called Sandy, this is where they made iron, rails and rods from the pig iron located in that area. Later on Raby invested in new technology for Caebad colliery which was a new high-pressure steam engine. (John, 2019).



(John, 2019)

As iron needs big quantities of coal, iron ore and limestone, Raby would have to go further to be able to get this. A place called Mynydd Mawr which is 13 miles from Llanelli had quarries which had both iron ore and limestone. This ment Raby needed a way to be able to transport large quantities, which he decided on a railway or tramway as it would be more efficient. On 3rd of June 1802 an Act of Parliament gave them the go ahead to do so. (John, 2019).

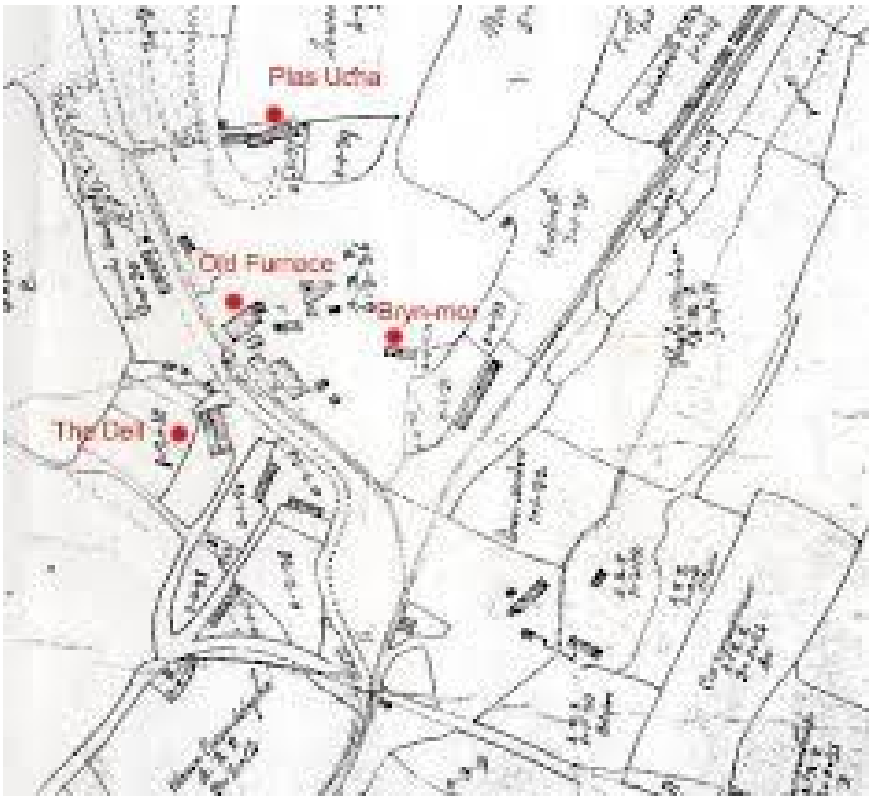
Changing Fortunes

With Raby's business booming at the beginning it brought in population to Llanelli and many jobs for some people.

> Through his agents James Goodyear, George Walker and Robert Parkin, Raby owned four ships. He set up an artery of tramways linking all his sites from his furnaces down to his dock. The small town of Llanelli experienced a population explosion, growing from under 500 inhabitants in 1795 to just under 3000 by 1801 (John, 2019).

Raby built many cottages which some were near his collieries due to the population growing he also had a public house at the end of the row of homes called 'Raby Arms'.

Unfortunately by 1806 the shareholders of the Carmarthen Rail Road company had not been receiving their shares on their investment which of course put Alexander Raby in financial trouble. As Raby was unable to recover from this he installed unauthorised tramways and railways at the furnace, collieries and forge, but then he never made payments of tolls to the company due to his current financial crisis. In 1806 Raby was in big trouble as he now owed Thomas Lewis of Stradey £1000 for rent on the Stradey estate which he was also avoiding. In June 1807, as Raby owed money he was forced to make these payments by giving up some of his properties in Cobham and London including his principal estate.



(By Llanelli Community Heritage, 2019)

In 1809 Raby found himself again in financial trouble, his iron works and collieries in Llanelli and Neath were now up for sale. On 16th of November that year an auction was being held in London. His failure began when he misused the Carmarthen Railway, it was then he went into partnership with Colonel John Dumaresq. “He owned a quarter share in the works and collieries in Llanelli. Raby had, in effect, bought Dumatesq out, on a long-term basis, by paying him fixed amounts with interest” (john, 2019).

In 1825 Raby had to give up his empire as he was now owing too much money to others. His Blast furnace still stands as a memory of Raby and also the village name ‘Furnace’. (John, 2019).

Existing Assets, structures and economic character

Ruins of Alexander Raby’s furnaces still stand. Here's a link below showing the beautiful historical history that has been left behind.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Un4Cn0lGhw

Furnace was named after the furnace built by Raby but before the name was given the small area was called 'Cwmddyche' which only had a few farm sheds and Bryn-Y-Mor house. This is where Stradey Park hotel and spa is today. The village by a valley in which the Afon Cille flows.
"Llyn Trebeddrod or Furnace Pond is also within the village and was constructed as a reservoir to serve the furnaces" (Howells, 2013).

The manor house now called Stradey Park Hotel built back in 1912 was owned by Alexander Raby. The building had dining rooms and a function room which former owners Angela Saunders and her brother Barry invested big money into the manor house and extended the manor house into a 77 bedroom hotel with meeting rooms and conference rooms, also a beautiful spa facility since they bought the place in 2000. (Price, 2020).

(By Stradey Park Hotel)

Around the area there is also a lovely pub/restaurant called Stradey Arms, Llanelli beach is walking distance from the area and of course Llanelli town itself and Trostre only a few minutes down the road with plenty of popular shops and also cinema, theatres and more restaurants and cafes. As Stradey is a small area of Llanelli there isn't much room in that area for regeneration plans or any changes to be made. But as for Llanelli town and the Llanelli docks area there are plenty of regeneration ideas that could be made to bring more population in the area and also more careers.

Key stakeholders and interest groups

Llanelli town itself looks run down with more shops empty than the building being occupied. Since Tostre opened, Llanelli town has struggled closing many

doors to the public. The area is big and could have massive potential weather this means giving business owners free rent for a couple of months just to help get the place up and running, as the town seems to have failed this will put many business owners off the idea of opening their own business. There is also a leisure centre with a great swimming pool which is now unfortunately run down and needs a lot of updating. Interest groups would include Councillors, Business owners, suppliers, landowners, local residents, unemployed seeking work, charities and lenders & society. There could be potential for the area with the correct investors.
Business Owners - would be key players. They are interested in how well their business would do in that area specifically and how much profit they would make. They have the say in the sales and they also decide the aim of the business. Customers are also stakeholders as without them there would be no sales. They are to be taken into consideration. (BBC, 2021).
The community - would be important and something business owners and investors would need to take in consideration when planning a business. They of course want to live in a safe, happy environment and have more job opportunities. But they could also be very unhappy with some ideas and could protest against it all. You want them to support the local businesses as they would be the customers to bring in the business money. It is important to listen and take advice from the community instead of them turning against business plans.

Local/Regional development strategies

Llanelli has a popular shopping centre in Trostre with plenty of popular clothing stores, supermarkets, DIY stores and much more. Beautiful golf course at Machynys with a restaurant and spa only walking distance from the beach. Llanelli town itself has a few stores that are still occupied, with a busy market and a cinema with restaurants such as Nandos and Jo's ice cream. There is also an indoor swimming pool which has had no change or work done to it for so many years. Although Llanelli seems to have everything you would want there is still room for improvement and updating. There are some plans in place for the town.

As popular Llanelli is, there are massive improvements to be made. With the building looking old and grubby, there are some plans being made for the area.

Station Road Llanelli is one area that desperately needs changing. According to Wales online 44 flats in Maes Y Gors will be demolished in March this year as the council has other plans for the area in regards to a well needed revamp. The plans for the area include 110 new housing units some that will be owner occupied. New offices and shops and also improvements to the llanelli railway station with more attractive links to the town centre. They have also said that 'The old good yard' could also be turned into community facilities and also offices. The £9 million regeneration scheme was approved last year. The area is known as an alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour place. (Youle, 2020).

There is also another £3million regeneration scheme in place for Llanelli town centre for new restaurants, apartments and offices, which again would be amazing news for the locals as this will give so many of them careers. (Lewis, 2020).

(By In your area, 2020)

There are also more plans that will include a Wellness Hub which will be offering a range of services. With facilities for training and education, sports and leisure centre, research and development within life science. There will be more accommodation for all ages including a nursing home and supported living accommodation. This will boost our economy with plenty of jobs available. (Carmarthenshire County council, 2020).

Regeneration Ideas

Llanelli docks - Spa and wellness centre

Llanelli docks have beautiful views of the beach and what better to have a relaxing day out at the spa to unwind with a beautiful view. Having a breathtaking view instantly relaxes the mind, and many people would say the beach is their happy place. To take full advantage of the view the spa would have mirrored privacy windows, so whilst you enjoy the views, no one would be able to see in. whether it's having a massage, facial or your nails done or simply relaxing in the relax lounges you will have this view right in front of you. The spa would offer many treatments from massages, reiki, facials, mud wraps, nail treatments and also treatments that would help with sleep routines or even something uplifting to boost the energy. Products would all be vegan friendly and hand made locally with natural ingredients and reusable amber bottles to keep the products fresher for longer and protected from UV light. Products would be available to customers also. In the spa there would be facilities such as jacuzzi, aromatherapy room, steam room, sauna and an outdoor infinity pool overlooking the beach. There would also be sound proof walls and doors for the spa to make sure the guests have a relaxing expereince.

The building would have different sections, the spa would be on one side of the building with treatment rooms and facilities taking over two floors. To the other side of the building there would be classes held for a healthy mind and body. These classes would be held on the first floor. Classes would range from yoga and meditation. In summer the classes would be held outside on the beach. There will also be classes held where a member of staff will give a presentation on how to keep a positive mind and to improve our mental health and how to balance a healthy lifestyle with plenty of advice and tips. On the same side of the building on the second floor there will be a skin care clinic. From anti wrinkling treatments to acne treatments and much more such as botox and fillers.

In the middle of the building there would be a restaurant for spa guests to use and local people. The restaurant will only contain healthy meals as the centre is about health and wellbeing. There are far too many fast food restaurants and

not enough healthy options in Llanelli. The younger generation have changed and are a lot more into fitness and health and this would be very popular bringing in customers of all ages. The restaurant will have a balcony overlooking the beach with a privacy wall between the balcony and the infinity pool to assure spa guests get full privacy.

Strength - There is no other Spa in Llanelli with a beach view with a pool, or hold classes for mental health. Also with a skin care clinic it is all under one roof. Good profits made with spa as not many products are used during certain treatments.

Hotel

On the same strip as the spa and wellness centre there would be a hotel. This could be linked to the spa and a great opportunity for the spa to do offers with the hotel where spa guests can stay. Businesses can help each other and make arrangements on this. The hotel would have up to 80 rooms with balconies. As many tourists come to Llanelli this would be an ideal place to stay as you are close to many places. Llanelli town is down the road and also you have Pembrey and Burry Port on the other side. The hotel would have a restaurant and a bar and function rooms to hire.

Beach Bar

Next to the Hotel it would be a great idea to open a bar/caffe. In the day it will be opened to the public as a beach caffe, in summer this would be great for all public that use the beach. Whether it’s to grab cold/warm drinks or homemade sandwiches, paninis or chips. This will bring more people to the area knowing there is a place open for beach guests and also anyone who passes by. In the night the cafe will close and open as a tapas bar to serve alcohol and light snacks and appetizers. Again this would be great for the summer nights and being able to sit outside enjoying a drink. Especially if you are a hotel guest next door to the building.

SeaFood restaurant

On the same strip with the views of the beach, a seafood restaurant would be ideal for the area. Selling all types of different seafood dishes from cockles, muscles, laverbread, prawn dishes and more. Again this is keeping it healthy and

delicious at the same time. With glass windows so you can still enjoy the views and an outdoor seating area with heated lamps ready for the summer nights.

Llanelli town centre

Many stores have closed in the town centre leaving empty buildings. This has been ongoing for many years. To give the area a chance and for business owners to have the opportunity to start a new adventure, the landlords of the buildings could possibly think of giving free rent for a couple of months just so the business owners can have a good start, and also reduce the number of empty buildings. They could also revamp the outside of the store as they do look run down, make the place look attractive and eye catching to the customers. Something as simple as adding colour and beautifully designed signs can make all the difference.

Workshop unit

Having a workshop unit for all different ages would be beneficial to the youngsters especially. It will keep them off the streets and keep them busy and occupied and also be able to find a hobby they will love and possibly career goals. The workshop unit can hold many different courses and classes to help the local people get a qualification or just simply to pass time and keep busy especially for the elderly. The classes can include crafts, wood work, knitting, beauty treatment courses, massage courses, candle making class and much more.

SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weakness
Skill levels of local people Strong local heritage Welsh language	Community complaints Government funding Current situation with Covid-19 poverty
Opportunities	**Threats**
Career opportunities Improve education standards and raise skills Sites/buildings available for redevelopment. Government grant schemes	Environmental threats Competition/competitors from other businesses Customer needs Customer perceptions

Conclusion

Llanelli has a lot of historical history to the area, which is great and makes the town what it is today.

There is no doubt that Llanelli is in need of a big change and the town definitely has potential. With plans already in place for this year and next year with funding being accepted the town is going in the right direction. £9 Million regeneration scheme got accepted in 2019 and another £3 Million regeneration scheme in place for the area. It is clear to see that in order to make regeneration plans it takes a lot of work and funding that could take years to get accepted. There are many opportunities in the area for investors and business owners, whether it is in the town centre of Llanelli docks.

This will open many doors for the residents in Llanelli giving them career opportunities and also bringing in more population. It will also improve their living environment.

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