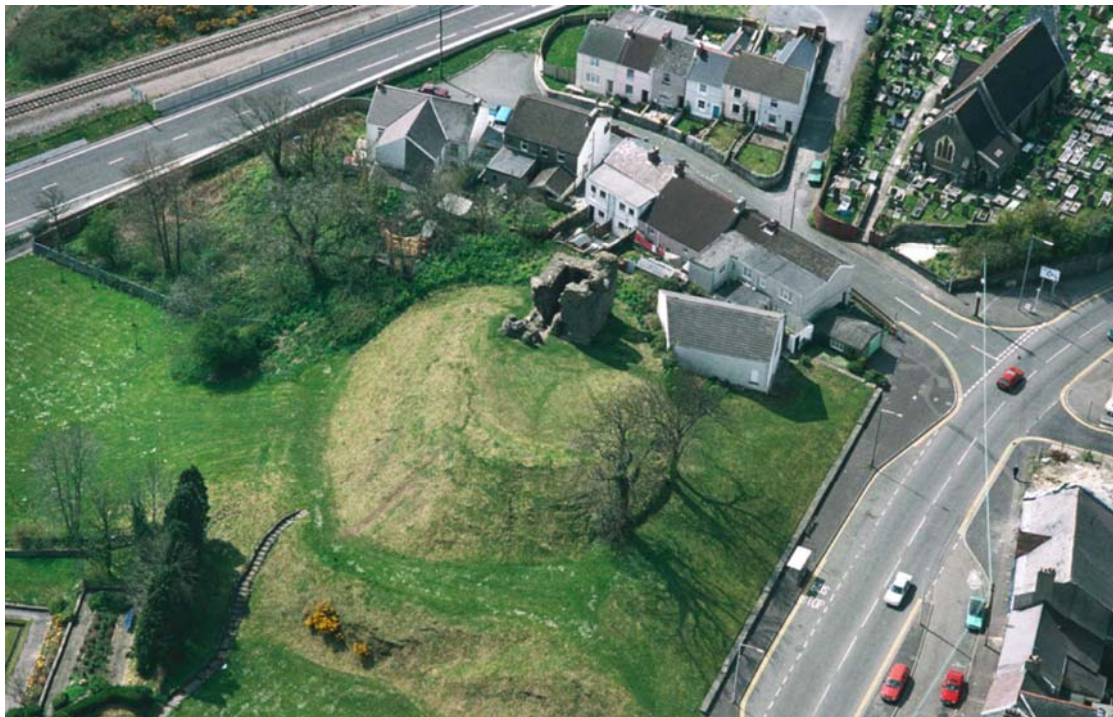


# Community Profile for Loughor Castle

Draft Version 1.0



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# Foreword and Acknowledgements

## Foreword

In January 2007, Cadw - the Historic Environment Service of the Welsh Assembly Government - commissioned Evidence Base Ltd to profile communities living near to monuments in their care. These profiles will be used to inform work priorities for individual monuments as well as area-based partnership-working. The profiles consist of summary information, outlining:

- The demographic, social, economic and environmental context of the communities;
- Local priorities and problems;
- Local networks, groups and initiatives;
- Community benefits and issues associated with the monument;
- Community use of the monument.

The profiles also provide references and website links for further information.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the local residents and individuals from local organisations, partnerships, groups and societies consulted during the course of the project that have helped us to gain an understanding of the local communities, including their priorities, problems, activities and projects. Their contribution has been of great value and we appreciate the time that they devoted to give us their views.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the staff at Cadw for their continuous support and assistance throughout the project.



# Loughor Castle

Roman soldiers from the Second Augustan Legion established Leucarum (Loughor) in about AD 75, to guard the major communications route that crisscrossed South Wales and included the River Loughor (in Welsh, Llŵchwr; Leucara, in Latin). Leucarum sat along a Roman road that stretched from Viroconium (modern Wroxeter) to Moridunum (Carmarthen) and probably linked several forts and fortlets in southern Wales, including Nidum (Neath). The auxiliary fort at Leucarum was essentially rectangular, and, at one corner - possibly now covered by the castle - a tower may have stood. Evidently, Leucarum's timber structures were adorned with "fine painted plaster walls with a leaf-pattern on a striped red and yellow ground" (Heather James, 1982). Today, only the shape of the site and some earthworks mark the existence of the Roman walls that originally encompassed the fort. The Romans abandoned Leucarum in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, but reoccupied the site from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century before leaving it permanently.



Cadw. Crown Copyright

In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Normans extended their control over southern Wales and the Earl of Warwick, Henry de Beaumont, became the area's overlord. By 1116, an oval ringwork castle existed on top of the earlier fort. Its first commander was Henry de Viliers, Warwick's representative. Initially, Loughor Castle was defended with timber ramparts and contained wooden domestic buildings. In 1151, the Welsh attacked Loughor Castle and burned it. Curiously scorched Norman chess pieces, possibly dating to this event, have been unearthed at the site. The Normans promptly regained their hold on the castle, and soon made repairs to the structure, adding several stone buildings.

In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, John de Braose became Loughor Castle's new owner. He added a low stone curtain wall, of which only foundations remain. At the end of the century, when William de Braose had the lordship, the rectangular stone tower that now dominates the site was constructed. Though greatly ruined, the two-storied tower retains enough of its original structure to give a fairly complete picture of how it was used. The fireplaces, fine windows, and garderobe (latrine chute) suggest that the tower was residential, perhaps housing the lord of the castle and his household. The gateway into the castle stood next to this tower and there is some speculation that a second tower also defended the later castle.

Little else of note took place at Loughor Castle. After Edward I's final subjugation of the Welsh at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the castle no longer occupied a significant place in the royal arsenal. Today, Cadw has guardianship of the castle, which is freely accessible any reasonable time. The site remains of interest to archaeologists,

who sporadically continue hunting for evidence of its past. If you are in the area, take the time to explore the ruins. You won't be disappointed.

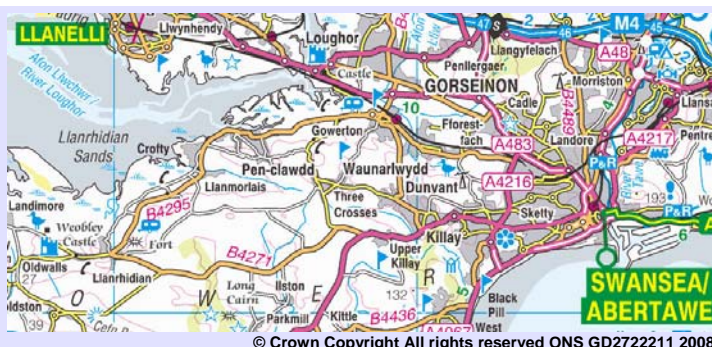
Lise Hull, Castles of Wales

[www.castlewales.com/loughor.html](http://www.castlewales.com/loughor.html)

## Location

### Directions

- **By car:** A484, A4070 to Loughor
- **By train:** Gowerton 4km/ 2.4mils.
- **By bike:** Loughor Castle can be accessed via a National Cycle Network on-road route.  
Visit the [Sustrans](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) website for details.



“One can only wonder how many visitors Loughor Castle really sees in a given year. The location was fine for a medieval castle, as it immediately overlooks a major river link to the sea, but its present situation, alongside the busy A484 roadway, means that, unless you are actively hunting for the site, your attention will most likely be focused on the traffic and the bridge ahead. Consequently, you may even miss the castle. Indeed, Loughor's castle seems to teeter on the fringes of invisibility, for the city is almost swallowed up by the sprawling Swansea, around which visitors must negotiate, with great anxiety (the traffic can be dreadful!), to find this little-known, but interesting site”.

Lise Hull, Castles of Wales, [www.castlewales.com/loughor.html](http://www.castlewales.com/loughor.html)

“Finding Loughor Castle was a real challenge for us. We drove pass the intersection three times. We parked and looked at the bridge that our maps said was by the site. We looked around in despair that there was no sign of a castle. Finally we looked 'up' and to our astonishment the tower was on the hill directly next to where we were parked. We once again had the satisfaction of finding our goal”.

Castle Sights, [www.castlesights.com](http://www.castlesights.com)

## Site Opening Hours

Loughor Castle is an unstaffed site, open to the public with no admission charge at all reasonable times, usually between 10.00 and 16.00 daily.

## **Site Facilities**

There are currently no facilities on site. The castle did have an interpretation panel in the past, but it is no longer there.

## **Access for Visitors with Disabilities**

The monument is set on a steep mount, which is not an easy climb for those with limited mobility.

## **Cadw Events at Loughor Castle**

No events are organised by Cadw at Loughor Castle.

## **Visitors**

Loughor Castle is an unstaffed monument, which means that official visitor figures are unavailable. The castle is very much in ruin form, with only the remains of a tower visible, so it does not have a very high profile among castles in Wales. The monument is said to receive few purposeful visits, but its central position in Lower Loughor means that residents are in and around the castle grounds on a daily basis. The site is popular with residents walking their dog and the local schools also bring children to the site for educational purposes. The Loughor estuary is popular with walkers and cyclists, many of whom stop at the castle. The Sustrans cycle network passes close to the castle which also brings visitors to the site.

There are two caravan parks a mile in either direction of Loughor, and the castle is visible from the sites. Some holidaymakers staying at the caravan parks are likely to visit the castle.

A popular restaurant (which brings people into Loughor) backs onto the castle. A number of restaurant customers are likely to take an interest in the monument.

## **Community Consultation**

During October and November 2008, a number of local stakeholders were consulted in order to improve our understanding of Loughor Castle and its standing within the community. The consultation consisted of a short, postal questionnaire and a series of telephone interviews, which enabled further discussion and identification of local priorities, issues and community activity. This section provides a summary of the consultation findings relating to Loughor Castle.

- **Community Benefits associated with Loughor Castle**

The castle is part of the community's heritage and an important landmark, which sets Loughor apart from other villages. The castle is on an elevated position, overlooking the estuary and the settlement that grew around it. It is the focal point for Loughor and the views from it are marvellous. Everyone in

the community is aware of the castle and, in the summer months, it is a popular place for local people to walk. While there is a lot of local pride in the monument, few residents are said to know much about the castle's rich history.

The local schools use the castle as an educational resource when teaching children about local history. One school organises a locality walk which encompasses heritage sites, including the castle. Another school uses the castle for art classes, as well as history. One local stakeholder mentioned that one of the local schools also created an exhibition at the school that related to the castle's history.

- **Community Problems and Issues associated with Loughor Castle**

The castle is described as being very "low key". While everyone in the local community is aware of the castle, it does not have a very high profile in Swansea and the wider region. The monument is only the remains of one of the towers of the castle, so it is not as spectacular as some of the other castles within the region. The castle also receives little promotion both locally and in the wider Gower area.

Despite the castle's rich and diverse history, there is little information available about the castle. The site itself has no information panels to tell visitors about its history.

The castle is not signposted anywhere in Loughor. As a result, those making a purposeful visit to the castle often have real difficulties finding it. Walkers and cyclists are said to be the main visitors to the castle as they pass the monument en route.

The castle is located close to the local park which can sometimes lend itself to being used as a place for young people to congregate and engage in underage drinking. A number of stakeholders identified underage drinking a problem at the castle. Youths are also seen climbing the monument and causing a general nuisance. As a result of youths congregating at the site, litter has been identified as a key problem at the castle, with empty bottles and cans left lying around the site. It has also led to damage to the castle structure over the years, where stones have been picked off or have fallen off as youths climb the structure. The problem is dealt with as and when it happens, and residents report incidents to the local police. There are currently no plans to introduce security measures at the castle site.

Car parking is very limited at the castle and within Loughor as a whole and, as a result, visitors travelling to Loughor by car often have difficulties finding a parking space. Loughor Castle and the surrounding area have been designated as a conservation area, so it is not feasible to build a car park. It was once suggested to Swansea City Council that the base of the castle would be an ideal location for a car park, but this was rejected.

While the castle and its surrounding area now have conservation status, in the late 1960s, the site was subject to unsympathetic town planning when a

bypass was built alongside it. The road was then widened in the early 1980s. The road network sadly cut through the area, spoiling the peaceful and tranquil setting which the castle once enjoyed.

- **Community Use of Loughor Castle**

- a. **A Marketing Tool**

- The castle is not currently used as a marketing tool by the local community.

- b. **A Venue for Community Events**

- The monument is not currently used for community events.

- c. **To attract Funding**

- To date, the castle has not been used by the local community to attract funding. One local stakeholder noted that they would be interested in opportunities that may exist to gain funding to improve the castle's surroundings.

- d. **Other Uses**

- The castle is occasionally used for photography. The neighbouring authority uses a photograph of the castle on the cover of its periodical community magazine.

When stakeholders were asked whether they saw potential for greater use of the monument, all answered in the affirmative. It was explained that there is great potential to use the open space and the castle as a backdrop for a range of events, including wedding ceremonies, receptions, photography, painting workshops; and community events, such as barbeques. One local stakeholder explained that the top of the mound has a flat area where there would be enough room to erect a small marquee to provide cover in wet weather conditions. It was also suggested that the local schools and tertiary college could make more use of the castle in local studies and project work.

One local stakeholder mentioned that it is not easy to walk up the castle mound, so this may limit access for some people; however, it was suggested that the castle could be included as an extension of the nearby park during community events.

- **Strengthening Links and Community Engagement**

- When asked whether they could think of ways in which Cadw could work with their community to strengthen links and develop more community engagement with, and use of, their monument, local stakeholders provided the following suggestions:

- **Expansion of Church Hall** - The local church, located opposite the castle, is currently investigating the potential to expand the church hall

for community use. It was suggested that there is potential to create an exhibition of the castle inside the new hall, which will strengthen the historic links between the church and castle. The church is very interested to find out Cadw's views on this proposal and would welcome joint working. For further details about this project see section entitled 'Local Priorities and Problems'.

- **Improving Loughor Park and surrounding area** – There is great interest within the local community to improve the area of Loughor encompassing the park and castle and develop more community use of these sites. The community would welcome support and joint working with Cadw on this project. For further details, see section entitled 'Local Priorities and Problems'.
- **More promotion** - Local stakeholders were keen to see more promotion of the castle to help raise its profile, both locally and across the wider Gower area. It was felt that Loughor Castle and the Roman Fort on which the castle stands have largely been neglected and there is very little information within the town to explain its history. It was acknowledged that the castle is not as impressive as some of the other castles, but it could be promoted as a group of castles alongside Weobley and Oxwich Castles. It was also suggested that there could be wider promotion of the castle amongst schools and colleges in the area. One stakeholder suggested that Cadw staff could visit local primary schools to talk about the castle.

It was mentioned that the majority of visitors to Loughor come for the town's link with Evan Roberts, the charismatic leader of the Welsh Religious Revival of 1904 – 05. In the summer months, coach parties arrive into Loughor to visit the place where Evan Robert's grew up and the Chapel. The Chapel is also said to receive many international visitors. It was suggested that, if there was some joint promotion of the castle and the town's links with Evan Roberts, this may help to raise the profile of the castle and encourage more visitors.

- **More interpretation** - There is currently no literature available in Loughor which explains about the town's rich history, which goes back to the Roman era. Local stakeholders and the schools were keen for more information to be made available. The castle no longer has an interpretation panel on site, so when visitors go to see the monument they are unaware of what they are looking at and its historical significance. It was suggested that a plaque with some interpretation would be beneficial. One local stakeholder suggested there should be more research and archaeology on the medieval period of Loughor Castle. The stakeholder mentioned that some kind of reconstruction of what the castle looked like in medieval times would be very interesting and useful.

- **Improve signposting** - The castle is currently not signposted in Loughor. Stakeholders would like to see signage installed to help direct visitors to the castle.
- **Heritage Trail** - The local area has a rich heritage, with many interesting historical sites including the town hall, horse pound, Roman road, salt house at the port and the castle. One local stakeholder suggested that there is great potential to link all the historical sites by creating a Heritage Trail. It was anticipated that this would encourage visitors to spend a day in Loughor.



# Loughor

Loughor (Welsh: *Casllwchwr*) is a small, historical town<sup>1</sup> which lies on the estuary of the River Loughor in the county of Swansea, South Wales. Loughor is the most westerly town in the historic county of Glamorgan, situated seven miles north west of Swansea, on the east bank of the Loughor River where it is bridged by the A484 and the main railway line.

The settlement owes its origin to the narrowing of the river at this point which led in the earliest times to the establishment of a ford and ferry crossing.<sup>2</sup> Around 75 AD, Loughor (or *Leucarum* as it was known) became a Roman stronghold as the legionaries of the Roman army charged westward into one of the remotest corners of the Empire. The fort, which commanded the headland immediately adjacent to, and overlooking, the causeway and landing place, covered approximately 5 acres and housed up to 500 soldiers. Following excavations in 1969, much of the Roman fort was discovered on the site of the Norman Castle whilst it is believed the Roman Commander's headquarters lay where St Michael's Church stands today.<sup>3</sup> The line of Roman construction is discernible in a number of places. The present day street pattern reflects the Roman layout, particularly with regard to the four entrance gates.<sup>4</sup>

Its importance in the communications of the area continued and, following the Norman Conquest, around 1106 the Norman knight, Henry de Villiers, began the construction of a fortification in the eastern corner of the derelict Roman fort. This site overlooked a convenient crossing point of the River Loughor, on the main east-west route through South Wales. A medieval rectangular tower is all that now remains of Loughor Castle.

Loughor town is divided into two distinct areas: Upper Loughor and Lower Loughor, which have separate histories.



Aerial view of Loughor  
© Crown: RCAHMW



Aerial view of Loughor Castle & Town  
© Crown: RCAHMW



Loughor Estuary with Llanelli in the background. [www.the-gower.com](http://www.the-gower.com)

<sup>1</sup> Whilst officially classified as a town, Loughor is often referred to as a 'village'.

<sup>2</sup> Swansea Unitary Development Plan Public Inquiry, July 2007

<sup>3</sup> [www.hurrens.co.uk](http://www.hurrens.co.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Lower Loughor** consists of an area of salt marsh south of the A484 road and a suburban settlement north of the A484. The settlement of Lower Loughor can be traced back to Swansea's early coal mining industry, with mines dating back to at least the 1730's and a nearby iron foundry dating from the same period. By 1869 the St David's tinplate works was established across the river and historic maps of the area show that the village had, as a result, grown significantly by 1876. The construction of the permanent bridge across the estuary in 1923, linking Swansea with Llanelli, encouraged further expansion of Loughor, which quickly grew into the densely populated area visible today. Some of the worker houses dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century remain in the area close to the estuary, but more modern development has taken place upslope, including a substantial area of Post-War Local Authority housing (around 30% of the housing stock), blocks of sheltered accommodation, a 1970's housing estate and more recently built developments.<sup>5</sup>



Sunset over Loughor Bridge  
© Hywel Williams



Loughor Estuary looking north  
© Andy Ranson

**Upper Loughor Town** located inland and up the hill from Lower Loughor, was well established as a distinct settlement by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, initially around the current Glebe Road area. In common with neighbouring areas, Upper Loughor owes much of its early development to coal mining, with a number of significant local collieries, including the Broad Oak colliery and the Cae Duke mine just east of Upper Loughor Town (which employed over 400 by 1923, but closed in 1947 and has since been developed for housing). The development of coal, iron and steel industries encouraged further housing development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly around the current Borough Road area further north in the ward.<sup>6</sup>



Moriah Chapel with Evan Roberts' monument in the foreground. © Crown: RCHAMW

One of the most famous residents of Loughor was **Evan Roberts**, a Welsh speaking coal miner's son who became the charismatic leader of the Welsh Religious Revival of 1904-05; a 'spiritual awakening' which saw more than 100,000 people in Wales pledge their faith in Jesus Christ. The 27-year-old became a huge celebrity, and the year-long religious upsurge he inspired is now seen as the instigator of the world-wide Pentecostal movement.<sup>7</sup> Due to its associations with Evan Roberts, Loughor receives national and international visitors during the summer (including organised coach parties) that pay a visit to Roberts' former place of residence and the Moriah Chapel.



Moriah Schoolroom (old 1842 chapel)  
© Crown: RCAHMW

<sup>5</sup> Census profile, [www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> An article on Evan Roberts and audio commentary of Roberts preaching in 1905 is available at [www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest/halloffame/public\\_life/evanroberts.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest/halloffame/public_life/evanroberts.shtml)

In the present day, Loughor is mostly a commuter town for Swansea and Llanelli via the Loughor Bridge. However, a number of major employers are present within the town, including the Loughor Foundry, the City and County of Swansea, and Gorseinon College.

Due to their historical and cultural importance, parts of Loughor town have been designated as conservation and archaeologically sensitive areas.<sup>8</sup> The Loughor Estuary forms part of the Burry Inlet Ramsar Site, a large estuarine complex of international significance. Its status as a Ramsar Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is based on the birds supported by the large intertidal sand and mudflats and the extensive areas of saltmarsh mainly on the southern shore of the estuary. There are also substantial sand dune systems around the mouth of the estuary.<sup>9</sup>

## Local Facilities and Services

Services and facilities available within Loughor include:

Town Hall ♦ Two Primary Schools ♦ College ♦ Churches and Chapels ♦ Post Office ♦ Restaurant ♦ Pubs ♦ General Store ♦ Loughor Inshore Lifeboat ♦ Park ♦ Children's Play Area ♦ Tennis Courts ♦ Bowling Green

Residents travel to neighbouring Gorseinon, Llanelli and Swansea to access a wider range of services and facilities.

## Local Events

The following annual events are organised by the local community, including:

- **Loughor Boat Club Regatta - June**

This annual regatta provides the local community with a wider range of entertainment, activities and food to help raise funds for local groups, including Loughor Inshore Lifeboat. The Regatta is a popular community event and also draws visitors from outside the local area.

- **Armistice Day – November**

Wreaths are placed at the cenotaph, close to the castle.

- **Fireworks Display – November**

The Boating Company hosts an annual fireworks display in November, which is enjoyed by the local community and brings in visitors from outside Loughor.

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<sup>8</sup> See Swansea UDP for details

<sup>9</sup> For more info, see [www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-landscapes--sites/international-designated-sites/ramsar.aspx](http://www.ccw.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-landscapes--sites/international-designated-sites/ramsar.aspx)

In addition to the above, there are a number of clubs and societies that are very active in the community including football clubs, Loughor Rugby and Football Social Club, Loughor Band, the working man's club, boxing club, scouts and guides, which regularly organise events and activities for local residents. The majority of activities and events are hosted at the Loughor Welfare hall which is the main community venue for Loughor. The local college also organises a wider range of events and activities for young people.

## Local Activities

### Walking & Cycling

Walking and cycling are popular activities in and around Loughor, and a number of designated routes are available. Just a few minutes walk across Loughor Bridge takes you to the start of **Carmarthenshire's Millennium Coastal Park**. Occupying 22km of coastline along the Bury estuary and overlooking the Gower peninsula, the coastal park features leisure attractions, stunning wildlife havens and historical sites, linked by a continuous traffic-free cycleway and footpath.



Millennium Coastal Park  
[www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

### Bird Watching

One of the highlights of the Millennium Coastal Park is the **National Wetlands Centre of Wales** at Penclacwydd. The Wetlands Centre can be reached from Loughor by following the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust signs (white duck on brown background) as you head across the bridge.

## Attractions in and around Loughor

The following are examples of the many attractions that are located within a 10-mile radius of Loughor Castle.

### National Wetland Centre Wales, Llwynhendy, Llanelli

This 500 acre reserve is situated at the edge of the Bury inlet, which is acknowledged in Wales as the premier estuary for wildfowl and waders. The area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar Site. Of particular interest to the centre is the Little Egret - a resident bird that has dramatically increased in numbers from 2 in 1995 to over 300 in 2005. There are many activities available for families, including an indoor interactive Millennium Discovery Centre; Canoe Safari; Bike Trail; Pond Zone and children's play area.



[www.wwt.org.uk](http://www.wwt.org.uk)

### **Weobley Castle**

This unusual historic site has one of the most atmospheric locations in Wales. It stands in a lonely spot on the low-lying northern coast of the Gower Peninsula, overlooking saltings and marshland. Weobley contains an impressive layout of integral chambers centred around a stone courtyard and a stately banqueting hall dominated by an oak gallery. It was built by the de la Bere family and dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.



Weobley Castle  
Cadw. Crown Copyright

**Swansea Castle** sits in the heart of this Welsh city, now surrounded by modern day buildings. The castle was originally founded by Henry de Beaumont in 1106 but was rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, probably after being razed by the Welsh. It now stands as ruins on a clifftop, below which the river Tawe originally flowed. The ruins of the castle make for a pleasant picnic spot on a sunny day.



Swansea Castle  
[www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

### **National Waterfront Museum, Swansea**

This museum is housed in a magnificent building that combines old and new architecture. Using real-life artefacts, archive footage, photographs, 2-D graphic panels, interactive computer displays and more, the museum covers almost every imaginable aspect of Wales' industrial and social history. The museum is open every day of the week and admission is free.



National Waterfront Museum  
[www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

### **Swansea Marina**

Situated in what was the Swansea South Dock Basin, erstwhile home of the deep sea trawlers of the Swansea fishing fleet, Swansea Marina is a great place for relaxing and having a gentle stroll taking in the sights. This whole area has been sympathetically developed, with galleries, restaurants, interesting sculptures, a theatre and museums. The marina holds a fascinating array of yachts and colourful old vessels which form part of the Maritime Museum.



Swansea Marina  
[www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

**Swansea Museum** is the oldest in Wales. It was opened in 1841 by a group of local people who were known as The Royal Institution of South Wales, which gave the Museum building its original name. Swansea Museum contains treasures from the past of Swansea, Wales and the rest of the world, displayed in six galleries. There are also many changing exhibitions each year.



Swansea Museum  
[www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

### **Clyne Gardens, Swansea**

These 19<sup>th</sup> century landscaped gardens of 50 acres contain probably the finest collection of rhododendrons in Wales, including some which grow to 16m high. They were established by the wealthy Vivian family who organised expeditions to collect exotic plant specimens from abroad. Interesting areas include the bog garden, lake and waterfall with Japanese Bridge. There is also a bluebell wood and wildflower meadow. During May, the “Clyne in Bloom” Festival is celebrated here, with many fun activities.



Clyne Gardens  
www.ukattraction.com

### **Gower Heritage Centre, Parkmill, Swansea**

The Gower Heritage Centre is home to a working 12<sup>th</sup> century water powered corn mill. It was originally built by William de Breos, a knight from Normandy. The mill is one of the oldest ‘Toll Mills’ in Wales, so called because local farmers were compelled by law to bring their crops here for grinding. Recently, the original mill has been expanded to include traditional country crafts. Visitors can enjoy exploring the saw mill, wheelwright’s shop, miller’s cottage, an agricultural museum, craft shop, traditional tearoom, animals and fish, and children’s play area.



Gower Heritage Centre  
www.ukattraction.com

### **Pennard Castle**

Perched high over the splendid Three Cliffs Bay, the mysterious Pennard Castle has to be one of the most picturesque ruins on the Gower Peninsula. Little is recorded on the history of the stronghold, but it is believed to be of late 13<sup>th</sup> century origin and to have been occupied for only a short period of time before abandonment. With few historical documents to detail the site, the castle is bathed in an air of superstition with many legends and folktales noting the castle to be both haunted and cursed.



Pennard Castle  
© Graham Taylor

### **Parc-Le-Breos, Penmaen**

One of several exciting Neolithic discoveries along the coastline in South Wales, the Parc-le-Breos burial ground is owned and managed by Welsh Heritage. When the excavations were first made, the bones of forty people were found, many of which had been scorched and burned. The site is open to the public and gives an insight into the religious and burial practices of the people of the region thousands of years ago.



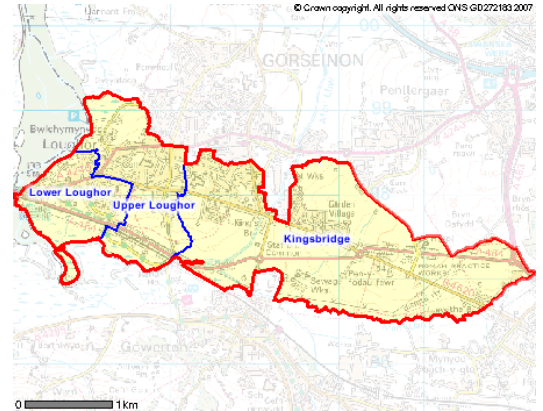
Parc le Breos  
© Chris Collyer www.stone-circles.org.uk

## Residents Profile

This section provides a statistical profile for residents living in the Lwchwr community area. Unless otherwise specified, the figures provided in this profile are the collective sum of the wards within the Lwchwr community area.

Lwchwr is located within the following administrative boundaries:

- Lwchwr Community Council area, which is coterminous with:
  - The wards of Kingsbridge, Upper Loughor and Lower Loughor.
  - LSOAs 007A (Kingsbridge 1), 007B (Kingsbridge 2), Swansea 007C (Kingsbridge 3), Swansea 007D (Lower Loughor), Swansea 007E (Upper Loughor 1), Swansea 007F (Upper Loughor 2).
- Swansea Local Authority area.



Lwchwr Community & Ward Boundaries

## Population

Lwchwr has a high population density compared to the county and national average.

At the time of the Census in April 2001:

- There were 9,080 people residing in the Lwchwr community area. According to the 2007 ward population estimates, the resident population had increased to 9,260.
- The average age of the resident population ranged from 38.5 years in Lower Loughor to 40.9 years in Kingsbridge (the Swansea and national average are 40 years and 39.5 years, respectively).
- The Lwchwr community area covered 743 hectares and had a population density of 12.2 people per hectare, compared to 5.9 in Swansea and 1.4 in Wales overall. Population density across the wards ranged from 8.5 people per hectare in Kingsbridge to 21.8 in Lower Loughor.

## Welsh Language & Identity

A higher proportion of local residents have knowledge of the Welsh language compared to the national average. Welsh identity in the local area is stronger than the Swansea and national average.

- In April 2001, 35.1% of the local population had knowledge of the Welsh language, which was higher than the Swansea average and national average (22.5% and 28.4%, respectively). 21% of residents were Welsh speakers and 14.4% could speak, read and write Welsh.

- 18.2% of residents added 'Welsh' for their ethnicity on the Census 2001 form, which was higher than the Swansea and national average (15.3% and 14.4% respectively). This figure varied across Lwchwr's ward from 16.6% in Upper Loughor to 19.5% in Lower Loughor.
- In April 2001, 9.6% of residents were of English origin compared to 13.3% in the Swansea and 20.3% in Wales.

## Health

The proportion of residents in good health is similar to the Swansea and national average.

- In April 2001, 66.1% of residents described their general health as 'good' compared to 64.6% in Swansea and 65.1% across Wales. This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards 63.5% in Lower Loughor to 67.9% in Kingsbridge.
- 12.4% of residents described their general health as 'not good' which is similar to the national average but lower than the Swansea average (13.4%). Again, this figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 11.7% in Kingsbridge to 14.2% in Lower Loughor.

## Households & Dwellings

Lwchwr is characterised by a high proportion of semi-detached properties and high levels of home ownership compared to the Swansea and national average. There is considerable variation in the housing characteristics across Lwchwr's wards. Most notably, almost one third of households in Lower Loughor rent social housing, compared to less than one tenth of households in Kingsbridge and Upper Loughor

- In April 2001, there were 3,803 dwellings in Lwchwr; of which 9 were classed as second residencies/holiday accommodation and 92 properties were vacant.
- Half of all properties in Lwchwr were semi-detached, compared to 35% in Swansea and 31.7% across Wales. This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 36.9% in Lower Loughor to 57% in Kingsbridge.
- A substantially higher proportion of dwellings in Lower Loughor were flats; maisonettes or apartments (23.9%) compared to 1.8% in Upper Loughor and 3.5% in Kingsbridge. The Swansea and national average were 10.5% and 8%, respectively.
- There was significant variation in the Council Tax Bandings across Lwchwr's wards. In Lower Loughor, the highest proportion of dwellings were in Council Tax Band A (27.9%) compared to 4.7% in Kingsbridge and 2.3% in Upper Loughor. In contrast, the highest proportion of dwellings in Kingsbridge and Upper Loughor were in Council Tax Band C (48.8% and 54.7%, respectively) compared to 23.7% in Lower Loughor.
- Levels of home ownership varied across Lwchwr's wards from 61.3% in Lower Loughor to 89.3% in Kingsbridge. The Swansea and national average were 69.6% and 71.3%, respectively.

- 31.2% of households in Lower Loughor rented from the council, a housing association or registered social landlord compared to 5.2% in Kingsbridge and 7.1% in Upper Loughor.
- In 2006, the average house price in the local area was £138,276, which was 6.4% lower than the Swansea average and 9.3% lower than the national average.<sup>10</sup>
- While house prices in the Swansea local authority area increased by 90.1% between 2002 and 2006, annual earnings only increased by 14.2%. Today, in Swansea, house prices are around 7 times the median annual earnings.

### **Education**

A lower proportion of residents in Lwchwr have no formal qualifications compared to the county and national average.

- In April 2001, 27.7% of 16-74 year old residents had no qualifications compared to 30.5% in Swansea and 33% nationally.
- Similar to the national average, 17.2% of the resident population aged 16-74 had a level 4/5 qualification, compared to 19% in Swansea.<sup>11</sup>

### **Economic Activity**

'Manufacturing' is the most important sector of employment for local residents.

According to the April 2001 Census:

- Similar to the national average, the most important sector of employment in Lwchwr was 'Manufacturing', accounting for 18.8% of employed residents aged 16-74 compared with 13.5% in Swansea. The second most important sector of employment was 'Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles', accounting for 17.8% of employed residents aged 16-74, which was similar to the Swansea average but slightly higher than the national average (16.3%). There was little variation across the three wards in Lwchwr.
- In terms of socio-economic classification, the highest proportion of local residents worked in 'Lower managerial and professional occupations' (18.7%) which was higher than the Swansea and national average (16.9% and 16.1% respectively). This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 16.6% in Upper Loughor to 20.2% in Kingsbridge.
- Overall, 2.9% of residents aged 16-74 were unemployed in Lwchwr compared to 3.6% in Swansea and 3.5% across Wales. This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 2.1% in Kingsbridge to 4.6% in Lower Loughor. Unemployment has declined in all 3 of Lwchwr's wards in recent years: between November 2001 and

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<sup>10</sup> The local house price quoted is the average value of property sales in the Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) Swansea 007.

<sup>11</sup> Level 4/5 includes First Degree and higher degrees; NVQ levels 4 & 5; HNC; HND; Qualified Teacher Status; Qualified Medical Doctor; Qualified Dentist; Qualified Nurse; Midwife; Health Visitor.

November 2006, the total number of claimants of Job Seeker's Allowance in Lwchwr fell from 155 to 105.

### Car Ownership

This area has a higher level of car ownership compared to the Swansea and national average.

- In April 2001, 80.1% of households in Lwchwr owned at least one car or van, compared to 71.5% in Swansea and 74.1% across Wales. This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 71% in Lower Loughor to 84.4% in Kingsbridge.
- 33.2% of households owned two or more cars or vans compared to 25.9% in Swansea and 28.5% in Wales. This figure varied across Lwchwr's wards from 28.1% in Lower Loughor to 37.5% in Kingsbridge.

### Deprivation

The Welsh Indices of Deprivation 2008 present the deprivation scores and ranks for 1,896 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales.

According to the overall Welsh Index, Lwchwr is not considered to be a deprived area. In fact:

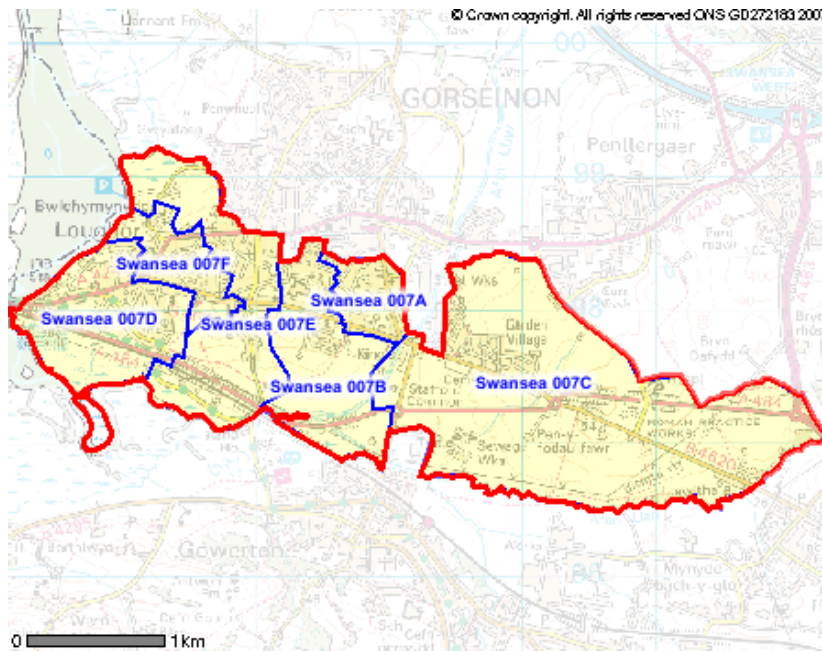
- Kingsbridge 2 ranks within the top 6% **least deprived** areas in Wales overall. Most notably, it ranks within the:
  - Top 1% least deprived areas for Income;
  - Top 3% least deprived areas for Community Safety and Housing;
  - Top 6% least deprived areas for Physical Environment; and
  - Top 25% least deprived areas for Employment.

Furthermore:

- Kingsbridge 1 ranks in the top 10% least deprived areas in Wales for Housing.
- Kingsbridge 3 ranks in the top 8% least deprived areas in Wales for Community Safety.

However, according to the Indices:

- Lower Loughor ranks in the top 10% **deprived** areas in Wales for Physical Environment.
- Kingsbridge 3 ranks in the top 20% **deprived** areas for Access to Services and Physical Environment.



Lwchwr Community & LSOA Boundaries

Deprivation Indicator	Swansea 007A Kingsbridge 1	Swansea 007B Kingsbridge 2	Swansea 007C Kingsbridge 3	Swansea 007D Lower Loughor*	Swansea 007E Upper Loughor 1	Swansea 007F Upper Loughor 2
Overall Index	1328	1775	1287	785	1469	1157
Income	1133	1881	1501	742	1563	1183
Employment	1032	1436	1114	684	1064	983
Health	718	1349	1018	927	1205	1321
Education	1369	1541	1398	969	1409	770
Access to Services	1408	629	362	589	537	506
Housing	1721	1830	1495	1599	1503	1161
Physical Environment	576	1791	386	180	1269	991
Community Safety	1563	1853	1754	1179	1182	1329

\* Loughor Castle is located within this LSOA.

## **Local Priorities and Problems**

### **Church Expansion**

St Michael's Church in Loughor is currently investigating the potential to expand the church hall in order to provide a venue that could be used by the community. While there are a number of community venues in Upper Loughor (including the Welfare Hall and working men's halls), Lower Loughor lacks a community venue. St Michael's is looking to expand its premises to accommodate this need.

The church has formed a sub-committee to lead on the project and is currently establishing the measurements of the potential hall and access requirements. The committee will be meeting with an architect in the forthcoming weeks to finalise plans for the extension, which will have disabled access and facilities for community use. It is anticipated that a proposal will be submitted for planning permission in the new year.

The church has expressed interest in forging stronger links with the castle through this project and is keen to establish contact with Cadw to discuss the project. As part of this project, the church has identified the potential to use part of the new extension space to exhibit the castle's rich history. Currently, there is no information available in the local area about the castle's history and it was explained that the church will be ideally located to hold interpretation and information about the castle as it sits opposite the monument.

### **Improvements to Loughor Park and Surrounding Area**

Over the years, the park in Loughor has lost much of its appeal; it has lost its benches and flower beds and the bandstand was set on fire and destroyed some years ago. In recent months, the community council undertook consultation with local residents to gauge levels of interest in improving the local park. The consultation met with a very positive response from residents and revealed that there is great interest amongst residents to improve Loughor's open space and encourage greater use by the local community. It is also anticipated that greater use of the park by the local community would help to discourage underage drinking and anti social behaviour at the castle and park sites. The community is currently setting up a 'Friends of the Park' group and welcomes support and joint working with Cadw to improve this area of Loughor.

### **Local Heritage**

Loughor has a very rich and diverse history, with many interesting historical features. The Railway Bridge built by Brunel has, in recent years, been listed and protected. However a number of important historical sites in Loughor have not been listed and therefore are not being protected, including the town wall; a virtually complete horse pound which is a circular stone built structure dating back to the old borough's horse fairs; the town hall; and an original salt house near the port. Furthermore, it was noted that there is little information available locally about the significance of Loughor's historical sites.

There is a lot of interest in raising the profile of Loughor's rich history and promoting its built heritage. Given the area's popularity as a walking and cycling holiday destination, the local community recognises the potential to attract visitors to spend time in Loughor by developing a heritage trail. To date, there have been no projects to develop this idea further. There is a lot of interest to work with Cadw to seek advice and information on potential funding streams to start a heritage project.

### **Town Hall**

Loughor's town hall is a Grade B listed building, currently owned by the Town Trust. Despite being an important historical feature in Loughor, the hall is disused and has, over the years, fallen into a state of disrepair on the first floor. The Trust would like to see the building brought back into use but lacks the funding required to undertake any structural improvements to the top floor of the building. There is a chamber on the first floor with two cells which are still intact and there have been ideas about opening up this space as a local heritage museum. The Trust currently has a lot of archived historical material which could be exhibited at the town hall. The Trust would like to approach Cadw for advice and guidance on the possibility of developing the town hall and also to investigate whether Cadw has an interest in this building. The Trust would welcome Cadw to take the town hall into its guardianship to help preserve the building and protect it from further deterioration.

The ground floor of the hall is a flat and is currently rented out at low cost to a senior resident who has lived there for many years. The Trust has stressed that it intends to continue renting the ground floor flat to the tenant for as long as required.

### **Changing Community Dynamics**

Loughor is considered to be a small and close knit community, although Upper Loughor and Lower Loughor have always had their own distinct identities. The last 20 years has seen a number of new houses built in the area, particularly in Upper Loughor, which has changed the local area and the community dynamics. Due to Loughor's close proximity to Swansea city, the area has attracted a large number of incomers over the years, transforming Loughor into a dormitory town. This has led to a noticeable change in the community, and community spirit is not considered as strong now as it was in the past. The change in the community is also said to have impacted on local services; small businesses in the area have struggled to sustain themselves as geographically mobile residents increasingly access services from outside the local area. Loughor has lost most of its shops as they have been unable to compete with large out-of-town retailers.<sup>12</sup>

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The town of Loughor is said to suffer from occasional problems of underage drinking and anti-social behaviour near the park and castle, particularly during the summer months. Much of the problem is attributed to boredom and insufficient activities and facilities for youths within the local area. The nearest youth centre is located 2 miles

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<sup>12</sup> Further details of how the Loughor community has changed can be found in Sheila Francis' narrative 'I remember Loughor'. A copy can be found at Annex A.

away. The community has, over the years, tried to provide activities and events for youths in the local area and a youth club was established at the bowls pavilion a couple of years ago, but this was unsuccessful and was later abandoned. Five years ago a skate park was built for young people in the local area which is well used but the problem of underage drinking and occasional anti-social behaviour still persists.

## Priorities and Problems in Swansea

### Characteristics of Swansea

Extending from Rhossili Down at the western edge of the Gower Peninsula to Kilvey Hill, Crymlyn Bog and the slopes of the Drummau Mountain on the eastern border with Neath Port Talbot; and from Mumbles Head and the sweep of Swansea Bay in the south to the 1200 ft. ridge of Mynydd y Gwair overlooking the Amman Valley in the north, the new City and County of Swansea covers an area of 378 square kilometres (146 square miles), about 2% of the area of Wales.

Some two-thirds of the County's boundary is with the sea - the Burry Inlet, Bristol Channel and Swansea Bay. The River Loughor forms the north west boundary with Carmarthenshire while the boundary to the north and east is largely defined by hill and valley features.

The main area of upland lies in the north of the County making up most of the community of Mawr. The highest point at 374 metres (1215 feet) occurs at Penlle'r Castell on the County's northern border. Areas of high land up to 185 metres (600 feet) range across the south of the County and form the hills of Kilvey, Townhill and Llwynmawr, separating the centre of Swansea from its northern suburbs. A ridge of high land, Cefn Bryn, forms the spine of Gower with Rhossili and Hardings Downs and Llanmadoc Hill forming major features over 600 feet high.

The chief river is the Tawe which enters the County at Clydach and flows through Morriston and the Lower Swansea Valley, before emerging to the east of the City Centre and entering Swansea Bay over the Barrage which separates the Docks and the Maritime Quarter. Only the River Loughor and its tributaries of the Lliw and Llan, which drain the north west of the County, are rivers of any other significance.

The City and County can be broadly divided into **4 physical areas**. In the north, the Lliw Uplands present an open moorland feature; the Gower Peninsula in the west, a rural landscape with contrasting coasts and a collection of small villages; the urban and suburban centre stretching from Swansea to Gorseinon and Pontarddulais; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, no more than 2 miles in width.

The urban area of the City and County is chiefly focused on Swansea and radiates to the west and north of the city centre - around Swansea Bay to Mumbles; over Townhill to Cwmbwrla, Treboeth, Fforestfach and Penlan; through Uplands, Sketty,

Killay and Dunvant; along the Swansea Valley communities of Hafod, Landore, Plasmarl, Morryston to Clydach; and on the east side of the River from St. Thomas to Bonymaen, Llansamlet and Birchgrove.

The second urban focus centres on the Gowerton, Gorseinon and Loughor triangle, along with the nearby communities of Pontarddulais and Penllergaer.<sup>13</sup>

### **Economic Regeneration**

Swansea has benefited from significant investment and employment growth in recent years. To build upon the success that has been achieved to date, an Economic Regeneration Strategy, 'Swansea 2020', has been produced to guide the regeneration of Swansea's economy over the next ten to fifteen years.

Swansea 2020 will deliver the prosperity theme of Swansea's Community Strategy, and has been produced by the Swansea Economic Regeneration Partnership (SERP). It seeks to raise prosperity levels for all people, businesses and communities in the City & County of Swansea.

Swansea 2020 sets out a **vision** for Swansea to be:

- An internationally competitive economy, with Output (GVA per Head), Productivity (GVA per Worker) and Wage rates at least equal to norms at the UK (Output & Wage rates) and England and Wales (Productivity) levels;
- Wales' leading centre for the Knowledge Economy, recognised for its adoption of innovation, and anticipation of market and technology change;
- Operating with an economically active population equal in size in percentage terms to the Great Britain average, known for its high skills, and providing critical labour mass in the priority Focus Clusters;
- A proud, vibrant and ambitious city, at the heart of a wider region, where people want to live and work.

The economic regeneration strategy focuses on six strategic aims to support this vision, which respond specifically to Swansea's economic circumstances:

1. **Increasing productivity:** to raise productivity levels in Swansea to close the productivity and output gaps with the UK average
2. **Knowledge Economy:** building and developing the knowledge economy in Swansea
3. **Economic Equity:** tackling deprivation and the high levels of economic inactivity in Swansea
4. **Entrepreneurship:** promoting the formation and survival of businesses in Swansea to create new employment and wealth

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<sup>13</sup> [www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk)

5. **Focus Clusters:** promoting the development of key sectors in the local economy - IT & Communications, Life Sciences, Professional Services, Tourism, Marine Industries and Creative Industries
6. **Children & Young People:** engaging young people and equipping them with the skills they need to contribute to the future economic success of Swansea

The strategic aims are supported by four cross cutting themes, which thread across the Strategy:

1. **Foresight:** monitoring future markets and technologies so that Swansea is able to exploit the opportunities that arise
2. **Sense of Purpose & Image:** building a sense of purpose amongst businesses, communities and people, and promoting Swansea internationally
3. **Competitive Places:** making Swansea a place where people want to live, work and visit. This encompasses sites and premises, transport, revitalisation of the city centre, the natural environment and tourism
4. **Excellence in Delivery & Sustainability:** promoting high standards in the implementation and delivery of the strategy

## **Tourism**

Swansea's Tourism Strategy 2006-2011, 'Grab a Piece of the Action', recognises that Swansea has the potential to become a major regional centre for tourism. Swansea's natural and cultural resources, together with its strategic location and accessibility, giving it unique scope to drive the region's tourism economy. Tourism will also help to achieve the Council's stated goal for Swansea to become a distinctive European city by 2020.

According to the tourism strategy, the main strengths of Swansea which create this market appeal are:

- (i) The underlying quality of the area's existing natural, cultural and heritage resources;
- (ii) Swansea's accessibility to the core UK markets of the South East, the South and the West Midlands, together with its accessibility to the Irish market;
- (iii) The unique location at the ocean's edge with the close proximity of the urban centre to outstanding countryside and coast of Gower, Mawr and beyond;
- (iv) The wide range of activities associated with sport, culture, learning and well-being that take place within this high quality environment.

The tourist strategy sets out the following **vision** for Swansea:

"By 2015 Swansea Bay will be established as one of Europe's foremost year-round maritime destinations for leisure and business tourism, offering a unique blend of high quality recreational, sporting and cultural experiences in an outstanding environment."

In spite of the quality and range of developments taking place, tourism activity has remained relatively static in recent years, not growing at the rate envisaged by the Tourism Strategy or the STGA report and, therefore, not meeting the targets set. In particular, over the past five years, Swansea has witnessed a decline in the long stay market using self-catering accommodation, which is dominated by the camping and caravanning sectors. In 2000 the self-catering sector handled 64% of all tourist nights spent in Swansea and contributed 49% of all tourism spending. By 2005 the sector handled 59% of all tourist nights and produced 40% of all tourism revenues.

The objectives over the next five years are to increase tourist revenue; extend the season to create a year round destination; and bring benefits to communities throughout Swansea whilst ensuring that distinctive identity is enhanced and that tourism contributes positively to environmental sustainability. The strategy notes that Swansea's future as a sustainable, vibrant, year round, high value tourism destination depends upon:

- Maintaining and strengthening its distinctive sense of place;
- Careful stewardship and management of its natural resources, culture and heritage, including the built environment;
- Developing local talent, skills and enterprise.

The focus for actions by tourism stakeholders within the City & County of Swansea for the development of tourism over the next five years has been divided into six sub destinations: Swansea Urban; Bay Foreshore; Mumbles; Gower; M4 Corridor; and Mawr. The tourism strategy notes that the strategic clustering of linked facilities within these areas will build on already distinct identities throughout the City and County and contribute to strong overall brand development. The strategy provides the following brief assessment of Area 6: Mawr (in which Loughor is located):

<b>Area 6: Mawr</b>	
<i>Key locations and sites</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mynydd y Gwair summit</li> <li>• Lliw Valley reservoirs</li> <li>• Loughor Foreshore</li> <li>• Dynamic Rock Climbing Centre</li> <li>• Pontardawe Arena</li> <li>• Villages of Pontarddulais, Gorseinon, Clydach and Felindre</li> </ul>
<i>Product required</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Serviced and self catering accommodation</li> <li>&gt; Networks of trails</li> <li>&gt; Food/beverage outlets</li> <li>&gt; Interpretation and visitor information</li> <li>&gt; Local festivals and events</li> <li>&gt; Developments complementing sports potential of the area</li> </ul>
<i>Principle Market Appeal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Culture/heritage</li> <li>(b) Couples without children</li> </ul>
<i>Product opportunities</i>	Culture, Heritage, Activity, Wellbeing
<i>Contribution to Vol:Val (1-5 high)</i>	Current: 0:0 Future Potential: 1:2

# Useful Contacts

## **Casllwchwr Primary School**

Contact: Mr A Reid, Headteacher  
Address: Castle Street, Loughor, Swansea SA4 6TU  
Tel: 01792 892420

## **Hurrens Inn On The Estuary (beer garden looks out onto Loughor Castle)**

Address: 13, Station Road, Loughor, Swansea, SA4 6TR  
Tel: 01792 899092

## **Llwchwr Town Council**

Contact: Anthony Davies, Clerk  
Address: 4 Lady Margaret Villas, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 0RX  
Email: [a.davies73@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.davies73@ntlworld.com)  
Tel: 01792 428460

Contact: Cllr D A Evans (also a member of the Loughor Town Trust)  
Address: 46 Bryn Road, Loughor, Swansea, SA4 6PR  
Tel: 01792 897554

## **Loughor Town Trust**

Contact: Mrs E Davies, Clerk  
Address: 8 Belgrave Close, Gorseinon, Swansea, SA4 4BQ

## **Swansea Council**

### **County Councillor for Lower Loughor**

Contact: Cllr Christine Richards  
Address: 76 Castle Street, Loughor, Swansea, SA4 6TS  
Home Tel: 01792 896069  
County Hall Tel: 01792 636923  
Email: [christine.richards@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:christine.richards@swansea.gov.uk)

### **Culture & Tourism Team**

Contact: Nerys Lewis, Manager  
Address: Penllergaer Offices, Penllergaer, Swansea. SA4 9GJ  
Tel: 01792 635217  
Email: [nerys.lewis@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:nerys.lewis@swansea.gov.uk)

### **The Benefice of Loughor**

Contact: Reverend G J Turner  
Address: The Rectory, 109 Glebe Road, Loughor, Swansea, SA4 2SR  
Tel: 01792 891958

**The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd**

Contact: Caroline Thomas

Address: Heathfield House, Heathfield, Swansea SA1 6EL

Tel: 01792 655208

Email: [enquiries@ggat.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ggat.org.uk)

**Tre Uchaf Primary School**

Address: Heol Cae-Ty-Newydd, Loughor, Swansea SA4 6QB

Tel: 01792 893682

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## Documents and Publications

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## Resident Profile Dataset References

Dataset	Source
Usual Resident Population (KS01)	Census 2001, Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Resident Population Estimates, Mid-2007	ONS
Age Structure (KS02)	Census 2001, ONS
Ethnic Group and Identification as Welsh (KS06A)	Census 2001, ONS
Knowledge of Welsh (KS25)	Census 2001, ONS
Country of Birth (KS05)	Census 2001, ONS
Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS08)	Census 2001, ONS
Qualifications and Students (KS13)	Census 2001, ONS
Household Spaces & Accommodation Type (KS16)	Census 2001, ONS
Change of Ownership by Dwelling Price, 2002-2006	Department for Communities and Local Government
Tenure (KS18)	Census 2001, ONS
UK House Prices, Oct-Dec 2006	Land Registry of England & Wales
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2002-2006	ONS
Occupation Groups (KS12A)	Census 2001, ONS
Cars or Vans (KS17)	Census 2001, ONS
Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band, March 2006	Valuation Office Agency
Industry of Employment - All People (KS11A)	Census 2001, ONS
National Statistics Socio-economic Classification - All People (KS14A)	Census 2001, ONS
Economic Activity - All People (KS09A)	Census 2001, ONS
Benefit Claimants - Job Seekers Allowance, 2001-2006	Department for Work and Pensions
Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008	Local Government Data Unit (Wales) & Welsh Assembly Government

Source: National Statistics website: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

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## **Local Websites**

### **Hurrens Inn On The Estuary**

[www.hurrens.co.uk](http://www.hurrens.co.uk)

### **I remember Loughor by Sheila Francis**

<http://freepages.nostalgia.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sheilafrancis/index.htm>

### **Loughor.com**

[www.loughor.com](http://www.loughor.com)

### **Moriah Loughor**

[www.moriah.org.uk](http://www.moriah.org.uk)

## **County Websites**

### **Swansea Council**

[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk)

## **Regional Websites**

### **Gower Holidays & Tourist Information**

[www.the-gower.com](http://www.the-gower.com)

## **National Websites**

### **Cadw**

[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

### **Castles of Wales**

[www.castlewales.com/loughor.html](http://www.castlewales.com/loughor.html)

### **Coflein – Online Database for the National Monuments Record of Wales**

[www.coflein.gov.uk](http://www.coflein.gov.uk)

### **Countryside Council for Wales**

[www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

### **Gathering the Jewels**

[www.gtj.org.uk](http://www.gtj.org.uk)

### **Local Government Data Unit – Wales**

[www.lgdu-wales.gov.uk](http://www.lgdu-wales.gov.uk)

**The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales**

[www.rcahmw.org.uk](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk)

**Welsh Assembly Government**

[www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

**UK Websites**

**About Britain**

[www.aboutbritain.com](http://www.aboutbritain.com)

**BBC**

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

**Castle Sights**

[www.castlesights.com](http://www.castlesights.com)

**Geograph British Isles**

[www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk)

**National Statistics**

[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

**Neighbourhood Statistics Service**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

**Stone Circles**

[www.stone-circles.org.uk](http://www.stone-circles.org.uk)

**Sustrans**

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**UK Attraction**

[www.ukattraction.com](http://www.ukattraction.com)

# Annex A

## **'I remember Loughor'**

The following text extract is taken from Sheila Francis's website on Loughor:

Hi everyone, my name is Sheila Francis and I welcome you to my web site which is about the village of Loughor. I came here as a baby in 1941 and I have seen so many changes that I think it is time that I put them down in print for future generations, so come with me on a travel back to the 1940's and 50's.

Our village is on the coast of South West Wales. If you study a map you should see us approximately 200 miles west of LONDON (England). Look for the Bristol Channel which divides England and Wales and we are an hour and a half's drive away. SWANSEA is our nearest city and about 9 miles east, and CARMARTHEN town is about 19 miles further west.

Loughor stands on the river bank and has a busy road bridge and a railway bridge which cross the river into the next county of Carmarthenshire. Our village has expanded greatly with many newcomers settling here just in the last 20 years and new housing estates dotted around.

In the 1940's this was quite an industrial area. Across the river stood two huge works.... the St. David's Tinsplate, (known as the Ysbitty works or by villagers as 'the Spitty', and next to it the Bynea Steel works. Huge smoke stacks could be seen for miles and many men were employed here. There were also two collieries... the Broad Oak, and the Beli Glas and an iron foundry, needless to say there was hardly any unemployment locally. Today if you visit us you will look across the river and see a modern factory 'Ina Bearings' on the site.

Work was very hard in the steel and tin works and you had to be tough. Boys about 14 left school and could start the following week, a tough breed of ladies were also employed 'opening plates'. This was one of the many processes in the works which entailed the separation of razor sharp sheets of tin very quickly. Although they wore thick aprons and gloves accidents were many as you can imagine. Toilets were outside and were the old 'bucket type' with wooden seat. Workers sweated so much that their thick flannel shirts could stand up alone. The steelmen were also strong and tough as they worked each day in very hot conditions. All the workers did shift work and loud hooters blared out at the various change of shift so we did not need a clock.

The bridge at Loughor was always busy with workers passing to and fro across it. We had a large strip of sand on the river bank and this was our holiday place. Everyone would congregate here on fine summer days, young and old. When the tide was in we had a great time building sand castles and swimming until the sun went down.

Fishermen spent many hours there too and we even had local cockle pickers who went way down to the Gower area and returned home with the tide in their boat loaded with sacks of the sea food which were transferred to a late steam train and taken to various parts of Britain. Today the sands stand forlorn, only a handful of fishermen when the tide suits.

The old cement bridge was built in about 1923 but heavier traffic caused cracks and it was demolished in the 1990's and a much larger one now copes with even more traffic. The old rail bridge still stands; it is made of wood and has withstood two tides a day for over a century. In rough weather the tide rushes through the arches at a terrifying speed I do not know how it still stands? We did have a station and the last steam train to stop there was in about 1961. Diesel took over and no more was heard the sound of steam and the train whistle and trucks being shunted up and down a side line. Where the station once stood is now a busy road leading to Llanelli. We had a ticket office and two waiting rooms and a signal box in which could be heard the clunk of levers as the signalman did his work, wires buzzed and the signals with their red and green 'eyes' went up or down along the track. Express trains sped through the village a long trail of smoke behind, heading for Swansea and the rest of the [country] and long lines of trucks trundled past carrying all sorts of commodities to we knew not where. All is gone now.... just a single track left.

We have on the river bank a busy Boating Club, but in my day there were only two boat sheds for rowing boats. Regattas held in were the 1920's a bit before my time! In the 40's and 50's gypsy camp stood on the site, colourful wooden caravans in a circle and tethered horses grazing nearby. Tents dotted around in which the families lived, and open fires on which they cooked. This is now the club car park.

A railway track wended its way from the station and along the sands past the present boating club and to the colliery. The small steam engine chuffed along carrying coal to the station yard where it was taken on to larger trucks and taken to many parts of the country. Work went on busily in the Foundry nearby and a one man wood yard next to it was always working... the loud grinding machine cutting wood could be heard over the area.

The castle dominated the area; it still stands looking over the sea as it has done since about the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Generations of village children have played on its grassy mound and still do.

The castle looks over a large park named Parc Williams after a generous benefactor who went to the USA. There are swings and a bowling green. Just after the war we had lovely fetes here quite often, now we have a band about three times in the summer.

Lower Loughor only has two public houses at the time of writing (2002) one has closed... It was called the Leucarum in the last few years but it was always 'The Station Inn' as the railway station was close by it. One other pub was 'The Bush

Hotel' but it burned down in 1961. The only ones left are the 'Ship and Castle' in Castle Street and The Reverend James.

We have St. Michael's church which also stands looking out to sea and is buffeted by the gales in the winter; it is cosy inside when the gas fires hiss and the candles are lit however. There once stood a welsh chapel on the opposite corner named Horeb and this was attended by numerous villagers who would dress in high fashion. A small chapel (now the church hall) was named Bethany this too finished up years ago. The English Congregational chapel has gone years ago from Castle Street, there are a row of houses here today. Jireh Gospel Hall still stands and is well attended. In the early 1950's all the village children converged there weekly raising the roof with hymn singing when they attended the Band of Hope meeting. We recited passages from the bible and watched in awe 'magic lantern pictures (before TV). We went on Sunday school trips in a fleet of buses and had lovely summer parties outside and winter ones inside. Happy days!

The village has a sheltered homes complex Llys y Coed which is at the junction of Castle Street and Culfor Road. Here about 40 elderly residents have one bedroomed flats owned by the city council, they have stood since the late 1970's. Before they were built there was a large field here which was cut for hay in the summer and we spent many an hour jumping into piles of hay from the high wall.

The village had a large number of shops when I was a child. Starting down near the bridge was a wooden shed chip shop this later moved to Station Road, a few doors from it was a small shop in a person's front parlour. It was a small grocers and had a weighing scale in the passageway for veg. On the corner by the castle was a tiny butchers shop, a cobblers stood across the road where Bob the cobbler worked the day away mending the villagers shoes. Two doors from the butchers was a large cafe and later another chip shop, next was a wool and sewing material shop, then a green grocers. Our main post office, another butchers shop, another grocer, and in Culfor Road another grocers so as you can see we did not need to go out of the village really.

In Castle Street stood the school (still there). Mr. Chester Morgan was headmaster when I was a child, he was very strict and everyone was afraid of him, he taught the older children. One of the teachers after the war later became a headmaster at another school the late Mr. Powell, Mr. Brain was another teacher there. School dinners came into force in about 1950 and we all had to walk single file to the canteen which was further along the road in a building called the 'town hall'. The school toilets were the old bucket type which had to be emptied at certain times and we only had a small school yard to play in. Skipping and whip and top were games played. I left in 1951 for the new Secondary Modern school in Upper Loughor... but that's another story.

I have kept this narrative short as I have written a book about the village (Loughor memories) which is now finished, obviously there is much more detail in that. The

book is priced £10 and is available now. You can email me for a copy:  
[sheilafrancis@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:sheilafrancis@ukonline.co.uk).

Please contact me if you need any info on our area or any family history details, I will be pleased to help.

Sheila Francis

<http://freepages.nostalgia.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sheilafrancis/index.htm>