Welshpool Town Council, The Vicarage Gardens, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DD
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Document / Report #744

Author	Richard Williams Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Title	Open Doors 2026
Date	29th May 2026

OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

1. **To support Welshpool Town Council's participation in Open Doors 2026;**
2. **To approve the opening of Welshpool Information Centre on Sunday 13th September 2026; and**
3. **To approve free parking at Church Street Car Park for Sunday 13th September 2026 at cost of approx £250 to be met from the Community Events cost code.**

1. Purpose

1. To consider Welshpool Town Council's participation in Open Doors 2026 and to make recommendations regarding the opening of Council facilities and support arrangements for the event.

2. Background

1. Open Doors is Wales' largest festival celebrating architecture and heritage, coordinated nationally by Cadw. The 2026 event will take place over the weekend of Saturday 12 September and Sunday 13 September 2026.
2. As part of our Visit Welshpool brand, a partnership consisting of the following has been formed:
    1. Powis Castle and Gardens
    2. Powis Estates
    3. Welshpool Town Council
    4. Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway
    5. Y Lanfa Museum and Library
3. The aim is to provide a coordinated heritage offer across Welshpool, encouraging residents and visitors to explore the town's cultural and historic assets over a single weekend.

3. **Proposed Activities**
    1. At present the proposed activities include:
        1. Powis Castle & Gardens - free admission both days
        2. Welshpool Town Hall - open to the public on both days including Chamber, Court Room, Cells etc
        3. WLLR - discounted rail tickets and heritage and guided tours on both days
        4. Y Llanfa - open both days (subject to final confirmation) and temporary exhibition and museum access
    2. The original proposal also included tours of the Motte and Bailey but the recent vandalism means that is no longer an option.

4. **Proposal**
    1. To support the Welshpool Open Doors programme, it is proposed that the Council:
        1. Opens the Town Hall to the public on both Saturday and Sunday
        2. Opens the Welshpool Information Centre on Sunday
        3. Provides an extension of the current free parking on Saturday to Sunday.
    2. The proposed Sunday free parking arrangement would complement the heritage offer and encourage visitors to park and walk between all four participating attractions.

5. **Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan**
    1. VW1 - Develop a tourism brand to include website, mobile app and other digital channels and work with tourism operators in town e.g. Powis Castle, WLLR to co-construct
    2. VW3 - Promote unique experiences through local businesses e.g. food tours, craft workshops

6. **Resource & Legal Implications**
    1. There will be some staffing cover required for any additional opening of the Welshpool Information Centre and additional staffing as part of weekend bookings in Town Hall would have to be accomodated, however the Town Hall is due to host the Longest Yarn for the entirity of September so would be open anyway.
    2. The main financial implication relates to the provision of free parking in Church Street Car Park on Sunday 13 September 2026. This would be around £250 and would be met from the Community Events budget.
    3. The Council has powers to support tourism, recreation, cultural and heritage activities under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. **Recommendation**
    1. To support Welshpool Town Council's participation in Open Doors 2026;
    2. To approve the opening of Welshpool Information Centre on Sunday 13th September 2026; and
    3. To approve free parking at Church Street Car Park for Sunday 13th September 2026 at cost of approx £250 to be met from the Community Events cost code.

8. **Decision**
    1. To resolve to adopt the recommendations as above.