



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Cyngor Cymuned Pontyclun Community Council

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Heol yr Orsaf, Pontyclun, CF72 9EE



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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

In May 2017 the electorate of Pontyclun chose its new Council. Ten members were elected and subsequently a member for the Miskin ward was co-opted. Of the eleven members, eight were new to the role and just three had previous experience of being a Councillor. This was clearly an opportunity to combine new enthusiasms with the experience of past office.

The agreed aim of the Council is to “work with residents and their organisations to ensure an active, lively and successful future for the communities of Pontyclun.’ The Council has agreed several strategic objectives in support of this aim and this Annual Report will refer to activities in support of these objectives.

“Pontyclun Community Council will promote the well-being of the residents and develop initiatives that will foster community cohesion and social inclusion through social and cultural activities.”

Cllr Margaret Griffiths convenes the working group tasked with achieving this objective. This group of Councillors has organised a full programme of council-initiated events designed to complement and support the wide range of events organised by Pontyclun’s active array of social groups, many of which are supported by the Council’s grants programme.

On 2 December 2017 the Council organised the Festival of Lights and Music during which many choirs and bands performed on a public stage to celebrate the turning on of the Christmas Lights.

In April 2018 the Community Council organised the Pontyclun Planetarium - 150 residents and 90 school children attended one of the 8 sessions in which the stars above us were brought to life with stunning images and magical stories of myth and legend. Thanks to Cllr Martin Ashford for initiating this event.

Community Council staff member, Tara Davies, normally organises Café 50 but on Easter weekend she found time to organise the successful Community Easter Egg Hunt. Thanks to Pontyclun Co-op, Spar and Tesco for donating Easter Eggs.

Café 50 has developed into a focal point for older people in our community. As well as providing affordable cooked lunches, it now hosts a wide range of social activities during most mornings, afternoons and evenings. Whilst the activities are run by volunteers, they are well supported by our staff and council members. Café 50 is supported by local organisations and businesses; notably the Community Shop, Full Stop Law and Leeks. Since last year Café 50 has benefited from the leadership of new staff member, Tara Davies, whose post is 90% funded by RCT Council.

Pontyclun is distinguished by the strength of our community, the willingness of so many to contribute and support each other. The Community Council works best when it supports the support that we freely give each other in our shared spirit of social solidarity.

Pontyclun Community Council will act with other agencies to improve the economic well-being of the residents, community, services and businesses

Cllr Gwyn Jackson convenes the working group to recommend actions which support this objective. The working group identified the importance of encouraging visitors to Pontyclun as a means of developing the local economy. To this end it has contributed to plans for the walking festival, the beer festival, the festival of Christmas Lights and Music and the invitation to Dark Sky Wales to create the Pontyclun Planetarium.

The local economy requires a town centre which is attractive and vibrant. The Council's investment in summer flowers and the Christmas lights is an important means of supporting local business.

The Working Group identified the lack of parking as a major obstacle to the further development of businesses in the town centre. It recommended that the Council consulted on transferring the Heol yr Orsaf Car Park back to RCT Council which had the powers to restrict car parking to a maximum period of 4 hours, with no charging. The result of the consultation led the Council to defer further consideration of this option until extra parking for rail commuters was in place. The claim that the Council had considered introducing parking charges is false.

The Council has achieved its objective of increasing car parking by selling the redundant toilet block in front of the rugby club to RCT Council which has significantly increased the number of car parking spaces whilst also making this town centre site more attractive.

The local economy requires that there is more rail capacity in Pontyclun - more trains, more carriages and more car parking. The Council continues to lobby Welsh Government and RCT

Council to this end; and will engage with the new train operating company once it is appointed.

Pontyclun Community Council will act to work with other organisations to improve the physical environment of the community

Cllr Kate Jones was appointed to convene the working group to recommend actions in support of this objective. The group has not met.

Nevertheless, the Community Council has worked in support of the Pontyclun Environment Group in organising a volunteer led Spring Clun during April 2018. Over 50 Pontyclun volunteers worked together to fill over 100 bags of litter. Congratulations to that Group and its volunteers.

Council staff, Darren Norfolk and Raymond Blank, work effectively to enhance the environment of Pontyclun through maintaining our public rights of way, managing Ivor Woods and Pontyclun Park and maintaining our flower beds in the town centre, on the station platform, on the River Clun bridge and in Groesfaen. They also maintain our bus shelters and benches.

Pontyclun Community Council will foster and support community engagement to ensure that the actions of the Council are transparent and accountable

The Council worked to engage with the community in its challenge to the planning application for 460 houses on Cefn yr Hendy. Whilst recognising that this site was identified for development in the Local Development Plan, residents and Pontyclun Councillors argued that the Plan's requirements for social and transport infrastructure were not being met, Unfortunately RCT Councillors on the Planning Committee consented to the application but Pontyclun Community Councillors continue to support the contrary application for a village green and support the application for a judicial review of the RCT decision.

The Community Council has planned a programme of community engagement in its development of a Pontyclun Place Plan. Thus far this programme has been frustrated by our inability to gain access to mapping software. We have recently gained the volunteer help of a local resident: Dr Robert Berry, Research Fellow at the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) of the University of Gloucestershire. Working with Rob we have re-

set the aim of having illustrations available for community engagement during September and October of 2018.

Pontyclun Community Council will administer the Council and its activities to ensure that residents get good value from the Council

The Administration Working Group, convened by the Cllr Paul Griffiths, was appointed to make recommendations to the Council on matters relating to the administration of the Council. It has worked to recommend the budget for 2018-19, develop recommended policies on matters such as the Council's financial reserves and its preparations for the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation.

In its budget for 2018-19 the Community Council has decided to increase its annual expenditure to £113,410. This is an increase of 2.2%. It will result in the annual average community council charge increasing from £32.07 to £32.72 - an increase of 65 pence. This will allow us to meet the extra costs resulting from Pontyclun Park and Café 50 as well as meeting increases in staff and utility costs. It was the first time in six years that the precept had been increased.

A staff evaluation exercise has recently been completed which adds a further £9000 to our annual staffing costs. The budget planning for 2019-20 will need to make provision for these costs or find savings elsewhere in the budget.

Soon after the new Council was formed in May 2017 it agreed, following due process, that Julius Roszkowski's temporary contract as Clerk should be made permanent. The Council relies on the advice and support of Julius and his Assistant, Karen James. The Council has six members of staff, five of whom are part-time, and it benefits from the commitment and wide range of skills that they bring to the organisation.

This year has been a year of change for the Council. In May 2017 we had 8 new Councillors elected, bringing new thoughts and ideas to what we do and how we do it.

Paul Griffiths
Chair of Pontyclun Community Council

COUNCIL SERVICES

The Council provides many local services and works with RCT CBC and Community groups to help support the community.

In particular we

- own and manage the Car Park in Heol yr Orsaf
- look after the Cenotaph
- own and manage Pontyclun Park and the play facilities there
- own and manage Ivor Woods and the land at the bottom of the Hollies
- maintain the public footpaths in our Community
- lease and manage Café 50
- Provide public conveniences in Heol yr Orsaf
- Provide floral displays in many locations across our Community

During this year we sold our old public conveniences in Pontyclun to RCT CBC to allow them to improve the long-term car parking facilities there. The benefits of this additional parking are already being seen in Pontyclun.

We were also successful in lobbying RCT CBC to improve the access facilities around Pontyclun Library and they have also made bids for Welsh Government funding for additional bus shelters in our Community.

Residents will soon see more development in the Community garden in Pontyclun Park, with a new group having been set up to look after this area.

We are pleased to have obtained Bee Friendly status. This recognises the actions the Council has done to improve our environmental management of our open spaces in a manner which supports pollinators.

In January we held several Dementia awareness sessions for local businesses and community groups. With an aging population this is something we must all be alert to and supportive of people who are affected. This is the first step on the way to making Pontyclun a Dementia Friendly Community.

HOW WE ORGANISE OURSELVES

The Council consists of 11 elected members and we employ 1 full time and 5-part time staff.

The Council meets monthly at Café 50 and residents are welcome to attend and contribute to our meetings.

We have 4 working groups who consider the Council's plans and agree actions and priorities.

The **administration group** (led by Councillor Paul Griffiths) discusses matters relating to how the Council runs itself with the aim to streamline how we operate and engage our residents.

During this year we have focussed on the opportunities people have to interact with us by

- Increasing the number of days the Council Offices are open to the public
- added the option to contact us via our website
- launched a Council Facebook page
- Improved the contact & location details given on our website as well as the information that can be found about the Council when searching online.

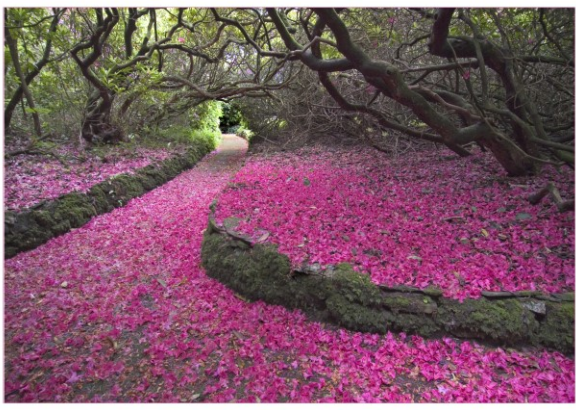


The **Economy group** (Led by Councillor Gwyn Jackson) discusses how we can help promote Pontyclun and make it a place more people wish to live in and visit.

The group has been looking at parking arrangements to see what we can do to support the improvement of these facilities. Residents will see that additional spaces have been added by the Rugby Club and we are looking at options in Heol yr Orsaf and other areas.

The aim is to also launch a series of walk leaflets for our area and to further improve visitor information on our website

The **Environment group** (convened by Councillor Kate Jones last year and Karan Lane going forward) looks after our various open spaces, including Pontyclun Park and Ivor Woods.



The **Social & Cultural group** (led by Councillor Margaret Griffiths) aims to arrange events and activities to promote our wellbeing and to develop social events and a feeling of community.

This group also makes recommendations on Café 50.

The Council is grateful to all the groups that organise events in our community, whether they be one off ones or regular occasions such as the bonfire night events at the Pontyclun Rugby Club and Miskin Scouts. These all help to make the Pontyclun Community a great place to live. If you have a community event you wish us to list on our website/Facebook page, then please contact the Clerk.

Planned events for 2018

The planned programme of events for 2018 which the Council is currently supporting includes:

The Walking Festival from 29 May to 3 June

Picnic in the Park - the 'Great Get Together' on 23 June

Vegetable Garden/ allotment Competitions in August

Beer Festival in August

'Peace at Last' - films and exhibitions throughout November to commemorate the Peace of 1918

Festival of Christmas Music and Lights on 1 December

CAFÉ 50

Café 50 continues to develop and thrive.

Café 50 aims to be a welcoming social hub for anyone over the age of 50, by providing a range of activities and classes designed to enhance social interaction, learning new skills as well as provide support to those who need it



It is open Monday to Friday with hot meals provided at lunchtime at affordable prices. This gives the more vulnerable and lonely in our community the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal which socialising with like-minded individuals.

With the support of RCT CBC we have recruited a Welcome Officer whose role is to develop & promote the facility further. She has been very active in working with local social care and health services to encourage referrals.

A new Facebook page has been launched which has been getting up to 5000 views for some of its posts generating significant interest in activities there.

We have seen increasing numbers of people joining the various groups that meet there and also more attending for the lunch service. New groups include Tai Chi, Yoga & Indoor Kurling and we will soon start showing Film Matinees and aim to see if we can run children's film shows in school holiday periods.

We introduced Wi-Fi facilities in both Café 50 and the Community Centre and now have the ability to allow groups to show DVDs to their members.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

How can we help?

The Community Council actively works to develop our Community striving with others to improve our facilities.

We have strong links with RCT CBC and work in partnership with them where we can.



Supporting Community Groups

The council allocates some of its budget each year to supporting local groups.

This year we gave 17 groups grants totalling £2600. Support was provided for groups encompassing the full range of our residents from the youngest to our most senior.

In addition, we publicise events by displaying posters & articles on our noticeboards, website and Facebook pages and give help and advice where we can.

The Council has allocated a further £2500 towards grant support for this 2018-9 and details of how to apply can be found on our website, Pontyclun.net

Looking forward

The Council has some great plans to support the Community going into 2018-9 and beyond.

We have several local events planned and will be supporting other community led activities such as the “Spring Clun” and Community Garden.

We are investigating options for additional parking, improving local facilities and promoting Pontyclun and our Community.

“We believe all residents, businesses, staff and visitors of Pontyclun should have the opportunity to make the best of their lives.

The Council is here to help facilitate those opportunities now and into the future.”

We would be delighted to hear from members of the Community about things that they would like to see and from local businesses who would like to help, and support develop our community.

Our Supporters

The following local organisations have given financial support towards events or the running of the Council during this year -

- The Community Shop
- Full Stop Law
- U3A
- Rybec Homes
- Café 50 Tuesday Quizzers
- Spar
- Tesco
- Co-op
- Yarnmongers

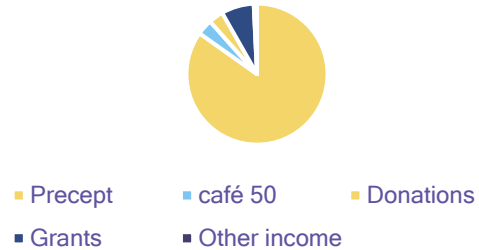
OUR FINANCES

Funding the Council

The Council is paid for by a precept on local residents. The precept for 2017-8 was £111k,

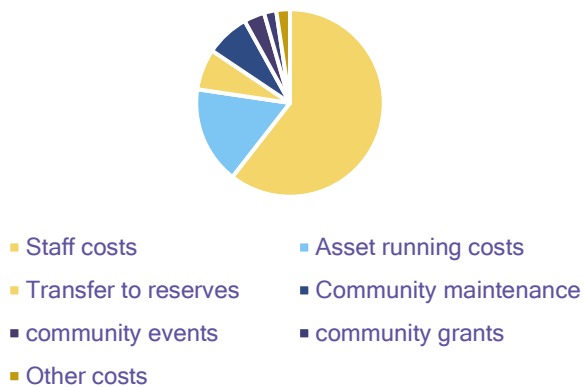
In addition we raised funds by seeking grants and the hire of Café 50.

Pontyclun Community Council income



The Council is also pleased to acknowledge the kind support of local businesses who have supported us by making donations towards events or the running of Café 50.

Pontyclun Community Council costs



Overall due to additional grants and donations and VAT refunds from previous year we had a small surplus in our budget for last year which was added to our reserves.

Reserves currently stand at £80k with £22k of that specifically earmarked for future commitments.

Our Auditor's view

“We have concluded that, based on the generally satisfactory conclusions drawn from work completed to date based on our annual programme of work, the Council continues to maintain adequate and effective internal control arrangements, with no issues of concern identified at this stage: we have also followed up progress on the implementation of issues raised in our previous report and are pleased to acknowledge the positive action taken to date to address them.”

OUR VALUES

Our values help us achieve our strategy. They will help us to make Pontyclun a place where people choose to live, and where businesses will thrive. Our values underpin the way we operate as an organisation. They influence our choices and our behaviours - they are the thread running through everything we do.

Our values are: People. Place. Pride.

People

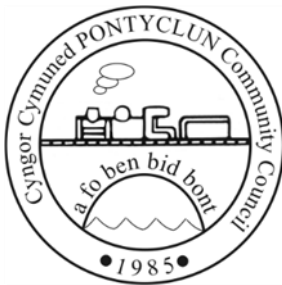
Every day we will treat people with the respect they deserve and believe only our best is good enough.

Place

We will strive to make Pontyclun an even greater place to live, work and visit.

Pride

We are proud of what we do and will accept the responsibility invested in us, rising to meet the challenges we face.



CONTACT US

You can contact the Council by



Telephone

01443 238500



Post

Community Council Offices
Heol yr Orsaf
Pontyclun
CF72 9EE



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Facebook

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Website

www.pontyclun.net