



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Cyngor Cymuned Pontyclun Community Council

Email: clerk@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales

Website: Pontyclun.net

Tel: 01443 238500

Heol yr Orsaf, Pontyclun, CF72 9EE



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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.’ During the past year the Community Council has achieved a great deal in support of this aim, and I thank all those residents, councillors and council staff who have worked together to make Pontyclun a better place.

However, since March 2020 so much of our community life has been changed by the virus Covid-19 which has been a threat to all our lives. The very necessary steps taken to reduce the transmission of the virus has reduced the economic and community life of Pontyclun to a very sad and extraordinary extent.

Our town centre which was previously buzzing with vibrant economic activity is now almost perfectly still with only food shops open and they must limit access. All our other businesses are closed - the cafes, restaurants and pubs; the hairdressers, beauty parlours, podiatrists and physiotherapists, the Gallery, the clothes shops, the florist, the Community Shop. They will all gradually re-open, but incomes will have been lost and recovery will require great strength and effort.

All schools in Pontyclun are currently closed and a small number of children of key workers are attending a ‘hub’ service at Ysgol Llanhari.

Pontyclun is normally distinguished by the warmth and liveliness of its social activity as residents come together in friendship and mutual support. All this is mightily diminished. The Community Centre, Café 50, the Athletic Club, the Rugby Club are all closed. Even our chapels and churches are restricting their activity. Almost all our social clubs have stopped meeting although great efforts are being made to maintain contact during this period. All these institutions rely wholly on the volunteer spirit of Pontyclun and their resurrection as we come out of this crisis will require determination and effort

Members of the Community Council have been active in this crisis. They have supported Pontyclun Community Friends, a network in which over a hundred local volunteers who have supported residents who have asked for help with shopping and medicines - as well as conversation. In the midst of this adversity the strength of our community has shown itself

The Council has agreed a number of strategic objectives and this Annual Report will refer to our activities in support of these objectives.

Through its programme of social and cultural activities Pontyclun Community Council will work to bring people together and enhance their well-being.

Cllr Margaret Griffiths convenes the working group tasked with achieving this objective. The range of activities created and supported by this group of Councillors during the past year has been remarkable.

In June 2019 the Community Council held once again its annual 'Picnic in the Park'. Hundreds of local people came together to enjoy each other's company. A myriad of local groups helped organise community activities: the running club, the cricket club, the Petanque club, the Environment Group, the Community Garden, the School PTA, Bethel Baptist Church, the U3A, the Macmillan Group. Once again. Councillor Carole Willis was a remarkable organiser of children's games.

Last December the Council worked with local Macmillan Fundraising Committee to organise the Christmas Festival at the Athletic Club which coincides with the switching on of the Christmas Lights. We thank the Macmillan Committee for organising the Christmas Market along with the local choirs and musicians who provided the music - including the rock band of Councillor Martin Ashford. The Council hired a marquee for this event, and this allowed the wonderful participation of our choirs from Ysgol Llantrisant, Ysgol Llanhari and Pontyclun Primary School. The Council worked with Pontyclun School PTA to organise a Christmas Grotto which was full of joyful and creative activity and was visited by Father Christmas

Café 50 is provided by the Community Council and has been a focal point for older people in our community. As well as providing affordable cooked lunches, it has hosted 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, notably the Café 50 Coordinator Tara Davies, and council members notably Councillor Gwyn Jackson who organises the weekly quiz and Councillor Mike Davies who organises a Film Club. Café 50 works in a close partnership with the Pontyclun University of the Third Age which is able to use the Café 50 space for the wide range of its learning groups. Café

50 is supported by local organisations and businesses including the Community Shop, Full Stop Law and Leeks. Café 50 was refurbished during the last year with support from the Probation Service.

The Council Clerk, Julius Roszkowski, has organised a very successful Walking Rugby Group

Pontyclun Community Council works with local businesses to support the local economy

Cllr Gwyn Jackson convenes the working group to 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 the Christmas Festival and Picnic in the Park. 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.

Following extensive consultation with local schools and local residents this Working Group recommended proposals to RCT Council and the Welsh Government to create safer walking routes in the centre of Pontyclun. As a result, there has been substantial investment to create a 20 mph zone in Pontyclun Town Centre, more dropped kerbs and more pedestrian islands along our main roads. The Council continues to press for improved road safety measures in Groes Faen and Miskin. In normal times car parking continues to be a major problem in the town centre. Local Businesses have pressed the case for extra car parking and have provided the evidence that trade is being lost when people cannot find a convenient car parking space. In recent years there has been extra parking places in front of the Rugby Club in the town centre. The Council is continuing to press for extra car parking spaces at the Railway Station

The Council has been pressing the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales for extra train capacity at Pontyclun. During the past year Transport for Wales has introduced more and larger carriages and this has resulted in a 40% increase in the number of seats. The Community Council continues to make the case for increased train frequency.

Pontyclun Community Council will work with other organisations to improve our local environment

Cllr Karan Lane is the energetic and enthusiastic convenor of the working group that supports this objective.

The councillors work closely in support of the volunteers in the Pontyclun Environment Group. As part of the 2019 Pontyclun Spring Clean in April 2019, 38 volunteers and members of the Pontyclun Environment Group, including 6 community councillors, spent the weekend collecting litter left in various parts of Pontyclun, Miskin and Hendy. In total 85 bags were filled with rubbish. Our thanks and congratulations go to every volunteer, the young and less young.

Darren and Ray, the Community Council staff, litter pick on our public rights of way and in Pontyclun Park. RCT staff litter pick each week in the shopping areas.

When we keep our community clean, we feel better. We are more likely to go out and socialise. Our health improves. We attract more visitors and local businesses benefit. It is no small matter.

The Community Council is also pleased to work in support of the Community Garden volunteers who provide a wonderful facility in Pontyclun Park - beds of flowers and vegetable which can be freely picked by any visitor to the Park.

During the past year Councillor Karen Lane has used her professional legal skills to gain agreement on a new lease for the Environment Group and a new agreement with the Community Garden.

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 financing of the Council.

The Community Council at its meeting on 8 January 2020 agreed its budget for 2020-21. The Council plans to have a precept of £122.100 in the coming year - 2.7% more than this year which largely reflects increases in staff costs. This budget will result in the average Pontyclun household being charged £34.79 towards the Council's costs.

The Community Council budget will cover the costs of Café 50, the town centre car park, Pontyclun Park, Ivor Woods, summer flowers and Christmas lights, maintenance of public footpaths, the Christmas Festival, Picnic in the Park.

The Council has been commended for its financial management by its external auditors and credit goes to the Administrator, Karen James, and the Clerk, Julius Roszkowski.

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.

In May 2020 the dark cloud of Covid 19 is hanging over Pontyclun. We will come through this crisis although no-one can be sure how the virus will continue to affect our lives in coming months. As the next year unfolds Pontyclun Community Council will work alongside all residents in Pontyclun to re-create everything that is wonderful in our community.

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 War Memorial in Pontyclun and Remembrance plaques in Groesfaen
- 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, manage and run Café 50
- Provide public conveniences in Heol yr Orsaf
- Provide floral displays in many locations across our Community
- Arrange a number of Community Events including a Summer Picnic in the Park and a Christmas Festival
- Co-ordinate a number of Community Groups including a Dementia Support Group, Walking Rugby team, a weekly Quiz for the over 50s and a monthly Film Club

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.

The Council is a Disability Confident - Committed employer and is a signatory to the Armed Forces Charter

HOW WE ORGANISE OURSELVES

The Council consists of 11 elected members and we employ 1 full time and 6-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 working group** (Convened 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.



The **Economy working group** (Convened 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 **Environment working group** (convened by Councillor Karan Lane) looks after our various open spaces, including Pontyclun Park and Ivor Woods.

The **Social & Cultural group** (Convened 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.



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 lonelier in our community the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal which socialising with like-minded individuals.

There is now a great variety of groups from crafts to quizzes, games, and exercises to education and even a Film Club.

Groups wishing to use Café 50 should contact the Council Offices to see what spaces are available and any costs. Note groups focussing on over 50s can have space for free between 9am and 3pm Monday to Fridays (subject to availability)

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

How can we help?

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. 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.



Supporting Community Groups

The council allocates some of its budget each year to supporting local groups. This year we gave grants totalling £2500 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 the 2020-21 financial year and details of how to apply can be found on our website, Pontyclun.net

Volunteers and Placements

The Council works with organisations to help people looking for a way back to work by offering workplace placements.

In addition, we work with local volunteers to help improve our community through a number of projects.

Looking forward

The uncertainty caused by the COVID 19 disease and restrictions imposed mean that it is difficult to plan for 2020-21.

We have had to cancel Picnic in the Park which was planned for the weekend of the VE75 remembrance festivities. Our Christmas Festival in conjunction with MacMillan cancer Support is still scheduled for Saturday 5th December

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

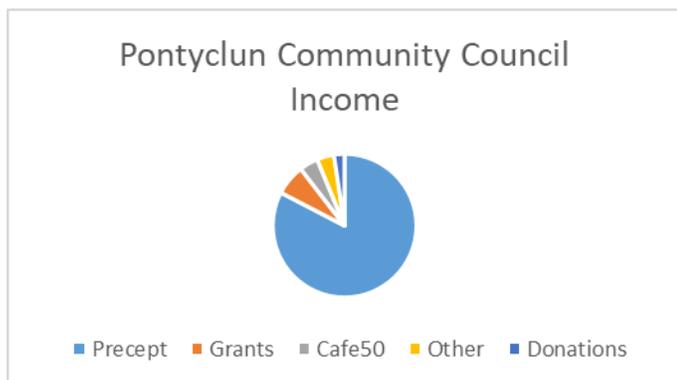
The following local organisations have given financial support towards events or the running of the Council during this year -

- The Community Shop
- Hapi Project
- Taf Ely Primary Care Cluster
- U3A
- Café 50 Tuesday Quizzers
- Spar
- Tesco
- Co-op

OUR FINANCES

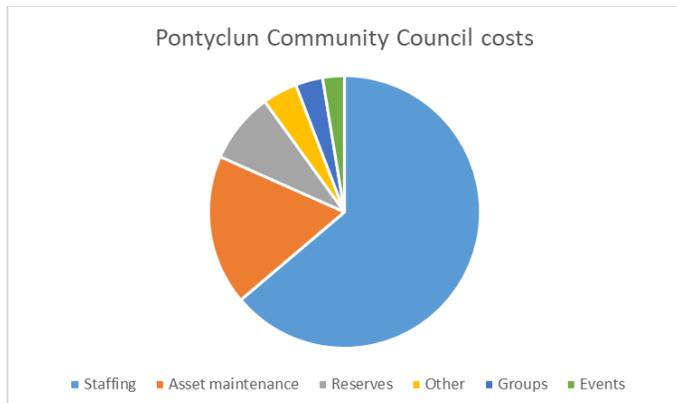
Funding the Council

The Council is paid for by a precept on local residents. The precept for 2019-20 was £118.48k,



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

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.



Overall whilst we planned to use our reserves to balance our budget with a planned spend of about £5k more than income we actually ended the year in a balanced position. This was due to a delay in receipt of utility bills for Café 50. These monies will be paid in 2020-21 and total about £4.5k Reserves currently stand at £97k with £48k of that earmarked for specific future commitments such as replacing the Playground equipment when it reaches then end of its useful life.

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

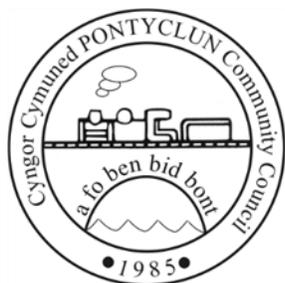
Every day we will treat people with the respect they deserve and believe only our best is good enough.

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
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