



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Cyngor Cymuned
PONTYCLUN
Community Council

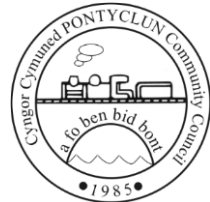


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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past year has been another year that has seen the unprecedented effects of the Covid-19 virus on our community and its residents. Although we have seen a few periods of lighter restrictions and increased activity within our community, who would have thought that we would have seen another year of the virus and associated restrictions?

However, throughout this period, the Council has continued to function and have a positive impact upon our community. This has only been possible due to the commitment and diligence of our council staff and council members alike. Home working and online meetings have enabled the Council to continue to function and provide a high standard of service to the community.

We have been able to keep facilities, such as our public toilets, open by providing increased cleaning and sanitisation regimes. Pontyclun Park, which is a facility provided by the Council, has been kept functioning and has provided a safe place for our residents to exercise and make the most of the outdoors at times when other things were restricted. As restrictions have eased the Council has opened up Café 50, resuming the provision of a lunch service for our older residents and a space for them to meet. The re-opening of Café 50 has seen a revision in the catering provision, and this has proved to have been successful and has enabled provision of a wider selection of meals and catering services to our users of Café 50. Our thanks go to the staff and volunteers who facilitate the organisation and running of Café 50, it proves to be an invaluable resource for our community. During the past year the Council has also been able to provide support for a number of community defibrillator units in conjunction with the unit situated outside the Council Offices in Heol-yr-Orsaf. This goes towards providing a wider coverage of units throughout our community which will help towards making Pontyclun a safer area for residents and visitors alike.

The past year has seen replacement and refurbishment of a number of our planters which enables the Council to continue to provide its display of both summer and winter flowers, enhancing our locality. Upkeep of our green spaces and hedgerows also provide a valuable and diverse habitat for insects and wildlife that goes towards sustaining a good ecological balance. Working alongside RCT we are able to keep certain areas within our community, as "wild-meadow" and this also encourages insects and wildlife and provides areas where native wildflowers are able to thrive. Our green spaces continue to provide safe spaces for families to enjoy their natural surroundings and we continue to develop our woodland and riverside walks, including the updating and publishing of our walking leaflets / maps. Alas during the last year, we have seen some major erosion along the banks of one of our riverside walks which has led to closures and restrictions of the footpath. We have also had damage caused to the bridge at Maesyfelin, for which the Council has needed to make an insurance claim to facilitate its repair and reinstatement. The Council will continue to work, in conjunction with RCT, to investigate the possible solutions that will enable the repairs to the footpath and enable the reopening of the riverside walk which has previously been extensively used by local residents.

Although not able to hold a summer festival during the past year, the Council was able to organise and successfully facilitate a Christmas Fayre held in our car park at Heol-yr-Orsaf and in Café 50. This was a much-welcomed change as restrictions were lifted during early December and proved to very popular amongst all who attended, providing a good foundation for future events. With the lifting of restrictions, and life

returning to normal, it is hoped that the Council will be able to facilitate and organise future such events and build on the good work of the past few years.

The Council's website has continued to develop and a large amount of information relating to our locality, including services, businesses as well as its history and places of interest; as well as being a place for all Council related information and reports etc. The development of Pontyclun History Trail continues, and more information is being collated to increase the number of sites that can be included.

As restrictions are now being lifted, and life starts to return to normal, the Council will need to rise to the varying challenges that comes its way and, along with the council staff, help Pontyclun to return to the vibrant community we are used to it being. The council strives to work alongside the residents of Pontyclun in creating a safe, happy and vibrant community.

Neil Holley

Chair of Pontyclun Community Council 2021-22

COUNCIL SERVICES

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

In particular we

- lease 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, the land at the bottom of the Hollies and the Riverside Walk in Brynsadler.
- 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. These are run by Council staff, Councillors or volunteers on our behalf.
- We provide Dog poo and normal waste bins around our community and also run a Crisp packet recycling scheme.

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 5-part time staff.

The Council meets monthly, 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 during 2021-2 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 during 2021-2 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 during 2021-2 by Councillor Martin Ashford) looks after our various open spaces, including Pontyclun Park and Ivor Woods.

The **Social & Cultural group** (Convened during 2021-2 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 relating to Café 50.



CAFÉ 50

Whilst Café 50 had to temporarily close for part of the year due to covid restrictions, these have been lifted and our groups have returned, and lunch is being served again.

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 normally 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.

Post Covid we are now even busier than before the pandemic with more groups using us than before. In September 2021 we restarted the lunch services using a new Caterer. RCT CBC Adult services are now providing a very popular lunch service which uses people of different abilities to help prepare and serve the meals.

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

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

There are Council Elections coming up in May 2022 at which a new Council will be elected.

This will give the residents of Pontyclun the opportunity to choose who they wish to take the area forward and hopefully this will create a new impetus from fresh ideas and suggestions which we will update residents on as they progress.

There are a few projects which we have been working on which are coming to completion -

- We are still progressing our Walking Routes which should be fully live by the summer of 2022 providing 5 excellent local walks for people to follow. These have been developed in conjunction with Ramblers Cymru and the aim is for this to rise to 7 over the medium term
- Our history trail research continues with over 40 sites identified and location markers should start being placed in the spring of 2022 with information provided by way of QR codes. Our ultimate aim is to link these together in a series of walking trails for interested people to follow.
- We are working to help add 2 new benches and replace another in Pontyclun and support installation of a further 2 defibrillators in our community

There will be a Picnic in the Park on 16th July (weather permitting) and a Christmas Fayre on 3rd December. Our aim is to improve on last year's excellent Fayre with more stalls, games and fun for all.

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 directly allocates £2500 of its budget each year to supporting local groups encompassing the full range of our residents from the youngest to our most senior. Details of how to apply can be found on our website, Pontyclun.net

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

The Council also provides free and discounted space to groups focussing on older people at Café 50 and this is equivalent to giving a further £5k of grants to the community.

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.

Our Supporters

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.

“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.”

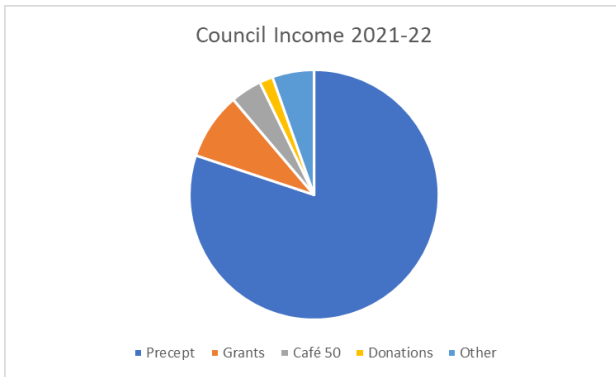
The following local organisations have given financial support towards events or the running of the Council over the last few years -

- The Pontyclun Community Shop
- Hapi Project
- Taf Ely Primary Care Cluster
- U3A
- Café 50 Tuesday Quizzers
- Blakemores
- Tesco
- Co-op
- Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes
- Action for Elderly
- Interlink RCT

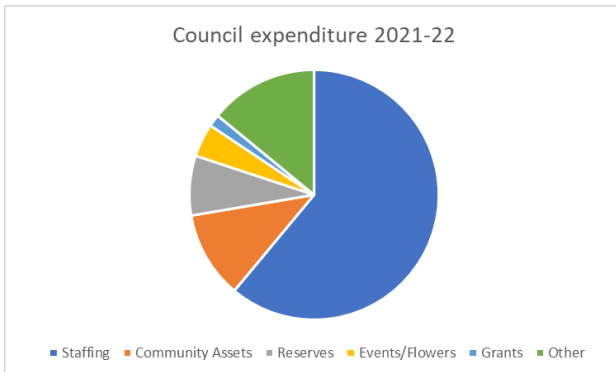
OUR FINANCES

Funding the Council

The Council is mainly funded by a precept on local residents. The precept for 2021-22 was £128.1k,



In addition, we normally raise funds by seeking grants, donations and the hire of Café 50. These returned to pre-pandemic levels at about £15k for the year



2021-22 saw us having to make a number of Insurance claims due to thefts of one of our flower planters and also parts of a wooden bridge at otters Brook. Replacing these increased our expenditure significantly, though of course were covered by the claims

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Council works with residents and local groups to help support the local environment. These include:-

Pontyclun Environment Group

This is a group of residents whose activities have included:

- Helping maintain the riverside walk along the River Ely from Brynsadler to Pontyclun.
- Managing the containment of knotweed and balsam along the riverside with the effect of widening the biodiversity of the area
- Working with Llais y Goedwig to optimise the health of the woodland areas on the land leased from the Community Council optimising trees, plants, birds and animal species.
- Coordinating the input of volunteer residents in undertaking litter picks.
- Organising local walks with the county ecologist so that residents can better understand and appreciate the diversity of the local eco-systems.

Pontyclun Community Garden

Pontyclun Community Garden is a group of volunteer residents who have established and maintained a community garden within the Pontyclun Park which is provided by Pontyclun Community Council.

The Community Garden includes

- Insect friendly flowers and vegetables
- Bug hotel
- Bee's nest
- Composting

Refill Pontyclun

Pontyclun school children made agreements with local retailers that tap water will be provided to children bringing their own bottles. The effect is to reduce the use of plastic and reduce the littering of plastic bottles.

The Community Council formalised these arrangements through the launch of a "Refill Pontyclun" scheme. This scheme currently has 21 local businesses as members.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

The Community Council seeks to support and work closely with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. RCT Council has innovated in the development of a grass cutting and collecting machine which allows vegetation a long growing season before it is cut and collected so as to foster local eco-systems and encourage greater biodiversity.

Pontyclun Community Council worked with RCT Council to identify and reserve sites for this 'hay cut' regime. The sites include:

- A half-acre of land along the perimeter of Pontyclun Park which is owned by the Community Council.
- 5 acres of land on the top end of the cycle path which runs from Pontyclun Railway Station to the A473
- 20 acres of land enclosed by Ffordd Cefn yr Hendy.
- Land in on Cowbridge Road, Talygarn and by the motorway Talygarn Drive

Groesfaen Gwyrdd

- We supported this new volunteer led organisation in Groesfaen to set up and start activities in 2020.
- Their purpose is to make Groesfaen a better place to live by taking action to improve the environment and encourage local participation.
- We supported them to acquire a "Pollinator Garden" under the Local Places for Nature scheme and also to plant a number of Pollinator friendly bushes on local waste land.

Pontyclun Community Council actions

Pontyclun Community Council owns and maintains 5 acres of woodland at Ivor Woods. Its woodland management is intended to increase biodiversity and local eco-systems. Where safe, fallen branches and trees are left 'in-situ' or cut branches are placed in piles to encourage wildlife.

The Community Council, as an agent of RCT Council, maintains 20 miles of public right of ways.

Our floral displays specifically use "Pollinator friendly" flowers in our hanging baskets.

The Community Council has a 'bee friendly' designation.

To encourage recycling the Council runs a Crisp packet recycling scheme in the Community with drop off locations at Café 50 and the Pontyclun Library.

With regards to its administration, paper purchased for use in the Office is PEFC certified from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources. It is also Chlorine free. We also replace light bulbs with LED ones when then need changing and recently replaced the bulk of the lighting in Café 50 with LED lights, reducing the number of light bulbs by nearly 60 during the process.

The Council seeks to promote and encourage biodiversity and habitats for pollinators and insects. To do this we

1. Since 2017 we have operated a Hay cut regime in a section of our park
2. In 2020 we also started to leave the area of ground to the side of Café 50 in Pontyclun uncut
3. In 2020 we also started to leave an area of ground at the Hollies uncut.
4. In 2019 we were asked by residents to look at installing additional fencing/gates at the park and as a result we planted a new section of hedging at the park boundary (rather than metal or wooden fencing)
5. In 2020 we signed up to the Hedgehog Heroes scheme

COUNCIL SERVICE LEVELS

Service	Target service level
Council Administration	
Messages to Council including via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Post • Facebook • Twitter • Telephone message • Website contact form • Google messaging 	Our aim is to respond to all messages within 2 working days of receipt Depending on complexity we may give an initial holding reply pending further investigation or discussion. The holding letter will provide information about what happens next and timescales
Information about Council meetings including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agendas and papers • Minutes • Annual Report 	Agendas and supporting papers for meetings will be published at least 3 working days (including Saturdays) before meeting Draft minutes will be published within 7 working days after a meeting and finalised minutes within 7 days after the next Council meeting An annual report for the prior financial year will be published by the end of June each year
Website maintenance including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External links • Business information • Community group information 	Website will be regularly maintained with all external links, Business information and Community group details updated at least annually
Booking Council assets including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café 50 • Use of land such as Pontyclun Park 	All requests for bookings will be acknowledged within 2 days of receipt All bookings will be confirmed in writing including providing terms and conditions of booking
Maintenance of Assets	
Dangerous trees, Playground equipment, paths etc.	The area will be made safe on the day we become aware of the issue and repaired in a timely manner afterwards
Footpath maintenance	All public footpaths in the Community will be reviewed and cleared annually. The footpaths used for our Community Walk leaflets and for long distance paths will be cleared twice annually
Waste management including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter picking • Bin emptying 	The Council will manage its waste in a responsible manner Pontyclun Park and the Car Park in Heol yr Orsaf will have litter picked at least once a week in Winter and twice weekly in Summer The Council owned bins (dog and waste) will be emptied at least weekly

Playground maintenance	<p>Playground at Pontyclun Park is visually inspected weekly by our staff</p> <p>Playground has additional checks by trained RCT staff three times a year and has an annual independent inspection</p> <p>Defects identified are dealt with in a timely manner commensurate with the risk. Any dangerous defects are made safe on day advised.</p>
Ivor Woods & Millfield tree management	<p>We have an annual inspection of our trees by RCT CBC Parks team staff</p> <p>Trees identified for removal (or pruning) are dealt with prior to next inspection</p>
Grassed areas	<p>During the mowing season grass will be cut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 3 weeks at Pontyclun Park, Café 50; The Hollies and at War Memorial • Areas of grass at Café 50; the Hollies and in the park are left to grow providing a better habitat for Pollinators and other wildlife
Asset inspection and maintenance	<p>All Council assets are inspected annually, and a report prepared for action to remedy defects</p> <p>Wooden floral planters are painted every 5 years with 3 coats of appropriate covering</p> <p>The railings at Pontyclun War Memorial are painted every 3 years</p>

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

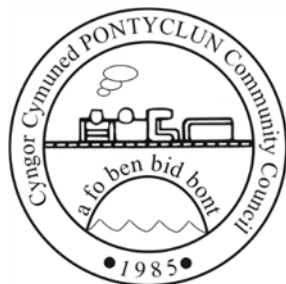
Every day we will treat people with the respect they deserve and believe only our best is good enough.

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



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