



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Cyngor Cymuned
PONTYCLUN
Community Council

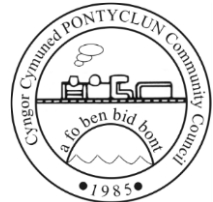


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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Thank you for the welcome we've received from the Community since being elected last May. It's been a very busy year and I'd like to place on record my thanks to the previous Community Council for their hard work and care for the local community.

There have been many positives during the year, most notably our successful community events, Picnic in the Park and the Christmas Fayre, which were both attended in great numbers and highly successful. We have added brand new events to the calendar this year, including a new Food & Drink Festival in August, to help increase footfall to the village and engage with large numbers of the local community.

We have also continued to give a large number of small grants to local organisations and charities, supporting the tremendous work they do on a daily basis for people in our local area.

The future of Café 50 has been high on the agenda for many this year and I want to again reassure everyone that it was never once considered for closure. It's a highly valuable local asset providing fantastic service and a safe place for many. The changes we decided to make were mainly financial- and partly operational-based. The previous lease actually expired in 2019, so we were being asked to renew something that hadn't been committed to last term, and with a considerable amount of future refurbishment required that would have had to be paid for out of our reserves, we felt this was the best way for management to be run going forward.

The Community Council-managed Ivor Woods has also been an area of concern and there is unfortunately no safe, quick or financially viable way to just make everything right immediately. We will continue to do as much as we can to re-open access as widely as possible.

Forest Wood Quarry and the volume of heavy-goods traffic is a priority for the Council, and we are setting up a specific Working Group to focus on it even more strongly. We believe the village is already too busy, with too much pollution and traffic.

You may have noticed your Precepts - the amount each household pays to maintain our Budget - have been raised this year. We had been the second cheapest in all of RCT after a decade of low or no increases, an enviable position but one that had left our Reserves low and left little wiggle-room to make positive changes to the area.

We are now mid-range when compared with the rest of the county and can commit to providing extra facilities to the whole area. New and refreshed benches in key areas, more floral displays, more Christmas decorations, a large investment in Pontyclun Park to repair tired equipment, more dog poo bins and much more besides. It isn't a decision we took lightly, but one we felt was essential to

improve the overall look and feel of the community, from Groesfaen to Talygarn and everywhere in between. The mini budgets allocated to each area - Pontyclun West, Central and East have been designed for the purpose of ensuring each area gets a fair allocation of funds and will be allocated to projects agreed by the Councillors in those areas. If you have any requests, please let us know!

I will finish by thanking you all, once again, for the warm welcome and please know that we are here and in these voluntary roles, to serve you. If anyone needs support or has an idea, please get in touch and we'll assess every single thought.

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you at one of our events or meetings soon.

Wayne Owen

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

- 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. As part of this we have published 6 Community walking trails.
- Support the running of 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, Food festival in August and a Christmas Festival
- Provide support for Community groups and Charities in the form of grants, discounted or free use of facilities and promotion.
- Co-ordinate a number of Community groups. 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.

Each of our three wards (Pontyclun Central, East and West) have a ward committee to discuss issues relating to services in that ward.

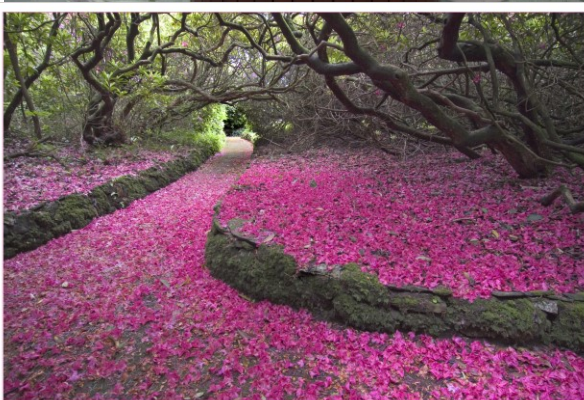
The **administration working group** (Convened during 2022-23 by Councillor Wayne Owen) discusses matters relating to how the Council runs itself with the aim to streamline how we operate and engage our residents.



The **Economy working group** (Convened by Councillor Paul Binning) 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 Kelly Sherratt) looks after our various open spaces, including Pontyclun Park and Ivor Woods.

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



We also have a temporary **Local development plan group** (convened by Councillor Sian Assiratti) who are supporting our response to RCT CBC's changes to the Local development plan. We also have a temporary group

convened by Councillor Jamie Daniel looking into possibility of applying for town status for Pontyclun.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

How we see ourselves and our place in the world is often expressed in what happens in our community.

Pontyclun is a thriving vibrant place with a rich tapestry of activities and events. Many of these are organised by an “army” of tireless volunteers and supporters who deserve our thanks and praise.

From small coffee mornings, to play groups and clubs, Pontyclun is a great place to live a full and rewarding life.

The Community Council aims to contribute to this tapestry, be it by flying flags at key points in the year like St David’s day, to supporting groups and arranging events for the whole community to enjoy.

Men’s shed Pontyclun.

In early 2023 the Community Council worked with volunteers to help set up a Men’s Shed in Pontyclun.

As a gender, men do not tend to form the same support networks and groups as women. Traditionally men in Wales have talked and socialised at the local pub, or during sports activities. Life presents many challenges; retirement, unemployment, physical or mental ill health - men can often find themselves with time on their hands, become socially isolated or lonely. The Men’s Shed Pontyclun offers a ‘health by stealth’ approach, encouraging friendships, community and service networks. The inclusive ethos they promote offers ‘Shedders’ a sense of belonging, acceptance and fellowship experienced ‘shoulder to shoulder’ through shared activities. We wish this group well in 2023 and beyond. Come along and join in some of their activities in the future.

King Charles’s Coronation

The nation will be celebrating the coronation of the King in May, Pontyclun will be no exception and there will be many street parties and events throughout the area.

The council has set aside funds to help pay for bunting and party stuff for local parties and shops.

Picnic in the Park

The council has run a Picnic in the park event for a number of years. This is a community focused event in Pontyclun park allowing local community groups and sports clubs the opportunity to showcase what they do and potentially raise funds, gain members and volunteers.

In 2022 we had nearly 25 stalls and many hundreds of visitors on what was one of the hottest days of the year

The Picnic is on 10th June in the afternoon and this year in addition to the stalls, games, activities food and drink. We are grateful to the various local groups who will be running stalls on the day for you all the enjoy.

Food and drink festival

The council is planning its first ever Food and drink festival for 2023.

To be held at the car park in Heol yr Orsaf on Saturday 26th August we aim to have over 25 Food and drink related stalls and food vendors.

This will hopefully develop into a great community event showcasing Pontyclun and adding it to the “foodie” scene.

Bonfire Night

Pontyclun RFC try to arrange a bonfire night event each year, and 2023 is no exception. After a few years due to covid when this was not possible, the club are trying to raise funds to run an event this year. To help this, should they fall short of their funding targets, the Community Council has pledged to donate up to £3k towards the costs.

If you would like to be a sponsor of this event, please contact the Rugby club
secretary@pontyclunrfc.org

Remembrance Day

The Community of Pontyclun has three Remembrance Day parades. One in Pontyclun itself at the War Memorial; one in the centre of Miskin at the War Memorial and one in Groesfaen at the green in the village centre.

They are all well attended by wreath layers and the public.

Our thanks go to the three individuals who arrange these parades on our behalf.

If you wish your group or business to be involved with the parades and have not been so before, please contact us on community@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales

Christmas

Christmas is a highlight of the year in Pontyclun, we may not get the festive weather but that certainly does not dampen our spirits.

Be it, the Santa run organised by the Pontyclun Action Group; the Bethel Church Christmas trail or the St Paul's Players fantastic Panto there is something for all to enjoy - however mad it may feel to dress up in a red suit and run in the rain!

The Community Council arranges the Christmas lights in Pontyclun and Groesfaen. and soon some in Brynsadler.

There will be a community Christmas tree, and we thank Giles gallery for allowing us to attach the tree to their building and giving us the electricity for the lights. Plus of course, thanks to the kids and parents for making the decorations. This year our tree lighting will be early evening on Saturday 25 November - we'll put a few extra things on this year to make it more interesting.

Pontyclun's Christmas fayre will be on Saturday 2nd December, with about 75 stalls, food traders, kids' activities, music and of course, the big man himself.

That weekend, the marquee, which is used for part of the fayre, will be available for use by Community groups. Friday evening; Sunday morning; Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening. 2 of the 4 slots are already taken but if anyone wants to use the marquee - it is 24m by 9m so large enough for 200; give us a shout.

CAFÉ 50

During 2022 the management of Cafe 50 transitioned from being owned and managed by the Community Council to being owned and managed by RCT Learning curve supported by the Community Council.

The aim of the transition was to try and maintain the service whilst reducing the risk to the Community Council and the ratepayers of Pontyclun of the costs associated with the building.

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 while socialising with like-minded individuals.

The catering is provided by RCT Learning Curve. The catering is provided in a way so as to provide opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities to develop themselves and maximise their potential in a friendly and inclusive way.

Groups are able to hire space at Café 50 and should contact the Council Offices to see what spaces are available and any costs.

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The new Council was elected with a mandate to deliver new and improved services, and to upgrade some of the existing infrastructure.

To do this we will be installing new benches, additional planters, extending the Christmas lights and adding to our already rich events calendar.

We will also carry on following through some of the things the previous Council did. The next phase of the Community History trails and completing the refurbishments of our existing floral planters are just two of the things that will be progressed this year.

Watch out for the Food and Drink festival in August and hopefully the return of the Rugby Club's Fireworks display in November. When added to our existing Picnic in the Park and Christmas events plus the many Coronation activities in May, this will make 2023 a great year for a party!

Our plan for 2023-24 is detailed below.

Objective	Actions	Comments
Community Events		
The Council will run three large Community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring- Picnic in the Park• Summer - Food and Drink festival• Christmas - Christmas Festival	
The Council will support other local organisations who arrange community events in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant for PRFC to hold Fireworks night.• Support 3 Remembrance Day parades in Community• Provide £1000 in grants for Community Coronation events.	Also, Promotion on Council social media, Noticeboards and Website as appropriate

Improving services		
The Council will deliver at least one larger scale new service or an improvement to existing service (£500+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three new benches to be installed. • Replace fencing at Riverside Walk • Repaint lines in MUGA 	Benches - by St Paul's church; Shepherds vets and in Brynsadler. Potentially 2 more later by War memorial
The Council will deliver one smaller new service each year (£50-500)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One History trail to go live 	Design template for all and launch Groesfaen walk.
The Council will deliver 3 small scale new services or make 3 smaller improvements to existing Council services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair facias at bus shelter in Brynsadler • Refurbish planter by Car wash. • 2 Dog poo bins to be replaced. • Bridge in Ivor Woods to be replaced 	
The Council will implement one new action each year designed to improve sustainability or benefit the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Trial of pollinator friendly plants in small planters 	If successful roll out across other small planters
The council will conduct an audit to identify potential locations for new street furniture/service installations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating to Benches/ floral planters/Christmas lighting 	

Resident engagement		
The Council will hold an annual meeting and at least 10 monthly meetings plus regular Working Group meetings.		Annual meeting in May No Meeting in August/December
The Council will engage residents via Noticeboards, Website and social media.		Agreed engagement strategy in place
The Council will arrange at least one Resident survey via online methods to elicit views from them.		
The Council will support creation of new groups to benefit the Community of Pontyclun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Pontyclun Community 	
Council administration		
The Council will agree and deliver an annual budget.		
The Council will meet its published service standards.		

The Council will publish an annual report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By end June each year	
The Council will implement one new action to reduce or mitigate its risks or to improve resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchasing additional generator for events• Extend support from learning curve for litter picking/looking after car park/Park	

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 which have become part of our lives. 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 community@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales.



Supporting Community Groups

The council has allocated a grant budget of £8000 for 2023-24 to support 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 or discounted space to groups who wish to use our facilities. In 2022-23 this was 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, services or the running of the Council over the last few years -

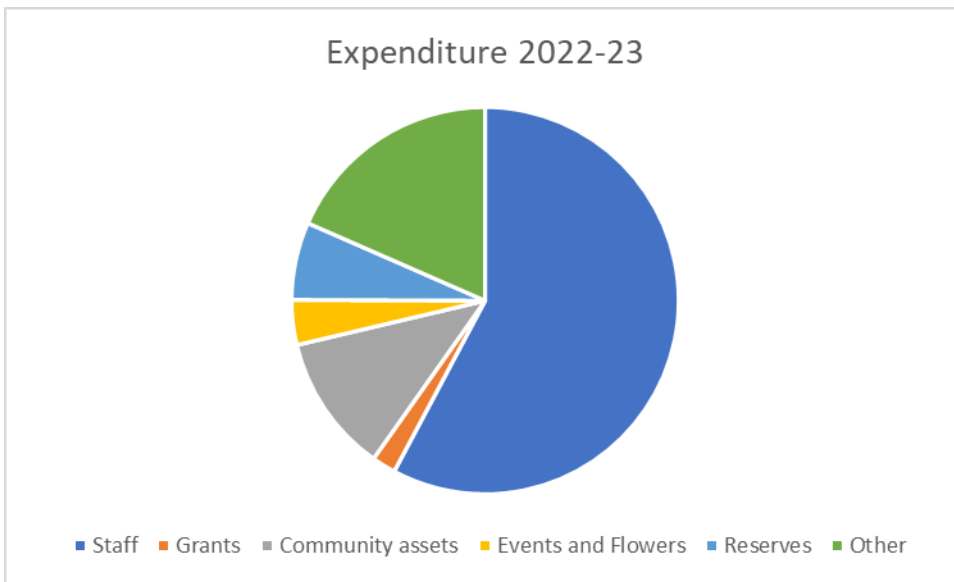
- The Pontyclun Community Shop
- U3A
- Café 50 Tuesday Quizzers
- Blakemore’s
- Tesco
- Co-op
- Action for Elderly
- Interlink RCT
- RCT Neighbourhood network
- Ramblers Cymru
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- Aggregates express Ltd.
- 1910 Trust
- Barrington Investments Ltd
- Pontyclun Pensioners group
- Pontyclun Girls club

OUR FINANCES

Funding the Council

The Council is mainly funded by a precept on local residents. The precept for 2022-23 was £132.6k and this was $\frac{3}{4}$ of our income. The rest came from donations, grants and fees for hire of our facilities.

Our total expenditure for 2022-23 was £192k and broken down as in the chart below.



Key items of expenditure last year were £9000 spent on replacing the last of the 100-year-old fence around the park; £8839 spent on helping set up a Men's shed group (fully funded by a grant from the Shared prosperity fund) and about 2.5k on new tables and chairs for Café 50. We also had to pay for the Elections last May which was £3267.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

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

Pontyclun Environment Group

The Community Council supports and work closely with the Environment Group.

This is a group of residents whose activities include:

- Coordinating the input of volunteer residents in undertaking litter picks throughout the Pontyclun Community recognising that litter free areas host biodiversity and foster community appreciation of local eco-systems
- Organising local walks with the county ecologist and other experts so that residents can better understand and appreciate the diversity of the local eco-systems.
- Arranging various environmental events across Pontyclun
- Promoting environment issues and actions in the area.

Pontyclun Community Garden

The Community Council supports and work closely with the 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
- Bees nest
- Composting

Working with Local Schools

The Community Councils seeks to support and work closely with local schools. For example

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.

Pontyclun Christmas Tree

In 2019 to encourage discussion on and the reuse and recycling of plastic waste the Council decided to decorate the Community Christmas Tree with waste plastic.

Local schools were asked to create garlands or paint empty plastic bottles which were then used to decorate our community tree.

This generated significant comments locally bringing recycling issues to the fore.

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 on Cowbridge Road, in Talygarn and by the motorway near 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 which has now been transformed into a valuable "Community Garden".

The aim is to extend this work into another area where fruit bushes will be planted for the Community and to help wildlife.

What does the Council itself do?

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. Where possible, the canopy is managed to control light and encourage biodiversity.

The Community Council, as an agent of RCT Council, maintains over 20 miles of public right of ways. In managing overgrowth and clearing litter, avoiding chemical interventions, the Council fosters biodiversity and local eco-systems.

Our floral displays mainly use "Pollinator friendly" flowers in our hanging baskets. In 2023 we are trialling using the mix of flowers we use in our hanging baskets in one of our smaller planters. We have 13 of these planters which are currently planted up with begonias, which are not pollinator friendly. If the trial is successful, the new flower mix will be rolled out in future years.

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.

The Council replaces light bulbs with LED ones when then need changing. For example, in 2018 replaced the bulk of the lighting in Café 50 with LED lights, and also 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 2019 we were asked by residents to look at installing additional fencing/gates at the park and as a result we planted new sections of hedging at the park boundary (rather than metal or wooden fencing)
3. In 2020 we started to leave the area of ground to the side of Café 50 in Pontyclun uncut (approx. 3m by 10m)
4. In 2020 we started to leave an area of ground at the Hollies uncut. (This area is approx. 10m by 20m)
5. In 2020 we signed up to the Hedgehog Heroes scheme
6. In 2022 the Council agreed to change our large flower bed in Brynsadler from using begonias to a mix of perennial pollinator friendly plants.
7. In 2023 we will be trialling using the mix of flowers we use in our hanging baskets in one of our smaller planters. We have 13 of these planters which are currently planted up with begonias, which are not Bee friendly. If the trial is successful, the new flower mix will be rolled out in future years.

COUNCIL SERVICE LEVELS

Service	Target service level
Council Administration	
<p>Messages to Council including via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Post • Facebook • Twitter • Telephone message • Website contact form • Google messaging 	<p>Our aim is to respond to all messages within 2 working days of receipt.</p> <p>Depending on complexity we may give an initial holding reply to pending further investigation or discussion. The holding letter will provide information about what happens next and timescales</p>
<p>Information about Council meetings including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agendas and papers • Minutes • Annual Report 	<p>Agendas and supporting papers for meetings will be published at least 3 working days (including Saturdays) before meeting.</p> <p>Draft minutes will be published within 7 working days after a meeting and finalised minutes within 7 days after the next Council meeting.</p> <p>An annual report for the prior financial year will be published by the end of June each year</p>
<p>Website maintenance including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External links • Business information • Community group information 	<p>Website will be regularly maintained with all external links, Business information and Community group details updated at least annually</p>
<p>Booking Council assets including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café 50 • Use of land such as Pontyclun Park 	<p>All requests for bookings will be acknowledged within 2 days of receipt.</p> <p>All bookings will be confirmed in writing including providing terms and conditions of booking.</p>

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	Playground at Pontyclun Park is visually inspected weekly by our staff. Playground has additional checks by trained RCT staff three times a year and has an annual independent inspection. Defects identified are dealt with in a timely manner commensurate with the risk. Any dangerous defects are made safe on day advised.
Ivor Woods & Millfield tree management	We have an annual inspection of our trees by RCT CBC Parks team staff. Trees identified for removal (or pruning) are dealt with prior to next inspection
Grassed areas	During the mowing season grass will be cut <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	All Council assets are inspected annually, and a report prepared for action to remedy defects. Wooden floral planters are painted every 5 years with 3 coats of appropriate covering. The railings at Pontyclun War Memorial are painted every 3 years

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

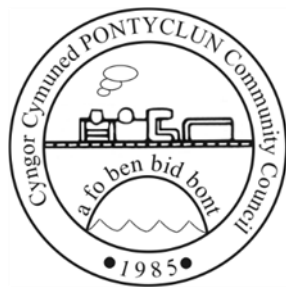
Every day we will treat people with the respect they deserve and believe only our best is good enough.

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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Heol yr Orsaf
Pontyclun
CF72 9EE



E mail
Clerk@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales or
community@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales for anything about
events or Community activities



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