



Pontyclun – 175 years to a town

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PONTYCLUN
Community Council



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FOREWORD

We are committed to supporting Pontyclun to be a great place to work, live and play.

Our proposal is to give Pontyclun 'town status'. We want to make this happen. And we have bipartisan support on the council to make this a reality. We want to hear your views on our proposal.

We believe that the businesses in Pontyclun are at an unfair disadvantage compared to similar businesses in nearby towns such as Llantrisant, Talbot Green and Cowbridge. The reason for this? These places are legally designated as 'Towns', so their high streets and businesses receive more attention from their Borough Council and are eligible for more grant aid than villages.

This idea was first floated just before and during the Pandemic: many businesses were struggling on high streets just like ours up and down the country. But high streets of equal size in settlements often smaller than Pontyclun were given more support owing to their status as being within a town. It sounds like a mere technicality. And it is. But it makes a big difference. The result was a less painful experience of the pandemic for many businesses in nearby towns including Llantrisant and Cowbridge. Many business owners felt overlooked. And we agree with them. This is why we need to make this happen so that we can secure the prosperity of our great high street for many years to come.

For example, there are currently four business and third sector grants administered by RCT: the Business Growth Grant, the Town Centre Maintenance Grant, the Commercial Improvement Grant, and the Large-Scale Property Improvements Grant. Of these, businesses in Pontyclun are only eligible for the Business Growth Grant. Businesses just up the road in Talbot Green can make use of all of them. As a council, we believe this is unfair, and we want to change that.

The Council is committed to supporting businesses, developing the local economy, encouraging private sector investment, and regenerating our high street. And with eligibility for these grants and other funding opportunities from RCT, this commitment will only be strengthened.

You may be wondering: how will the council go about getting this 'town status'? It's a straightforward process. Once the consultation period ends on August 31st, the proposal will be revised in line with the comments of residents and businesses in our community. After that, the council will vote on it, and pending that approval, that's it.

So, if these are the benefits, what will be the cost of this to our community? The simple answer is the only cost to the community will be administrative when changing logos and signs that belong to the council, and we will do that when they need replacing to keep costs down.

That's it, it won't affect future planning or council precepts and will not change the fact that Miskin, Brynsadler, Mwyndy, Talygarn and Groesfaen are villages. Only the centre of Pontyclun will be designated as a town to make the businesses eligible for the support you deserve.

We need your help to promote this. We need you to help us rally support for what we believe can make a real positive impact on people's livelihoods in our community, and to help promote the benefits that this status will bring our beloved high street.

Many businesses and residents support our plan, and we hope you will too.

If you have any questions about our proposal or how you can play a part in making Pontyclun into a town, please email Community@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales or visit the FAQ section of this document where your question may have already been answered.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and we hope you have a wonderful day.

Cllr Wayne Owen
Chairman, Pontyclun Community Council

Cllr Jamie Daniel
Vice-Chairman, Pontyclun Community Council
Convener, Town Status Working Group

INTRODUCTION

Pontyclun is a vibrant town located in South Wales that has much to offer its residents and visitors. Its many facilities and resources make it an attractive destination for people of all ages. This proposal seeks to outline the reasons why Pontyclun should be a town within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The village and community of Pontyclun has all the necessary characteristics and facilities to be granted town status. It has postal town status and a major transport network, as well as a bustling high street, large population, various shops and businesses, successful sports teams, vast heritage, and numerous community facilities; Pontyclun's status as a town would be the recognition it needs to support the community within its borders while attracting inward investment to the Southern Sector of RCT.

Pontyclun currently does not have town status, which could limit its ability to attract new businesses, high street funding and visitors. As a result, the village is not fully recognised for its contributions to the area and its potential for future growth.

The goal of this proposal is to secure town status for Pontyclun, which would allow it to better attract new businesses, investment, and visitors. This would also recognise the contributions of the community to the wider area and provide opportunities for growth and development.

WHY SHOULD PONTYCLUN BE A TOWN?

Pontyclun is a vibrant village that offers a lot to residents and visitors alike. The village has a bustling and growing high street with a variety of shops and businesses, providing a vital hub for the local community. These businesses contribute to the village's economy and provide a range of goods and services to residents and visitors alike. Additionally, the village has a railway station that attracts both tourists and commuters, making it an important transportation hub for the area. Pontyclun's location as a primary access point to Cardiff, Vale, Bridgend, Swansea, and the M4 also makes it an important centre of activity for the wider region.

Pontyclun has a rich heritage, including historic buildings, sites of archaeological interest, and an important role in the mining and railway industries. This heritage provides a source of pride for residents and is also a draw for visitors who are interested in history and culture. The village's successful football and rugby teams also contribute to its identity and provide a sense of community spirit.

Pontyclun offers a range of facilities and resources that benefit residents of all ages. Its schools are part of the 21st Century Schools' Programme, which aims to ensure that students have access to modern, high-quality educational facilities. Pontyclun also has a community centre that provides a range of activities and services for residents, including nurseries, warm spaces, and a food bank. Additionally, Pontyclun has numerous sports clubs and recreational facilities, such as parks, footpaths, and an athletic club.

The area has potential to grow further, with developable land available in the community. There are current and proposed developments in Cefn Yr Hendy, Ely Valley Road, Mwyndy, and Miskin quarry.

Furthermore, Pontyclun's town status would benefit the wider region by making the area more attractive to visitors and investors and providing further investment and footfall for the nearby Llantrisant/ Talbot Green area, which is the key strategic town in the Southern Sector Strategy. Additionally, solidifying Pontyclun's position as part of RCT over the ever-expanding borders of Cardiff would bring further benefits to residents.

Information about the history of the area, its economy and population comparisons with other local towns is provided in the appendices to this proposal.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

Costs:

The cost of granting town status to Pontyclun would be purely administrative, mainly for the Community council.

The Council would change its name to become Pontyclun Town Council and over time this would mean changing all the signage, logos etc. Even with a change of name, costs can be minimised, with the Council proposing to make changes to existing signs only when they require replacement.

Benefits to the community would be significant.

Benefits:

Town status would provide official recognition of Pontyclun's current facilities, services, and potential for growth. This would allow Pontyclun to access new resources and funding opportunities, attract new businesses and investment, and better promote Pontyclun to visitors.

Granting town status to Pontyclun would provide numerous benefits to the town and the wider community:-

1. It would provide official recognition of Pontyclun's current facilities, services, and potential for economic growth.
2. This recognition would attract new businesses and investment, which would create jobs and support economic growth in the area.
3. Town status would provide Pontyclun Town Council with access to new resources and funding opportunities, which would allow it to improve and expand its services and facilities.
4. RCT CBC in its plans makes special provision for many of its town centres and by becoming a town we could also be eligible for this extra consideration. For example, RCT are looking at installing free WiFi in all its Town Centres. If Pontyclun became a town we could be considered for this.
5. Town status would also open up additional funding opportunities for our local businesses, which are currently ineligible due to us being a village.
6. Town status would also benefit residents of Pontyclun directly by improving the quality of life in the village. The increased investment and resources would allow for the development of new community facilities and programs, such as improved parks and recreational spaces. This would benefit people of all ages and encourage a sense of community spirit.
7. Granting town status to Pontyclun would benefit the wider community by recognising the contributions of Pontyclun to the region. This recognition would help to promote Pontyclun as a destination for visitors, which would benefit local businesses and the wider economy. Additionally, it would help to strengthen the sense of community and connection between Pontyclun and the surrounding towns and cities.

PONTYCLUN, A PLACE FOR ALL

In summary, we believe that granting town status to Pontyclun would be an asset to Rhondda Cynon Taff. Pontyclun has a lot to offer, including its facilities, services, and potential for growth. The proposal for Pontyclun to be granted town status would not only benefit the village itself, but also support the broader economic and social development goals of the Southern Sector Strategy. Councillors have discussed the importance of highlighting how Pontyclun's town status would complement the development of Llantrisant/Talbot Green as the key strategy town in the area, rather than detracting from it. In fact, Pontyclun's town status could enhance the attractiveness of the whole area, gaining further investment and increasing footfall to the Southern Sector.

One potential counterargument against Pontyclun's town status is the perceived lack of developable land. However, as previously highlighted, the developments and proposed developments in Pontyclun, including those on Cefn Yr Hendy and Ely Valley Road, prove that there is still room for growth and expansion. Moreover, Pontyclun's town status would cement its position as an integral part of Rhondda Cynon Taff, distinct from the ever-expanding borders of Cardiff. By promoting Pontyclun's identity and unique character, town status would further enhance the sense of community and belonging for its residents and increase the town's visibility and profile within the wider region.

YOUR VIEWS MATTER

The Council welcomes the views of our residents and businesses, and we would be pleased if you contacted us to discuss any aspect of these proposals.

You can do this in several ways: -

Email the Council at Community@pontyclun-cc.gov.wales

Speak or write to your local Councillor

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1 - 175 YEARS OF PONTYCLUN

The name Pontyclun has been in official use since 1893.

It was the coming of the Railway nearly 175 years ago that was the “big bang” for the creation of Pontyclun.

The 1841 - 42 the map of the Pontyclun/Miskin area shows just 30 farms ranging from 20 to 200 acres in size, a corn mill, and a few small cottages.

And then the Railway came.

The first section of the South Wales railway, between Chepstow and Swansea was opened on 18th June 1850. It included a station called “Llantrissant for Cowbridge”, essentially where today’s modern station is. On 2nd August 1860 it also became a junction with a new line opening on the Ely Valley railway to Tonyrefail.

It was the influx of workers for the iron ore and coal industry after this that changed the area for all time. The Coedcae Colliery (first listed in 1856) and the Bute iron ore mine (which opened in October 1852) were the catalyst for the population growth.

The new industries attracted labour from many parts of Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom, Cornwall in particular. The way of life changed from agricultural to industrial. The proportion of families using Welsh in their daily life diminished

By 1870 the industries of the area had been expanded by the coming of the Ely Tin Plate Works (1872), The Llantrissant Pipe and Pottery Works (before 1890) a railway wagon works (in 1880s) and The Steam Joinery Company (before 1880).

The needs of the workforce brought about the building of School Street and Llantrissant Road which were among some of the earliest houses in the area, along with the National School built in School Street, c. 1878.

The Bute and Windsor Hotels were built in the 1870s, a cinema - Studt’s, opened in 1913 (rebuilt in 1931 opening with “talkies”)

Development of the town continued (and continues today). Electricity arrived in 1920, street lighting in 1925; shops and businesses started, and a thriving town centre was built.

To service the more spiritual and cultural needs of our residents we had Churches and Chapels, pubs and restaurants, Sports clubs, and associations.

Indeed, over the years both our Football and Rugby clubs have punched above their weight, having given the Welsh FA and WRU past Presidents and the Welsh FA motto was “borrowed” from Pontyclun in 1951.

In the early part of the 20th Century many parcels of land were gifted (or sold) by the Clark family to be used as land for schools, parks, and areas of recreation. Many of these are still being used for these purposes 100 years later.

The pits and ore workings are all closed, those big factories of the Victoria era have long since gone but Pontyclun, unlike many areas in the South Wales valleys, Pontyclun continues to grow and thrive.

We have a more diverse workforce with many industrial units based in Coed Cae lane and other local industrial estates. Our location is ideal for commuting to Cardiff, the Vale and into the Valleys and this has driven development in through late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Over the last 30-40 years many large housing estates have been built around Pontyclun taking its population to nearly 9000. These are at Ynysddu; Tyla Garw, Cefn y Hendy and even the old Brewery site in Brynsadler.

Indeed, this continues with 460 houses approved in March 2023 for the Cefn y Hendy area and another planned application for around 200 houses in the old Miskin Quarry nearby expected shortly. However, status as a town has no bearing on planning, and so will not mean greater expansion of such developments within our community.

With the 175th anniversary of Pontyclun rapidly approaching, granting Pontyclun status as a town will be the recognition of progress it needs while providing our community with more of the support that it deserves. At our anniversary, we can look back with pride as to how our community has developed and look forward with great expectation as to what the coming years will bring.

APPENDIX 2 - PONTYCLUN'S ECONOMIC MIX

Pontyclun and its surroundings are a vibrant and growing community. Our economic mix and community's facilities outperform many towns nearby.

We have great communication links, a Railway station, easy access to M4, A470 and Cardiff making the area an ideal location for many businesses and people to base themselves.

The main shopping area of Pontyclun has over 70 shops and businesses and a strong demand from potential new ones mean we rarely have empty shops other than whilst being renovated for new owners. For example, when a local estate agents closed their shop at the end of the 2022, new owners were in by Easter after a full renovation.

Our high street is not dying, it is showing growth and improvement over time. We have a varied mix of businesses from Cafes, Restaurants to convenience shops and specialists such as butchers, gift shops and even a wool shop. However, we believe that in order to enable our great high street to reach its full potential, it is only right that they have access to the full range of support available to similar businesses just down the road.

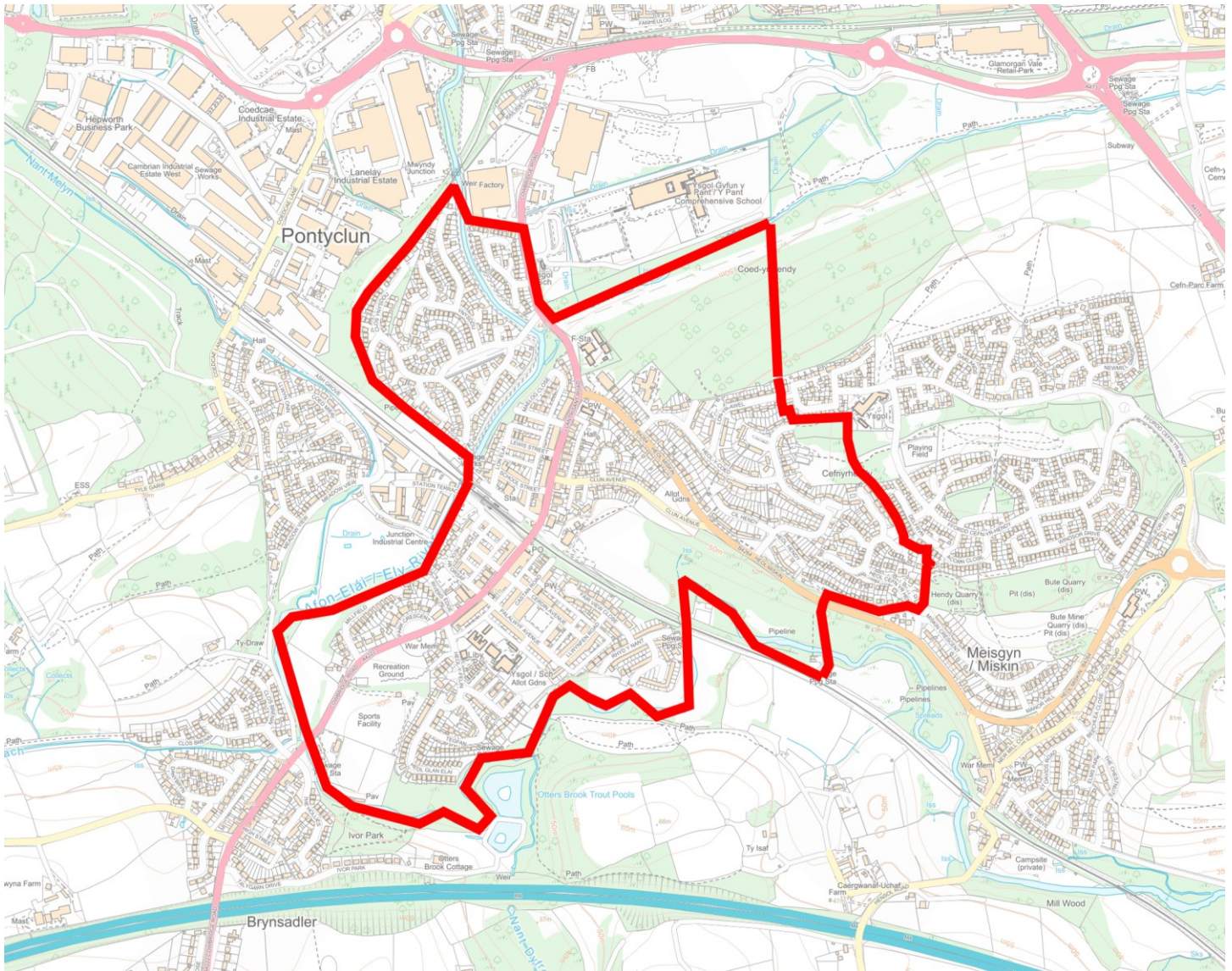
There are 2 areas of mixed light industry nearby, in Mwyndy and at Coed Cae lane which provide locally based opportunities in addition to those people who commute to Cardiff for employment.

We also have the well-respected Miskin manor hotel in the area.

Community facilities include:

- Doctors
- Dentist
- 2 Pharmacies
- Vets
- 3 x other healthcare providers (e.g., podiatrist)
- Community Centre
- Rugby Club
- Football Club
- War memorial
- Several Playgrounds
- Fire station
- Library
- Park
- 2 x allotments
- 2 x churches
- Chapel
- Railway station

APPENDIX 3 - PROPOSED PONTYCLUN TOWN BOUNDARY



If you have any objections or comments about this proposed boundary, please see our contact information below.

APPENDIX 4 - COMPARING WITH OTHER TOWNS

Approx populations in 2021 - care some numbers refer to just the towns and others the whole Community.

Name	Approx Population
Pontypridd	31k
Llantrisant	14k
Talbot Green	6.7k
Aberdare	37k
Treorchy	7.6k
Porth	5.7k
Ferndale	4k
Tonypandy	3.6k
Mountain Ash	13k
Cowbridge	4.3k
Pontyclun	9k

By community population, Pontyclun is far larger than some nearby towns including Cowbridge, Porth, Ferndale, Tonypandy and Treorchy. While we only propose making the centre of Pontyclun into a town, even this relatively small area would have a population comparable to some towns on this list.

Pontyclun's status as a town would not only be a huge win for local businesses, but a recognition of the size of modern Pontyclun.

FAQS

1. Why are you doing this?

Businesses in Pontyclun have access to far less funding support from RCT than those in nearby Talbot Green or Llantrisant. We believe in enabling our businesses to maximise their own potential. By doing this, we will be helping achieve this aim.

2. What is the cost to the Council/Community?

Very little. It will not impact community council precepts or RCT Council tax (Pontyclun CC has no say on RCT Council tax). The only cost to the community will be administrative when changing logos and signs that belong to the council, and we will do that when they need replacing to keep costs down. Given that these things need replacing on a rolling basis anyway, we do not believe this cost to outweigh the benefit to our community.

3. How will this impact me as a resident?

As a resident, this is unlikely to impact your life in any way other than if you are directly connected to a local business.

4. How will this impact me as a business?

As a local business, this will expand the range of funding opportunities attainable by you from RCT, the Welsh Government and the U.K Government. For example, there are currently four business and third sector grants administered by RCT: the Business Growth Grant, the Town Centre Maintenance Grant, the Commercial Improvement Grant, and the Large-Scale Property Improvements Grant. Of these, businesses in Pontyclun are only eligible for the Business Growth Grant. Conversely, Businesses just up the road in Talbot Green can make use of all of them. We want to fix this by passing this motion.

5. When will this happen?

This consultation will run from Tuesday 27th of June to Thursday 31st August. A working group meeting will subsequently take place to sort through public comments and present a final proposal to the full council shortly afterwards, where a vote will take place.

6. Which areas are affected?

Only the centre of Pontyclun. Surrounding villages will be unaffected. This decision was made to keep Miskin, Talygarn, Brynsadler, Mwyndy and Groesfaen as villages, while keeping mindful that most businesses within the Pontyclun Community are within the area under consultation to be given town status.

7. What will change?

If this proposal is accepted, then Pontyclun will be given town status and the businesses will have a greater arsenal of funding support. It is possible that the council may subsequently change its name to reflect this, though this would not change its status as a community council for all of Pontyclun and the surrounding villages.

8. Don't you need a royal charter or something to make it into a town?

No. It only requires a motion on Pontyclun Community Council. We have sought advice on this from the Welsh Government.

9. I thought Pontyclun already is a town?

Legally, it's not. While there are Government agencies and other organisations who describe Pontyclun as a town on a regular basis (including the Post Office and the Office for National Statistics), this legal status has never been given to Pontyclun. So, in order to get the businesses and the high street the support they deserve, we need to arrange this as soon as possible.

10. I live in Miskin/ Mwyndy/ Talygarn/ Brynsadler/ Groesfaen. If the council changes its name (e.g., town council), will I still be represented on the council?

Absolutely. There is no guarantee the council would then change its name once a change in legal status for the 'town' has taken place. However, if the council should decide to do that, it would only be a name change to reflect Pontyclun being a town. It would still cover the entire current legal community of Pontyclun.

11. What do Councillors gain from this?

The councillors will gain nothing from this. Allowances, expenses etc will be unaffected.

12. "I like living in a village. How will this impact that?"

We only propose making Pontyclun itself into a town. If you live in Miskin, Mwyndy, Talygarn, Brynsadler or Groesfaen, you will still live in a village. The map in Appendix 3 shows our proposed boundary for what would be deemed the 'town' of Pontyclun.

13. Does this mean Pontyclun will become even bigger?

No. Having status as a town has no impact at all on planning, and therefore this does not at all mean any additional green spaces are at risk of being built on as a result. The council would like to put this proposal across as recognising Pontyclun for what it already is, this is not to make Pontyclun bigger.

14. "I would rather live in an overdeveloped village than an underdeveloped town"

Pontyclun is one of the largest villages in Wales by community population. The businesses turn over millions of pounds and employ thousands of people. We have more community facilities than many towns, and a bustling high street that deserves equal support as is given to other surrounding towns nearby, such as Talbot Green.

15. How will this impact traffic? Will this bring more people to the area?

While the potential for increased investment may positively impact footfall on the high street, this may be through a combination of public transport and use of roads. Current congestion concerns in Pontyclun are being dealt with by the Council at present, and we feel the impact on traffic volume of town status will be extremely limited.

16. Will this mean our community precepts will go up?

No.

17. What is the point then?

Town status for Pontyclun means more grants and support for the businesses which they cannot get without us getting town status. Also, RCT CBC gives special consideration to the towns in its boundary and if we become a town we can try and tap into this additional support. For example RCT is considering providing free WiFi in its town centres.

As we approach our 175th anniversary, we want to recognise modern Pontyclun for what it is based on our community facilities, population, status as a postal town and economic influence in our region.

18. How exactly can the council make this happen?

We started this process earlier this year when a working group (committee) was set up to explore this concept. Since then, councillors have debated the specifics of the process and have put this proposal together for consultation. Once the consultation period is over, we will decide on the council factoring in the comments of residents and businesses.

CONTACT US

You can contact the Council by



Telephone 01443 238500



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