



PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

Contents

Foreword: Chair and Clerk	3 - 4
About Pontypool	5 - 6
Role of the Community Council	7 – 10
Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty	11 – 14
Pontypool Community Councillors	15 – 17
Environmental and Well-Being Champion Roles	18
Community Mapping	19
Achievements in 2019 for Pontypool Community Council: Winning Amazing Tree of the Year Award: Pontypool Community Council becoming a litter Hub Youth Council hosting a very successful Youth Festival and Mental Health Youth Conference (Twinning Youth Festival & Conference held annual but every 4 th year in alternate twinned towns)	20 – 25
Annual Events: Environmental Quiz Poet of Pontypool/Photography Competition Party in the Park Grants Presentation Evenings/Grants Projects Funding Christmas Cavalcade Eisteddfod Forest Schools	26 - 37
Litter and Doggy Bins, and Spring Flowers	38
Window Displays & Notice Boards	39
Commemorative Benches	40
Chairman’s Charities	41
Useful Telephone Numbers	42- 43
Covid 19 & Conclusion	44
Pontypool Community Council Staff	45



Annual Report 2019/2020

Introduction to Pontypool

Pontypool Community Council is a vital part of local government delivering services at grass roots level and interacting with people who live and work here.

The Council was created in 1985 and 21 members are elected every 4-5 years, the last election being in 2017 and the next one due in 2022.

The Council provides a diverse range of events and services and prides itself in being the 2nd largest (population wise) in Wales with more than 37,000 inhabitants.

The Well-being Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a duty on certain community and town councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan that has effect in their areas including a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report compiled by Pontypool Community Council in relation to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Part - Section 6.

This report will show the progress that the Council has made towards meeting the well-being objectives and public service objectives over the last year and how it intends to move forward.

Also in 2019 Pontypool Community Council won the Amazing tree of the Year Award, became a litter hub for litter picking, appointed a Well Being Champion and an

Environmental Champion as well as the Youth Council orchestrating a successful Youth Conference on the provision of mental health with the Council's twinned towns.

This report was approved by Council on 22nd July 2020.



Cllr Mrs Rosemary Matthews
(Chair of Council 2019-2020)



Mrs R V Tucker
Clerk to Pontypool Community Council

About Pontypool

Pontypool is situated at the surprising altitude of 450 feet above sea level and it appears wedged into the bottom of a steep valley. Its history goes back much further than Blaenavon (World heritage site) for in Norman times it was known as Le Pool and no doubt takes its existing name from a bridge that was built in early times over the Afon.



Pontypool has a great history. Most notably, ironmaking was first carried out here on a small scale in 1525 but the town became an important industrial centre in the 16th Century when Richard Hanbury came here from Worcestershire to exploit the mineral wealth of the area. The Hanbury family were the first major ironmasters in South Wales and they played a very important part in the history and development of this town. Capel Hanbury built Pontypool Park House in 1690 – 1720 and it was extended in 1779-1861. (The house is now a Comprehensive School)

Major John Hanbury (1664 – 1734) was the pioneer of the tin-plating industry and the rolling mill was invested by his agent Thomas Cooke who came from Stourbridge. This was an important development which replaced the labour-intensive process of manually hammering out wrought iron bars into sheets. Thomas Allgood a Northampton man, who was employed as a manager of the Pontymoile works discovered a durable and inexpensive method of applying lacquer to tin-plate. The process was later developed by his son Edward who set up a business in Trosnant to produce Pontypool Japanware in 1732.



Snuff boxes and trays decorated in gold formed the main part of the early production and it was not long before Pontypool became famous for its Japanware.



The 158 acre park that surrounds Pontypool Park house was given to the town after the birth of Capel Hanbury' son and it now boasts beautiful woodland and recreational facilities including a leisure centre and a Ski slope. There are also walks to local curiosities such as the Folly Tower and the Shell Grotto where extensive views may be obtained.

Pontypool historically has seen a shift from the old manufacturing industries of coal and iron to high technology and service industries. Following a period of decline in the economy of Pontypool as a town, it is now beginning to benefit from the resurgence of the industrial heritage and its proximity to the world heritage site at Blaenavon. It has also undergone massive investment and regeneration which has brought multiple chain stores to the town. The emphasis is now on promoting and marketing the town as a vibrant place to visit and shop with the new nestling alongside the old in the shape of the Victorian Market and other features within the town.





PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Statement of Well-Being:

This Well-Being Statement sets out the Council's commitment to the principle of sustainable development to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The aim being to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Pontypool.

Our Objectives for the future

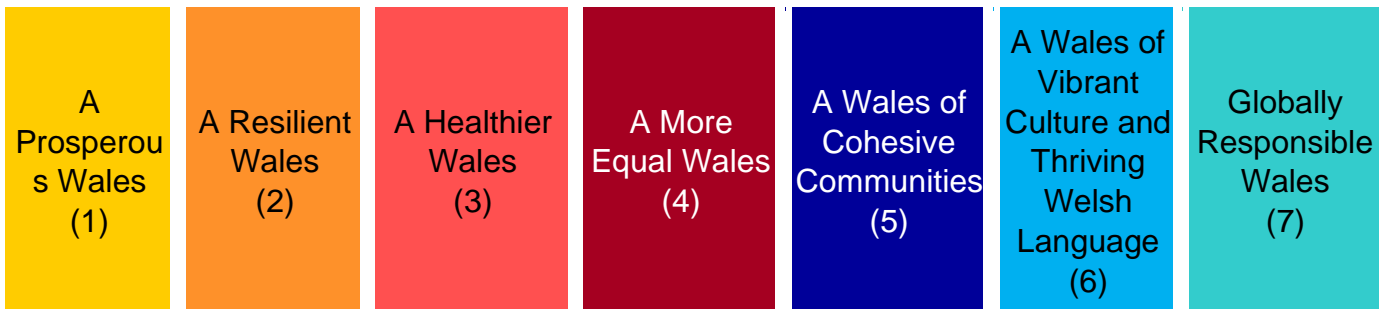
1. The Council adopted the following well-being principles, as its long-term objectives in October 2017 to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Well-Being Future Generations Act 2015

To contribute towards the delivery of:

- A Prosperous Pontypool.
- A Resilient Pontypool.
- A Healthier Pontypool.
- A More Equal Pontypool.
- A Pontypool of Cohesive Communities.
- A Pontypool of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language.
- A Globally responsive Pontypool.

These overarching goals provide a framework for the delivery of the Council's projects and events. How this is achieved is described within the report. These objectives will continue to form the Council's principle priorities moving forward. They provide a framework within which the Council's services, spending and programme of events sits.

When applying these well-being goals to the functions, activities and services provided by the Council; the Act requires the Council to think more about the long term, to work better with people and communities and also other public bodies, to look to prevent problems and to take a more joined up approach.



The following information reflects the five ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for the people:

- **Long term:** the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs.
 - **Prevention:** how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
 - **Integration:** considering how public bodies' well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
 - **Collaboration:** acting in collaboration to help meet well-being objectives.
 - **Involvement:** the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.
2. To create a committee structure to ensure that the work of the council has focus and delivers positive outcomes in line with the main objectives.
 3. To produce an Annual Governance Statement and report to reflect how the above is being achieved.
 4. To review annually the success of these objectives.

There are 735 Town and Community councils in Wales; this number has remained relatively stable since the 1980s after the Local Government Act 1972 transformed the structures of local government in Wales.

Community and Town Councils form the most local level of government: they are corporate bodies and local authorities and cover many rural and urban areas throughout Wales.

In Torfaen there are 5 Community Councils and 1 Town Council (these being Pontypool, Cwmbran, Henllys, Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon, Ponthir and Blaenavon).

As the part of local government closest to the people, Community and Town councils have a powerful voice to represent local people. As an elected tier of local government, Community Council activities are controlled by Acts of UK Parliament or legislation introduced by the National Assembly for Wales.

The other tier in Wales consists of Unitary Authorities, for example, for Pontypool, Torfaen County Borough Council is the unitary authority who has a legal duty to deliver services such as education, town and country planning, environmental health and social services.

The Local Government Act 1972 sets out duties to ensure that all the rules for the administration of the council are followed.

Therefore, Pontypool Community Council must appoint:

- A chair of Council annually
- Appoint Officers as appropriate for carrying out its functions
- Appoint a Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to manage the council's financial affairs
- Appoint an independent and competent internal auditor
- Keep records of all decisions related to council business (the minutes)
- Hold an Annual meeting

One of the key statutory tasks a Council undertakes, irrespective of its size, is to prepare an annual budget.

Pontypool Community Council holds a budget day each year in December and members decide what they would like to spend in the forthcoming year on local services/events and activities with the amount of income it expects to make.

The excess of planned spending over income is made up by the precept or by drawing on reserves held by the Council.

Once the Council approves the budget, it is used as an active tool to manage the Council's finances. Every month the Accountant prepares a financial budget comparison report to go to the Policy & Finance Committee to show spending and income to date against budgeted amounts with reasons for any under or overspending. By regularly monitoring the budget, members are able to consider and make recommendations about increasing income or making decisions about using funds from contingencies or reserves only if considered necessary.

The Council holds earmarked reserves, which are set aside for specific purposes and for savings for future projects with the levels assessed and approved as realistic by the Council.

There are many legal powers the Community Council can operate within but there will be an emphasis upon focusing on the following powers in particular:

FUNCTION	Power of Well-being: Wales
POWERS & DUTIES	Power to do anything to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the council's area or anyone in the area, subject to any statutory prohibitions, restrictions and limitations on council powers
LEGISLATION	Local Government Act 2000 ss. 1 – 5/ s.137b Local Government Act 1972

FUNCTION	Recreation/Community Buildings/ Sports Organisations
POWERS & DUTIES	Power to provide and contribute to a wide range of recreational facilities in or outside the council's area including providing and equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or educational objectives
LEGISLATION	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19

FUNCTION	Tourism
POWERS & DUTIES	Power to encourage tourism to the council's area or contribute to organisations encouraging tourism.
LEGISLATION	Local Government Act 1972, s.144

FUNCTION	Entertainment and the Arts
POWERS & DUTIES	Power for the Council to provide entertainment and support of the arts
LEGISLATION	Local Government Act 1972, s.145/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6
The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019

Name of Town or Community Council: PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Introduction and Context

- Pontypool Community Council has been in existence since 1985. It is one of the largest Community/Town Councils in Wales with a population exceeding 37,000 and a budget in excess of £650,000.
- The Council is made up of 21 elected members that represent the community on a ward basis. These members make decisions on the services and activities provided throughout the town and liaise with Torfaen County Borough Council officers when any other issues of interest or concerns arise.
- In order for the Community Council to run smoothly and efficiently, a small and dedicated team of 7 members of staff made up of the Assistant Clerk, Finance & Events Manager, two Events Officer, Accountant and Administration Officer under the direction of the Clerk Mrs. Ruth Tucker, work tirelessly to produce all the necessary administration, organisation and financial tasks that are demanded of them. Together with members all the hard work goes to making a difference in the Pontypool community.
- Our mission statement:
‘Pontypool Community Council striving to promote a Positive, Cohesive Community’
- The Community Council provides grants specifically for projects and initiatives that promote or support the environment, sustainability and biodiversity.
- Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Council has to provide a plan for the future and explain what has been done in the past. The first is to be published in 2019 and then every 3rd year thereafter. Pontypool Community Council has to report on how it meets the objectives of the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

Highlights, Key Outcomes and Issues

- In 2019, Pontypool Community Council won the National Tree of the Year competition which was organised through The Woodland Trust. This was an amazing award to be granted to Pontypool for its 400-year-old Sweet Chestnut tree located in Pontypool Park. It has helped to raise environmental awareness throughout the Community.
- The Woodland Trust has given the Community Council a £1000 award to be spent in relation to the Tree of the Year. It is proposed that the money be spent to improve access to the tree so that more members of the public are able to enjoy it. Also, it has been approved that an interpretation board be displayed within Pontypool Park with details of the tree and history of the surrounding woodland area.

- To undertake this the Council has matched the award so that £2000 is available to undertake this work. It was hoped that this could have commenced in 2020 but Covid 19 has meant that many projects have been delayed.

Action Report

Action carried out in relation to the following objectives:

NRAP Objective 1a –

Embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement

Action to be carried out in future:

All planning matters must now consider biodiversity management. This is to ensure that the environmental impact of each planning application is considered, and concerns raised.

A biodiversity champion will be nominated by the Council to address biodiversity in relation to planning applications received.

For the future, Biodiversity including Well-being will be added as a standard agenda item for every meeting held by the Community Council. This will ensure that these topics are incorporated into every meeting.

Monitored by:

Community Councillors and Biodiversity Champion

This will be the Council's first formal commitment to a planned future course of action that will help the Council take biodiversity matters into account as part of its work programme.

NRAP Objective 1:

-raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance

Each Year the Community Council holds an Environmental Quiz for the local schools. This is helping to raise environmental awareness within school age children. In 2019, a special round was added to the quiz with questions specifically related to Biodiversity. There is also a round which supports s7 of the Act having regard to the habitats and species of principal importance for Wales, as listed by Welsh ministers.

Grants are handed out to local schools who apply for them. This supports schools and encourages them to pursue environmental projects that they might not have funding for.

The Community Council support and pay for Forest Schools in conjunction with Greenmeadow Community Farm during the Spring. The Council pay for the transport for the Children to Pontypool Park and for the Forest School Tutors. This is helping to raise awareness of the environment with young children where they can be fully immersed in the outdoors.

Sadly, these events in 2020 have had to be cancelled due to Covid 19.

Monitored by: Community Councillors, Finance & Events Manager and Chair of Planning and Environment

NRAP Objective 2:

-safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management

The Community Council owns and leases a small parcel of land within the Pontypool area and this has been identified as having diverse habitats as listed in Section 7 biodiversity lists.

A Management plan for this parcel of land is in place and is being improved upon, to ensure this, Pontypool Community Council works closely with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Monitored by: Clerk – to ensure a management plan is in place and routine monitoring by Councillors

NRAP Objective 3:

-increase resilience of our natural environment by restoring habitats and creating habitats.

On a yearly basis the Community Council help to plant Daffodils throughout the town. For future bulb planting schemes, it is minuted from a full council meeting that more diverse flowers should be planted. For example, wildflowers rather than daffodils to help with biodiversity and wildlife. Also planting in more diverse areas.

Monitored by: Community Councillors

NRAP Objective 4:

-tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Within the offices at the Community Council we are aiming to reduce/reuse and recycle as much as possible. Recycling occurs through the local recycling schemes and we have also started to collect items for recycling through local TetraCycle schemes.

We have also started looking into eco-friendly (nature based) solutions for cleaning and this is something we hope to pursue in 2020, though due to Covid 19 this may be deferred to 2021.

It has been suggested that the office goes paper free- this would be a huge task to undertake so for the future we are aiming to decrease paper use.

Monitored by Community Councillors, Clerk and Office Staff

NRAP Objective 5:

-use improve and share evidence

In relation to this report and The Tree of the Year Pontypool Community Council has been working in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council Ecologists.

With Biodiversity being added as an agenda item to all meetings it is ensuring that information is passed between Councillors.

Information is shared through Social media and the Community Council website.

Also, the Council has close links with Friends of Pontypool Park, Friends of the British and Friends of Pontypool Town. These groups have all been involved with biodiversity projects.

Monitored by: Community Councillors and Friends of Pontypool Park.

NRAP Objective 6:

-support capacity for biodiversity and support its delivery

Each Community Councillor has a Local Voluntary Fund. They are able to choose different local projects to award grants from their fund. It has been suggested that the form used to gather information about the grant receiver be amended to include a section on how the money will be used to support or promote biodiversity and well - being. This will be a great source of gathering information from the local community on how biodiversity can be improved and for monitoring the grant use. For example, some of the beneficiaries of the grants include Allotments and Sports groups, and we could encourage the use of the grant towards biodiversity such as beehives in allotments and grassy areas left uncut for sports pitches

Monitored by: Community Councillors and Office Staff

Elected Members of Pontypool Community Council 2017-2022
Aelodau Etholedig Cyngor Cymuned Pont-y-pŵl


The role of a Councillor is a responsible one.


Pontypool Community Council is made up of 21 Councillors. All 21 Councillors in Pontypool Community Council are elected or co-opted where applicable. The Clerk, as part of her role, summons the Councillors to each Council and Committee meeting. The Councillors have a duty to attend.

Just after the election and before the Annual Meeting, members must agree to act within the law and follow, and sign a declaration of acceptance of office to say they agree to work with and abide by the Code of Conduct set out by the Public Ombudsman for Wales. The role of a Community Councillor is voluntary, no salary is paid and only expenses or allowances for specifically identified components of the role are paid, all allowances are taxable.

ABERSYCHAN & CWMAVON		BRYNWERN
		
COUNCILLOR NICK BYRNE Labour	COUNCILLOR GILES DAVIES Labour	COUNCILLOR NICK SIMONS Labour
CWMYNYSKOY	GARNDIFFAITH & VARTEG	
		
COUNCILLOR JOHN KILLICK Labour	COUNCILLOR MRS KAY J ARTHUR Labour	COUNCILLOR MISS LYN CLARKSON Labour
GRIFFITHSTOWN EAST	GRIFFITHSTOWN WEST	NEW INN LOWER

		
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LANG Conservative	COUNCILLOR MRS ELIZABETH HUNT Labour	COUNCILLOR RAYMOND MILLS Conservative
NEW INN LOWER	NEW INN UPPER	
		
COUNCILLOR RICHARD F OVERTON Conservative	COUNCILLOR D KEIGH JAMES Conservative	COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS JONES Conservative
PONTNEWYNYDD	PONTYPOOL	SEBASTOPOL EAST
		
COUNCILLOR MRS ELAINE CHILCOTT JP Labour	COUNCILLOR MRS GAYNOR E JAMES Labour	COUNCILLOR MRS NORMA P PARRISH Labour

SEBASTOPOL WEST	SNATCHWOOD	ST CADOC'S & PENYGARN
		
COUNCILLOR BEN RAPIER Labour	COUNCILLOR BARRY M TAYLOR JP Labour	COUNCILLOR MRS ROSE MATTHEWS Labour

TREVETHIN		WAINFELIN
		
<p>COUNCILLOR MATTHEW FORD</p> <p>Labour</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MRS JANET E JONES</p> <p>Labour</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MRS JACKIE TAYLOR</p> <p>Labour</p>

If you wish to contact a Councillor in your ward details can be found on Pontypool Community Council's website or contact the office on 01495 365951 and a member of staff will pass on your query or enquiry to the appropriate member.

Environmental Champion and Well-being Champion

In 2019 Pontypool Community Council nominated two members to serve as the Council's Well-Being Champion and the Council's Environmental Champion. Councillor J. Killick was chosen as the Council's Well-Being Champion and Councillor Miss L. Clarkson was chosen as the Council's Planning & Environmental Champion.

Role of the Environmental Champion and Well-Being Champion

The Environmental Champion is a member of the Council who oversees planning & environmental issues in relation to the planning applications. This should be related back to the Environmental Wales Act 2016 and the report that was written and approved by Council as outlined earlier in the report indicating the areas in which the Community Council would be working towards.

The roles of the Well Being Champion/Environmental Champion in the Community Council are to ensure that that the Council are meeting the 7 specific objectives relating to the Well-being plan. On the Future generations Act website there are 7 national goals. These objectives are:

1. Develop a functional, connected network of natural areas that support the current and future well-being needs of local populations.
2. Develop mitigation and adaptation responses to the impacts of climate change.
3. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
4. Support healthy lifestyles and enable people to age well
5. Tackle the inter-generational patterns of poverty and develop economic resilience
6. Improve local skills through work-force planning, training, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities
7. Create safe, confident communities and promote community cohesion

Community Mapping

Early in 2019 the Welsh Government offered a grant scheme to Local Councils whereby Welsh Government would fund a community mapping exercise to collate a list of all community facilities. The aim being, to share knowledge and enable the facilities to work together to achieve best value for money.

The grant funded bringing the groups together and providing some refreshments. This exercise was carried out across the 6 Town and Community Councils that are in Torfaen County Borough Council. The next stage is the sharing of information and will take place when lockdown is lifted. Already the organisations have been willing to share the type of support that is needed.

The bulk of the work has been undertaken by Torfaen Voluntary Alliance whose main function is to work with voluntary organisations and provide support.

The local organisations have used great resilience in surviving doing this difficult period and we have demonstrated how well the Councils can work in collaboration whilst taking into account the long-term objectives of balancing them against short term needs.

Hopefully we can move to the next stage and meet again with the local organisations as the easing of lockdown slowly moves forward.

The process of Community Mapping is to help us understand the unique needs, assets, and perspectives within each individual community. It's an important step which ensures that local perspectives and ideas are always at the centre of our Community.

Amazing tree of the Year

Pontypool Community Council winning the amazing tree of the Year has met the Well Being Objectives in the following way:



Education –

The historical value of this tree provides an opportunity to inform people of the industrial and cultural history of the area and the value of the habitats provided to wildlife. Achieved via an information and interpretation board containing a brief history of the area, the tree and its biodiversity value. To be sited at a suitable point where full access is available to all.

There is potential for more interpretation boards to be sited around the park with further information sharing re the cultural and historical points of interest in future.

Health and Wellbeing.

Encouraging outdoor activities, walking and spending time in a natural environment is shown to improve mental and physical wellbeing. The publicity generated by the award is hoped to highlight the Sweet Chestnut and other ancient trees within the Park as points of interest and encourage more visitors to the Park.

Signposting to be erected by PCC at suitable points to guide people to the location.

Equality and Diversity

Whilst it will not be possible to create suitable disabled access directly to the base of the Hollow Sweet Chestnut due to its location on a bank, there is good level access to bring people into close and visible proximity and more examples of ancient Sweet Chestnuts at the same location which are located directly alongside a level tarmac footpath therefore disabled access is good. There are good public transport links and car parking available for visitors to Pontypool Park. Access to many ancient trees is limited due to location. Pontypool Park provides an opportunity for all to visit and view many fine examples of ancient trees.



Biodiversity and Ecosystems

The sweet chestnut is a rare example of an ancient tree, over 450 years old and has a particular importance and high value to biodiversity. The preservation of the tree will ensure these important habitats are maintained. The national and international value of ancient trees is acknowledged, and PCC's actions are in line with Welsh Government's Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and with consideration of TCBC Biodiversity and Ecology Resilience Plan 2019 i.e. 1. What is the impact, positive or negative on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience? 2. What are the resource implications? 3. Is the method or the material used the best way of achieving the desired outcomes?

The Council has approved commissioning of a professional survey of the tree and its current condition will identify best practice and management that is aimed at ensuring this tree and potentially others on site will be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The award of £1000 re Tree of the Year (Wales) from Woodlands Trust ensures this action is cost effective with match funding by PCC and will assist TCBC in their ongoing responsibility and management of the asset.

Pontypool Community Council is now a local hub for litter picking

At Pontypool Full Council's meeting on Wednesday the 29th January 2020 it was agreed that Pontypool Community Council would become a local hub for litter picking after a presentation from Mr. T. Board from Keep Wales Tidy.

Keep Wales tidy is a charity working across Wales to protect the environment for now and in the future and as such, trying to encourage communities to make a positive difference as the benefits can have a big impact on people's health and well-being in line with the Future Generations Well-Being Act.

The equipment stored at litter picking hubs includes litter pickers, hoops, hi-vis vests and bin bags. The kit also contains all necessary health and safety guidance. However, in respect of gloves, people are asked to provide their own obviously for health and safety reasons.



Any groups or individuals who wish to visit any hub to borrow equipment must complete a litter picking loan agreement and a risk assessment before they are allowed to take the equipment overseen by the Hub Manager who for Pontypool Community Council is Ms. C. Peterson who can be contacted on 01495 365951.

When the individuals/groups return the equipment they let the Hub Manager know where the litter bags have been sited in order that the Hub Manager can contact the appropriate person in Torfaen in order that they can arrange for the collection of bags.

If your organisation is interested in becoming a litter hub then website link is as follows:

www.keepwalestidy.cymru

Pontypool Youth Council

Pontypool Community Council has its own Youth Council. Part of being a Youth Councillor is to join in and contribute towards discussions on matters that affect young people today, especially the provision of mental health in youth, as well as discussions on everyday topics.

The Youth Council recruits young people between the ages of 11 and 25 and anyone interested in joining and contributing towards discussion on matters that affect young people are welcome. This year one of our Youth Councillors Ms I. Hepsy-Jones made it onto the Youth Parliament which is a massive achievement in in itself.

There are opportunities to meet with and talk to Community Councillors and to be involved in decisions that are made about Pontypool.

Part of the role is involvement with young people from Pontypool's twinned towns of Longjumeau in France, Bretten in Germany and Condeixa in Portugal.

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 4.45 pm in the Community Council offices at 35A Commercial St Pontypool.

How Pontypool Community Council established, maintained and managed effective engagement with local young people?

The Youth Council was established via presentations made to secondary schools in the Pontypool area and through the borough's Youth Service followed by being elected by their peers. Support was offered through Pontypool Council's Clerk. Pontypool Community Council agreed to help the young people set up their own bank account. It now grants them a sum every year to enable them to make their own decisions and be a voice in the community.

While having fun is key to retaining interest regular activities include monthly meetings with agenda, which they lead using proper public body governance arrangements. Their work has had the following major outcomes: -

- participation in Community Council events such as Party in the Park, Eisteddfod and Christmas Cavalcade
- engagement in consultations
- contribution towards conferences and events
- co-option of two members to the Community Council where they can fully participate, except voting
- one member elected as youth member of Parliament
- representing young people on Pontypool Regeneration Partnership
- collaborating with a local Housing Association and in the middle of writing and producing a play to perform for 13/14-year olds about mental health and well-being in order to improve provision of and access to mental health support

- Meeting with the Leader of the Borough Council to inform him about the work of the Youth Council, particularly in respect to Mental Health and also to ask for an opportunity to see permission to use Torfaen County Borough Council premises to provide facilities for young people. Their presentation was well received, and the Leader gave assurances that TCBC would support the aims of the Youth council and the Youth Project going forward.
- All of the above demonstrate how the engagement process benefits the Council, the young people and the community. They are regularly becoming aware of how they meet higher goals of the Well Being Future Generations Act 2015 and the objectives of the PSB. This includes them helping Pontypool to:
 - reach out to all areas of our varied Council catchment
 - welcome diverse young people and presently working on how its new recruitment drive attracts young people with a disability
 - promote the language and culture of Wales at a recent twinning conference with our three European partners
 - assist young people to move into adult life as active contributors.

In August 2019 it was Pontypool Community Council's turn to host the Youth Festival/Conference with its twinned towns of Bretten in Germany, Longjumeau in France and Condeixa in Portugal. The Youth Council chose as their theme for the conference "Young people's mental health"

Youth representations from each town had prepared a presentation on how mental health issues affects the Youth in each town and what is done to overcome and deal with the issues. The Mayors and representatives of the towns then spoke on how they would address the issues that had been brought to them.

The plan was to have a virtual meeting in 6 – 8 months, so each town could collaborate on their current positions. Unfortunately, the Corona Virus has prevented this going any further at present. However, as it is not going to be possible to have a Youth Festival in 2020, the issues from 2019 will be discussed in a forum later this year and then taken forward with another topic to be discussed in 2021.



Environmental Quiz 2019

The Council holds an Environmental Quiz each year for Year 6 pupils from Pontypool Primary Schools.

The Quiz consists of 7 rounds of questions relating to the Environment. The topics cover subjects to do with recycling, energy sources and included a new round on biodiversity. It also includes a word search and an environmental spelling bee and energy sources.

Each participant receives a £5 voucher and a certificate.

The winning school wins - £100

2nd place - £60

3rd place - £45

A Healthy buffet is provided by the host school for the participants and the Community Council pays for it.

New Inn Primary school hosted the 2019 Quiz and 5 primary schools participated. The winners were Padre Pio R.C. Primary School.

The 2021 quiz will be held at Padre Pio school.

Well-being goals:

Prosperous Wales:

Promotes children's knowledge in the local and global environmental issues and promotes sustainability.

Resilient Wales:

Educates children about biodiversity and healthy functioning eco systems and ecological resilience and their capacity change and also promotes good environmental practice.

Healthier Wales:

Encourages children to look after their environment.

Equal Wales:

The event does not discriminate against gender or nationality.

Cohesive Communities:

Helps promote safer environments and communities.

Vibrant Culture

Encourages children to take an interest in their local environments and day to day habits which could impact on the environment.

Globally Responsible Wales

Educates the children to contribute to global well-being.

Poet of Pontypool

The Theme in 2019 was Land of my Fathers – Rugby/Grand slam. The judging took place on 26th June and Mrs Gwyne Carnell and Karenne Griffin were the judges. There were both Senior entries and Junior entries.

The cash prizes are 1st - £50, 2nd - £30 and 3rd - £20 for both Junior and Senior Winners – Pontypool District Writers pay half of the Junior prizes and Pontypool Community Council pay the remainder at a total cost to the Council of £150 plus the winners receive an engraved pen set, framed copy of the winning poem and a trophy.

The winners in 2019 were:
Senior – Mrs Audrey Griffiths
Junior – Master Max Burton

The presentation evening took place in Woodlands Field (Log Cabin) Penygarn.

Well Being Aspects:

Prosperous Wales:

Promotes the use of language and written skills plus helps build confidence skills when people recite the poems at the presentation evening.

Healthier Wales:

Working on a poem can help with mental health issues as it can be both relaxing and de –stressing. Joining a poetry/writing group promotes friendships and inclusivity which helps with mental health.

Equal Wales:

The event does not discriminate against gender or nationality.

Cohesive Communities:

Encourages the public to join in with events that are happening within the local community.

Vibrant Culture:

Encourages participation in the arts.

Globally Responsible Wales:

Helps encourage wellbeing by taking part in something.

Party in the Park 2019

This annual event has taken place in Pontypool for dozens of years. Formally known as Pontypool Carnival with floats and a parade through the streets of the town, it was organised by TCBC.

In 2019 Pontypool Community Council took over that responsibility and it became the largest event that took place in the park last year. There were activities on offer for all ages with a funfair as well as a mechanical dinosaur and with glorious sunshine it was a wonderful day. A big band is hired as the headliner, along with a stage manager who headlines a diverse line up of music and dance acts throughout the day. There is also a food and craft market in addition to the usual range of stalls with a wide variety of food on offer. The Parade made a welcome return but taking place solely in the park. With funding from Welsh Government children were able to produce craft pieces to carry or wear in the parade and instruments to play in the parade.



The Council took advantage of a prime spot asking members of the public what they wanted to see and what improvements could be made in Pontypool as a whole. The list is shown below, and the activities of the Council demonstrates that it has been busy dealing with these matters in partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council:

Feedback from Party in the Park

The Committee received a list of feedback issues from members of the public who attended Party in the Park of which the majority related to environmental matters. The Committee went through the list one by one to ascertain which suggestions the Community Council could address.

The following suggestions were highlighted as issues that the Community Council could address:

- **More dog/litter bins** – The Community Council are currently looking at sites for dog/litter bins in conjunction with Torfaen County Borough Council.
- **Keeping Noticeboards up to date** – all members and staff who are responsible for noticeboards have been asked to keep them updated.
- **Track down Penygarn Hill is not accessible for prams and wheelchairs** – Torfaen County Borough Council are and have finished upgrading this footpath.
- **More play equipment/facilities in parks** – It was stated that money is currently budgeted for play equipment and that grants could be applied for to help with funding new equipment. Members have been asked what play areas need addressing.
- **More social media/website updates on what the Council is doing** – A member stated that navigation of the website is too complicated. A discussion took place regarding the company hosting the website plus new regulations coming into force regarding the accessibility of websites. It was recommended that an item be placed on Full Council detailing the current position in respect of the Council's website.
- **More things for teenagers to do** – the Community Council is in the process of addressing this, see article on Youth Council further down.
- **Improve the Town Centre/tidy it up** – the Community Council is in the process of supporting this.
- **Greater variety of shops in Pontypool/reduce business rates** – The Leader stated the business rates are set on the size of the premises and that the Welsh Assembly are currently working on reducing business rates.
- **More effective policing** – although the Community Council could not directly provide all of this, they could recommend that more meetings take place between the police and the Community Council.

We also asked where people where they came from and a significant number came from outside of Pontypool demonstrating the Council's desire to bring communities together and showing that is a Pontypool of Cohesive communities

Unfortunately, the 2020 event has had to be cancelled due to the Covid 19 but despite the awful effect of the pandemic, Wales and Pontypool have shown they can be resilient and globally responsible as this is the only way forward.

Grants Presentation Evenings

The Council's grants presentation evenings are held twice a year.

Members make grants to local organisations within their ward and these groups include guides, scouts, local sports organisations, churches, craft groups, community association, dance groups and many more. Grants from the Council, other than Local Voluntary Funding amount to more than £32.000.

The Council awards grants to sporting organisations to encourage and support the establishment of healthy living through sports.

The Council has provided more than 50 benches and seating and in doing so commemorated 100 years since the Great War as a mark of respect for those who gave their life to give us our freedom today.

Council grants are given to some organisations which are spread across Pontypool and to numerous local and national charitable organisations.

The Council sponsors Pontypool RFC, 4 local junior sporting teams are also sponsored annually on a rolling programme. The Council also provides grounds maintenance grants to local sports teams so that they can maintain their sports pitches and continue to use them.

The following organisations also benefit from core funding grants: Citizens Advice, Torfaen carers and Age Connects, Torfaen Museum Trust, TOGs and Pontypool Pacers as well as many others.

Each Councillor has a Local Voluntary Funding pot of £2,500 that it can award to groups and organisations in their ward. These range from sporting groups to charities to museums and to community halls towards running costs.

These organisations need these grants to support healthy living and to ensure a more equal Wales that brings together communities. In turn that leads to a more prosperous Wales enabling everyone in the community to reap the same benefits.

By balancing these short term needs the community will reap the benefits long term. Pontypool consists of diverse communities and it is important that everyone benefits across the town and its surrounding areas.

Objectives of the Council:

- i) To continue to support the well-being goal of a healthier Wales by working collaboratively and helping to prevent problems before they occur.
- ii) To seek more imaginative ways to help these organisations achieve their goals

Photo Competition 2019

The theme was History and Heritage in Pontypool

Judging took place on Wednesday 11th September 2019.

The Judges were Mr and Mrs Payek who run the Abergavenny photo club.

The finalists were invited to the Grants Presentation evening on Thursday 24th October where the winners were announced.

The prizes were:

1st - £50 and a canvas of the winning entry

2nd - £30 and a canvas of the winning entry

3rd - £20 and a canvas of the winning entry

The winners were:

1st – Julie Morgan



2nd – Ian Gilbert



Well Being goals:

Prosperous Wales: Low carbon as the theme is usually set to encourage people to visit the outdoors to take picture of parks or wildlife which helps with people's well-being.

Resilient Wales: People learn about the wildlife and environments around them.

Healthier Wales: Helps with peoples physical and mental health by being active and visiting an outside space.

Equal Wales: The event does not discriminate against gender or nationality.

Cohesive Communities: Encourages the public to join in with events that are happening within the local community.

Vibrant Culture: Encourages people's participation in the arts.

Globally Responsible Wales: Participation in the event raises awareness of the local community sites and could encourage participation in conservation of the local sites.

Eisteddfod 2020

Every year the Community Council hold an Inter – School’s Eisteddfod where every Primary school in Pontypool is invited to participate.

The Schools are set songs, dances and recitations all in the medium of Welsh and they learn the pieces over a 3-month period and then compete at the event.

The winners receive a trophy and vouchers and the overall school wins a cash prize.

The Eisteddfod meets the following Well Being goals:

Prosperous Wales:

It helps children to learn and recite Welsh language and performance encouraging confidence in the children and develops their language skills.

Healthier Wales:

Dance and song help promote positive Mental Health plus performing with peers can encourage friendships to thrive.

Equal Wales:

Performing for the school fulfils children’s potential and encourages confidence. The event does not discriminate against gender or nationality it encourages the use of the Welsh language.

Cohesive Communities:

Promotes the good work the schools do in the Community plus the good work the Community Council’s do for the Community.

Vibrant Culture:

The event is based on the Welsh Culture and actively encourages children and teachers to promote the Welsh Culture and encourages participation in the arts.

Globally Responsible Wales:

Helps children learn the history of the Welsh Culture and they take that forward in their lives.

The Eisteddfod took place in Pontypool Active Living Centre over the following dates:

Foundation Phase – Tuesday 10th March

Key Stage 2 – Wednesday 11th March

The following schools participated over the 2 days:

New Inn
Griffithstown
Garnteg
Ysgol Bryn Onnen
George Street

Penygarn Primary
Ysgol Panteg
Cwmffrwdoer

The 2020 results were:

Foundation Phase:

- 1st - Griffithstown
- 2nd – Ysgol Bryn Onnen
- 3rd – George Street
- 3rd – Ysgol Panteg
- 3rd – Garnteg

Key Stage 2:

- 1st – Griffithstown
- 2nd - New Inn
- 3rd – George Street

Pictures of Griffithstown Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2



Forest Schools

Forest Schools is an innovative and inspiring approach to learning and development which offers people of all ages opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences during regular visits to a local woodland site.

Forest Schools provide opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to grow in confidence, self-esteem and independence in special woodland settings, where they are supported in their development by qualified FS Practitioners.

Participants develop and nurture respect and responsibility for themselves, other people and the environment in a truly empowering experience, which is also exciting, healthy and fun.

The cost of the experience for the school children was £2000, which was the amount allocated by the Community Council. This included the work of the trainers and transport if required.

Council's Objectives:

- i. To enable children to continue to develop and nurture respect and responsibility for themselves, other people and the environment
- ii. To encourage school children to have more self-confidence by mixing with their peers

Pontypool Christmas Cavalcade

On 23rd November 2019 the Council hosted the annual Christmas Cavalcade which is now in its 29th year. Pontypool Town Centre and Indoor Market came alive with Christmas spirit. Entertainers and giant children's characters entertain members of the public in the town centre and indoor market throughout the afternoon. Families are particularly well catered for with children's entertainment which includes Santa's Grotto, face painting, a magician, Grinch Christmas photos, balloon artist, bell ringers and choirs. The entertainments are free for all children. A new act for 2019 proved very popular, The Musical Elf Band which entertained children and adults alike, with their elf costumes and music, keeping everyone entertained in the Indoor Market, walking around the Town and on the main stage.



A colouring competition for children under the age of 11 is included in the event programme and copies for all pupils are delivered to the primary schools in the Pontypool area. The first prize is a ride in Santa's carriage the following year. On event day children are also encouraged to enter a free competition to find the Chocolate Santa's hidden in shop windows throughout the town centre and entries increase every year. Their prize is a selection box, in 2019 over 100 selection boxes were given out.

Businesses in the town centre enter the “Best Dressed Business for Christmas Competition” which is free to all and encourages shops, market stalls and other businesses to promote the town centre.



This event helps improve the economy of the town by bringing in more people. The grand finale starts in the late afternoon with a Parade watched by crowds of people who line the streets and which is led by Santa, Mother Christmas and last year’s colouring competition winner in a horse drawn carriage, followed by marching bands, musical elves, children’s dancing groups, Cadets and the children’s characters. At the end of the Parade the big ‘lights’ switch on takes place from the main stage where a snow machine adds to the Christmas theme.

Litter and Doggy Bins

- Pontypool Community Council has been able to financially contribute to approximately 50 doggy/litter bins in the Pontypool area with money allocated for the year 2020/2021 to purchase more.
- Many local ward members have provided sponsorship towards the cost of these bins. Most of these have been placed at various green sites i.e. parks and public playing fields but also on paths and the canal bank to encourage dog owners to dispose of their doggy mess in a responsible manner. Local school children have also been involved in the project and all primary schools in Pontypool have been sent information leaflets warning of the dangers of dog mess.
- The Dog Fouling Act of 2016 places responsibility on the person in charge of the dog to ensure that dog mess is cleaned up otherwise a fine of £1000.00 can be imposed.

Council's Objectives:

- (i) To encourage dog owners to dispose of dog mess in a proper and responsible manner or take home the bags, to encourage a cleaner and more resilient Pontypool.
- (ii) To encourage residents to take pride in the community that they live in.

Spring Flowers

The Council has for many years provided spring flowers and bulbs across the community area. The ecologist for Torfaen has suggested that the range provided should be more diverse to attract and encourage more wildlife and insects.

The Council will be working with TCBC with regards to the corridors of wild planting along the verges of main roads and selected open spaces.



Council Objectives:

- i) To encourage greater biodiversity.
- ii) To provide critical habitats for pollinators which benefits insects and wildlife which is important for the eco systems.

Window Displays

Due to the current situation the Community Council windows have not been utilised to their full potential for display purposes this year. Unfortunately, our main exhibitor being Pontypool museum has not been able to change their window display since our offices closed in March. Although they provided a very festive scene at Christmas, with many members of the general public stopping to admire their hard work. Earlier this year they produced a very realistic display with many original items from a bygone era, which encouraged people to visit the museum.



Pontypool Community Council designed their own displays during the year for several of their events, which included Party in the Park, the Cavalcade in November incorporating a Christmas theme. Many schools took part in the Eisteddfod in March and the children's art was displayed in one of the windows.

This year we have had enquiries from new charities asking if they could use our windows to inform people of the good work they undertake during the year. The Parkinson's charity still uses our window on a yearly basis to promote awareness of their work.

Notice Boards

The Council has provided many notice boards across Pontypool and ensures that information regarding the Council is displayed as well as statutory notices. This informs people of events and activities across the area and details of Council meetings.



Commemorative Benches

The Council has provided more than 50 benches and seating and in doing so commemorated 100 years since the Great War as a mark of respect for those who were unable to age well.



Commemorative Bench at the Memorial Gates

This year saw the 75th anniversary of VE Day place on Friday the 8th March. The occasion, which is also known as Victory in Europe Day, to mark the end of the Second World War.

"They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
we will remember them"

Chairman's Charities

Every year the Chair of Council nominates a charity/charities that they wish to raise money for in their year of office. Since the formation of the Community Council in excess of £100,000 has been raised to support the following charities:

Lincolns Legs, Fathers for Justice, British Heart Foundation (Cymru), SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association), South Gwent Breast Cancer Support Group, Age Connects, Torfaen Youth & Junior Football, Stroke Rehabilitation Unit at Panteg Hospital, Torfaen Environmental Trust, Wales Air Ambulance, Motor Neurone Disease, Progress Prostate Cancer Support Group, Girl Guides New Inn & Griffithstown, Pontypool Scouts, Citizens Advice Bureau, Pontypool Youth Brass, Advocacy Action Wales, Alzheimer's Society, Pontypool Pacers Heart Support Club, Ty Hafan's Children Hospice, Arthritis Care, All Creatures Great and Small, National Autism Society, Haemophilia Society, Macmillan Cancer Care, Sparkle, Diabetes UK Cymru, TOGs, Guide Dogs Cymru, Tafarn Newydd, Pancreatic Cancer UK and Imperial Cancer UK.

For the year 2019/2020 the Chairman's Chosen Charity is Parkinsons UK (Pontypool Branch).

Useful Telephone Numbers

Useful telephone number that you may wish to contact if you require assistance are:

Pontypool Community Council	01495 365951
Torfaen County Borough Council	01495 742200: 1 – Payments 2 – Council Tax 3 - Benefits 4 - Bins and Waste 5- Switchboard
Torfaen Voluntary Alliance	01495 742420
Pontypool Credit Union	01495 742500
Age Connects Torfaen	01495 769264
Samaritans Helpline	116 123 (freephone)
Torfaen Citizen's Bureau	0300 330 2117
Pontypool Women's Aid	01495 742052
Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Mind	0800 132737
NHS Non-Emergency	111
Age UK	0800 169 6565
Domestic Violence Hotline	0808 2000 247
Childline	0800 1111
Alcohol rehab in Wales	02072 052845

Telephone numbers for pharmacies

Boots in Pontypool	01495 762727
Mayberry's	01495 763431
Health Plus 01495 762991	01495 762991
Abersychan	01495 774012
Lloyds Pharmacy Pontypool	01495 762502
Griffithstown Lloyds Pharmacy	01495 763960
New Inn Pharmacy:	01495 763504
Well Garndiffaith	01495 772711
Well Blaenavon	01495 790293
Blaenavon Healthcare Centre	01495 790594
The Pharmaceutical Department	01495 790594
Cwmbran Boots	01633 483281 or 01633 244026
Lloyds Cwmbran	01633 483509 or 01633 482897
Superdrug Cwmbran	01633 861228
Malpas Pharmacy	01633 858002

Coping during the Corona Virus – Covid 19

Towards the end of the financial year and the council year, our country, in fact the world was hit by the worst possible pandemic after Corona Virus which affected and killed thousands of people throughout Wales and a considerable number within SE Wales where Pontypool is located. The UK and Welsh governments instantly ordered a lockdown which resulted in many measures being undertaken including at first everyone to remain and stay at home with only a few exceptions.

It became obvious that there were many people in need of a variety of services such as food and pharmacy collection and delivery. Also access to food as so many people were furloughed, and others instantly lost their jobs such as the self-employed so there was no money coming into many households.

Pontypool Community Council rose to the challenge and within a short period of time members collectively donated £10,000 to the food bank which was followed by a further £10,000 pound a few months later.

Individual Councillors took it upon themselves to support people in their wards, by collecting toiletries and night clothes for people in hospitals; by delivering furniture to some families who were in dire need of the most basic of items and telephoning people to provide some comfort to those living on their own as well as collection prescriptions from pharmacies for those who were totally housebound and isolated. Many actively supported the Corona groups that have been set up across Pontypool.

The staff in the main have been working from home which itself is not conducive to a healthy lifestyle balance but we must now find a way to make this work alongside working in a new environment.

We have been told that we have to learn to live with the virus even though we are moving out of lockdown as there are likely to be “spikes” periodically in the community. This will affect how we deliver services for some time to come.

Conclusion

For most of the year 2019 – 2020 the Council successfully organised a variety of activities and events all of which have been mentioned in our Annual Report.

As referred to earlier, the challenge now will be creating new ways of working, so that the quality of what we do as a Community Council does not discriminate and we can demonstrate that we will be working all the time to improve and enhance the standards that we are used to working by and more than ever observing the “Well-Being” principles and goals laid down in the Well-Being, Future Generations Act 2015.

Council Staff

Community Council Clerk	Mrs Ruth Tucker
Assistant Clerk	Ms Jane Wright
Finance & Events Manager	Mrs Cindy Challenger
Events Officer	Mrs Annette Ambrosen
Events Officer	Mrs Rebecca Cronin
Administration Officer	Mrs Carol Peterson
Accountant	Mrs Lisa McMail

Contact us:

We would love to hear from you – about what we have done and about what we could and should do in the future. We cannot do everything that we would like, but we do want to know what people think about what we do and make our services/events even better in the future:

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