



PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

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Foreword to the report and to Pontypool

This is Pontypool Community Council's third annual report for the financial year 2021-22, required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to show what we do and how our work contributes to the well-being goals adopted for Wales. We want to let you know who we are, what we do and how we do it.

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 next year in 2022. The Council provides a diverse range of services and events and prides itself in being the second largest (population wise) in Wales, with more than 37,000 inhabitants.

This year was again dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic although there was more opportunity for events than last year which will be displayed throughout this report.

Pontypool Community Council now holds its meetings multi-locally, whether online using Microsoft Teams or in the Community Council offices.

This report was approved by Council on



Clerk to the Council
Mrs R V Tucker



Councillor Giles Davies,
Chair of Council 2021-2022

About Pontypool

Pontypool is situated at the surprising altitude of 450 feet above sea level and 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. Pontypool no doubt takes its existing name from a bridge that was built in early times over the Afon River.



Photo of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal at Pontymoile



Photo of the viaduct at Garndiffaith

Pontypool has a great history. Most notably, ironmaking was first carried out here on a small scale in 1525. 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 the 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.



Photo of the clock tower in Pontypool Park

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.



Photo of the Folly Tower

The 158-acre park that surrounds Pontypool Park house was given to the town after the birth of Capel Hanbury's son and it now boasts beautiful woodland and recreational facilities, including a leisure centre and a dry ski slope. There are many fascinating walks easily accessible via Pontypool Park, to local curiosities such as the Folly Tower and the Shell Grotto, from where extensive views of the surrounding countryside 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 has benefited in recent years from the resurgence of its industrial heritage and from its proximity to the world heritage site at Blaenavon. It has also undergone massive investment and regeneration which helped bring 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 significant features in the town.



Photo of the Bandstand in Pontypool Park

Pontypool is a wonderful place to live, work, visit, shop, learn, play, be active, to relax, and simply "to be". It is close to the M4, Cwmbran, Newport, Cardiff and Bristol to the south, so has excellent links for tourism, leisure, education, business and commerce. To the north are the Blaenavon World Heritage site, Abergavenny and the Black Mountains. The South Wales Valleys and the Brecon Beacons are located to the west and, to the east are Monmouthshire and the Forest of Dean.

Pontypool is a perfect, vibrant place for improving health and well-being, with stunning scenery, rivers, the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, walks, hills, forests, reservoirs, beautiful parks, history, library, museum and historic indoor market, countless sports and leisure clubs and groups and access to numerous outdoor and indoor activities. It has been said: "There's no better place to be (especially when the sun is shining)".



Statement of Well-Being:

This Well-Being Statement sets out the Council's commitment to the principles 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 Council aims in everything it does to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Pontypool and surrounding areas.

Our Objectives for the future

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

To contribute towards the delivery of:

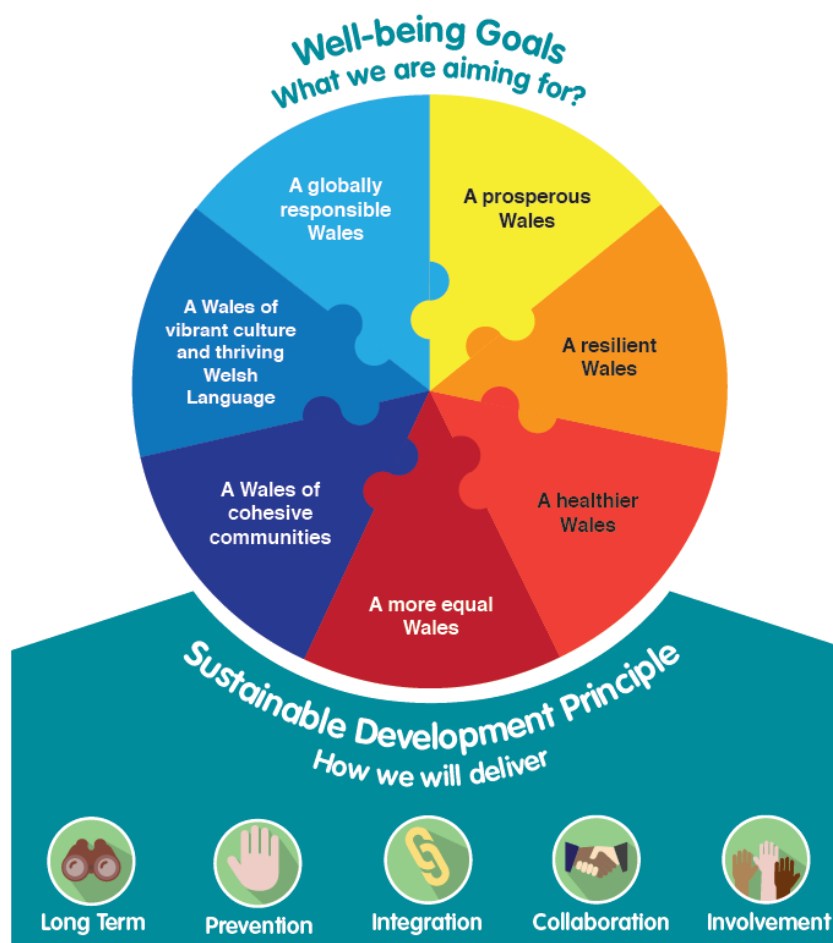
- A Prosperous Pontypool.
- A Resilient Pontypool.
- A Healthier Pontypool.
- A More Equal Pontypool.
- A Pontypool of Cohesive Communities.
- A Pontypool of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language.
- A Globally Responsible Pontypool.

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

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

The Community Council also agreed to create a committee structure (in 2017 and beyond) to ensure that the work of the council has focus and delivers positive outcomes in line with the main objectives; to produce an Annual Governance Statement and report to reflect how the above is being achieved; and to review annually the success of these objectives.

Wellbeing Goals: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



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.

Pontypool Community Council is currently committed to working towards these goals as follows:

A Prosperous Pontypool



- To promote the town and local businesses
- To work in partnership with other agencies and participate in Borough and regional meetings, as well as the Pontypool Regeneration Partnership
- To support a thriving local economy in Pontypool and award local voluntary funding grants to organisations/societies throughout the Pontypool area, as well as provide core funding grants.

A Resilient Pontypool



- Maintain and enhance the natural environment of Pontypool through its partnership working with Friends of Pontypool Park and Fishponds Park, Panteg, Torfaen's Ecologist and others.
- To create healthy functioning ecosystems by awarding environmental grants to schools in the Pontypool area and encouraging them to explore options for environmental projects.
- To provide doggy/litter bins etc.

A More Equal Pontypool



- Increase engagement with all parts of the community through networking at Grants Presentation Evenings and other events
- Give people equal opportunities to participate in decision-making to enable equal outcomes.
- Ensure training is provided for all staff on the importance of equal opportunities.
- Provide Induction and equalities training for Councillors through One Voice Wales and a staff training programme to be prepared annually.
- Promote equality through the Youth Project by actively engaging with LGBT+, young carers, young people living independently at an early age and young care leavers
- Give young people a voice through the Youth Council
- Support organisations which work with children and young people with learning difficulties such as TOGs and Hope GB

A Healthier Pontypool



- Provide access to essential and useful phone numbers.
- Explore health projects or initiatives that Pontypool Community Council could support.
- Provide health information and raise awareness of mental health and well-being via twitter, Facebook, social media and at the office.
- Promote indoor and outdoor activities and pursuits including access to better outside spaces, which lead to better health and well-being.

A Pontypool of Cohesive Communities



- Create the conditions where people and communities can do the things that matter to them through partnership working with Gwent Police, Public Health Wales, Save a Life Cymru and others
- Provide the Council Chamber as a meeting space for outside organisations/partnership working as soon as Covid Restrictions lift.
- Promote inter-generational work through the Youth Council.

A Pontypool of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language



- Support the Welsh language through Pontypool Community Council's Inter-Schools Eisteddfod
- Value culture, creativity and diversity as core dimensions of well-being.
- Provide documents in the Welsh language where appropriate.

A Globally Responsible Pontypool



- Pontypool Community Council Inter-Schools Eisteddfod
- Twinning Links with other cities and towns
- Commitment to reducing global warming through the provision of the Council's litter hub, doggy/litter bins, Forest Schools, recycling schemes etc.

What are Community Councils (including Pontypool) and how do they work?

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 are the bedrock of local government: they are the local authorities which are closest to local communities, they are corporate bodies and they cover most rural and urban areas throughout Wales.

In the Torfaen County Borough Council area, there are five Community Councils, these being Pontypool, Cwmbran, Henllys, Ponthir, and Croesyceiliog and Llanyrafon and one Town Council (Blaenavon).

As the arm of local government closest to the people, Community and Town councils have a powerful voice in representing local people and a significant opportunity to help improve quality of life for local people. As an elected tier of local government, Community Council activities are controlled by Acts of UK Parliament or legislation introduced by the Welsh Government (the Senedd).

The other tier of local government in Wales are the Unitary Authorities (for example, for Pontypool, Torfaen County Borough Council is the unitary authority) which have a legal duty to deliver services over a wider geographical area, such as education, town and country planning, environmental health and social services.

The Local Government Act 1972 contains rules and standards to ensure that local councils are administered effectively and efficiently. The Community Council must:

- Appoint a Chairman of the Council annually
- Appoint Officers as appropriate, to carry out its functions and responsibilities
- Appoint a Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to manage the Council and its financial affairs in line with proper practices and legislation
- Appoint an independent and competent internal auditor
- Keep records of all decisions related to council business (the minutes)
- Hold an annual meeting and other meetings throughout the year.

The above are the basic minimum duties of local councils; many more requirements, as well as powers and duties, are set out in legislation and government guidance.

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 where elected members (also known as councillors) decide what the Council should spend in the

forthcoming year on local services, events and activities, taking into account the amount of income the Council expects to receive. This group will recommend a budget to the Policy and Finance committee who will then recommend to Council where the final decision will be made.

The excess of planned spending over income is made up by the “precept” (which is one component of the Council Tax for the area) or by drawing on reserves (longer term savings) 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 presents relevant financial information and budget monitoring reports to the Policy & Finance Committee, to show spending and income to date, against budgeted amounts. By regularly monitoring the budget, members of the Council are able to consider spending and make recommendations about increasing income or using funds from contingencies or reserves if necessary.

The Council also holds earmarked reserves, which are set aside for specific purposes and to save towards future projects. The level of reserves is monitored closely.

There are many legal powers which the Community Council uses to improve well-being, in particular (but not only):

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.137bLocal 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




The Council is now complying with the qualification criteria set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to work towards attaining the General Power of Competence. If successful, this will enable the Council to deliver even more in future to improve the health and well-being of current and future generations of people in and around Pontypool and thus achieve a healthier Wales.



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



Councillors (also known as members) play an important and responsible role.




Pontypool Community Council is made up of 21 Councillors. All 21 Councillors 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 Council Meeting, members must sign a declaration of acceptance of office which commits them to act within the law, use their best endeavours and judgement and abide by the Code of Conduct for Members, set out by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The role of a Community Councillor is voluntary, they do not get a salary, only expenses or allowances for specifically identified components of the role are paid, in line with the decisions of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. Members' allowances are taxable.




ABERSYCHAN & CWMAVON		BRYNWERN
		
COUNCILLOR NICK BYRNE Labour	COUNCILLOR GILES DAVIES Labour	COUNCILLOR NICK SIMONS Labour

CWMYNYSCOY	GARNDIFFAITH & VARTEG	
		
COUNCILLOR JOHN KILLICK Labour	Vacant since May 2021	COUNCILLOR MISS LYN CLARKSON Labour

GRIFFITHSTOWN EAST	GRIFFITHSTOWN WEST	NEW INN LOWER
		
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LANG Conservative	COUNCILLOR MRS ELIZABETH HUNT Labour	Vacant since Oct 2020

NEW INN LOWER	NEW INN UPPER	
		
COUNCILLOR RICHARD F OVERTON Conservative	COUNCILLOR D KEITH 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 CADOCS & PENYGARN
		
<p>COUNCILLOR BEN RAPIÉR</p> <p>Labour</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR BARRY M TAYLOR JP</p> <p>Labour</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MRS ROSE MATTHEWS</p> <p>Labour</p>

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 your ward councillor, contact details can be found on Pontypool Community Council's website. Alternatively, contact the office on 01495 365951 and a member of staff will pass on your enquiry to the appropriate member.

Environment and Biodiversity Champion and Well-being Champion

Roles of the Environment and Biodiversity Champion and Well-Being Champion

The Well-being Champion and the Environment and Biodiversity Champion work to ensure that the Council is meeting the seven specific objectives set out in the Statement of Well-being (on page 6 above). On the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act website there are 7 national goals. These are to:

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 grants to local councils to carry out a community mapping exercise and collate a list of all community facilities in their areas; the aim being, to share knowledge and enable community facilities to work together to achieve best value for money.

The grant funded bringing local groups together and providing refreshments. This exercise was carried out across the six Town and Community Councils located in the Torfaen County Borough Council area. Although an initial meeting took place, with a healthy turnout, the second stage was put on hold due to the Covid lockdown. The next stage of the project is to improve the sharing of information and this will take place when Covid restrictions are lifted completely and people can gather freely.

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

Local organisations have shown great resilience in surviving during Covid and we have demonstrated how well councils can work in collaboration, taking into account short term needs and balancing them against longer term objectives.

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

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, Parkinsons, TRAC 2 and Crownbridge School

For the year 2021/22 the Chairman's Chosen Charity is Parkinsons UK (Pontypool Branch).

Objectives of raising money for the Chairman's Charities

- i) To expand awareness of the Charities
- ii) Increasing awareness of the charity will multiply the number of people that the Council engage with.

YOUTH PROVISION FROM MARCH 2021

The Council is proud that it has invested £53,000 in a Youth Project which offers activities, opportunities, and social involvement for all young aged 11 – 25 who live, learn, work, and play in the area covered by Pontypool Community Council. Pontypool Youth Project aims to offer activities and opportunities to young people which help and empower them to be motivated, confident, independent players in their community and support them as they grow into adulthood.

The project works in partnership with Torfaen's Youth Service, Torfaen Sports development, Torfaen Young carers and Hwb Blaenavon who supports with staffing and resources. They also have gained support from Garnsychan partnership and Tesco Community funds to support the opportunities we offer young people.

Pontypool Youth project started in March 2021, much of the work for the initial months was completed online by delivering physical resources to young people at home for them to complete digital sessions through Microsoft Teams every Wednesday evening, as part of the resources included ingredients for cooking activities, craft supplies, treats and games and worksheets. These sessions were delivered in partnership with Hwb Blaenavon and Torfaen youth service due to COVID guidelines we were unable to complete face-to-face work until 2 months into the project, the sessions included cooking, crafts, quizzes and party sessions, these were often hosted by the young people and all were planned with young people, an average of 10 young people attended these sessions weekly. To re-engage those who engaged with us digitally at the start of the year we offered them a range of trips throughout the summer programme which included a trip to Barry Island, Llandegfedd Reservoir and Hollywood Bowl Cwmbran.

When COVID guidelines were relaxed, Youth workers completed detached work in a range of areas within Pontypool to map areas and gauge where the need for youth work intervention was most needed. Youth workers set up youth clubs in Garndiffaith, Pontypool town, and Trevethin as well as regular detached sessions at Pontypool Park and occasionally mapping sessions at local parks and public spaces within Pontypool. As part of our detached sessions, we offered young people youth work support in public spaces for them to engage in activities safely that were coordinated by professionals to ensure activities were adhering to movement guidelines and were inclusive to all. A typical session, young people would have access to engage in sports, crafts, social and emotional support and issue-based discussions and refreshments to be provided and often a fire pit.

In partnership with Torfaen Youth service and Hwb Blaenavon we delivered a weekly photography project 'walkabout' with Hwb and Torfaen Youth service taking young people around local beauty points and showcasing our heritage through photography sessions around Blaenavon town, Pontymoile canal basin and Cwmbran boating lake. Young people had access to a range of cameras as well as receiving a starter kit they could keep and take home including art supplies and camera lenses they could attach to their mobiles.

Throughout the spring and summer, youth workers support Griffithstown community garden by supporting maintaining and planting in the garden. This was great life-skills for the young

people to be able to learn about seasonal, native plants and how to source their own food from a garden. This gave young people a sense of belonging and achievement from volunteering their time on this project. Young people were able to use meditative techniques and connect with nature through their participation.

A characteristic of youth work is being adaptable and changing location and style of delivery to suit the need of the young people, this is something that has been clear through our work this year and our range of engagement styles with young people. Within youth clubs, youth workers encourage young people to support the planning, preparation, and delivery of activities to promote full participation from young people. This delivery ensures that young people engage voluntarily and feel empowered to make decisions and have their voices heard. We offer young people activities to support their physical, social, and emotional development such as sports, cooking, workshops, and art and creative activities. Our regular youth clubs are well attended and continue to grow with full attendance ranging from 20-40 young people each session. As well as our regular youth clubs, we offer young people trips and additional activities for young people to engage in, including sleepovers, trips to local entertainment providers, and integrating young people into local community events such as Pontypool Town's Christmas cavalcade.

Youth workers visited primary schools in the local area to introduce the youth project to the year 6's, throughout their visit youth workers delivered nature base activities outdoors to allow the young people to socialise with their peers in team building games.

The project often attended various community events including, party in the park, Pontypool Christmas Cavalcade and local craft fayres to promote the project to the wider community. Youth workers also supported Torfaen Youth Service on their annual Halloween trip to Thorpe park which allowed young people from the area to attend the 'fright night' event. This event was a great opportunity to build relationships with young people throughout Torfaen and signpost them to the services we offer as a community council.



Annual events and other achievements

Party in the Park

This annual event has taken place in Pontypool for dozens of years. Formerly known as Pontypool Carnival, with floats and a parade through the streets of the town, it was organised by Torfaen County Borough Council until 2019, since then it has been organised and delivered by Pontypool Community Council, in the beautiful surroundings of Pontypool Park.

Throughout Party in the Park 2019, Council officers and members asked a large number of people what they wanted for Pontypool. The highest response was for more activities for young people. The Council listened to this and, added to the big issues for the town which came out of the Youth Conference (referred to in the Youth Council section of this report), the Council created the Youth Project, the main task of which is to provide greater opportunities for young people, outside school time.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions on public gatherings, the 2020 and 2021 Party in the Park events were cancelled.

The Community Council is committed to reinstating Party in the Park in 2022. This is a major event in the Pontypool calendar and is attended and enjoyed by thousands of local people.

Pontypool at Christmas

The annual Christmas Cavalcade 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, children's dancing groups, Cadets and the children's characters and street acts from throughout the day.

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.

In 2021 the Youth Project had a stall in the market, where activities were provided throughout the day for young people, this proved to be very popular. Bells and instruments were made that could then be used in the parade at the end of the day.

Santa's Grotto is always a huge success at the event with over 500 selection boxes given out free of charge.

Various Street Acts and entertainers are hired for the day, in 2021 these included, Magician, Circus Act, Superhero Characters, Trees Alive, Gent on a cycle, Brass Band and Bouncy Elves

Best Dressed business window for Christmas Competition 2021

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

The judges walked around the Town to look at the displays and judged on the basis of the appearance of the display and the effort made in producing the display.

The winners were:-

1st - A Cut Above



2nd - Bladez Barbers - Indoor Market



Joint 3rd - Osbourne Lodge Nursery



Joint 3rd - Belle Femme



Joint 3rd Ragamuffins Vintage Tearoom



Festive Lights Competition 2021

Over the past two years the Community Council introduced a festive light competition.

It attracted many entries and the winners for December 2021 were as follows:

1st - Penygarn Ward



2nd - Varteg Ward



Joint 3rd - Pontypool Ward



Joint 3rd - Penygarn Ward



Litter and Doggy Bins

- Pontypool Community Council has been able to financially contribute to purchasing and siting approximately 60 doggy/litter bins in the Pontypool area, with money allocated to purchase more in future.
- Many local ward members have provided sponsorship towards the cost of these bins. Most of these have been placed at various green sites such as in 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 were 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. A fine of £1000.00 can be imposed on a dog owner who does not clean up after their dog.

The Council's Objectives relating to doggy/litter bins:

- (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.

Window Displays

The Community Council normally invites local societies, charities and Pontypool Museum to display events and social history exhibits in its office windows, which face the street and act as a promotional space, for the Council and for partners. Due to the ongoing situation with Covid-19, the Community Council's office windows have not been utilised to their full potential for displays this year. A display by our main exhibitor (Pontypool Museum) has been in one of our windows since our offices closed in March 2020. The display is attractive and promotes the Museum, but the Council would have liked to replace it during the year, had that been possible.

Notice Boards

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

"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."

Pontypool Community Council's response during the CoronaVirus (Covid 19) pandemic

Early in 2020, Wales, the UK and indeed the world were hit by the worst possible global pandemic (CoronaVirus or Covid-19). This affected and killed thousands of people throughout Wales, where Pontypool is situated, hundreds of thousands across the UK as a whole and millions throughout the world. The UK and Welsh governments ordered several lockdowns and introduced restrictions on people's movement and gathering, including a requirement for staff to work from home wherever possible and for people to stay at home. People were not allowed to go out to shops, restaurants or pubs, businesses closed down, traders could not trade due to the lack of customers and enforced shutdowns, tradesmen and women could not go into people's homes to help with home improvements or fix problems, and the whole country (and much of the world) came to a standstill.

It quickly became obvious as a result that many people were in need of a variety of services, such as food, collections of medication and deliveries. Access to food was restricted as people could not leave their homes, businesses were closed and staff were furloughed, and many people instantly lost their jobs (such as the self-employed) so there was little or no money coming into many households.

The Council rose to the challenge and donated £20,000 to local Foodbanks. Individual councillors took it upon themselves to support people in their wards, by collecting toiletries and clothes for people working or staying in hospitals; by delivering furniture to families who were in dire need of the most basic of items; by telephoning people to provide some comfort to those living on their own; by collecting prescriptions from pharmacies for those who were totally housebound and isolated; by leaving, collecting and delivering "tin on a wall"; and by delivering a huge range of other "on the ground" support to people and communities. Many members also actively supported other groups which were set up in and around Pontypool, to deliver this much needed support.

The Community Council also quickly adapted in terms of community engagement, recognising that people may not be able to do business face to face, but still needed to access services, advice and support, and to be able to speak to each other, seek information and have their voices heard.

The Council increased its use of social media so that information about services, events and activities could be accessed by people in their own homes, online. The art competition, poetry competition, Youth Council meetings and many other initiatives took place or were advertised increasingly online, so that people still had access to these and other services. The Community Council had thousands of hits, shares and likes on many of its social media posts, which demonstrates the success of our community engagement activities, using these channels.

Partnership working also increased and improved, with the Community Council taking on an increased community information service role, sharing news from the NHS, the Blood Donation Service, Torfaen County Borough Council, the Torfaen Voluntary

Alliance and many other sources, so that people were informed and involved as much as possible, despite staying at home and social distancing.

The Community Council supported not only foodbanks and dozens of local groups and organisations, but also paid towards Play Schemes (run by volunteers under the stewardship of Torfaen County Borough Council) for children and young people in the Pontypool area; a food project, so that young people could eat while they attended playschemes; and play activity packs (for children and families to use at home during periods of lockdown).

The Community Council's staff worked from home in the main, which was necessary to ensure Council services continued to be delivered effectively. As government guidelines in relation to Covid 19 recedes, we are finding innovative ways to work, going forward, with a balance of home working and office working, to suit the needs of the Council, staff and customers, while ensuring we continue to be safe and socially distanced wherever possible.

The Community Council is committed to doing everything it can to work flexibly, to adapt to the "new world order" as it develops and to continue delivering excellent services for its many and diverse communities, to ensure we meet the needs of people now, as well as to ensure we address the needs of future generations.

Since 2021/2022 meetings are now held multi locationally so people have the opportunity to attend via Teams, or in person.

Conclusion

During 2021-2022 the Community Council successfully delivered a variety of services, events and activities, where these were possible within the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19. Our achievements have been many and various and are listed in the report above.

The challenge going forward will be to work in new ways, to be flexible and adapt, to ensure we continue delivering excellent, efficient and effective services, events and activities to the people and communities of Pontypool, so that we continually improve well-being for current and future generations.

Council Staff

Community Council Clerk	Mrs Ruth Tucker
Acting Clerk (Interim) (May 2021)	Richard Gwinnell
Assistant Clerk	Ms Jane Wright
Finance and Events Manager	Mrs Cindy Challenger
Events Officer	Mrs Annette Ambrosen
Events Officer	Mrs Rebecca Cronin
Administration Officer	Mrs Carol Peterson
Accountant	Mrs Lisa McMail
Youth Worker (March 2021)	Olivia Williams
Youth Support Worker (June 2021)	Jacob Gregg Harris
Youth Support Worker (2021)	To be recruited

Email enquiries: clerk@pontypoolcc.gov.uk

NEWS - Retirement of Clerk after 37 years - March 2022

Pontypool Community Council would like to announce that, after 37 years' service, Mrs Ruth Tucker has resigned her role as Clerk to the Council. Ruth has undertaken the role of Clerk since the Council was created in 1985 and guided the Council through its inception until her recent retirement.

Ruth played a large part in forging Pontypool's partnerships with its Twin Towns in Longjumeau, Bretten and Condeixa and these relationships are still strong today, with a Youth Festival taking place every year. Ruth supported the Council with distinction and took an active role in events and projects including the Inter Schools Eisteddfod, the Schools Environmental Quiz, Grants Presentation Evenings, Party in the Park, Pontypool Regeneration Partnership, the Poet of Pontypool and other presentation evenings, the Christmas Cavalcade and more.

Ruth played a huge role in the Community Council, as did her family, with her late husband serving as a community councillor and her children serving as youth councillors in years gone by. She has made many good friends and helped ensure a brighter future for the Community Council.

Pontypool Community Council would like to thank Ruth for all her hard work, dedication and commitment over the years and we wish her all the very best for a long, happy and healthy retirement. The staff and Councillors she worked with over the years, many of whom have become firm friends, will miss her help, support and guidance, admiring her kindness and loyalty to the team.



Useful Telephone Numbers

Useful telephone numbers 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
NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue Emergency	999
Age UK	0800 169 6565
Domestic Violence Hotline	0808 2000 247
Childline	0800 1111

Please see the Community Council's website for links to and contact details of many local groups and organisations within our communities.

Telephone numbers for local 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

Other useful telephone numbers and email addresses

Age Connects Torfaen	01495 769264 widdershins@ageconnectstorfaen.org
Big Pit	0300 111 2 333 bigpit@museumwales.ac.uk
Bron Afon Community Housing	01633 620111 enquiries@bronafon.org.uk
County Hospital, Griffithstown	01495 768768
Melin Homes	01495 745910
Free Press	01633 810000
Gas Emergency	0800 111999
Grange University Hospital	01633 493100
Hafod Housing Association	02920 799539
Job Centre Plus	0845 004 3719
Nevill Hall Hospital	01873 732732
One Voice Wales	01269 595400 admin@onevoicewales.org.uk
Police	01633 838111
Pontypool Museum	01495 752036
Registry Office, Pontypool	01495 742132
Royal Gwent Hospital	01633 234234
South Wales Argus	01633 810000 pontypool@gwent-wales.co.uk
Inland Revenue Cardiff	0300 200 3300
Welsh Government	0300 0604400 customerhelp@gov.wales

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 we would like, but we do want to know what people think about what we do and make our services, events and activities even better in the future:

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35A Commercial Street,
Pontypool,
Torfaen.
NP4 6JQ
Telephone: 01495 365951