

2022 - 2023

# Annual Report

Pontypool Community Council  
Cyngor Cymuned Pont-Y-Pŵl



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# About Pontypool

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, beautiful parks, rivers, the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, walks, hills, forests, reservoirs, 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)”.



*(clockwise from top left)* Bandstand in Pontypool Park, Clock Tower in Pontypool Park, Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal at Pontymoile, Folly Tower

# Message From The Clerk

I was appointed as Clerk to Pontypool Community Council in September 2022 after the retirement of the previous Clerk Mrs Ruth Tucker. This is Pontypool Community Council's fourth Annual Report. With each report we want to let you know who we are, what we do, how we do it and our achievements throughout the year, you will find this documented throughout this report.

The staff, Councillors, and I look forward to serving Pontypool Community Council through the Council's vision statement.

As Clerk I am accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources ensuring the Community Council provides quality and well-maintained services and events for the community. I am also the Responsible Finance Officer and accountable for all financial records and proper administration of its finances. (ctd.)



**“To proactively engage with local residents to identify their priorities and aspirations, ensuring the work of the Council and its partners make a positive difference, empowering our community”.**

**Vision statement**

Since my appointment I have, with the support of members put in place training plans for all staff and members in line with the Wales Local Measure Plan and ensured improved partnership working by having several guest speakers at our Council/Committee meetings throughout the year, held informal coffee mornings to improve networking and I am keen to continue and actively promote Pontypool Community Council going forward.

As a Community Council we have supported many initiatives and provided grants throughout the year. Some of our achievements this year are:

- Our continued support to provide a Youth Project, which is going from strength to strength. We are very proud to be able to fund this project.
- We fund grants for local Junior Sponsorship, Grounds Maintenance, Core Funding and Grant Aid.
- We organise Party in the Park, the Christmas Cavalcade and the Schools Eisteddfods as well as smaller events which are detailed in this report.
- We have provided Christmas Trees and Christmas lights throughout our communities.
- We have provided funding to local foodbanks.

- We have funded Grants to local not for profit organisations.

- We provide environmental awareness through Forest schools visits and Environmental Quiz for our primary schools.

- We also have a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems plan as required inside of Section 6 duties.

This past year has continued to be challenging. After emerging from the COVID 19 pandemic to a more familiar sense of living, the current economic challenges continue to affect us today.

During the forthcoming year we will share more of our achievements as a Community Council with you via our website and social media platforms. This is an exciting time for the Community Council, I am looking forward to some very exciting projects we have planned for 2023/24.

Lisa McMail

Clerk

Pontypool Community Council

# Chairman's Foreword

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Although this is the Council's 4th annual report it is the first Annual Report of the 2022 - 2027 newly appointed Council administration, elected to serve Pontypool Community Council from May 2022. The newly elected Members will be introduced to you later in this report. As you will see from the Clerk's foreword a new Clerk to the Council Mrs Lisa McMail was appointed in 2022 after the retirement of the previous Clerk Mrs Ruth Tucker who had served the Council for 37 years with such compassion and diligence from its inception in 1985 until her retirement.

Throughout 2022/23 Pontypool Community Council has participated in far more public consultation and invited numerous speakers to talk at Council meetings on important matters including the Annual Residents Survey 2022, (ctd.)



**"I was honoured to be appointed as Chair of Council for the Civic year 2022/2023 and would like to thank my fellow Councillors, staff and the new Clerk for all the support afforded me in this position. On behalf of us all we continue to look forward to supporting our communities going forward."**

Torfaen Play service, Community Engagement, Community Review, Cyber Awareness, Draft Canal Strategy and Action Plan, Waste Consultation, Levelling Up Fund, Tidy Butt, and many more. More public consultations will be announced throughout the administration period to engage with our communities and ensure that residents are fully informed of the Council's plans. If you need support or advice in the meantime, you can visit Pontypool Community Council's website to find out the contact details for both the Council office and for your local Councillor. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Pontypool Community Council continues to support local groups/societies, foodbanks, sporting organisations and national organisations financially through its Local Voluntary Funding and Grants schemes as well as providing money to foodbanks.

2022/2023 has proved to be an unexpected, challenging year for everyone, especially with the start of the war in Ukraine which saw energy prices rise sharply which also triggered the cost-of-living crisis which has had a detrimental effect on many families to date with many working families now relying on foodbanks. The Council also puts on many community events, one of the main ones being Party in the Park to ensure inclusivity to all.

This report is dedicated to Ruth  
Tucker  
(08.05.1955 – 10.05.2023)

Cllr Matt Ford  
Chariman  
Pontypool Community Council

## **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 various charities. Chairman Councillor M. Ford chose TRAC 2 and Crownbridge School to raise funds for during his year in office (2022/2023).

### **TRAC 2**

Is a crisis support charity providing help and support to people during difficult period in their lives. They provide food, household goods and financial advice to families and individuals who are on a low income or have no money to support themselves. The team is made up of staff and volunteers who can call upon many agencies to work with clients and support them through difficult times.

### **Crownbridge School**

Crownbridge school educates children and young people between the ages of 2 – 19 years with severe learning difficulties. The school is spread over 2 sites within the Torfaen area. The Primary part of the school is situated within Penygarn mainstream school for pupils aged 3 – 11 years and the older children attend Crownbridge school in Croesyceiliog. The school provides a range of therapies, activities and learning facilities which caters for each child's needs.



# Pontypool Community Council

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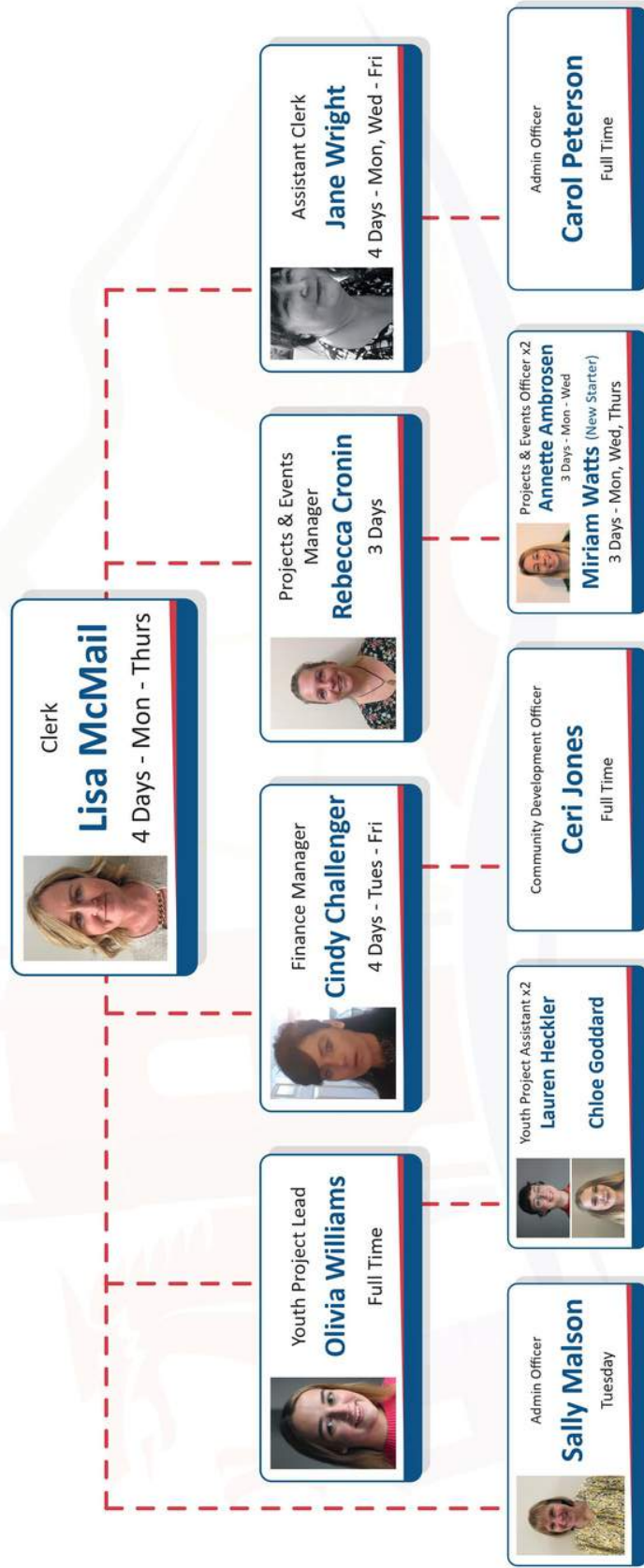
## Introduction and Context

- Pontypool Community Council has been in existence since 1985. It is one of the largest Community/Town Councils in Wales with a population exceeding 47,000 and a budget in excess of £700,000 per annum.
- The Council is made up of 21 elected members that represent the community on a ward basis. These members make decisions on a range of services and activities which support the local community and liaise with Torfaen County Borough Council when other issues of concern or interest arise.
- In order for the Community Council to run smoothly and efficiently, a small, dedicated team of 12 members of staff under the direction of the Clerk Mrs Lisa McMail, work to provide the necessary administration, organisation and fulfil the Council's statutory commitments.



**Pontypool Community Council**  
Cyngor Cymuned **Pont-Y-Pŵl**

# Staffing Structure



## Councillors

The role of a Councillor is a responsible one. Pontypool Community Council have twenty-one Council Members in Pontypool who were elected or co-opted in 2022/2023. Each one of them has an active interest in the Pontypool community and they are dedicated to improving the quality of life and the local environment. The Clerk, as part of her role, summons the Councillors to each Council meeting. The Councillors have a duty to attend.

As part of the inauguration, just after the election, and before the Annual Meeting, Members must agree to act within the law and follow the Local Government Act (1972). They are governed by a Code of Conduct set out by the Public Ombudsman for Wales and must sign a declaration of acceptance of office to say they agree to work within this Code as well as producing a list of interests they hold.

The role of a Town & Community Councillor is voluntary. No salary is paid and only expenses or allowances for specifically identified elements of the role are paid. Any allowances received are also taxable. As the voice of the local community, Councillors have an opportunity to influence bodies such as Welsh Government and their Unitary Authority (Torfaen County Borough Council) for the better and generate ideas and plans that formulate the overall policies of the Council. Each Councillor, their political affiliation and the Pontypool Ward that they represent is shown on the following pages.



**Cllr Rose Matthews -  
Deputy Leader**

Ward: St Cadocs and  
Penygarn - Welsh Labour



**Cllr Elizabeth Hunt**

Ward: Griffithstown West  
- Welsh Labour



**Cllr Nick Byrne**

Ward: Pontnewynydd -  
Welsh Labour



**Cllr Lyn Clarkson**

Ward: Garndiffaith and Varteg – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Matthew Ford – Chair**

Ward: Trevethin – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Gaynor James – Leader**

Ward: Pontypool – Welsh Labour



**Cllr John Killick**

Ward: Cwmyscoy – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Jonathon Martin**

Ward: New Inn Lower – Conservative



**Cllr John Cox**

Ward: Garndiffaith and Varteg – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Richard Overton**

Ward: New Inn Lower – Conservative



**Cllr Nick Simons**

Ward: Brynwern – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Nicholas Jones**

Ward: New Inn Upper – Conservative





**Vacant**

Ward: Sebastopol West



**Cllr Sue Malson**

Ward: New Inn Upper –  
Welsh Labour



**Cllr Jools Rogers**

Ward: Abersychan and  
Cwmavon – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Bob Rogers**

Ward: Abersychan and  
Cwmavon – Welsh Labour



**Cllr Anne Gunter**

Ward: Griffithstown East –  
Welsh Labour



**Cllr Caroline Price**

Ward: Snatchwood –  
Welsh Labour



**Cllr Nathan Warren**

Ward: Sebastopol East –  
Welsh Labour



**Cllr Jon James**

Ward: Wainfelin – Welsh  
Labour

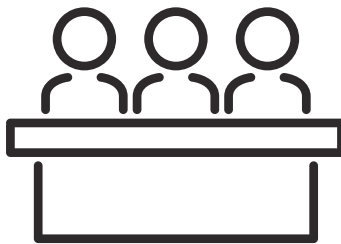


**Cllr Jon Horlor – Vice  
Chair**

Ward: Trevethin – Welsh  
Labour

## Council / Committees

Pontypool Community Council meets every month (apart from August) and is supported by four principal committees – Policy & Finance, Planning & Environment, Events and Establishment. The Policy & Finance meeting (this will be known as Finance, Governance and Policy in 2023) and Planning & Environment committees meet every month as does Full Council while Events and Establishment Committees meet on a bi-monthly basis. The Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 was implemented in January 2021 and one of the Act's provisions was to introduce multi location meetings where Council meetings must provide for Councillors and members of the public who wish to attend remotely, using Teams or telephone conferencing facilities. As Clerk I am pleased to state that Pontypool community Council provides this facility.



The Council is currently 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.

**THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:**



**Policy & Finance**

Financial matters including preparation of budget, monitoring of all income and expenditure, Internal Controls, Audit, Grants, Policies.



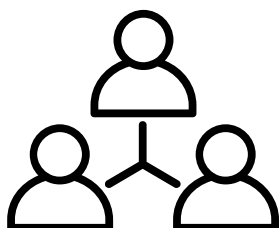
**Planning & Environment:**

All planning and development matters including planning applications, plenary powers and planning determinations



**Events:**

All Events of the Council – Eisteddfod, Christmas Cavalcade, Party in the park, Environmental Quiz, and many more – more on these throughout the report



**Establishment:**

All personnel and staffing matters

# Events & Projects

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## 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. 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 Council's objectives are:

- (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 Display & Notice Boards

Pontypool Community Council has two large windows for display purposes. One of the exhibitors who regularly uses our windows to promote forthcoming events and exhibitions which they organise is Torfaen museum. They also design themes which include items from their vast collection. At Christmas, they decorate the window to show how the festive season used to be celebrated. It also encourages members of the general public to visit the museum. Other organisations to have used the Council windows are Torfaen Parkinsons, Art Regen, Motor Neurone Association and many more.

The Council has provided 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.

The Council's objectives are:

(i) To ensure those residents who are unfamiliar with social media have the same opportunity to access information.

(ii) To learn about the work of the various exhibitors and encourage more visitors to Pontypool.



## Hanging Baskets and Floral Displays



The Council fund hanging baskets through the town on an annual basis. These floral displays brighten the streets and provide a pop of colour to welcome in the Spring and Summer months.

## Plant a tree for the Jubilee

Pontypool Community Council planted 3 trees as part of the Plant a tree for the Platinum Jubilee initiative. The trees were planted in the following areas:



**PANTEG PARK PLANTED BY COUNCILLORS LIZZIE HUNT, NATHAN WARREN AND ANNE GUNTER.**



**PONTYPOOL PARK PLANTED BY COUNCILLORS GAYNOR JAMES AND ROSE MATTHEWS**



**GLANSYCHAN PARK PLANTED BY COUNCILLORS GILES DAVIES AND LYNDA CLARKSON**

**THANK YOU TO ALL INVOLVED -  
CHWARAE TORFAEN PLAY, FRIENDS OF PANTEG PARK  
AND TORFAEN.**

## Grants

The Council awarded grants / funding in the region of £140,000 in 2022/23, as below:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| £50,000 | Local Voluntary Funding                  |
| £18,000 | Running Costs                            |
| £8,000  | Grounds Maintenance (sports pitches)     |
| £5,000  | Grant Aid                                |
| £4,800  | Grants – National Charities/local groups |
| £15,000 | Food Banks                               |
| £6,000  | Junior sponsorship                       |
| £29,000 | Playschemes in Pontypool                 |
| £7,000  | School Environmental Grants              |

Council grants are given to groups and organisations which are spread across Pontypool and to numerous local and national charitable organisations. The 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 benefits. Each Councillor has a local voluntary funding pot of £2,500, that they can award to local groups and organisations in their ward.

Objectives of the Council's grants:

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.



## Litter Picking Hub

Pontypool Community Council is now a litter picking hub. We have 10 litter pickers that can be borrowed from our offices to use within the Pontypool Community. Our offices are open Mon - Thurs 9am - 5pm.

If you require any further information, please telephone 01495 365951 or email [pontypool@pontypoolcc.gov.uk](mailto:pontypool@pontypoolcc.gov.uk)



## Play Park Accessibility Improvements



In November, installation of a new wheelchair accessible roundabout was installed in the children's play area. Following this, in the new year Pontypool Community Council funded the interactive Musical Stepping Stones.



## POET OF PONTYPOOL

The Council held a Poet of Pontypool competition in June 2022 followed by an Art competition with the same theme – The Queens Jubilee. The winning poems were as follows:

### JUNIOR WINNING POEM

**Our Queen  
This is our Queen,  
Up there on her own.  
Benevolent majesty,  
Setting the tone.  
Cheering on horses,  
Giving corgis a bone.  
Supporting her subjects,  
With never a moan.**

### ADULT WINNING POEM

Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, our glorious queen,  
The most amazing of monarchs, Great Britain's ever seen.  
Born in stylish Mayfair as a sweet York Princess  
Until abdication made her heir presumptive no less.  
The death of her father the King changed her life  
And she became Queen at the age of just twenty five.  
I'll be known as Elizabeth as that is my name  
Was the first thing the new monarch was heard to exclaim.  
It's a glamorous new era, her subjects all thought  
Of the girl who promised duty, her life long or short.  
So she reigned with Prince Philip, her strength and her stay,  
We are honoured to have her right up to this day.  
She has steered the Commonwealth, Head of the Realm,  
Has had 14 Prime Ministers and remained at the helm.  
The Silver Jubilee brought a series of tours  
Full of hellos and holas and jolly bonjours,  
They followed the golden with konnichiwa  
As she once again travelled to land near and far.  
The Diamond was paired with Olympics, t'was heaven  
Especially when she appeared with 007!  
Then Platinum for service of 70 years  
Marked by Trooping the Colour, parade and loud cheers.  
A thanksgiving service, the new Elizabeth Line  
Tea with Paddington Bear which was really sublime.  
One woman whose life she's devoted to us  
Through the ages, so steadfast, without any fuss.  
Mother, Grandmother, Sister, Aunty and friend,  
Can the virtues of this lady we love never end?  
What really has this Platinum Jubilee been about?  
But Her Majesty, faultless and 70 not out.

**All over the world,  
From far and near,  
Know Queen Elizabeth  
Has her jubilee year.  
Let's raise a toast.  
So all can hear.  
"To our loving Queen"  
Shout out your cheer!**



## Art Competition



Adult Winner - Kate Evans



Junior Winner - Abersychan School,  
collaborative piece by Year 7 SNRB base

## Photo Competition 2022-2023

This year PCC ran the photo competition with the theme “Animals in Winter” over the 3 months of winter to allow people a better chance of capturing their photo. 30 entries were received. The competition was judged by Mrs Julie Morgan AWPf, who stated that all entries were of a high quality.



1st Prize - Wynford Jones

## Environmental Quiz

The Community Council has for many years organised, run and paid for an annual environmental quiz, which involves teams of children from local primary schools competing against each other to answer questions on environmental issues and win prizes for their schools.

In 2022 Padre Pio R.C school hosted the quiz on Monday 20th June, seven schools each sent a team of Year 6 students: George Street, Padre Pio RC, New Inn, Cwmffrwdroer, Griffithstown, Penygarn, Ysgol Panteg

There were 7 rounds in total and each student received a recycled note pad and pen for participating and a healthy buffet was provided after the event.

Cwmffrwdroer won the 2022 Environmental Quiz and will host the 2023 event.

## Eisteddfod 2022

In 2022 we saw the return of our Annual Inter- School's Eisteddfod after a one-year hiatus because of Covid. The Eisteddfod takes place over two days at Pontypool Active Living Centre and pupils compete in Welsh recitals and singing categories plus Welsh Folk Country Dance and Instrumental categories.

The following Pontypool schools participated over two days in May: Garnteg, Cwmffrwdroer, Ysgol Bryn Onnen, New Inn, George Street, Griffithstown and Penygarn. Griffithstown Primary won overall winner on both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 days.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED**

## 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 provides 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.

In 2022 Pontypool Community Council funded Forest School lessons for nine Pontypool schools at Greenmeadow Community Farm. The Council also paid for the transport.

## Garden Competition 2022



This year's competition ran from June – July and we had 15 entries in total.

The judging took place on Monday 25th July and the judges were Mrs Annette Williams who works at Greenmeadow Community Farm and Mrs Lesley Smith who works at The Secret Garden (Garden Centre).



Categories included: Best Container, Best Flowerbed, Best Wildlife Friendly Garden, Best Lawn, Best Vegetable Garden, Junior Category Tallest Sunflower and Best Overall Garden Winner.



## Party in the Park 2022

This event returned after a 2 year gap due to Covid restrictions. The 2022 event was bigger than ever, attracting huge crowds on what was a very hot sunny July Saturday. The main attraction was Titan the Robot who had featured on Britain's Got Talent. Other entertainment included inflatables, children's entertainment, children's art and crafts, animal petting and a large number of arts and crafts stalls, as well as food and drink vendors – many being local small businesses. The stage hosted a number of artists and the headliner band was The Trends. Children could have their faces painted and Pontypool Youth Project braided hair on their stall. PCC provided most of the children's entertainment for free, making it a day that could be enjoyed by many local residents and visitors.



## Christmas Calvacade 2022

On Saturday 26th November we held our 2022 Christmas Cavalcade. Unfortunately, the weather was against us, and all the entertainment was moved into Pontypool Indoor Market. The Market was full of entertainment, with Santa's grotto, storytelling, facepainting, disco with Mad Mel, magic with The Magnificent Johnno, and children's characters appearing. The rain eased a little to allow the annual parade to take place, a horse and carriage pulling Santa and Mrs Claus led the parade of local groups, The Red-Hot Piping Band, children's characters among others down Crane Street in Pontypool town culminating with the switching on of the Christmas lights.



**PONTYPOOL**  
**Christmas Cavalcade 26th November 2022**

**Itinerary**

Visit Santa in his Grotto on Market Street entrance opposite The Comrades Club from 10am-12.30pm and 1-4pm (Santa queue will close at 3.30pm)

There will be a number of entertainers appearing throughout the day, including Inflatable Gingerbread, Christmas Mickey & Minnie, Elf on Shelf, Sonic the Hedgehog, Buzz Lightyear, LED Stilt Wings, Brass band Elves, Christmas Gent, Belle & Cinderella plus more - between 1-5pm

| <b>Pontypool Indoor Market</b>  | <b>Stage</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-4pm Visit Santa in his grotto (Market Street)</li> <li>• 11- 3pm South Wales Party Booths for a free photograph with festive props</li> <li>• 1.30pm Mr. Big - Storytelling and Juggling Workshop</li> <li>• 2.30pm - Piping Hot Band</li> <li>• 3pm Magnificent Johnno - Balloon modelling and show</li> <li>• Don't forget all the regular Market stalls plus additional festive stalls, hot food and Christmas shopping until 6pm</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 1pm Disco by Mad Mel</li> <li>• 2pm TV and Film characters on stage</li> <li>• 2.30pm Brass Band Elves</li> <li>• 4pm Dancing display by Dance Stars Academy</li> <li>• 5pm Straight after the Parade A Christmas message from Chairman Cllr Matt Ford and Christmas light switch on</li> </ul> |





# Pontypool Youth Project

**Pontypool Youth Council's aim is to be a group of young people aged fourteen and above who advocate for young people's rights. Pontypool Youth Councillors sit on Community Council meetings to give youth a voice in discussions that affect young people in Pontypool.**

## Highlights Throughout the Year

- Gwent N-Gage came to deliver a workshop on substance misuse with young people.
- Youth workers delivered a workshop around equality, inclusivity and hidden disabilities.
- Workshops around mindfulness and yoga.
- Tidy Butt came and delivered 2 sessions with the group around mental health.
- Fearless delivered a workshop on knife crime.
- The Canal and River Trust came in to deliver a workshop around water safety.
- Youth workers celebrated Tourette's awareness month and the youth club dressed in green to support Tourette's Action.
- Street Doctors delivered workshops where young people gained certificates for what to do if someone is bleeding.
- Youth workers celebrated space week and offered the young people the opportunity to take part in a range of science experiments.

## Youth Council (aged 14+)



Pontypool Youth Council meets weekly on a Monday afternoon, 4:30 pm-6:00 pm at the Pontypool Community Council office. Youth councillors take the views of their peers from consultations at youth clubs, schools and online and make positive changes to benefit young people's lives within Pontypool. Youth councillors not only have an instrumental part in community development, but they also participate in wider network groups.



This year, youth councillors have engaged in a workshop with Senedd Cymru to learn who their local representatives are and how decisions are made. This workshop provoked the team to learn more information about this process, so youth councillors went on a trip to the Senedd to develop their knowledge of how the Welsh government works.



Youth councillors worked hard on their project around Climate change. They engaged in a range of activities to develop their understanding of what is going on locally to tackle climate change. Young people volunteered an evening at Blaen Bran woodlands to help maintain the woodland area and learn more about how the committee undertakes regular work to support habitats within the woodlands and ensure it is safe for the public to enjoy the space. Youth councillors also visited Techniquet which supported their understanding of climate.



With all the research and activities the youth councillors engaged in, they were ready for the Youth Twinning Festival in Bretten, Germany with the theme being 'Climate Change Knows No Boundaries'. At the twinning festival, five young people engaged in discussions with other young people from Bretten and Condexia around Climate change.



As well as having enriching discussions to develop young people's mindset, young people engaged in a range of leisure activities including high ropes, visiting a theme park, music lessons, a city tour, flower planting and swimming.

Pontypool Youth Councillors raised £58 for local charity Sight Cymru in a blindfolded bowling event, this event was a great opportunity for young people to gain empathy for people with sight impairment.

Youth councillors worked towards a nature walk within Pontypool Park to increase town tourism and encourage children and young people to get active. They mapped a small route around the park with pinpoints to guide the route. The youth councillors went on trips to local nature trails to gain inspiration on what was available and how we can mirror good ideas in our area.

Pontypool Youth Council sit on Torfaen Youth Alliance meetings and has recently attended Gwent youth question time to have their say on matters that affect young people and ask questions to key decision-makers in the area. In the evening, young people discussed various topics including community safety, sexual health and healthy relationships, and the cost of living.



**Youth councillors as a result of their trip from Bretten came back to Pontypool with a better understanding of the effect of single use plastic and ways, they can reduce their wastage in everyday activities. Young people have worked on funding a water fountain to be installed at Pontypool Market for the community to access free water in hope to reduce single use plastic.**

## Youth Club at Sharon Church

At the start of 2022, we moved the youth club to a new venue at Crane Street Church, this space was bigger and more accessible than our previous venue and in the centre of town. We later moved again to Sharon Church where we currently run our sessions every Wednesday 5:00–7:30 pm and Friday 4:30–6:00 pm.

At youth clubs, young people were able to engage in usual arts, crafts, sports, cooking and workshops. During our sessions, we purchased some musical instruments and a karaoke machine, and young people within the youth club enjoy the opportunity to express themselves. Our sessions often include a range of different music genres and singing.

As part of our workshops, we called on support from local organisations to be able to offer young people more advanced knowledge on issue-based topics.



## Community Events



Young people supported Pontypool Indoor Market to plant flowerbeds in the town as part of a Keep Wales Tidy project. They had a sense of achievement from this activity and took pride in their community. Young people also often partake in litter picking in the town and surrounding areas.



Young people supported the Halloween event at Pontypool Indoor Market. They dressed up in Halloween costumes and supported the market by getting into character to entertain customers who attended the event. The young people have asked to do this event again next year.



Young people attended the Pontypool Christmas Cavalcade where young people had a chill-out spot to socialise. In the chill-out spot, young people were offered free refreshments and Christmas films were played all day. As well as the chill-out spot, young people learnt some entrepreneurial skills from making and selling hot chocolate cones and reindeer dust to the public. Young people made a small profit on these products that went back into resources at the youth club.



Some young people enjoyed dressing in Christmas costumes to finish the day and take part in the parade around town.



We supported a young person, Lucy Phillips run a coffee morning to raise money for Tourette's Action and promote her book to raise awareness and break down the stigma around this disability



We attended TVA volunteering awards as one of our volunteers Morgan Fish won the young volunteer award.



We attended Pontypool Community Council's annual dinner with the youth councillors

## Garndiffaith Millennium Hall

Pontypool Youth Project runs a youth club at Garndiffaith Millennium Hall every Thursday evening. This youth club is delivered in partnership with Torfaen Sports Development, this allows young people to have access to various opportunities within the sessions including lots of sports activities facilitated by a trained coach. Through partnership work with Torfaen Sports Development, young people have been offered a range of team-building games and icebreakers to develop stronger relationships with their peers. Young people have been able to request themed sports sessions such as football, netball, rugby and golf skills.

During the summer of 22, we organised a summer party in partnership with local organisations including Torfaen Sports Development, Melin Homes, Police and Garnsychan Partnership. From this community partnership, we were able to offer rugby skills from Dragon's Rugby community team, face painting, carnival-themed games, a BMX demonstration from Fusion Extreme, bouncy castles and competitions. This event was free for any young person to attend and was a well-attended event to celebrate the end of summer.

Local community support officers attend our youth clubs regularly, this supports the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the area from community officers making relationships with young people and reiterating the importance of appropriate behaviour when out in the community and how to gain support or report issues to the local authority.

Within our open-accessed youth club at Garndiffaith Millennium Hall, we ran various workshops to promote informal education. The topics were around issue-based topics including healthy relationships, substance misuse, well-being, and mental health. We have gained support from outside agencies to offer more advanced knowledge on these topics.

Our youth clubs are youth-led so young people are encouraged to participate in the planning, preparation and delivery of the activities. A typical session often includes a range of sports, workshops, arts and crafts, games, and cooking. These activities support the young person's development throughout adolescence and support their problem-solving skills to improve mental and physical health.





## Garndiffaith Millennium Hall

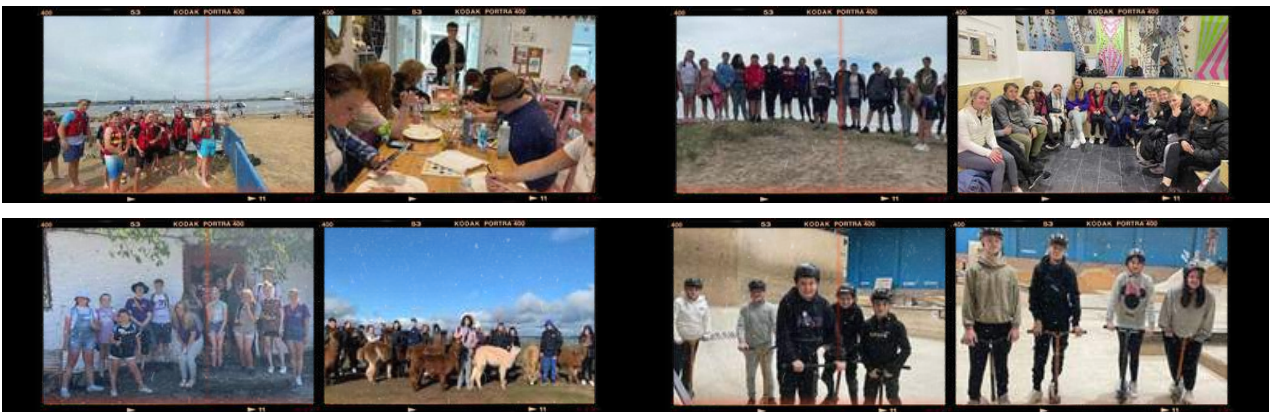
Throughout the Easter half term in 2022, youth workers delivered a sleepover in the youth club, this was a fun experience where they were able to take part in crafts, watch a film, have pizza, and do nail painting. Young people loved this experience and often ask for another sleepover or residential.

For the Easter half term in 2023, we worked in partnership with Torfaen Sports Development and the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) to deliver a 'Fun, Fit, Fed' rugby camp at Garndiffaith RFC. During this morning camp, young people were trained by coaches from the WRU and were given breakfast and lunch as part of the experience as well as a WRU rucksack, wristband, and a pen as a gift for taking part. Young people loved taking part in this morning camp and being able to exercise and learn new skills with their friends. Some young people who took part in this camp have since joined local rugby clubs and after-school clubs to enhance their rugby skills.

## External Funding Received:

- TVA £800 youth led grants for a gardening project at Garndiffaith Millennium Hall to grow fresh fruit and veg for youth club.
- Welsh water £250 community fund
- Ogi £250 micro fund
- TCBC £5000 Period Proud Project.

## Trips





## Detached Sessions

Throughout the summer we delivered detached sessions in Pontypool Park. These sessions were delivered with Torfaen Sports Development to be able to deliver sporting activities alongside a range of well-being activities such as outdoor cooking, crafts, and mindfulness exercises and meet the young people “where they are at”.



## Pontymoile Canal Basin Volunteering

Throughout the year we delivered sessions at Pontymoile Canal Basin with the Canal and River Trust. In these sessions, we cover outdoor activities including volunteering to litter pick and paint. This beautifies the area and makes it a more welcoming place for the community. We grow flowers and maintain the flower beds as well as learn outdoor skills such as shelter building and bushcraft skills. We also play lots of fun games. This session was set up to target young people who were home-educated in the local area but has developed to reach out to school non-attenders as well.



# Well-being Goals





## 01. 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.



## 02. 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.



## 03. 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.



## 04. 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, other 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.



## 05. 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.
- Promote inter-generational work through the Youth Council.



## 06. A Pontypool of Vibrant and 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.



## 07. 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.

# Conclusion

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Thank you for reading this report, our next one will be published in July 2024.

If you would like to speak to us regarding this document, or any other matter, you can contact the council via the following methods:

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Emergency contact - Clerk - 01495 365952 or 01495 365954

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