

Penyffordd, Penymynydd & Dobshill

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021/22 (May 2022)



Hello and welcome to all of our residents.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, introduced as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, that a community council must prepare and publish a report (an “annual report”) about the council's priorities, activities and achievements during that year. This is our first report which we hope you will find of interest.

There are 13 members on Penyffordd Community Council. Councillors are office holders who sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office upon their election or appointment - they are therefore part of the local government structure of Wales. Although they carry out many community activities on a voluntary basis, they are not volunteers.

At the head of the Council is the Chairman, who is elected annually from amongst its serving Councillors. The Chairman for 2021/22 was Councillor Mark Rothero and the Vice-Chair was Councillor Roy Wakelam.

The Council has a vacancy for a Community Youth Representative to represent the youth sector and be a ‘voice’ on the Community Council for local issues affecting young people. This was advertised and local schools contacted, however, unfortunately it remains vacant.

The council is supported by the Clerk, Sarah Hughes and Street Operative, Glyn Davies.

We meet formally on the second Wednesday evening of the month at 6.30pm, during 2021/22 these were all held remotely. These are very structured meetings with very full agendas. Anyone is welcome to observe and there is an opportunity at the start for public questions, but it is a working meeting rather than a public presentation.

The council has a number of current projects so in order to be more proactive, we meet in between in 'Working Groups' to deal with specific areas/projects.

Your Community Councillors for the Year 2021/22 were as follows:

Mark Rothero – Independent (Chairman)	Pat Ransome - Independent
Roy Wakelam – Independent (Vice Chairman)	Paul Blackman – Labour
Richard Bestwick – Labour	Ian Challinor – Independent
Cindy Hinds - Labour	Alasdair Ibbotson - Welsh Labour
Jeff Priddin - Independent	Steve Saxon – Resigned Jan 22
David Williams - Independent	Tom Evans – Resigned Nov 2021
David Walker – Labour	

Your Community Council

The Community Council are responsible for some street lighting, CCTV / crime prevention, street furniture, community buildings, Christmas lights, open space and the Millstone play area (we also offer some financial and work with Flintshire County Council on other playgrounds) and are a statutory consultee for many local authority and government issues including planning.

Virtual Meetings

As a result of the pandemic, during the last 2 years the council quickly adapted and transferred to virtual meetings in order for council business to continue. Under new Government legislation, the council will now be looking to work towards hybrid meetings which will make it easier for members and the public to attend.

Budget/Precept

The Council's budget for 2021/22 was £288,172 (not including money held in reserves for specific projects) and the precept requirement was £100,739. Here is a brief explanation of how the precept is calculated:

The total forecast expenditure for the Community Council was £182,638. In addition to this, we have to allow for having a £25,000 buffer in the bank, so the total we needed to raise is £207,638. By the end of the financial year (31 March 2021), we did not expect to have spent everything that was budgeted for in the previous year and so we were left with money in the bank (£75,899), plus the estimated VAT which will be reclaimed of £31,000. These two figures are taken away from the total we need to raise, leaving a balance of £100,739 to be raised via the precept. The Tax Base for the 2021-22 financial year of equivalent Band D properties is 2060.63 and the cost per Band-D property: £48.89.

At the end of the financial year 31 March 2022 the council had actual only spent £158,203 which is £129,969 under budget. The three main expenditure items for the underspend were; Melwood Play Area Improvements; Millstone Skate Ramp project and the Memorial Garden project.

Audits

Each year an Internal and External Audit is undertaken. The Internal Audit was completed 28th April 2021 with only one recommendation of *The risk assessment should be updated to include supplier (procurement) fraud including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls*. The External Audit undertaken by Audit Wales is still yet to be received.

Activities during the Year 2021/22

Wildlife Garden

We secured a lease on an area of land to the rear of West View/Alyn Drive with the objective of making a Community Wildlife garden. The area was under utilised scrub land with a variety of self-seeded trees and plants. The idea is to improve the diversity of trees and plants in the area, provide some fruit trees, and to improve the accessibility of the area. The council have appointed WoodWorks CIC to manage the site and they are working to include community involvement.

Old School Site

The end of February 2022, Flintshire County Council wrote to the council indicating a proportion of land from the old junior school site on Penymynydd Road that they would be willing to discuss as a community asset transfer for open space. This is still in the very early stages, however, it is positive that the council have managed to secure open space for the community,

Place Plan

The council have undertaken a number of surveys during the year to assist with the review of the existing Place Plan which was compiled in 2017. Further information and details will be published in the second quarter of 2022/23.

Memorial Garden Project

The area in front of the clock is known as the Memorial Garden. The area is currently one of the focal points of the village. The council has secured planning permission from Flintshire County Council but are still waiting for information regarding leasing the land. The proposed plans are to create a semi-enclosed area where people can go and sit with the creation of a wall around the periphery encompassing seating and a flagged base.

Play Area Improvements

Melwood – There have been significant delays with this project due to having to undertake improvements to the drainage. Completion of the play area improvements were completed April 2022.

Westview – The council together with FCC invested £20,000+ on the improvements to this junior play area. We are aware of some issues experienced by the neighbouring properties which we are endeavouring to address.

Millstone – The council has invested in the provision of a youth shelter and additional benches. We are also looking into possible options to relocate the existing skate ramps and the installation of a pump track. This is still in the early stages which we hope to pursue further in 2022/23.

Tree Planting

A big thank you to the many residents who have supported the 'sponsor a tree' initiative again. This started two years ago and is hopefully going to be a rolling programme that will be a real feature of the village.

Trees have been planted in various locations around the three villages. We have also planted orchards in Dobshill and Millstone playing fields and also behind the youth club of cooking and eating apple trees, pear trees and fruit bushes.

We had excellent support last year from County in the sowing of wild flower 'doughnut' rings around the trees, and future planting will have a neatly mown surround on the outside. The wild flower seeds have been prepared and more planting will take place during the winter

Village Planters

Positive and welcome additions to the village environment have been the flower planters that can be found at the entrances to the village and at various locations. They brighten the village and are often commented on by residents.

Oak barrel planters have been sponsored and maintained by local businesses whilst residents within the community have donated plants for the wooden planters at Dobshill and the centre of the village.

Of particular note is the rainbow planter on the Memorial Garden in front of the clock which was donated to the village as part of the NHS, Frontline and Keyworkers Day of Thanks and Reflection held in July.

Circular Walks

Over the past couple of the years the council has prepared and published four Circular Walks around our community. Exploring the area on foot highlights the amazing countryside we have on our doorstep and the leaflets provide information about points of interest on the walks. These have proved extremely popular in the community and have been to reprint several times. Further walks are planned for the future.

Walk 1 – Border Views Walk 2 – Penyffordd Streets Walk 3 – Into The Woods Walk 4 – Bilberry Woods

Litter Picks

This remains a key agenda item with future plans to have our own litter hub based in the village. We are fortunate to have our Street Operative Glyn Davies, who keeps our village free of litter. We are most appreciative of all Glyn does but litter is an ongoing scourge and needs support from the community.

In conjunction with Flintshire Keep Wales Tidy we have linked with our schools, the community and other stakeholders to tackle litter. We know too that many in the community already help out collecting litter whilst out and about and that support is most welcome.

McDonalds, Broughton have readily joined in and supported the days and are especially welcome. They acknowledge the issues we see of litter from fast food outlets and are keen to encourage responsible disposal of packaging. Staff members have joined the litter days and actively supported the community.

At the last Litter Day we had support from Flintshire Walkabout walkers in the area, McDonalds, village youngsters and families, Team Red, local businesses and others and we collected x 15 large sacks of litter which is brilliant.

Planning - Vounog Hill Planning appeal.

The public inquiry for housing planning on the Vounog sledging field was originally scheduled for April 2020, and after numerous postponements finally took place in March 2022. We all, together with the support from Flintshire County Council, strongly opposed this application and we had a number of Councillors attend the hearing. We are extremely pleased that on this occasion, the battle was won and the application was dismissed. We thank everyone involved in the objection of the this appeal.

Community Changing Rooms

The units were installed nearly two years ago, but problems have been experienced getting services connected. The final obstacle is the fitting out of the units that have now been started by the football club, but funding is still a problem due to difficulties in organising fund raising events due to Covid.

As we were reaching a significant stage, unfortunately, due to Flintshire County Council now looking to extend Ysgol Penyffordd, this may potentially impact/delay the opening and use of the facilities for 2022/23.

Annual Grant Applications

The council sets a budget annually to be able to offer financial assistance to local groups and organizations. Applications usually open in October and close in November, however, for 2022/23 we will be launching it in September allowing for a longer period for applications. This year we are pleased to report that we helped 11 local groups/organisations to the sum of £2900.

Street Lighting

The Council own and are responsible for a selection of street lights throughout the villages and are in a long term scheme to have these columns upgraded and transferred back to Flintshire County Council. This has taken a number of years to get to where we are, but have now had 26 columns upgraded in total, 6 of which still requires the commuted sum to be paid. This coming year we are looking for a further 2 columns to be done.

Summer Playscheme

In conjunction with Flintshire County Council and Welsh Government, the council financial supports the provision of a 4 week summer playscheme held at The Millstone Play Area.

Christmas Lighting

There are a total of 47 bracket Christmas lights around the three villages, which includes an additional 7 lights for 2021/22.

Hanson Cement

After many years of liaising with Hanson to reinstall an Air Quality Monitoring System, this was finally agreed and a new system was installed at Penyffordd Bowling Club early 2022.

CCTV

The council provides and maintains CCTV cameras at The Millstone Play Area and Hawarden Road, Penyffordd. The CCTV images are only accessed and viewed by North Wale Police.

Community Engagement

- Yellow Bows for covid – National Day of Reflection
- Play area surveys: West View and Melwood
- Annual Newsletter (Nov 2021)
- Place Plan; surveys and in person
- Queens Jubilee Planning

Police

Community Council have always maintained strong links with North Wales Police and our Police Community Support Officers and we regularly review the crime statistics for our area which are relatively low.

The current PCSOs for our area are:

- PCSO Lewis Jones - LEWIS.JONES@northwales.police.uk - mobile t.b.c
- PCSO Ryan Thomas - Ryan.Thomas@nthwales.pnn.police.uk - 07811713427
- PC Natalie Williams - Natalie.Williams@nthwales.pnn.police.uk - 07817148417
- PC Chris Myles - Chris.Myles@nthwales.pnn.police.uk

Whilst rates are low, there are incidents reported which are logged. One area of concern has been the increased use of nitrous oxide in the community, evidenced by the number of discarded cylinders. Community Council have met with our PCSOs and Flintshire County Council Substance and Drug Awareness Team, Flintshire Sorted to look at effective ways to engage with our youngsters to help them make informed choices.

Elections 2022

The 2022 Welsh local elections were held on 5 May 2022 to elect members of all twenty-two local authorities in Wales and Town and Community Councils. Following changes in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 all legal residents of Wales who are aged 16 or over on polling day are eligible to vote in the local elections (16 and 17 year-olds and EU Citizens and citizens of other countries).

There were 10 nominations received for the 13 available seats which resulted in the 10 members being elected unopposed. The remaining 3 seats will be filled by co-option.

Key Council Objectives for the Year 2022/23

What are the plans...

- More street lighting
- Appoint a Village Groundsman
- Millstone Skate Ramps
- Memorial Garden (Millennium Clock)
- Continue to work on the Place Plan review

What is the budget....

The Council's precept for 2022/23 is £116,851 and the budget for 2022/23 is £249,250 which includes money held in reserves for specific projects.

For more information about the council, council business and to see regular updates please view our website: www.penyfforddcouncil.org and follow us on facebook: Penyffordd Community Council.

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