

GARW VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

15th September 2025

INTRODUCTION:

This Annual Report covers Councillor Neal Harwood Scorer's year as Chairperson of the Community Council, supported by Councillor Maxine Lewis as Vice-Chair, which commenced on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2022 and ran for 12 months. This is the Community Council's fourth Annual Report.

A Community Council is a corporate body and its lawful acts, assets and liabilities are its own and not those of its individual members. Any decisions taken by the Community Council are the responsibility of the whole council regardless of voting on a particular issue. The Community Council raises its money through the Precept - a levy which its residents pay through the Council Tax. It has powers which allows it to spend this public money on the services which it provides.

Council meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at 6.30 pm and meetings move around the Garw Valley wards so that members of the public from all wards can access face-to-face meetings or they can join via zoom. The exceptions to this are that the council is in recess in August and in May its Annual Meeting takes place at 6.00 pm prior to the Ordinary Council meeting at 6.30 pm. The December meeting, which is a precept setting meeting, is sometimes held earlier in the month as it is a Precept setting meeting. Committee meetings are held on an ad hoc basis and include Finance & Resources, Events and Employment & Disciplinary committees.

OBJECTIVES:

The council's objectives are:

- To serve the Garw Valley community
- To be a competent council; be open and transparent
- To offer equal opportunities and be inclusive to all
- To be globally responsible and environmentally friendly

COUNCILLORS:

The Garw Valley Community Council serves 4 wards - Bettws, Blaengarw, Llangeinor and Pontycymer and is served by 13 Councillors who are either elected or co-opted. The next local council election will take place in May 2027. Once elected or co-opted, Councillors cannot function as a councillor until they've signed a formal declaration of acceptance of office form. They also undertake to abide by the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and must undertake Code of Conduct training.

>Wards:

The councillors serving the Garw Valley Community Council at the end of the financial year ending 31st March 2025 were:

Bettws:

- Councillor Graham Lloyd (Reform)
- Councillor Neal Harwood Scorer (Independent)
- Councillor Lloyd Thomas (Independent)
- Councillor Michelle Trowbridge (Labour)

Blaengarw:

- Councillor Gareth Andrews (Labour)
- Councillor John Coles (Independent)
- Councillor David Williams (Independent)

Llangeinor:

- Councillor Deb Davies (Reform)
- Councillor Christine Lloyd (Reform)

Pontycymmer:

- Councillor William Davies (Labour)
- Councillor Heather Griffiths (Labour)
- Councillor Maxine Lewis (Labour)
- Councillor Glyn Walters (Labour)

Note: During 2024/2025 Councillors M Jones and M Thomas resigned as councillors and only served part of the year and Councillor R Jones was disqualified due to lack of attendance in a six month period. Councillors G Lloyd, L Thomas and D Williams were co-opted to the vacancies and only served part of the year.

>Chair:

The Chair is elected by the members at the annual meeting held in May each year and holds the position for up one year. The Vice-Chair is also elected at that meeting and holds the position for one year. It is the council's practice that the Vice-Chair on completion of their time of service moves on to become the Chair. The Chair holds a casting vote in the event of a tied vote, but cannot make decisions on behalf of the council.

STAFF:

>Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer:

The Clerk & RFO is employed by the council to carry out its administration work, financial management, asset management, project management and other professional duties. The Clerk works on a part-time basis.

The Clerk takes instruction from the whole council and not individual members.

The Clerk is the council's 'Proper Officer' and all correspondence should be sent to the Clerk.

>Community Warden:

The Community Warden is employed by the council to carry out the maintenance of Parc Calon Lan, the Strand, the Pocket Park and some community maintenance duties.

Health & Safety documentation and risk assessments including checks are carried out by the Community Warden.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Ann Harris

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer to the Garw Valley Community Council

PO Box 377, Bridgend CF31 9PS

Tel: 07949451690

Email: clerkgarwvalleycc@gmail.com

Visit us at: [Garw Valley Community Council Gary Valley Community Council](#)

Note: All individual councillor contact details can be found on the council's website

MEETINGS:

When summoned to a meeting councillors will be provided with an agenda, minutes of the last meeting and relevant reports or papers associated with the items being discussed to enable them to prepare for a meeting properly as they are acting on behalf of the electorate and represent the views of the community in discussions. No single councillor can decide on behalf of the council.

A list of meetings for the year is published on the council's website. The meetings are hybrid meetings (in person or via zoom). If a member of the public wishes to attend a meeting remotely they can contact the Clerk to request the joining instructions.

Members of the public may speak on an item on the agenda within the time limit as set out in the council's Standing Orders which can be found on the council's website. The guidance to request speaking at a meeting is also included in the Standing Orders.

Within 7 days of a meeting being held a summary of the resolutions of the meeting must be published on the council's website, though these are not yet approved as accurate by full council. Once approved by full council the full minutes are published on the council's website.

>Declarations of Interest:

Councillors must individually make Declarations of Interest in items on any meeting agenda and must decide themselves whether to leave a meeting if an issue being discussed is of personal or prejudicial interest. A full list of declarations made for 2024/2025 can be found on the council's website in the Our Councillors page.

>Councillor Attendance at Meetings in 2024/2025:

Annual and Ordinary Meetings		
	Expected	Present
Councillor G Andrews	13	10
Councillor J Coles	13	12
Councillor D Davies	13	13
Councillor W Davies	13	13
Councillor H Griffiths	13	10
Councillor Neal Harwood-Scorer	13	13
Councillor M Jones	4	0
Councillor R Jones	10	3
Councillor M Lewis	13	12
Councillor C Lloyd	13	12
Councillor G Lloyd	2	2
Councillor L Thomas	6	5
Councillor M Thomas	10	6
Councillor M Trowbridge	13	7
Councillor G Walters	13	9
Councillor D Williams	1	1

Events Committee Meetings		
	Expected	Present
Councillor J Coles	2	1
Councillor H Griffiths	2	2
Councillor R Jones	2	0
Councillor C Lloyd	2	2

Finance Committee Meetings		
	Expected	Present
Councillor G Andrews	2	2
Councillor H Griffiths	2	2
Councillor N Harwood Scorer	2	2
Councillor D Davies	2	2

Note: no staff or disciplinary meetings took place in 2024/2025

FINANCE & ACCOUNTS:

>Audit:

Each year the council's accounts undertake an internal and external audit. In 2023/24 the council received an unqualified audit from the Auditor General for Wales. The full Auditor General's report can be seen on the council's Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2024 which is published on the council's website under the Finance tab, sub folder Audits. There were no issues raised by the Internal or External Auditor.

The audit for 2024/2025 will be published on the council's website following the conclusion of audit in early autumn 2025. This year the council is receiving a full audit. This is scheduled every 3 years.

>Budget:

The budget for 2024/25 includes the council's general reserve and some earmarked reserve for resolved matters carried forward. The full budget is published each year on the council's website and is shown below:

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Staff Costs	47,844.19
Office Costs	1,373.00
Members Allowances incl. Chair	3,844.00
Elections	1,485.00
Insurance	3,626.00
Audit 23/4	500.00
Training	150.00
Memberships and Registrations	1,500.00
PCL Maintenance	3,000.00
PCL Machinery	2,000.00
PCL Visitor's Centre	2,000.00
Playschemes	9,650.00
S137 and Donations	200.00
Dog Waste Bags	1,230.00
Rights of Way & Community Route	3,400.00
Floral Displays	4,231.00
#Wards	16,000.00
Christmas Lighting	6,000.00
Events	1,000.00
Contingency	10,000.00
*Earmarked Projects	27,629.00
**Earmarked Reserves	27,730.78
General Reserve	43,239.15
	£218,632.12
*Ear Marked Projects	
Parc Calon Lan Lake Clearing	10,500.00

CAT Containers	5,330.00
War Memorial Repairs	499.00
Tommy Silhouettes	800.00
The Strand	8,500.00
Pocket Park	2,000.00
Total:	£27,629.00
**Earmarked Reserves	
2 x charity donations to year end 31/3/234	50.00
Outstanding External Audit Fees	425.00
Parc Calon Lan Lake De-silt	5,000.00
Ward c/f 2024/25	7,255.78
Footpaths Parc Calon Lan	15,000.00
Total:	£27,730.78

>Income:

The council's income is made up of its precept - in 2024/25 this was £121,000. In addition it received additional income of £56,408.39 giving a total income for 202425 of £80,177,408.39, broken down as follows:

Item	Amount £
Precept 2024/25	121,000.00
Right of Way Claim 23/24	3,450.00
Donation from Calon y Cwm	6,000.00
VAT Reclaim 23/34	10,249.26
Refund from Bakers DIY	235.20
Pro Rata Refund of Allowances from Cllr R Jones	79.33
Grant Funding for Event in Parc Calon Lan	3,840.00
T&CC Grant Fund (phase 1) payment	13,370.98
T&CC Grant Fund (phases 1 and 2) payment	15,257.50
Christmas Concert Ticket Sales	219.00

T&CC Grant Fund (phase 1) payment	307.12
Right of Way Claim 24/25	3,400.00
Total:	£177,408.39

>Financial Contributions:

Each year the council donates or contributes to services or organisations that benefit the local community. In 2024/2025 the council donated a total of £19,235.86 to the following:

- Donation to Urdd Gobaith Cymru £25.00
- Donation to Eisteddfod yr Urdd £25.00
- Community Awards £112.49
- Donation to the Federation Choir of Primary Schools in the Garw; a donation of £850.00 towards bus for their trip
- School Community Award Vouchers (5 x £50) £250.00
- Donation to Carn Rovers FC £2,000 towards storage container
- Richard Price Centre £650 donation towards a Pantomime
- Donation towards Halo Leisure Playscheme £9,650.00
- Christmas Gifts for the Primary School Children £973.37
- Pontycymer RFC donation of £2,500 towards a storage container
- RL Davies Wall Art to Pontycymer Bus stops £2,000
- Donation to Wales Air Ambulance £25.00
- Donation to Kids Cancer Charity £25.00
- Donation to Marie Curie £25.00
- Donation to Urdd Gobaith Cymru (local and national) £50.00
- Donation to Llangollen International Eisteddfod £25.00
- Donation to SSFA Wales £25.00
- Donation to Ray of Light Cancer charity £25.00

Note: If you'd like to apply for a donation please complete the grant funding application which you can request from the Clerk.

>Councillor Allowances:

Councillors do not receive a salary but are entitled to claim a one-off payment of £156 per year to cover general expenses, a one-off payment of £52 per year for consumables (printing ink, copying etc.) and an attendance allowance of £30 per year. They can elect not to receive any payments or to receive all or some of the payments.

The Chair is also entitled to an allowance of £750; there is no allowance for the Vice-Chair.

A list of payments made each year is published on the council's website in the finance section. There is no longer a requirement to publish the names of councillors accepting expenses payments.

In 2024/2025 the following allowances were paid:

No of Councillors	General Allowance £156.00	Consumables Allowance £52.00	Chair Allowance £750.00	Meeting Attendance Allowance £30.00	Other Allowances	Total
11 (1 pro rata)	1,637.50	-	-	-	-	£1,637.50
7	-	£364.00	-	-	-	£364.00
1	-	-	£750.00	-	-	£750.00
5	-	-	-	£150.00	-	£150.00
1	-	-	-	-	£418.00	£418.00
Total:	£1,637.50	£364.00	£750.00	£150.00	£418.00	£3,319.50

5 councillors declined their allowances.

COMMUNITY ASSETS:

The council currently manages Parc Calon Lan under a lease from Bridgend County Borough Council at a peppercorn rent.

It also manages an area of Blaengarw known as The Strand, an area of Pantygog, Pontycymer known locally as the Pocket Park, the war memorial on Victoria Street, Pontycymer and has agreed a licence with BCBC to manage a small area of green space at the front of Ysgol Gynradd Calon y Cymoedd, Bettws.

The council has licences with BCBC for the provision of some of the benches, bins and floral displays within the valley.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024/2025:

A list of donations made by the council can be seen in the Financial Contributions area of the Finance section above.

The council also provided the following services in the community:

- The maintenance of Parc Calon Lan, the Strand and the Pocket Park
- The maintenance of the War Memorial in Pontycymmer
- Grass cutting in Parc Calon Lan, land next to Glen Garw flats, Blaengarw and land at Pen Parcau, Bettws
- Footpath maintenance is carried out to all footpaths on the definitive Right of Way map. The council relies on the public to let them know if a footpath is blocked, overgrown or lacking in maintenance as it is impossible to walk all the footpaths very frequently.
- Repaired the footpaths around the monument in Parc Calon Lan, added drainage and planted trees and wildflower seeds
- Purchased additional benches at Bridgend Road and outside Dan y Mynydd
- Installed 2 additional noticeboards in Pontyrhyl and Lluest
- Installed 10 floral hanging baskets in each of the 4 wards

- Installed a sign planter and two barrel planters in Pontycymer and Blaengarw
- Refurbished the Strand with the installation of 3 new benches and 3 new bins, tree maintenance, planted flower beds with daffodils, replaced the steps and installed a new handrail and replaced the retaining walls behind the benches.
- Arranged and funded the painting of murals on two bus stops in Pontycymer
- Installed a small Christmas tree and lights in the Pocket Park, Pontycymer
- Renewed the bridge footboards at the bottom of Pontycymer lake
- Arranged a Christmas Concert for residents of the valley in the Blaengarw ward.

PLANS FOR 2025/2026:

- To consider the creation of a digital footpath map in collaboration with neighbouring councils
- To consider a community bus service in collaboration with neighbouring councils
- To continue to fund the activity schemes in the school holidays
- To continue to provide the Christmas lighting in all wards and in 25/26 to add a small tree with lights on the Strand
- To contribute helping sports Community Asset Transfers with the provision of storage containers
- To continue to contribute to provide financial contributions for community events.
- To look at improving the area's biodiversity.
- To clear and install a Tommy silhouette and a monolith on a small, green space in Bettws
- To install an additional defibrillator in Pantygog, Pontycymer
- To continue to hold its annual Community Award and provide the primary schools with their awards
- To plant a community orchard in Pontycymer
- To continue to represent the community regarding traffic concerns, local developments, planning applications etc.
- Arrange a Christmas Concert for residents of the valley in the Bettws ward
- Contribute towards the repair of the floodlights at Bettws Primary School for community use

MEMBERSHIPS AND REPRESENTATIVES:

The council maintains an annual membership of One Voice Wales, the Town and Community Council sector's voice which consults with the Welsh Government. This membership ensures that the council's opinions on consultations by the Welsh Government is heard, it provides appropriate training for staff and councillors, including Code of Conduct training which is mandatory. It also gives the Clerk/council guidance on legislation and procedures and ensures the council is compliant with new legislation. The council is also a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

In addition a councillor is representative on the One Voice Wales area committee, the larger council's committee and the national conference.

The council is also represented by one of its councillors on BCBC's Town & Community Council Forum and on each of the five primary schools' board of governors. Some of the community councillors are also LEA representatives on the board of governors.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES:

New policies are prepared and adopted by full council and new process have been put in place to ensure the council is data compliant.

All the council's policies, guidelines, reports and statements are published on its website.

These include:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Complaints Procedure
- Vexacious Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy

- Social Media Policy
- Training Plan
- Annual Reports
- Biodiversity Reports

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The council arranges children's activity schemes during the school holidays, contributes to the local primary school children for special public and royal events and purchases gifts for each child who attends one of the five primary schools at Christmas time.

The council also presents two Community Awards - a general award and a sports award and the winners are selected from nominees made by the residents of the valley. In addition, the council provides each primary school with £50 of gift vouchers to present at their end of year leaver's service to the child or group of children who have served their community.

The council has good relationships with local organisations including V2C, BCBC and South Wales Police who each month are invited to attend the council's monthly meetings to discuss the month's crime figures.

The council also provides a Christmas display of decorations, lights and trees in all 4 wards and in 2024/2025 provided additional Christmas tree and lighting in the Pocket Park; it also provides small trees and lighting in Pontyrhyl. In recent years the council has also donated towards the provision of a Christmas Pantomime at the Richard Price Centre.

The council is also mindful of the importance of Remembrance Sunday and places two remembrance wreaths each year and takes part in the services at Pontycymer and Bridgend. The council also has Tommy silhouettes displayed in each ward and Lest We Forget benches.

The council provides floral displays throughout the Garw Valley.

WEBSITE:

The council's website can be found at: [Garw Valley Community Council Gary Valley Community Council](#)

All council documents can be found on the website along with the council's accessibility statement.

TRAINING:

Each year the council must write an annual training plan for council members and this can be found on the council's website.

REMEMBRANCE:

The council manages a war memorial on Victoria Street, Pontycymer and is mindful of the importance of Remembrance Sunday and places two remembrance wreaths each year at the Pontycymer memorial and Bridgend memorial services.

To commemorate the 80th Anniversaries of VE and VJ day in 2025 the council has written an Armed Forces Covenant and it is published on the council's website. In addition the council has purchased Lamp Lights of Peace which were lit in each ward on both anniversary days and planted red, white and blue flowers in the planters throughout the valley to mark the occasions.

Each ward also has a Lest We Forget bench installed and a Tommy silhouette.

WELSH LANGUAGE:

The council's Clerk & RFO is a Welsh speaker and can respond to verbal and written communication and we have a Councillor that speaks Welsh.

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY:

The Council recycles its waste paper and ink and toner cartridges are disposed of responsibly. In addition it has a programme of footpath maintenance and an agency agreement with Bridgend County Borough Council, as well as conducting environmental maintenance of trees and hedgerows grass cutting and it provides floral displays in baskets, planters and flower beds that encourage bees and aid the environment.