

Betws Community Council Annual Report

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

The Council

The Council comprises of one ward which is represented by 12 Councillors.

After the elections in May 2022 your Councillors are as Councillors Betsan Jones, Loreen Lewis, Delyth Richards and Annette Price did not return:

Dave Stacey (Chairperson and Chair of Finance and Staffing Committee)

Mike Jones (Vice Chairperson and Chair of Recreation Ground Committee)

Lucy Jones (resigned August 2022)

Jose Picouto

Lynwen Phillips

Andy Megrath (resigned August 2022)

Andrew Williams (resigned April 2023)

Peter Comley

Carwyn James

Paul Allchurch

Karen McMinn-Davies

Maureen Williams

Co-Opted March 2023

James Derrick

The Council employs a part-time Clerk Angela Brown

The Community

Betws is a community that is near Ammanford in Carmarthenshire nestled between the River Amman on the Northern side and on the Southern side it meets the Western end of the Black Mountain which is known as Betws Mountain.

The meaning of the name Betws is Bede House/Alms House/Prayer House and originates from the word Bed-Hus an Anglo-Saxon word. In Welsh it means Chapel.

The ward is currently served by one County Councillor – Betsan Wyn Jones – Plaid Cymru.

The Community Council was set up in 1980.

The eligible electorate for Betws in 2023 is 1,802.

Council Objectives

The Councillors for Betws are in the lower tier of local government and are best placed to see the real issues/concerns that arise within communities as they are often the first point of contact.

Betws Community Council has a good working relationship with the County Councillor for the ward.

The local Police Community Support Officer attends the monthly Community Council meetings where concerns can be raised, advice given and a monthly update on the quantity of local crimes are passed to the Council.

Council Priorities

To safely and effectively manage the Heol Y Felin area which is held in Trust on behalf of the residents of Betws. The area comprises of the Playground, Green along with the RFC and the Car Park which is leased to Betws RFC where the Council work together to ensure compliance under the terms of the lease and the original deeds and conveyances.

To safely manage and improve Betws Park and Maesquarre Playground which are asset transfers from Carmarthenshire County Council.

To manage effectively the Council Finances and Budget complying with Governance and Audit requirements.

To represent the Betws electorate in partnership with the local County Councillor.

To work with the community, local groups, organisations, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure improvements can be made within the village to benefit the residents of Betws as a whole.

To comply with the requirements as set out in the Welsh Government Local Council Toolkit to ensure compliance in the running of the Council and its policies and procedures.

To ensure the continuous professional development of both the Proper Officer and Councillors in order to deliver their roles as office holders.

To work towards incorporating and considering the seven well-being goals as set by the Welsh Government Act 2015 into decisions and any funding applications made by the Council:

1. A more prosperous Wales - The Council donate to local groups primarily throughout the year to ensure they are supported. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) shows more detail for Betws which is ranked 1026 out of 1909 Lower Super Output Area (LSOAs) in Wales, which places it among the 50% least deprived overall. However, it is ranked as 30-50% most deprived with regards to Employment and Education.

<https://wimd.gov.wales/lsa/w01000627?lang=en>

2. A resilient Wales - The biodiversity within the ward is being enhanced where possible along with the protection of the flora and fauna such as the Royal Ferns which grow in the area when applying for funding and when planning applications are submitted. The mowing practices and type of planting within Betws Park is being changed to improve biodiversity and pollinators.
3. A Healthier Wales – The Council are working towards installing 3 more defibrillators within the village, at Betws Primary School, the Family Centre and Ty Coch. The two Playgrounds are regularly inspected by a qualified contractor and the Recreation areas are regularly inspected by your local Councillors. An independent annual inspection is carried out in the playgrounds
4. A more equal Wales – The Council works with the Public Rights of Way Department of the County Council, the County Councillor and the local walking group to ensure local footpaths are maintained.
5. A Wales of Cohesive Communities – The Council work with the County Councillor and Safer Routes in Communities to ensure the roads within Betws are safe.
6. A Wales of Vibrant Culture and thriving Welsh language – The Council supports the Eisteddfod and ensures it has bilingual documents where possible.
7. A globally responsible Wales - To enhance biodiversity and minimise effects on climate change within the ward and in Council practices. The Council has in conjunction with Carmarthenshire County Council renewed the street lighting to LED lights, the Councillors have moved to paperless working where possible.

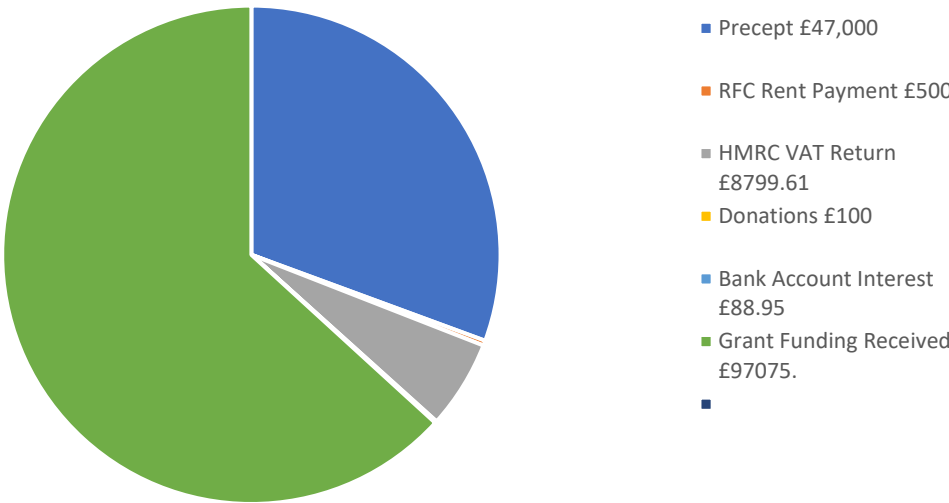
Finance

The Precept for 2023/2024 is £52,000 and apart from that the Council gain income from the rent paid by Betws RFC under the Terms of their Lease at £1,000 per annum. This payment goes towards the upkeep of the Heol Y Felin area which is held in Trust. The precept amount currently does not meet the expenditure for the Council due to the Asset Transfers that have been taken on during this term of office. The precept will need to be increased annually in order to meet the expenditure for management of the areas and to build up a sinking fund in order to replace the equipment and any other costs which become evident in the maintenance of the recreation areas.

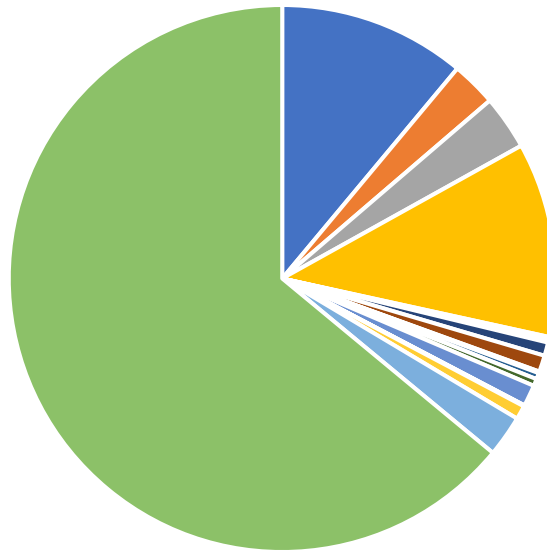
The other income comes via grant funding and donations when given to the Council.

The breakdown of the running costs for the Community Council are as follows:

Betws Community Council Payments Received 2022 to 2023



Betws Community Council Payments Made 2022/2023



■ Administration Costs £16948.62	■ Heol Y Felin Playground and Green £4069.
■ Maesquarre Playground £4914.27	■ Betws Park £17622.
■ Village Planters £180	■ Recreation Ground Committee £335.5
■ Insurance £1212.80	■ Footway Lighting £1484.52
■ Bank Service Charge £84	■ Training £70.
■ Audit £565.	■ Affiliation Fees £646.
■ Website £1927.28	■ Chain of Office £34.49
■ Christmas Lights £67.96	■ Donations £1250.
■ Election Fees £3741.77	■ Projects Spending £98038.87

The Community Council should hold in its useable reserves 3 – 12 months expenditure also grant funding received, donations given for specific items, money given under the Asset Transfer process and any Section 106 money received as well as fund to replace any of the fixed assets held under the terms of the leases from Carmarthenshire County Council for Betws Park and Maesquarre Playground.

In its unusable reserves it should have money for previous Clerks pensions (amount unknown) and an amount to cover legal fees for the ongoing issues with the Heol Y Felin land held in Trust and a fund to cover the cost of replacing equipment at Heol Y Felin Playground and any other maintenance that may be required.

Achievements during the 2022 – 2023 term of office

1. New No Loading/Unloading restriction restrictions placed on Heol Y Felin/Colonel Road agreed with Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department implemented and revised.
2. Survey conducted by Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department on Pentwyn Road – awaiting results of this.

3. New Road markings placed at entrance to Woodlands Park by Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department.
4. Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department – 3 new road markings were placed near the green at Ffordd Y Glowyr .
5. Mynydd Y Betws Windfarm Grant for some new playground equipment in Maesquarre Playground 2021 the project commenced during 2022 and was completed by the summer holidays for the children.
6. Betws Park National Heritage Lottery and Welsh Govt Local Places for Nature Grant 2022 the project commenced during 2022 and the opening event was held on Friday 17 March 2023.
7. Clerk commenced CILCA training March 2022 as part of her continuous professional development.
8. Councillors have received some training via One Voice Wales to assist them in carrying out their roles during their term of office.
9. Section 6 Biodiversity of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for the village was drawn up as per regulations in 2019 was reviewed towards the end of 2022 and placed on the website in Feb 2023 once completed.
10. New LED lighting replaced on the street lighting within Betws to help reduce their carbon footprint which was installed by Carmarthenshire County Council and the cost is being repaid annually until 2028/2029.
11. Donations given to local causes including the Food bank.
12. Virtual Hybrid meetings, Welsh Gov legislation implemented with regard to this and hybrid meetings (face to face only meetings cannot be held without giving the option for virtual attendance and it is each person's choice on how they attend).
13. Defibrillators – proposed extra 3 within the village at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre and a 3rd at Ty Coch when the RFC get their new defibrillator from the RFU. Betws In Need donated £1900.00 towards the project. This project is still in progress with delays due to funding for cabinets and electrical installation costs from CCC this is being progressed actively by Councillor Comley. Cabinets have been paid for and Carmarthenshire County Council completed the electrical work for the installations at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre.
Waiting for the defibrillators being placed inside and more first aid training to be arranged by Councillor Comley and update of database of where sited and who is responsible (guardian) which is Councillor Comley.
14. Donations received £100 for the CCTV from Endurance Arena Fibre, Heol Y Felin.
15. Christmas Tree and Lights erected in Betws Park for Christmas 2022 with the Tree donated by Gower Christmas Trees.
16. Councillor M Williams goes into Betws Primary School on a weekly basis attends the school one morning a week to help support the children in Year 4 with their English reading.

Future planning for the next term 2022 – 2027 and beyond.

1. Christmas Lights for the village and Recreation Grounds

2. Heol Y Felin Green to consider more seating and goal posts with consideration for higher fencing to be erected to stop the balls from exiting the area onto the neighbouring ground - road, car park, playground for safety reasons.
3. Picnic Benches for various sites around the village where appropriate such as viewing area at top of Waun Ddwfn Road, the land above the Maesquarre Development owned by TRJ who would add a second picnic bench if the Community Council placed one at site.
4. Phase 2 of Maesquarre Playground equipment to be implemented once funding gained.
5. Electricity point for Christmas Lights at Maesquarre Playground has been identified and the costs of implementation gained. Funding will be required to enable installation.
6. New larger notice boards - one to be placed at Heol Y Felin as it is Community Land (facing the RFC or Playground) so that more information for the Community can be placed upon the boards as part of RFC being the Community Hub and discharging its duties for Community Groups.