

# Betws Community Council



**Annual Report (New) 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**



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# Chairpersons Report

This has been another successful year for Betws Community Council.

I'd like to thank all my fellow councillors for their work, to welcome Emyr to the team, and to thank our Clerk for all her work in keeping us moving forward.

It has been lovely to see the work of the last few years paying off - the maturing of the nature garden and the growing number of community groups making use of the space in particular, but the use that members of the community and beyond are getting from our open spaces and our playgrounds as well.

Each year we build on what has been before, and the ceremony at the entrance to the park to mark the switching on of the Christmas Tree lights was a fantastic addition to our calendar, which included again our Remembrance Day service. The involvement of children from Betws School really did make those two events, and I'd like to put on record my thanks to the staff and pupils at the school for all that they have done around the village over the last twelve months. I would also like to thank Mrs. Jayne Picouto, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed for her attendance and support of events in the village.

We have started to reach out more to the local community through surgeries and better use of notice board spaces, and while those specific events haven't been particularly well attended, the increase in correspondence with the council from local residents I think is a positive sign, and something we can build on more next year.

We've been unlucky in some of our grant applications this year, and I do think it's a shame that colleagues put such a lot of time and effort into chasing these pots of money, with no guarantees of success. None the less, we look again next year for more opportunities to carry on the work of improving the facilities for the people who live and work in this area.

Last year I donated my Chair's allowance to the Ammanford Food Bank. This year I'm going to ask that it stays in our account, to be used as match funding for future funding applications for improved play equipment for the village.

It's been an honour serving as chair for the last two years, and I'd like to wish X the very best of luck and success for their period in office.

Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Dave Stacey, Chairperson

# The Council

## **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 2023/2024 is 1,802.

## **The Role of the Council**

Community Councils are the bottom tier of local government who live within the communities they represent. The Councillors work to improve the village of Betws and as they are members of the local community, they are best placed to find out what is needed to benefit their ward.

The Community Council gives out donations to local community groups.

2 new defibrillators were provided in the previous year at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre with a 3<sup>rd</sup> being placed at Ty Coch. Therefore, along with the one that was already at Betws RFC the village has good coverage. Councillor Comley is the contact person and guardian for them and regularly checks them.

The 3 recreation grounds are maintained by the Community Council with Betws Park (2017) and Maesquarre Playground (2019) being asset transfers from the Community Council.

Heol Y Felin Playground and Green and the Betws RFC and Car Park area is held in Trust by the Community Council for the benefit of the Community. This area was given to the Community in 1947, with Betws Community Council taking over the Trusteeship from Betws Community Association in 2012. As part of the terms of the Trust/Lease to Betws RFC it is to be used as the village community centre, where community notices can be placed on the notice board in the foyer and the facilities can be hired by organisations for meetings, events, and celebrations. Councillor Comley is the secretary and member of the committee for Betws RFC who can be contacted regarding using the facilities.

The Council aims to improve these areas as funding allows. The current aim is to gain funding for phase 2 of replacing the end-of-life playground equipment it inherited from the asset transfer of Maesquarre Playground from the County Council.

It has previously gained funding to improve the disused tennis courts within Betws Park and the area has been transformed into a new nature garden. A group of local volunteers help the Community Council alongside the contractor to maintain the area.

The Community Council has a website **[betwscouncil.org.uk](http://betwscouncil.org.uk)**.

The Community Council has one employee a part time Clerk who can be contacted on [betwscommunitycouncil@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:betwscommunitycouncil@hotmail.co.uk).

The County Council consults with the Community Council on:

Planning Applications for the village.

Any tree work that is carried out within the village which is consulted on via the planning application process.

Footpath maintenance/issues with access currently the County Councillor Betsan Jones is working with the County Council and Betws Walking Group to re-open the footpaths to Hopkinstown with gate being placed at one location so far.

Any fly tipping issues – Mountain Road and Betws Park.

Formal Policy changes/consultations which affect the village such as changes to road markings, street lighting, affordable housing within the village. With white lines being placed at Woodlands Park and Ffordd Y Glowyr. Double yellow lines at Colonel Road/Heol Y Felin junction area with further consultations taking place for placement of double yellow lines at the bottom of Pentwyn Road and the junction of Caemawr with Betws Road.

The Welsh Governments formal policies are also commented on either directly by the community council or via One Voice Wales who collate each councils' comments.

# Your Community Council Members

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

Since the elections in May 2022 your Councillors are:

Dave Stacey (Chairperson)

Carwyn James (Vice Chairperson and Chair of Finance and Staffing Committee)

Mike Jones

Jose Picouto

Lynwen Phillips (Chair of Recreation Ground Committee)

Andrew Williams (resigned April 2023)

Peter Comley

Paul Allchurch (Chair of the Community and Events Committee)

Karen McMinn-Davies

Maureen Williams

## Co-Opted March 2023

James Derrick

## Co-Opted July 2023

Emyr Morgan

There is one vacancy for the office of Community Councillor for Betws.

# Achievements during the 2023 – 2024 term of office

1. New No Loading/Unloading restriction restrictions placed on Heol Y Felin/Colonel Road agreed with Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department were revised and changes implemented.
2. Survey conducted by Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department on Pentwyn Road and junction of Caemawr with Betws Road, waiting for the implementation of the new road markings.
3. New Road markings placed at Woodlands Park and Ffordd Y Glowyr by Carmarthenshire County Council Highways Department.
4. Mynydd Y Betws Windfarm Grant for some new playground equipment in Maesquarre Playground was applied for by Councillor Phillips however the application was unsuccessful along with a second application to the Levelling Up Fund which was also unsuccessful. Councillor Phillips applied for a grant from the National Lottery to go towards the cost of the inclusive roundabout for Maesquarre Playground which was successful. Council is hoping to be successful with the Mynydd Y Betws Application on the next round.
5. New Councillors have received some training via One Voice Wales to assist them in carrying out their roles during their term of office.
6. Donations given to local causes including the Betws Park Volunteer Group.
7. Defibrillators – fitted and operational at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre and a 3<sup>rd</sup> at Ty Coch. Betws In Need donated £1900.00 towards the project. Cabinets have been paid for. Carmarthenshire County Council with County Councillor Betsan Jones' assistance completed the electrical work for the installations at Betws Primary School and the Family Centre. Councillors Picouto and Comley worked on this project. More first aid training took place arranged by Councillor Comley. The database of where each defibrillator is sited was updated along with the name of the guardian who is responsible for checking the defibrillators. This person is Councillor Comley.
8. Donations received £15 for the Christmas Lighting Event from Tesco Stores Ltd, Ammanford.
9. Christmas Tree and Lights erected in Betws Park for Christmas 2023 with a Christmas Tree Lighting Event taking place on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with a Local Celebrity 'Madge' from Pobol Y Cwm attending.

10. Councillor M Williams attends 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. Councillor Picouto also supports the school in his role as Chair of Governors and attends 2 – 3 times a week.
11. Councillor AllChurch implemented monthly surgeries on the first Saturday of each month at Betws RFC with very little participation from the Community. Surgeries to be offered by appointment with bookings to be done by emailing the clerk. 2 Councillors to attend any surgeries.
12. The new nature area within Betws Park won a Community Land Management Award Cymru (CLAS award) which was given to celebrate community growing projects accessing and making good use of land in their communities throughout Wales. Betws Park Volunteer Group received the award at an award ceremony held in Mid Wales on 13 March 2024 which was hosted by Social Farms & Gardens, Wales. Pictured on the right is Andrew Williams receiving the award on behalf of the Volunteer Group.



13. Councillor Jones and Councillor Stacey are working on a new management plan for the 3 recreation areas which will be a useful tool for contractors, volunteers and the Council to work from.
14. Councillor Jones and Councillor Stacey are devising new contract documents that will be used for tenders for contracting for the work to maintain the 3 recreation areas.



# 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. A new boundary fence between the green and track to Betws RFC situated below Bryn Ffin.
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.

# Annual Accounts Summary

## Payments Received 2023 -2024

Precept	£52,000.00
RFC rent	£ 0.00
VAT return	£ 4,099.91
Donations received	£ 15.00
Bank Account Interest	£ 463.07
Grant Funding received	£ 2,363.00

## Payments Made 2023 – 2024

Administration	£23,420.00
Recreation Ground Committee	£ 1,700.70
Heol Y Felin Playground and Green	£ 1,679.00
Heol Y Felin Grounds Maintenance and Bins	£ 1,776.00
Betws Park Grounds Maintenance and Bins	£17,410.84
Maesquarre Playground	£ 1,957.40
Maesquarre Grounds Maintenance and Bins	£ 2,352.00
Village Planters	£ 180.00
Insurance	£ 1,301.07
Bank Service Charge	£ 84.00
Audit – Internal/External	£ 1,170.00
Website	£ 115.00
Christmas Lights	£ 281.97
Election Fees (£800 to reserves/annum)	£ 0.00
Footway Lighting	£ 1,143.74
Training	£ 73.00
Affiliation Fees	£ 238.00
Chain of Office	£ 0.00

Donations awarded	£ 1,239.84
Projects funding	£ 2,334.99
Total	£54,882.72

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.

# Donations Awarded

Ammanford Foodbank	£ 300.00
Papur Bro Glo Man	£ 100.00
Capel Newydd Betws – Cemetery	£ 200.00
St Davids Church – Cemetery	£ 200.00
Bugler – Remembrance Service	£ 75.00
Ffrindiau Betws – Volunteer Group – Public Liability Insurance	£ 56.00
RBL Poppy Appeal – Wreaths for Remembrance Service	£ 80.00
St Davids Church – Christmas Lights	£ 50.00
Capel Newydd – Christmas Lights	£ 25.00
Ffrindiau Betws – Volunteer Group – plants and seeds	£ 153.84
Total	£1239.84

# How can the Council help you?

Please let the Community Council know what you want from your Council, you may have ideas or suggestions for future projects or an issue that needs to be resolved, you can do this by speaking to one of your Councillors or by contacting the clerk.

The following matters fall under Carmarthenshire County Council it has no power to act or to insist but can make suggestions for changes or actions that are of concern to the community:

Planning

Footpaths

Verge Grass Cutting

Highways including road surfaces and potholes

Fly tipping

Street sweeping

Refuse and Recycling

Road signs

Council Housing

Education

Social Services

The Carmarthenshire County Council switchboard number is 01267 234567

You may also contact your local County Councillor Betsan Jones with any issues/suggestions [BetsanJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:BetsanJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk).