

# LLANVACHES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Annual Report for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Section 52 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that all Community Councils must prepare and publish an Annual Report about the Council's priorities, activities and achievements during that financial year. It is to be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

### **Organisation of the Council**

Llanvaches Community Council was created in 1974 following local government reorganisation. It is one of 733 Town and Community Council in Wales.

In order to act and carry out duties as a member of a community or town council all persons are required to make a formal declaration of acceptance of office. Following this declaration, members of community or town councils are then holders of elected office and occupy a role that is part of the Welsh local government structure.

### **Your Council**

The Community Council is the grass roots voice of Local Government and is therefore closest to the people. It comprises 7 elected members, representing the village of Llanvaches. The present councillors were elected in May 2022 to serve a five-year term of office and together they serve a population of 402 at the 2011 Census.

The Councillors for 2023/24 were Cllr Ethan Addis, Cllr Clive Bevan, Cllr Abul Chowdhury, Cllr Kay James, Cllr Duncan Kew, Cllr Ian Norrie and Cllr Caroline Wynn.

### **Elected Member Responsibilities as Individuals**

A Councillor has an active interest in their local community and plays a vital role in representing the interest of the community in which they serve by improving the quality of life and local environment. Councillors must act within the law and must sign a declaration to say they agree to work within the Code of Conduct. They are able to suggest ideas, engage in constructive debate, represent constituents and respond to the needs and views of the local community.

Councillors are the voice of their local community and can work to influence other tiers of Local Government and help make collective decisions which form the policy of the Council.

### **The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**

The Clerk is the Council's Chief Officer employed under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972. As the Proper Officer of the council in law the Clerk is answerable to the Council as a whole. Individual members cannot give instructions to the Clerk. The Council must also appoint a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to manage its finances and at Llanvaches Community Council the Clerk and RFO is the same person. The Clerk can be contacted by email at [clerk@llanvachescc.gov.wales](mailto:clerk@llanvachescc.gov.wales).

### **Communication**

The Community Council has a website where all agendas and minutes are published along with financial information, details of internal and external audit outcomes and council policies. The website is

[www.llanvachescommunitycouncil.org.uk](http://www.llanvachescommunitycouncil.org.uk)

## Meetings

Meetings of Llanvaches Community Council are usually held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm. All meetings are open to the public with time allocated on the agenda for public participation and access to the remote meetings are available via the link in the agenda.

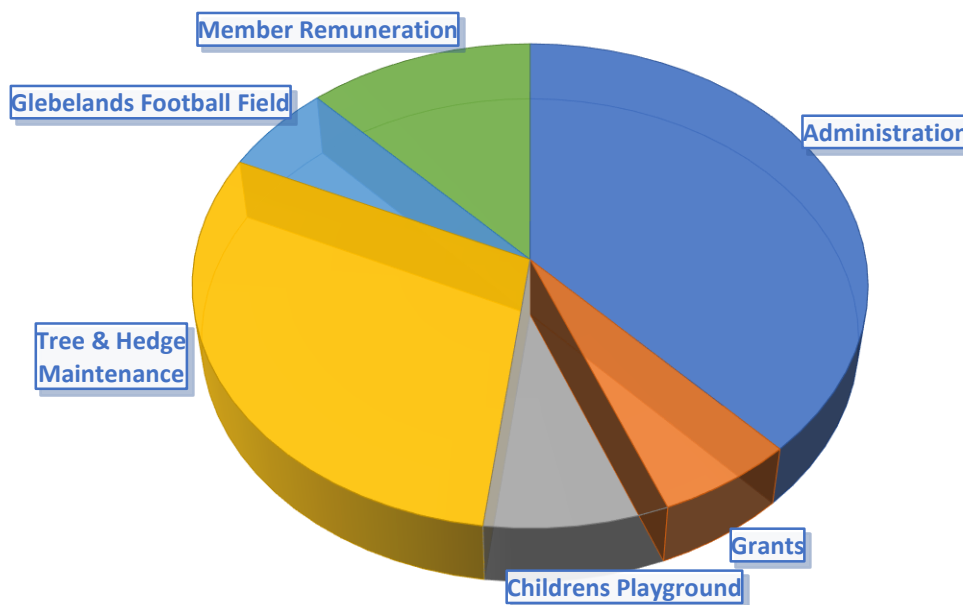
## Finances

The Community Council is funded by a precept which is an additional amount added to the Council Tax from Newport City Council based on the requirements of the Council.

In November the Council calculates the money the Council needs to raise in order to provide for its services and fund any projects planned, "the budget", it then deducts any income or reserves that it expects to receive or use leaving a net amount known as "the precept".

The budget for 2023/24 was £12,815.00, funded by the precept\* of £11,222.50 with the balance of £962.50 being met by the general reserves which the Community Council hold. This cost the average council taxpayer based on Band D £50.00 per annum.

**The budget for 2023/24**



- **Administrative Costs £4,945:**  
Payroll, expenses (stationery, paper, stamps) Councillor Training, Website and IT costs, Internal and External Audit fees (as required by legislation), Insurance, One Voice Wales Membership.
- **Grants £700:**  
Churchyard Maintenance Grants and Church Hall Grant.
- **Childrens Playground £1,120:**  
Annual Inspection, Equipment renew/replace, New Equipment.
- **Tree & Hedge Maintenance £3,850:**  
Tree Maintenance, Grass & Hedge cutting, General Maintenance (inc village green floral display).
- **Glebelands Football Field £700:**  
Annual rent, legal fees for lease renewal.
- **Member Remuneration £1,500:**  
Mandatory payment to Councillors unless opting out.

The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 require town and community councils to have adequate and effective arrangements in place for an internal audit of their accounting records and their systems of internal control. This is carried out on an annual basis by an independent internal auditor who is an independent and competent person appointed by the Council to carry out checks on its systems of control. The auditor carries out tests focusing on areas of risk to public money, reports to the Council and signs a report on the annual return to confirm that the Council's systems of controls are in place and operating.

The Community Council is then subject to a statutory external audit by the Auditor General for Wales.

All financial information including the Annual Return, internal and external audit reports are available to view under the [Finance pages](#) on the website.

### **Member Remuneration**

In accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Measure 2011, Community and Town Councils must publish within their authority area the remuneration received by their members by 30th September following the end of the previous financial year. This information must be sent to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales by the same date. Nil returns are also required.

For 2023/24 there was a nil return.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Playing fields**

The Community Councils main responsibility is for two playing fields in the village.

The football field known as Glebeland's is leased from The Representative Body of the Church in Wales on a new 10 year lease which commenced this year.

The playing field, behind Wentwood Drive, is leased from Newport City Council on a 990-year lease.

#### **Grass and hedge cutting**

The Council is wholly responsible for the grass and hedge cutting and the maintenance of the play equipment and Members carry out regular inspections to check for faults and damage.

#### **Planning**

The Council also comments on all planning applications in the village with Newport City Council making the final decision, taking into account the Council views.

### **Other statutory duties**

#### **Training Policy**

[Section 67 of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) requires all Town and Community Councils to make and publish a plan about the training provision for its members and staff. Members approved their [Training Plan](#) at its meeting in September 2022.

#### **Biodiversity**

[The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) require all Town and Community Councils to prepare and publish a plan which details the Town Council's actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity. Members approved its [plan](#) in September 2022.

#### **In 2023/24 we have:**

- Liaised and supported the community in its comments on the Revised Local Development Plan;
- Undertaken regular play area checks and carried out an annual inspection of the play equipment;
- Kept a regular check on the trees in the village particularly those with ash die back;

- Provided a Christmas Tree and lights on the village green;
- Provided grant funding for the maintenance and upkeep of all church grounds in the village;
- Undertaken regular grass and hedge cutting in the play areas.
- Provide grants totaling £400 to the four closed churchyards in the village.