

LLANPUMSAINT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

We are pleased to present the Annual Report of Llanpumsaint Community Council ('LLCC') for the year 2022/23 (the period running from 1 April 2022 and ending 31 March 2023).

1. Composition of LLCC

LLCC is essentially a non-political Community Council. Council elections were held in May 2022. All members of the outgoing Council stood down and no-one stood for election. In June a re-election was held: three former Councillors and three new people offered to stand and all were elected unopposed. A seventh person was co-opted during the year.

Outgoing Council (until May 2023)

- Cllr Arwel Nicholas (Chair)
- Cllr Danny Davies (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Elfed Davies
- Cllr Dylan Jones
- Cllr Pamela Jones
- Cllr Derick Lock

The Clerk, Mr Phil Jones, resigned from his post in June 2022.

New Council from June 2023

- Cllr Arwel Nicholas (Chair)
- Cllr Kumi Ariyadasa (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Clare Bishop
- Cllr Dylan Jones
- Cllr Derick Lock
- Cllr Ann Pettitt
- Cllr Felix Merry (Co-Opted from 10 January 2023)

Cllr Kumi Ariyadasa agreed to take on the role of Acting Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer on a voluntary (unpaid) basis pending the recruitment and appointment of a new Clerk.

Sub-committees have been created for finance and personnel. A planning working group is convened as and when required to 'review planning applications and any planning issues relating to the community of Llanpumsaint, make site visits where this is considered appropriate, and prepare any representations to be submitted in response, for approval by the Council.'

Councillor Bishop and Cllr Pettitt have been nominated as the Council's representatives for the One Voice Wales Carmarthen Area Meeting which acts as a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences between Community and Town Councils in the County.

2. Meetings

LLCC holds regular bi-monthly Council meetings on the second Tuesday of every other month. During 2022/23, LLCC met on the following eight occasions:

Ordinary meeting	6 April 2022
Annual meeting & Ordinary meeting	8 June 2022
Ordinary meeting	12 July 2022
Extraordinary meeting	26 July 2022 (to approve annual return for 2021/22)
Ordinary meeting	13 September 2022
Ordinary meeting	8 November 2022
Ordinary meeting	10 January 2023
Ordinary meeting	14 March 2023

3. Relationship with Carmarthenshire County Council

LLCC's main communication with the County Council was through County Councillor, Bryan Davies, who regularly attended our Community Council meetings and diligently followed up on issues with the County Council. The Community Council is grateful for Cllr Davies' valued support in helping to take the Council forward.

4. Recruitment of a Clerk

There was no success in recruiting a new part-time clerk, despite extensive efforts including exploring options for a joint appointment with a neighbouring council. In the interim, the Vice-Chair has undertaken this role in a voluntary capacity, and other Councillors have also voluntarily assisted with specific tasks when possible, for all of which the Council is extremely grateful. Efforts to recruit a new Clerk are ongoing. Until a new Clerk is in post, the Council is able to carry out essential business priorities only.

5. Budget

LLCC's main source of income is the Precept. This is the amount that Carmarthenshire County Council collects from Llanpumsaint residents through the Council Tax. The Precept in 2022/23 was £9,992. For the typical household in Llanpumsaint this amounts to around £30 per year.

LLCC's main items of expenditure during 2022/23 were:

Former clerk's salary (up to 08/06/2022)	135.00
Translation	430.80
Fees to Wales Audit Office (for additional work in the 2018/19 audit)	7395.00
Street lighting	2474.94
Llanpumsaint Heritage Walk website	60.00
Urdd National Eisteddfod	100.00
Wales Air Ambulance charity	100.00
Village After School Club	300.00
Village Voice Information Exchange	500.00
Village Hall Committee	500.00
Welfare and Recreation Committee	500.00

Christmas tree celebrations	234.78
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Full details are available in the Annual Return for 2022/23, which is published on the Council's website.

All Councillors waived the annual allowance of £150 each, set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, as well as any additional entitlements for the Chair. The total remuneration paid to Councillors during 2022/23 was nil.

6. Assets

The Council's assets were reviewed and valued during the year and the Asset Register was updated. The Council's assets include the following:

- Ty Hers, Gwili Terrace
- 4 bus stops
- 6 benches
- 2 telephone boxes
- 30 Street lights (the final upgrading was completed during the year).

A repairs and maintenance programme is being developed.

7. Standards Committee

The Council has received no complaints about the conduct of Councillors, nor any references to the Standards Committee in relation to the conduct of any of its Councillors.

8. Training Plan

LLCC has continued its membership of One Voice Wales, which enables Councillors to access a range of training courses to support the effective discharge of the work of the Council.

With the election of the new Council in June 2022, a new training plan has been developed and is published on the Council's website. Councillors have taken up limited opportunities for free training provided by One Voice Wales and attended training courses on the Members' Code of Conduct, employment, planning, community engagement, local government finance and biodiversity duties. A bursary of £100 was received from One Voice Wales to contribute towards the training fees.

9. Language policy

Historically, the Council has conducted its business in Welsh and engaged a simultaneous translator for Council meetings. This practice continues with a simultaneous translation service. However, the Council has agreed that its administrative documents will routinely be produced and published only in English until a bilingual Clerk is appointed.

10. Audit

A significant amount of work has been carried out this year to address the accounting and governance issues identified in the Audit Wales public interest report issued in October 2021.

The Council's accounts for the financial years ending 31 March 2020, 2021 and 2022 have now been audited by Audit Wales and the Council is delighted that the external auditor has given an Unqualified Audit Opinion confirming that there are no matters of material concern. The audited accounts are published on the Council's website.

The Annual Return for 2022/23 (also published on the Council's website) has been internally audited and submitted to Audit Wales.

11. Biodiversity

The Council has prepared a Biodiversity Plan, to help to fulfil its statutory duty to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and appointed Cllr Bishop as its Biodiversity Champion. In preparation for the development of the Council's biodiversity plan, two baseline surveys were undertaken. Fourteen households participated in the RSPB's Garden Bird Watch and their results were aggregated to form a picture of the winter bird population at village level. In the summer, a survey of meadow flowers was undertaken in five fields under different farm management regimes. The results of both surveys were reported in the village magazine ('Village Voice').

12. Key Activities Undertaken in 2022/23

This has been a busy year for the new Council seeking to take the Council forward. The main priority was to successfully resolve the issues raised during the external audit of the Council's 2018/19 accounts by Audit Wales. The Council developed and implemented an Action Plan for this and is delighted that Audit Wales has now issued an Unqualified Audit Opinion for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The Council prepared a recruitment pack for the position of Clerk and has publicised the vacancy widely within the local area, to seek a suitable person to take on this role.

The Village Fun Day in June 2022 was attended by the Community Councillors and used as an opportunity to engage with local residents.

A number of requests for financial assistance were considered and the Council was pleased to approve grants for the Village Hall, Welfare and Recreation Committee, Village Voice, After School Club, National Urdd Eisteddfod and Wales Air Ambulance.

The Council has continued to consider various highways concerns and planning applications affecting the village and submitted representations to the Highways Department and the Head of Planning respectively, where appropriate. It has also received reports to keep up to date with relevant policy and practice and put forward views on behalf of the local

community, for example, on the new 20mph speed limits introduced by the Welsh Government.

In response to a request from a member of the public, the Council put up a Christmas tree outside the Village Hall and organised a well-attended lights switch-on and carols event in December 2022. This popular event will be repeated in 2023.

The Llanpumsaint Heritage Walk website has also been maintained, to attract visitors to the area and give them a flavour of the history of the village.

13. Priorities for 2023/24

- Recruit a new Clerk. Pending this appointment, the Council's work capacity is limited and needs to focus on essential business priorities
- Consider any identified needs within the community and ways for the Council to address these within the available resources.
- Continue to develop the biodiversity plan and consider whether there are any opportunities for the Council to maintain and enhance biodiversity within the community.
- Prepare a repairs and maintenance programme for Council assets to ensure they remain safe and fit for purpose.
- Secure relevant training for all Councillors, in line with the Council's Training Plan.
- Continue to build on improvements to the Council's governance arrangements.