

Pontardawe Town Council  
Annual Report 2022 (issued April 2023)



Pontardawe Town Council is committed to the future development of Wales and is required to produce an annual report, in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which expanded the previous requirement for Town and Community Councils with a turnover of over £200k under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to all Town and Community Councils in Wales

The Act has 7 goals, which are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsive Wales

The Town Council Annual report highlights the areas in which the Council is achieving the seven goals and objectives, and is published annually (following the end of each Civic Year)

The purpose of Pontardawe Town Council Annual Report is to inform the community. The report contains details of projects that the Council is working on, as well as details of elected members, Town Council responsibilities and budgets.

Pontardawe lies in the Swansea Valley and is named after the bridge crossing the river Tawe which runs through the town. The settlement developed as the crossing point of two drover trails; the one running from Swansea to Brecon, and the other from Neath to Llandeilo. The picturesque canal, now dormant, is evidence of the industrial past of steel, tinplate and coal. St. Peter's Church, notable for its French architectural style, was completed in 1862 and continues to stand tall above a town known in the nineteenth-century for its religious Nonconformity and political radicalism. The town has been an important centre for Welsh folk and pop music, as manifest in the success of Mary Hopkin (1950 -) in the 1970s, while Pontardawe Arts Centre remains a significant hub for the varied cultural activity of the Swansea Valley, in both languages, today. The resilience of the town and its people were celebrated in the Welsh language poems of D. Gwenallt Jones (1899-1968) and Dafydd Rowlands (1931 – 2001), and the town's vibrant sporting culture continues to be centred on its cricket, rugby and football clubs.

## Annual Report 2022/23 S U M M A R Y

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on public services over previous years however the lifting of restrictions has allowed the Town to return to a sense of normality. However there have been changes to working practices following the Pandemic, with remote working and Hybrid systems far more in evidence

During the Election in May 2022 several of our Members stepped down in order to pursue other projects which led to nine new Councillors elected to the Council. These Councillors have introduced new ideas and suggested several projects for Pontardawe and the surrounding areas

The Annual Report 2022-23 highlights progress that Pontardawe Town Council has made in relation to tackling local issues and working with partners, in order to benefit communities

### **C H A L L E N G E S**

#### Legislative changes

The introduction of a legal requirement to provide Hybrid Facilities for all Annual General and Ordinary Meetings provided an opportunity to review the current office and meeting facilities. In response the Town Council entered a new partnership with Pontardawe Arts Centre who provided office space and Hybrid meeting facilities to the Town Council. Rental of the space by the Town Council in turn secured a guaranteed source of income for the Arts Centre and ensured that the Town Council rental income is reinvested in the the public purse.

The introduction of additional duties under the proposed 'Martin's law' also increased the amount of restrictions imposed on the organisation of street events but our Winterfest still went ahead with the support of our fantastic children's walking groups, Pantomime Dame, music, Christmas Market, Santa's grotto and Fireworks!



## MAYORS FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to introduce Pontardawe Town Council's annual report. for 2022.

It has been a delight to return to comparative "normality" this year and to see community events return; in particular the "Winterfest event which was agreed by all who attended as a resounding success. We were particularly pleased to be asked by a resident of a similarly sized town "How does such a small place put on such a fantastic event?"

The answer of course is "Team work" and I must take this opportunity to thank Debby Phillips the Town clerk in particular for her efforts in both running the day to day business of the Council and coordinating all those involved in organising community events.

We have been pleased also to be able to continue providing funding support for local groups and to help them develop further.

Finally, I would like to thank my deputy Mayor Cllr Rebeca Phillips and my fellow town councillors for their support, particularly those who were newly elected in May 2022 and who have entered into the role of Town Councillor with such energy and enthusiasm

Cllr Linet Purcell

Pontardawe Town Mayor 2022/23



## Decision and Responsibilities Pontardawe Town Council

Pontardawe Town Council, as a body, is responsible for making decisions and managing public money.

The Council is open and transparent in decision making and spending. All decisions are published within 7 days of a meeting being held.

Town Council Ordinary General meetings are held monthly at 6.45pm (usually on the second Monday of each month - except August and Bank Holidays), other committee meetings such as Planning, Policy and Resources and Development are usually held on the third Monday of each month

Details of Committee meetings for the following month are found in each month's Ordinary General Meeting minutes which can be found on our website <http://www.pontardawetowncouncil.gov.wales/>

Meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity for the public to contribute to matters on the agenda at the beginning of each ordinary meeting.

Pontardawe Town Council serve the residents of Pontardawe, Rhyd-y-Fro and Trebanos and is responsible for a number of assets and facilities, which include Trebanos, ARCH and Ynysmeudwy Community Halls, Trebanos Park, Ynysmeudwy Park, Parc Chwarae Teg, together with the maintenance of Public Footpaths and some litterbins.

The Town Council also works in Partnership with the Unitary Authority, Art Centre, Schools, Community Groups and third sector organisations to organise events. We also provide grants to local groups.

Details of finance, policy documents, Council activity and additional information about the Council can be found on our website.

Pontardawe Town Council is a separate body to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, and therefore, manages different functions and responsibilities.



## PONTARDAWE TOWN COUNCIL

The Council is within one tier of local government, another tier would be Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as the unitary authority. Both Council's are corporate bodies and therefore decisions are made as a whole. The Town Council has the right to raise money through taxation via a precept and to spend in accordance with the legal powers.

Membership of Pontardawe Town Council has changed over the past year and new Councillors have joined the Council following the Election in 2022

Town Councillors are elected or co-opted onto wards to represent the individuals in those areas.

The variety of representation on the Town Council means that there are a number of skills and areas of expertise across the Council Members.

The Mayor is the face of the Council, attending events and chairing Town Council meetings. The Town Council also employs staff who are managed by the Clerk who is the proper officer of the Council in law. The Clerk provides advice and support, and acts to implement Council decisions.

The Clerk has a varied role and is answerable only to the Council as a whole.

## Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is responsible for services including education, health and social services, leisure, refuse and recycling, street cleaning, highways - both roads and pavements – street lighting and libraries.

Neath Port Talbot Council Staff are able to assist with queries relating to Council Tax, Education, Health, Highways, Leisure, Social Care and Street Lighting and can be contacted by telephone on 01639 686868 or via email, in person or by post. Details of how to contact Neath Port Talbot Council can be found on their web site at <https://www.npt.gov.uk/?lang=en-gb>





Pontardawe Town Council consists of three wards, and were represented as follows

## Pontardawe Ward



Gary Davies  
Labour - Elected  
07580147304



Dai Brain  
Plaid Cymru - Elected  
Email -  
Cllr.d.brain@gmail.com



Jill Lord  
Labour - Elected  
Email -  
Cllr.J.Lord@gmail.com



Matt Vincent  
Plaid Cymru - Elected  
Email - Advertising  
@southwalesmedia.com



Meirion Davies  
Labour - Elected  
Email -  
info@vesopa.com



Linet Purcell  
Plaid Cymru - Elected  
Email -  
linetpurcell@gmail.com



Anthony Richards

Plaid Cymru - Elected

Email -

[cllr.a.j.richards@npt.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.a.j.richards@npt.gov.uk)



Bleddyn Howells

Labour - Elected

Email -

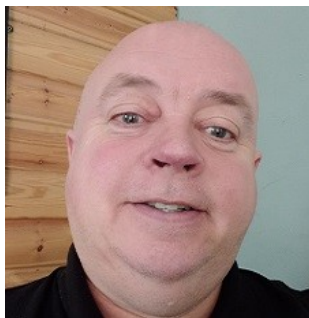
[Cllr.B.Howells@gmail.com](mailto:Cllr.B.Howells@gmail.com)



Jamie Nemeth

Plaid Cymru –Elected

07846529813



Heath Davies

Plaid Cymru -

Elected

Email -

[Cllr.h.davies1@npt.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.h.davies1@npt.gov.uk)

## Youth Councillors

Dylan Fitzgerald &

Olly Brandrick

Email - c/o the Town

Clerk at

[town.clerk@pontardawetown](mailto:town.clerk@pontardawetown)

[council.gov.wales](http://council.gov.wales)

## Rhyd-y-fro Ward



Steve Todd

Labour - Elected

Email -

[Cllr.s.todd@gmail.com](mailto:Cllr.s.todd@gmail.com)



Paul Temblett

Independent - Elected

Email -

[P.temblett@talk21.com](mailto:P.temblett@talk21.com)

## Trebanos Ward



Gwenno Ffrancon

Plaid Cymru - Elected

Email -

[Cllr.G.ffrancon@gmail.com](mailto:Cllr.G.ffrancon@gmail.com)



Rebeca Phillips

Plaid Cymru - Elected

Email -

[Cllr.r.phillips@npt.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.r.phillips@npt.gov.uk)





Jamie Watkins  
 Plaid-Cymru - Elected  
 Email -  
 jamiehwat@gmail.com



Eira Thomas  
 Plaid Cymru - Elected  
 Email -  
 Cllr.e.thomas@gmail.com

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Ordinary General Meetings</u>										
	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23
Ms R Phillips	X		X	C	X	X		X	X		X
Ms E Thomas	X		X	C	X		X		X	X	X
J Watkins	X	X		C	X	X	X	X			
Ms G Ffrancon	X	X	X	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S Todd	X	X	X	C	X	X	X		X		X
P Temblett	X	X	X	C		X		X			
Ms L Purcell		X	X	C		X	X	X	X	X	X
A Richards	X		X	C		X	X	X	X	X	X
M Davies		X		C	X		X	X		X	
M Vincent	X	X	X	C	X	X		X	X	X	X
D Brain	X	X		C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J Nemeth	X	X	X	C		X	X	X	X	X	X
Ms J Lord	X	X	X	C	X	X	X		X	X	X
H Davies	X	X	X	C		X	X	X	X		
B Howells	X	X		C	X	X		X	X	X	X
G Davies	X		X	C		X	X		X	X	

Blank = absent  
 C= cancelled  
 X = Present

## TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE

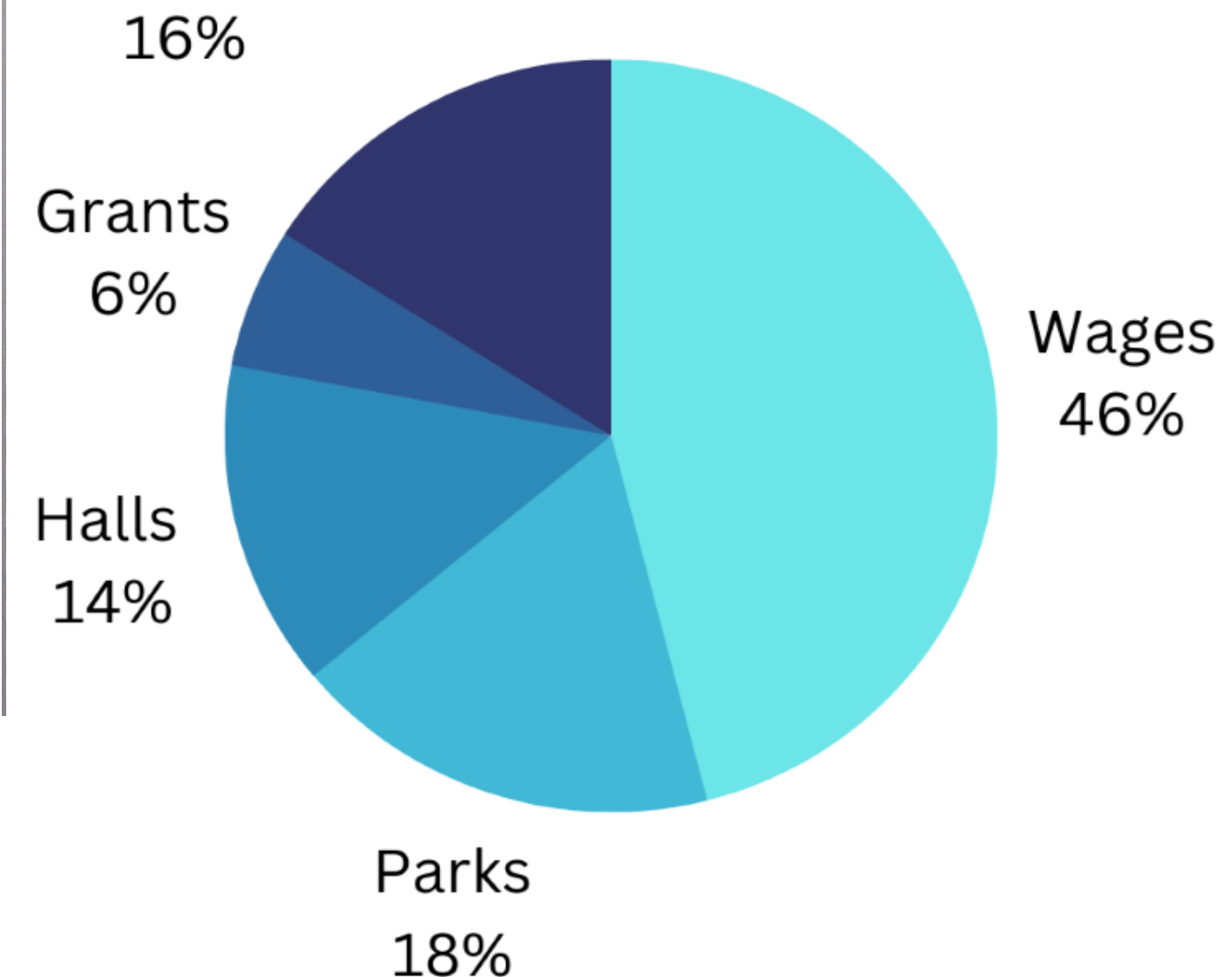
Pontardawe Town Council has legal powers to raise money through taxation (the precept) and the Council has a range of powers to enable to spending of public money. The Finance Committee of the Council meets annually to agree the precept for the following financial year. Decisions of the Finance Committee are approved at a full Town Council meeting.

In setting the budget, the Council considers ongoing pressures and projects, as well as looking at other potential sources of funding.

In 2022/23 the Precept was agreed at £208101

The Table shows the percentage of spending for 2022/23

### Governance



To give context to the figures shown, the areas are broken down to include the following (lists are not exhaustive):

Parks and Community Spaces  
Footpaths and Bridleway maintenance  
Cwmdu Nature Reserve  
Highway seating and litterbins  
Hanging baskets and Town Floral decorations  
Christmas Lights and Christmas Trees  
Defibrillators

Governance  
General Administration  
Management of Town Council functions and finance  
Support and advice at Town Council meetings  
Implementation of Council decisions and organisation of Council procedures  
HR Functions  
Insurance  
Health and Safety  
Organisation of Civic Functions and other events  
Research and implementation of grant funding  
Liaison with Partners and other groups  
Media and Social Media

Grants for local groups and Partnership events

Community Halls  
Liaison with Community Hall Management Committees  
Insurance/ Risk Assessments/ maintenance/ advice

Parks and Play areas  
Nature Reserve

# Wellbeing

Pontardawe Town Council places community wellbeing at the heart of all the decisions made and so supports both the Welsh Government Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board well-being objectives

“The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.”

Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board Objectives

Objective 1: Support children in their early years, especially children at risk of adverse childhood experiences

Objective 2: Create safe, confident and resilient communities, focusing on vulnerable people

Objective 3: Put more life into our later years - Ageing Well

Objective 4: Promote well-being through work and in the workplace

Objective 5: Value our green infrastructure and the contribution it makes to our Well-being

Objective 6: Tackle digital exclusion

## The authority demonstrates its support for children by having;

- Authority representatives on both Secondary and Primary Governing Bodies
- Organising children and family focussed events such as the Trebanos Welsh Youth Club, Easter fun days in Trebanos Park and Park Chwarae Teg and Rhyd y Fro Family fun day.
- Ynysmeudwy second hall permanently provided free of charge for the Pontardawe Youth Club
- Children's activity groups well represented at all three Community Halls – Hall subscriptions kept to a minimum to assist groups (Town Council covers utilities, risk assessments and insurance)
- Well maintained and adventurous play equipment at all three parks
- Partnership working on events with schools, unitary authority, Art Centre, community groups and third sector organisations.
- Web site 'Go Valley' which gives information on children's groups in the area
- Support for local groups via grant funding
- Support for Town Centre retail centre via the improvement of the environment (floral displays, Christmas lights etc)
- Liaison with the Chamber of Commerce
- Partnership working on Events with the Art Centre, Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Centre and others
- CCTV project
- Close partnership working with Unitary Authority to support local initiatives (Cwmdu Glen, Monthly Market, Town Team production of Community/Place Plan)

### Youth Councillors

Our Youth Councillors provide Council with a young person's viewpoint and two can be co-opted each year, for a term of one year, with a minimum age of 15 years old. Youth Councillors are an important voice in ensuring diversity within the decision making process.





## The Town Council supports Aging well by ensuring that;

- Pontardawe is a Dementia Friendly Community
- Groups are well represented at all three Community Halls – Hall subscriptions kept to a minimum to assist groups (Town Council covers utilities, risk assessment and insurance)
- Local groups are supported via grant funding
- Web site 'Go Valley' gives Information on groups suitable for older Members within the community



## The Town Council supports well-being through work by;

- Pledging to 'Time to Change' Wales – Action to tackle Mental Health discrimination
- Supporting the Monthly Market
- Supporting Town Centre retail centre via the improvement of the environment (floral displays, Christmas lights etc)
- Membership of the Town Team to create a Pontardawe Community/Place plan to support the future prospects of the Town Centre

## The Town Council supports Green Infrastructure by;

- Pontardawe Town Council Environmental Statement reviewed and updated in 2022- Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity
- Ongoing projects with the 'Friends of Ynysmeudwy Park' and Pontardawe Conservation volunteers
- Projects together with Neath Port Talbot Countryside and Coed Cymru
- Grants to local groups
- Cwmdu Nature Reserve

## The Town Council tackles digital exclusion with;

- Support of local and national initiatives



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## National Goals

### *Prosperous:*

*An innovative, productive and low carbon society which, recognises the limits of the Global environment and therefore, uses resources efficiently and proportionately, and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.*

Pontardawe Town Council is committed to working actively with partners to encourage and promote the town centre by liaising with the Neath Port Talbot Council Town Officers to ensure that initiatives are known, communicated and advertised by all partners

The Town Council has developed our website and set up a Facebook page. The website provides key contact information and responsibilities of the Council and promotes activities of local voluntary groups and organisations. Both website and social media are used to inform and communicate with residents, publicising meeting information, events and signposting to other service providers.

We also financially support in total or in part, a number of events and activities within Pontardawe, through the grants process (Fireworks, Tree of Light, Carnivals, Christmas events, Ponty prom etc) and supply Christmas Lighting and Floral Displays.

The Town Council is committed to development of young people in the area and encouraged the relocation of the Pontardawe Youth Club to the second hall in Ynysmeudwy community Hall, to prevent closure, when the previous venue ceased to be available. They have also supported creation of a new Welsh Language youth club in Trebanos Hall

Town Council grants (both capital and revenue) are available for local groups and organisations.

**Resilient:**

*A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.*

Pontardawe Town Council is committed to ensuring that the town remains a pleasant clean and safe environment. We are not responsible for any highways or street cleaning; however, we has developed excellent working relationships with the responsible authority.

Street Cleaning, litter collection, refuse and recycling are the responsibility of Neath Port Talbot Council. However, in supporting these services and engaging with colleagues the Town Council can assist in addressing areas of concern. Grants have also been provided to 'My Green Valley' to assist in volunteer litter picks

We also provide some litter bins within Pontardawe together with additional highway seating

The Town Council acts as consultee on Planning matters and observations are then made to the Local Planning Authority on any issues which are perceived to be a detriment to the town.

Several Town Councillors are also part of the Town Team Project which aims to create a Community and Place plan to future proof and support both the retail park, Town Centre and the Industrial Estate through supplementary planning.

Town Councillors are also present on various liaison committees to support both business and the environment in the local area (i.e. Pwllfawatkin liaison and Quarry Liaison)

**Healthier:**

*A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health is understood.*

By providing outdoor space such as Parc Chwarae Teg, Ynysmeudwy and Trebanos Park, the Council is committed to the health of residents in the Pontardawe Area. The Council ensures that the parks are regularly maintained and safe for use by the public. Parc Chwarae Teg is a children's play area and MUGA. Trebanos Park encompasses both the Rugby Ground and changing rooms (these are leased to Trebanos Rugby Club) and a children's play area. Ynysmeudwy Park holds a children's play area, MUGA and supports an Environmental project to plant trees, create bug and bird boxes and to maintain a meadow area.

In previous years we supported the creation of the local Allotments which are now for use by residents of both Cilybebyll Community Council and Pontardawe Town Council. The site encourages and allow people to cultivate their own gardens, growing produce for their own consumption

The Town Council actively supports wellbeing through use of town council Community Halls for groups and organisations within the community, and further supports well-being by maintaining in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council, the Cwmdu Nature Reserve and in the maintenance of local Footpaths and bridleways

## ***More Equal:***

*A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or Circumstances*

The Town Council office is based centrally within the town. Contact details for the Clerk and all Councillors are available on the exterior notice board, on the Town Council Facebook page and the Town Council's accessible web site.

We provide meeting space to groups and organisations, which enables a wide range of people to enhance their skills and fulfil their potential through taking part in activities. Rental costs are minimised

Subsidised Community events ensure that access is available to all regardless of their financial situation

Free use of Town Council facilities is available for Summer Playschemes organised by the County Borough.

The Town Council is a supporter of Dementia Friendly Communities

## ***Cohesive Communities:***

*Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities*

The Town Council works in partnership with the Art Centre, Chamber of Commerce and Heritage Centre to promote the Town and to organise festivals and events to encourage footfall within the Town

We also liaise directly with the Neath Port Talbot Town Centre Officer to ensure that events organised by different organisations are communicated to make the best use of available resource and are advertised as widely as possible.

The Joint CCTV project with Neath Port Talbot Council in partnership with the local Police Force will provide 'live' CCTV feed from Pontardawe Town Centre

Pontardawe Town Council also financially supports the Crossing Patrol Officer at Swansea Road in conjunction with Cwmtawe School and Neath Port Talbot Council

The Summer Flower display and Christmas lights encourages footfall within the Town Centre, and we also worked with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage Neath Port Talbot Council to retain the 'One Hour Free' parking within their Town Centre Car Parks

## ***Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language***

We have lots of opportunities to interact in Welsh and have recently supported the creation of a Welsh Language youth club in Trebanos Hall, and promotes bilingualism with a bilingual Web site.

We have partnered with Menter Iaith on several projects and events that promote the use of the Welsh Language and the Pontardawe Welsh Language Hwb is located on Holly Street in Pontardawe

Our Councillors are Minor Authority Governors at YGG Trebannws and Pontardawe and Grants have been provided to both the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod. Pontardawe Town Council is also included within the institute of Welsh Affairs 'Understanding Welsh Places' project

## **Globally Responsible**

*where we look after the Environment and think about other people around the World*

Pontardawe Town Council has responded to a number of surveys, primarily from Welsh Government, which demonstrates a commitment to global well-being and the capacity to adapt to change.

We are concerned with energy consumption at all premises and ensure that the best value for money is obtained when renewing utility contracts and undertaking procedures to ensure that energy is not unnecessarily used

We will also be obtaining advice from Aman Awel Tawe on possible projects to review energy supply and consumption at our halls.

What has the Council done in 2022/23?

### *Grants Awarded:*

Pontardawe Conservation volunteers £1000, Pontardawe Chamber of Commerce £414.32, Pontardawe Senior Citizens £500, Pontardawe Heritage Centre £3000, Pontardawe Users group £500, Pontardawe RFC—£500, St Peters Church £1000, Pontardawe AFC £1000, Pontardawe Art club £500, Glantawe Lions £150, Pontardawe Bowls Club £1500, Riverside £350, Pontardawe Rec association £2000, Repair Café £200, Llais £255.58 & Menter Iaith £130

*Exterior Defibrillator at Pontardawe Taxis, financial support for the Repair Café creation, Summer floral display within the Pontardawe Town Centre and planter at Trebanos Management of Cwmdu Nature Reserve including specific plan to address Ash dieback and to reinstate the Circular path.*

*Volunteer days to improve our natural surroundings and encourage a sense of community Christmas tree, Christmas lights, Parade and Fireworks to celebrate Christmas Festive Town Centre window competition*

*Easter Events at the Parks & Family fun day at Rhyd y Fro*

*Involvement with the Pontardawe Town Team creating a Community Plan*

*Welsh Government consultations*

*Support of the Pantry foodbank*

*Improvement to both Community Halls and Children's play areas*

*Swansea Road Crossing patrol officer*

### **Our Youth Councillors have:**

Become our town representative for One voice Wales. They are the only youth councillor representative within the organisation and have been a strong proponent for improving youth representation and cooperation, they were also an active presence in the 21st century school decision, by giving a comprehensive account of the decision to assist the community with their consultation.

They also answered questions from young people and provided information on ongoing projects and the activities of the council.



# A Year in Pictures

