

Pontardawe Town Council
Annual Report 2021 (issued April 2022)



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, tinsplate 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 2021/22 S U M M A R Y

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

Pontardawe Town Council is one of the public bodies which is required to produce an annual report, demonstrating how the council is working towards the visions and well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on public services and has affected how services have been provided since early 2020.

Pontardawe Town Council has therefore changed working practices to comply with Central and Devolved Government public health directives.

Changes had to be introduced swiftly and have been complied with by the Council and staff, as far as reasonably possible to do so.

The Annual Report 2021-2022 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

C O V I D - 1 9 P A N D E M I C

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the most challenging periods for everyone. Initially during the pandemic, there was a lot of pressure on public services and the Town Council worked in partnership with the County Borough Councillors, the Neath Port Talbot 'Safe and Well' scheme and the community volunteers to ensure that vulnerable members of the community could be identified and allocated the help they needed.

We would like to express our continued thanks to the volunteers and the community for their support to residents during the crisis



INTRODUCTION

MAYORS FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to introduce Pontardawe Town Council's annual report for 2021.

It has been another uncertain year with the continuation of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, most of our annual events have had to be cancelled to the disappointment of myself, my fellow Councillors and the community.

Despite the restrictions we were able to continue with the installation of the Christmas lights and arranged for a snow globe to be placed in Pontardawe Town Centre.

Whilst this was nowhere near the usual Christmas arrangements, the snow globe was fully booked and was enjoyed by many of the community.

We were also able to continue with the distribution of grants to local groups and organisations to help them develop and grow into the future.

I would like to thank Cllr Hywel Davies for his support as the Deputy Mayor and to my fellow Town Councillors for their encouragement during my time in office.

My final thank you must go to the Clerk of the Town Council, Debby Phillips and other officers for their dedication, hard work and commitment to the council and its duties.

Councillor Rebeca Phillips

Pontardawe Town Mayor 2021/22



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 (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 months 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.

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.



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

The Council is within a tier of local government,. Another tier would be Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as the unitary authority. The Council is a corporate body and the decisions are made as a whole. The Council has the right to raise money through taxation (precept) and 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.

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 employs staff who are managed by the Clerk, 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.



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

Pontardawe Ward



Gary Davies
Labour - Elected
7 Bryn Onnen,
Pontardawe,
SA8 4LH



Vince Hotten
Labour - Elected
85 New Road,
Ynysmeudwy,
SA8 4PP



John Jones
Labour - Elected
Brynamlwg,
Graig Llanguicke,
Ynysmeudwy,
SA8 4PS



Andrew Nicholson
Plaid Cymru - Elected
6 Ynysderw Road,
Pontardawe, SA8 4EG



Rev. Sue Northcott
Plaid Cymru - Elected
6 Ynysderw Road,
Pontardawe, SA8 4EG



Linet Purcell
Plaid Cymru - Elected
39 New Road,
Ynysmeudwy, SA8 4PJ



Anthony Richards
Plaid Cymru - Elected
197 Bryn Morgrug
Alltwen, Pontardawe,
SA8 3BE

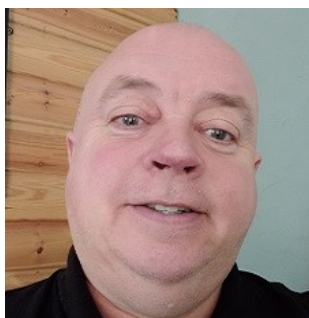


Ryan Thomas
Independent - Elected
19 Oakfield Road,
Pontardawe, SA8 4LD

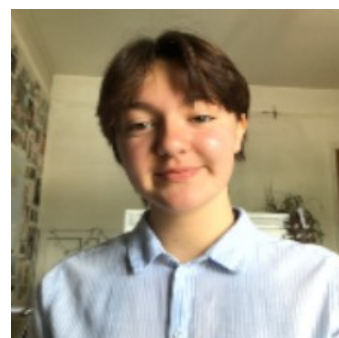


June Ashton-Mears
Independent - Co-
Opted
7 Tanydarren,
SA8 4QT

Youth Councillor



Heath Davies
Plaid Cymru - Co-
opted
82 Parc Gilbertson,
Gelligron, SA8 4PU



Issy Williams
Youth Councillor
c/o 4 Herbert Street ,
Pontardawe, SA8 4EB

Rhyd-y-fro Ward



Hywel Davies

Plaid Cymru - Co-opted

Ty Rybeth. Gelligron
Road, Pontardawe,
SA8 4LU.



Daniel Williams

Plaid Cymru - Co-Opted

Golwg y Cwm, 3 Clos
Llwynallt, Pontardawe.
SA8 3JG.

Trebanos Ward



Plaid Cymru - Elected

8 New Road,
Trebanos,
SA8 4DL



Plaid Cymru - Elected

9 Maes Rhosyn, Rhos.
Pontardawe,
SA8 3HT



Jamie Nemeth
Plaid-Cymru Co-Opted
7 Lon Deg,
Pontardawe, SA8 4LZ



Eira Thomas
Plaid Cymru - Co-opted
1 Darren Cottages,
Graig Rd, Trebanos ,
SA8 4AU

Attendance	Ordinary General										
	Blank = absent	X = Present									
Councillors name	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
Mrs R Phillips	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ms E Thomas	*	*	*	Co-opted	X		X	X	X		X
Ms C Ford		X		X	X	X					
J Nemeth	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Hywel Davies	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X
D Williams	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Mrs L Purcell		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A Richards		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
J Jones	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
V Hotten	X		X	X	X	X	X				X
Rev Ms S Northcott	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X
A Nicholson	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
R Thomas	X	X			X	X	X		X		
Heath Davies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Co-Opted	X	X	
Mrs J Ashton-Mears	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	
G Davies		X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
R Clapham	X	X	X	X Resigned							

RESOURCES AND LEGISLATION

The impact of the pandemic has affected the way that the Council undertakes business. Changes in legislation have allowed the Council to work electronically,. Consequently, the use of electronic agendas and meetings has been introduced (previously these were not allowed by law).

➤ The Town Council risk assessed the work carried out by staff and introduced methods of minimising risk during the pandemic.

Staff were provided with relevant equipment to facilitate this and to ensure that we adapted to public health measures as they were amended;

➤ The Council moved to remote meetings in order to protect staff, public and Members

The meetings are open and transparent, with agendas and minutes publicised in the normal way;

➤ There were significant implications for the Town Council, pertaining to our assets with the closure or restrictions placed on some of our facilities.

The Community Halls at ARCH, Trebanos and Ynysmeudwy have been closed, or restrictions added, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. Restrictions were regularly reviewed in order to ensure they were both safe and proportionate. Essential Medical clinics continued at the Halls in line with Welsh Government advice during the Pandemic

➤ The play areas remained open but were managed in line with Central Government directives and advice

The relevant signage was displayed in accordance with Central and Devolved government directives;

➤ The Town Council Office was closed; however, the Clerk was contactable via telephone and email. All Councillors were also contactable via telephone and email.

Members have implemented modified working practices to ensure that Pontardawe Town Council continued to provide high quality services to its Constituents. The Council is committed to continue to provide services and facilities which will benefit the local residents and communities.

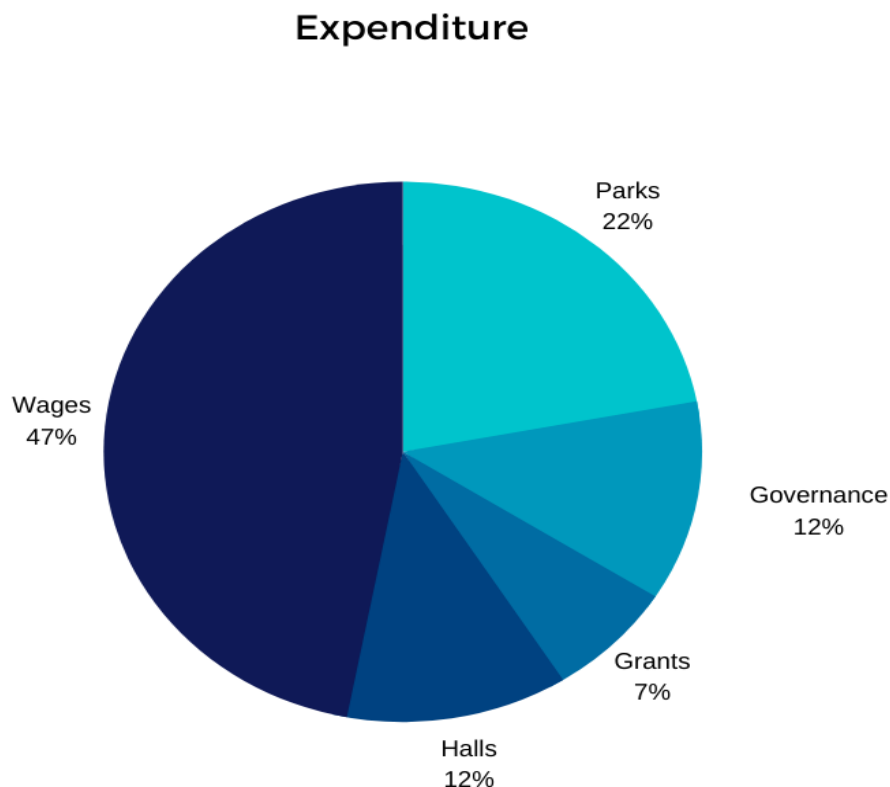
TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE

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 2021/22 the Precept was agreed at £196450

The Table shows the percentage of spending for 2021/22



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
General Administration
Governance and 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
- 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' Information on groups for the Community resilient communities
- Groups well represented at all three Community Halls – Hall subscriptions kept to a minimum to assist groups (Town Council covers utilities, risk assessment and insurance)
- 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
- Close partnership working with Unitary Authority to support local initiatives (Cwmdu Glen, Monthly Market, Town Team production of Community/Place Plan) CCTV project



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 for 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 -Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity
- Ongoing projects with the 'Friends of Ynysmeudwy Park'
- Project 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

Pontardawe Town Council has developed the 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.

The Town Council financially supports a number of events and activities within Pontardawe, through the grants process (Fireworks, Tree of Light, Carnivals, Christmas events, Ponty prom etc) and as part of the agreed budget. These include Christmas Lighting, Retailer competitions and Floral Displays

The Town Council is committed to development of young people in the area and supported 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.

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. The Town Council is not responsible for any highways or street cleaning; however, it has developed excellent working relationships with the responsible authority, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Pontardawe Town Council provides some litter bins within Pontardawe together with additional highway seating

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

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

Town Councillors are 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

The Town Council supported the creation of the Rhos Allotments 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.

The Council further supports well-being by maintaining in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council, the Cwmdy 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' accessible web site.

Town Council provide use of the building 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

The Town Council also liaises 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

The Town Council 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

where we have lots of opportunities to do different things and where lots of people can speak Welsh

The Town Council 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

Councillors are Minor Authority Governors at YGG Trebannws and Pontardawe

Grants have been provided to both the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod and we are 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

What has the Council done in 2021/22?

Grants Awarded:

Pontardawe AFC—£450, Swansea Valley History—£60, Veterans Essentials £500, Pontardawe Arena £2000, Pontardawe Sports and Recreation Ground £2000, My Green Valley £786.28, Pontardawe Bowls Club £2000, Leon Heart Fund £2500, Pontardawe Conservation volunteers £237, Neath Rural District Guiding £1000, Pontardawe Town FC £916.72, Pontardawe Cricket Club £200, Riverside £350

Exterior Defibrillator at the Art Centre

Happy to Chat bench at Alltycham Drive and within Parc Chwarae Teg

Summer floral display within the Pontardawe Town Centre and planter at Trebanos

Cwmdu Nature Reserve including specific plan to address Ash dieback

Volunteer days to improve our natural surroundings and encourage a sense of community

Christmas tree, Christmas lights and Snow Globe to celebrate Christmas

Festive Town Centre window competition

Upgraded website to include lists of local activities for children, seniors and those living with disabilities

Additional signage at the Recreation ground to warn motorists of pedestrians

Involvement with the Pontardawe Town Team creating a Community Plan

Supporting 'Go Safe' – To improve safety at Brecon Road

'Supporting both Cartref' the Welsh water scheme and the improvement of Pharmacy provision within the Town

Welsh Government consultations

Improvement to both Community Halls and Children's play areas

A Year in Pictures

