



COYCHURCH LOWER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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Introduction

Under the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the community council is required to produce a report showing how it is contributing the wellbeing of current and future residents. This is the first report of this nature that the community council has published.

This short report outlines the activities of the Coychurch Lower Community Council up to and including the financial year April 2023 to March 2024. The aim is to provide a summary of progress against the community council's plan for April 2019 to March 2024 as well as details about council spend during the year 2023-2024.

Summary of Progress, April 2019 – March 2023

The Community Council has been working on a plan to improve the physical environment for residents, to improve the access to opportunities for residents of all ages to exercise safely and to comply with the community council's biodiversity obligations.

Progress so far:

1. Village Presentation and Biodiversity
 - a) 20 Lamppost planters in Coychurch and 4 in Waterton Close
 - b) Two 5-tier planters installed in 2021. One 3-tier and 3 round planters to compliment these have been installed in St Mary's View and Glenwood Close in 2022.
 - c) The starter wildlife garden and a native hedge were planted in the play park in 2021
2. Activity / Exercise

The Coychurch Circular Walk was established, using local Right of Ways, in 2021.
3. Play Park Refurbishment

This has been a 3-phase project funded by Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Fund, Bridgend County Borough Council, the National Lottery "Awards for All" and Coychurch Lower Community Council residents through their council tax.

The majority of the new equipment was installed and the ball court replaced between 2021-2023. The equipment is designed to stimulate children's imagination and encourage physical activity for children with a wide variety of ability.
4. Playing Field and Pavilion

Following public consultations and discussions with Bridgend County Borough Council it was decided that the community council would apply for the Community Asset Transfer of the field and pavilion. The process was begun and the BCBC CAT committee agreed to the transfer in principle.
5. Festive Lighting

Purchase of 6 electric festive lamppost displays on Main Road/Hawthorn Drive, Coychurch and annual hire of 6 solar powered Christmas trees in Waterton Close, Waterton

Progress in 2023 – 2024

Much of the work in this financial year has involved research, discussion and planning regarding future actions.

Village Presentation and Biodiversity

This is the largest budget item and during 2023-24 the contractor was instructed to cut at 3-weekly intervals rather than fortnightly and to a height of 7.5cm. This means that the verges are cut at such a height that small flowers can bloom and provide much needed food for bees and other pollinators before the grass is cut and also reduces the cost of grass cutting.

Play Park

The footpath to provide wheelchair / pushchair access to the ball court was installed in March 2024 and repairs have been made to the main footpath to improve the drainage at the Main Road end, thus preventing ice forming and creating a safety hazard in the winter months.

The annual inspection of the play equipment by RoSPA indicated that all of the equipment complies with safety regulations.

Playing Field and Pavilion

During 2023-24 Bridgend County Borough Council's Local Places for Nature team designed and proposed a landscape design for the field aimed at improving biodiversity and managing the surface flood water. This plan was submitted for public consultation and supported by 84% of responders. The plan includes flood defence for the residents of Park View and several different habitats that over the years will become established and provide outdoor education opportunities for the local school.

Working with this plan, the Community Council have identified opportunities for outdoor exercise equipment, family picnic and play area, and an outdoor classroom. The field holds surface water so a pathway running around the field between the LPfN areas and the grassed central area will be needed to allow people of all physical capabilities to exercise / play / walk / sit in the new park.

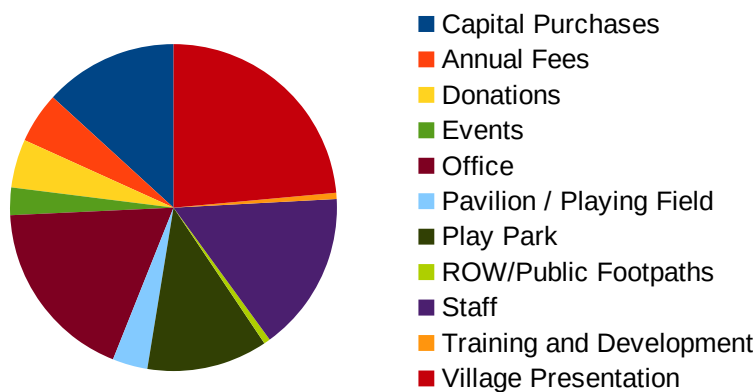
As part of the Community Asset Transfer process the condition survey of the pavilion indicated that it would take more to re-establish the facility and correct the sewage issues than to purchase and install a new one. Through the year there have been ongoing discussions with suppliers of different types of building and residents were canvassed to obtain their preference for the type/style of building. Following this, more detailed costings and discussions are continuing.

Festive Lighting

2 additional electric powered light displays have been added to the 6 on the Main Road / Hawthorn Drive.

Coychurch Lower Community Council

Area of spend as proportion of total Expenditure 2023-2024



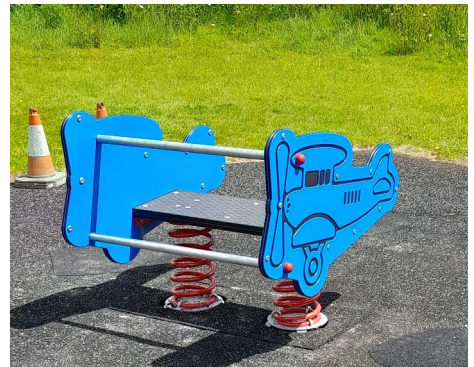
What is included in each category of spend? (Residents are welcome to view the detailed accounts as part of exercising their electoral rights during July 2024 – see the website or village noticeboard for details)

CAPITAL PURCHASES. This included:

a) 2 benches. One to commemorate the life and service of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and one to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. Both are made of recycled/recyclable materials.



b) The last piece of play equipment was a two-seater Aeroplane Springer for the younger children. This has been installed at the Main Road end of the play park.



c) Upgraded laptop for the council clerk

REVENUE SPEND

Village Presentation includes:

- Twice yearly planting of: 3 flower beds, two 5-tier planters, one 3-tier planter, 3 round plant pots, 2 rectangular plant pots.
- Planting, installing 20 lamppost planters in Coychurch village and in 4 Waterton Close
- Watering of planters and pots during the season
- 3-weekly grass cutting in the village and play park
- Weed spraying in the play park and along the public footpaths/Right of Ways within the village

Office costs include hire of storage space, office and the purchase of consumables.

Staff costs include the clerk's salary and PAYE.

Play Park included a new path around the ball court, repairs to the main footpath, new wooden top and benches on the wheel/pushchair friendly picnic table.



Annual Fees includes council employee and public liability insurance, council membership of One Voice Wales, clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks, and Information Commissioner's Office registration.

Donations are small grants to local community organisations. In 2023–2024 to St Crallos to assist with graveyard maintenance (a ROW passes through the graveyard) and external lighting of the church and to the Coychurch Over-50s Coffee Morning group.

Pavilion / Playing Field for additional surveys of the pavilion and surroundings

Events includes hire of solar powered Christmas trees for Waterton Close.

ROW/Public Footpaths includes clearance of the right of ways within Coychurch village.

Training and Development online courses for councillors and clerk

Remaining funds from the precept for 2023-2024 will be added to a general reserve fund and to specific reserve funds being accumulated for future projects or unexpected costs. The specific reserves going into the 2024-2025 year are for:

- Election Costs
- Play Park Maintenance
- Playing Field/Pavilion CAT
- Defibrilators
- Summer School

April 2024 Onwards

A new plan will be created for 2025 and beyond. Contributions / ideas from residents will be sought and welcomed.

Village environment / Biodiversity

The council is aware of the need to keep costs down as much as possible so we are looking at the possibility of turning the planted beds and their associated grassed areas into pollinator friendly areas. We will plant pollinator friendly plants which will not require annual replanting.

Playing Field and Pavilion

The wildlife theme started with the hedge and wildlife garden in the play park is being progressed in BCBC's Local Place for Nature in the playing field. The groundworks are expected to begin in September 2024 and the initial planting done in the spring 2025. Maintenance equipment will be purchased as soon as the Community Asset Transfer is completed.

Play Park

With the installation of the last piece of play equipment, the bike stands and relevant signage his project will be completed in 2024. There will be the usual maintenance of the equipment and the native hedge in the future plan.

In Conclusion

The community council will continue to strive to maintain and improve the physical environment for the residents in the Coychurch Lower ward and support the Williams Memorial Hall (as its sole trustee) as a venue for local groups for people of all ages and abilities to meet for recreation, socialisation, exercise, health improvement and education.

Over the next few years the focus will be on the development of the Coychurch Nature and Leisure Park on the site of the playing field, building on the Local Places for Nature project, but the council will welcome any proposals from residents for community projects for the future.

Please contact the Clerk with any suggestions you may have:

email: clerk@coychurchlower-cc.gov.uk

or use the contact page on our website: www.coychurchlower-cc.gov.uk

or by phone on: 07549019798