



# Gilfach Goch Community Council

## Cyngor Cymuned Gilfach Goch



## Adroddiad Blynyddol / Annual Report

### 2024-25

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# Cyflwyniad

*Dyma adroddiad blynyddol Cyngor Cymuned Gilfach Goch ac mae'n grynodeb o waith y Cyngor Cymuned dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf hyd at 31 Mawrth 2025.*

*Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cynnwys adran ar lesiant sy'n trafod yr amcanion llesiant a gyhoeddwyd gan Fwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cwm Taf o fewn gofynion fframwaith Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015.*

## Introduction

Gilfach Goch Community Council's Annual Report is a summary of the work of the council in the year to 31 March 2025.

This report contains a well-being section which addresses the well-being objectives published by Cwm Taf Public Services Board within the framework requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## Cynghorwyr / Councillors

Hendreforgan Ward      Daljinder Athwal & Elizabeth Price

Gilfach Goch Ward      Joan Abbott & Richard Price

Garden Village Ward      Andrew Draper, Julie Rees & Allun Warren

An elected member acts on behalf of the whole community and takes an interest in all issues. They listen to you and represent the views of the community when discussing council business and working with outside bodies. Members play an important part by thinking creatively about what they can do together to improve the lives of local people. The community council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month other than August. These meetings are open to the public and media to observe.

## The following payments were made to councillors in 2024-25

Councillor	Payments for costs incurred – telephone, broadband etc. (max. £208 per cllr.)	Other	Total
Cllr Allun Warren	156	52	
Cllr Elizabeth Price	156	52	
Cllr Daljinder Athwal	156	52	
Cllr Joan Abbott	156	52	
Cllr Julie Rees	156	52	
Cllr Richard Price	156	52	
Cllr Andrew Draper	156	52	
	<b>£1,092</b>	<b>£364</b>	<b>£1,456</b>

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 30<sup>th</sup> September following the end of the year to which the payment relates. This information should also be sent to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales by the same date. Nil returns are also required. See Annex 4 of the Panel's report for more information.

## Staffio / Staffing

Dawn Walters	Clerk and responsible finance officer	20 hrs per week
Huw Jones	Outdoor assets caretaker	12 hrs per week
Russell Scully	Groundsperson, Holly Street allotment	20 hrs per week

## Ein blaenoriaethau gwariant / Our spending priorities

### Sut rydym yn cael ein hariannu / How are we are funded?

The council is funded mostly by the council taxpayer. Other sources of income are the rental of plots at the Holly Street allotment, ground rent for garages and windfarm grants.

### Ble mae'ch arian yn mynd / Where does your money go?

The council agreed a precept of £87,511 to spend on the provision of services in 2024–25. For the council taxpayer the Band D tax levied was £41

The council's budget for 2024–25 was as follows:

INCOME	BUDGET
Balance 31st March 2022	168,931.00
Precept	87,511.00
Allotment rent	700.00
Ground rent	700.00
Misc. income	100.00
Windfarm	5,000.00
VAT	5,264.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268,206.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	
Wages – clerk inc. oncosts	22,000.00
Wages – other inc. oncosts	24,000.00
Chair's allowance	300.00
Employer's NI payments	2,400.00
Windfarm-related projects	5000

<b>ADMIN.</b>	
Office/misc.	3,000.00
Ground rent	5.00
Audit	700.00
Insurance	1,750.00
Water charges	150.00
Electricity	2,000.00
BT phone	500.00
Council tax	1,208.00
Remunerations/Training	2,456.00
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES</b>	
Allotment	10,000.00
Bus shelters	2,000.00
S137 grants	8,000.00
Donations:	3,000.00
Memberships	1,000
Biodiversity project	5,000
New park area/skateboard park	60,000
Fireworks	3,000.00
Christmas/Easter	11,000.00
Fun run	5,000.00
<b>MISC.</b>	
Office refurbishment	60,000.00
VAT PAID	5,264.00
CONTINGENCY	29,473.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268,206.00</b>

# Gilfach Goch community council training plan

## Training for councillors

The following councillors undertook training this year in areas such as local government finance, the law, health and safety, and employment practice: A Draper, A Warren, L Price & R Price.

Councillors are provided with access to:

- The Good Councillors Guide produced by local councils' body One Voice Wales.
- Basic presentations prepared by One Voice Wales include:
  - Induction
  - Code of conduct
  - Local government finance
  - Health and safety
  - The council as an employer
  - Understanding the law.

Councillors are encouraged to request online / face-to-face training by visiting the One Voice Wales website to see the current training schedule. Councillors receive these training opportunities frequently via e-mail.



## Adroddiad Llesiant / Well-being report

The Well-being of Future Generations Act was introduced by the Welsh Government with the aim of improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. It passed into law in 2015.

The act seeks a more joined-up approach between public bodies to think about the long term to create the Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The organisations that make up Cwm Taf Public Services Board are:

• Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	• Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
• Community Rehabilitation Company	• Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
• Interlink	• National Probation Service
• Natural Resources Wales (NRW)	• Public Health Wales
• South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	• South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
• Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT)	• Welsh Government

### Amcan 1:

*Hyrwyddo cymunedau diogel, cryf a ffyniannus sy'n gwella llesiant trigolion ac ymwelwyr ac yn adeiladu ar ein hasedau cymunedol*

#### Objective 1:

**To promote safe, strong and thriving communities, improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets**

The community council will continue to invest in the allotment at Holly Street and will work alongside the Allotment Association. Employing a groundsperson has proved worthwhile. A communal polytunnel has been made available. Allotments are a great way for people of all ages to grow and eat good, healthy food and gain fresh air and exercise. Our allotments are also a place where plot holders come together to share their experiences, learn and support each other. One section is fully accessible. One area has beehives.

This aids the pollination of plants and crops. Bees are the champions of cross-pollination, ensuring the survival of honeybees. Beekeeping can help save honeybee colonies in danger and encourages biodiversity. Keeping bees helps other flora and fauna to flourish by providing nectar and pollen, which in turn helps them to reproduce and build healthy populations. Several bird / bat boxes have been put up in the trees and a hedgehog box has also been positioned.



One area of the allotment is fully accessible and has raised beds. The Friends of the Gilfach Goch Day Centre and their families make use of this area with the raised beds.

### **Actions within the next three years to ensure biodiversity**

The community council is working towards further actions within the next three years aimed at a wider range of activities to protect, enhance and create the habitats required to ensure biodiversity within the village:

- applying for nature packs via Keep Wales Tidy
- a working group has been set up to advance plans for emissions-free hydropower in the village. It will, if realised, necessarily respect and encourage biodiversity and wildlife, and help take our community towards net zero and electrification
- a wildlife pond at the allotments
- the village has set up a wildlife and biodiversity group which has created a wildlife information board for the new seating area near the waterfall / duck pond at the top end of the village.

The works at the allotment planned for 2025 are to begin clearing an area troubled with knotweed. Gilfach Goch community council works closely with Miskin Tree Services. They regularly work alongside qualified ecologists and have a keen interest in protecting the environment. They:

- only use biodegradable chain oils and splash trays
- check all tree splits, twists and cavities for bats before working on them
- check for nests
- check the ground for wildlife – aquatic, dormice, bumblebees etc. around the drop zone before work.

The £5000 biodiversity budget was spent on the following:

**£3000 to Hendreforgan School** for developing outdoor areas. There is so much ground space that is currently underused, with much potential for this to enhance the curriculum offer. Part one of the outdoor development project is underway, following a successful application to the RCT Multiply project. With parents' involvement, the end product will be multi-purpose seating areas at school, two in the nursery garden in the form of U-shape planters with bench seating attached, and another area alongside the junior yard and field. It will consist of planters and benches. This will provide a designated place for pupils to grow fruit and vegetables but also provide the opportunity for a seating area for the juniors, as well as outdoor story-telling areas in the nursery garden.

The next stage of development is an area behind the junior block for a 'growing garden' with large planters alongside the existing gardening shed. The area can be fenced off with space for planters for each of the classes in years 1-6. This is an ideal opportunity to develop the curriculum offer and provide something for those who struggle to access more formal approaches to learning. The learning opportunities and potential for skill development are endless. This would also align with the current cluster vision of developing 'forest schools', something the school is exploring.

There is a second area, Part 3 of development regarding the possibility of installing an outdoor classroom, work benches, a manufactured pond area and further structures for growing produce.

**£2000 to the Gilfach Goch Community Association (GGCA)** to further develop the allotments and areas next to the centre: extra wildlife and growing areas, fruit trees, additional infrastructure to improve access and signage.

## **Walking the footpaths around Gilfach Goch**

Many Gilfach Goch residents are keen naturalists. Walking the footpaths around the area is a popular pastime. Several people have expressed an interest in walking all the mapped footpaths. There was talk of footpaths being undesignated if not actively used but we understand the proposal has been withdrawn by the Welsh Government. However, walking interest remains.

Walkers are asked to proactively report on biodiversity issues which the community or county borough council could address.

Biodiversity projects – such as establishing bird boxes and nature corners – could be encouraged and developed in the village schools and with community organisations. One school in the village has undertaken forest-based learning activities.

## Gilfach Goch Community Facility (formerly the Day Centre in High Street)



The community council continues to support the facility. It celebrated its 30th anniversary on 26 September with special thanks to Paula Pope, the cook for 30 years.

*Celebrating 30 years*

## ***Amcan 2: Helpu pobl i fyw bywydau hir ac iach a goresgyn unrhyw heriau /*** **Objective 2: To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges**



With the Olympics in full swing the community council held its own event. The annual children's forestry run / fun day took place in August with 118 participants tackling the tough terrain to earn their own gold medal.

The long-awaited refurbishment of the skateboard park at Hendreforgan was completed in November. The community council contributed £20,000.



## Fireworks and Breakfast with Santa

A bonfire night fireworks display was held in Tonyrefail on 3 November in conjunction with Tonyrefail community council. Both community councils funded the event. Tickets were sold for £1.50, and all proceeds went to the Fire Service Benevolent Fund. Gilfach Goch fire station crews were the organisers. Corey Elkins, the event organiser, said the fireworks display was yet another successful evening.



The community council hosted a Christmas pantomime for all pupils of Hendreforgan School along with Breakfast with Santa at the GGCA for reception and nursery classes. They were joined by Messy Monsters Day Care and Lil Amigos parent and toddler group.

We part-funded a Christmas in the Park event organised by the Families Supporting Families group.



The Day Centre held its Christmas dinner, where the Friends of Gilfach Goch Day Centre presented everyone with a gift bag as part of their Operation Santa, which was part-funded by Gilfach Goch community council.

## Community grants

The community council makes funding – known as S137 community grants – available to local groups and organisations. These groups are vital to the richness and diversity of community life and activities and the council is proud to exercise this important role to support them. In the review year, grants went to the following:

<b>Garden Village Ladies Arts &amp; Crafts Class</b>	<b>£300</b>
<b>Moriah Chapel</b>	<b>£1,000</b>
<b>Hendreforgan Community Primary School</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Messy Monsters Day Nursery</b>	<b>£300</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Community Singers</b>	<b>£300</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Old People's Welfare Fund</b>	<b>£800</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Watercolour Society</b>	<b>£150</b>
<b>Bethel Methodist Church</b>	<b>£1,000</b>
<b>St. Barnabas Church Community Shop</b>	<b>£100</b>
<b>Gilfach Bushi-Kai Karate</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Tonyrefail &amp; Gilfach Goch Community Defib</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Swn Yr Afon Tenants' Social Fund</b>	<b>£800</b>
<b>Red Valley FC</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Lil Amigos Parent &amp; Toddler Group</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Ladies Bowls</b>	<b>£200</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Quilting Group</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Friends of Gilfach Goch Day Centre</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Families Supporting Families</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Community Pantry</b>	<b>£500</b>
<b>Gilfach Goch Food Bank</b>	<b>£300</b>



£5,000 was received from the Mynydd Portref Wind Farm and allocated as follows:

<b>Gilfach Goch OAP Welfare</b>	<b>£2,000</b>
<b>Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail</b>	<b>£3,000</b>

## Remembrance Sunday

The community council, along with the Gilfach Goch Community Association, ensured that a Remembrance Sunday service took place at the cenotaph in Evanstown Welfare Park. The clerk, Dawn Walters, led the service and members of the churches in the village, Borough Councillor Aurfron Roberts, Chris Bryant MP and pupils of Hendreforgan and Abercerdin schools took part. A white poppy wreath symbolising peace was laid by the community council, and Ogmore Valley Community Council laid a lamp of peace. Refreshments were served at the pavilion.



Residents of Swn Yr Afon collaborated to recycle plastic bottles into poppies. Approximately 300 bottles were collected, cut into pieces and painted by the group to create the poppies for the display. Once the poppies were complete, holes were punched in them and secured with wires. The display (see above) has been proudly displayed on either side of the gates of Swn Yr Afon.

Community councillor Joan Abbott decorated a grassed area with poppies.

### **Amcan 3:**

*Tyfu economi leol gref â seilwaith sy'n denu pobl i fyw, gweithio a chwarae yn RhCT /*

### **Objective 3:**

**To grow a resilient local economy with infrastructure that attracts people to live, work and play in RCT**

Gilfach Goch has grown rapidly over the past few years with new housing being built. According to the 2021 census, the village had a population of 3,337, down from 3,436 in 2011. RCT made progress on dualling parts of the A4119, which is intended to ease traffic flow.

## **Infrastructure**

The community council is committed to investing in the provision of bus shelters to encourage more people to use sustainable transport. We work closely with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. Unfortunately, these shelters continue to be vandalised.

We invest in benches. They provide much needed respite for people walking around our community and increase the likelihood of people walking instead of driving. These benches are well placed throughout the community and are pleasant for people to sit and enjoy some of the spectacular views on offer in our area. They also have an added benefit of encouraging people of differing abilities to get out and about, safe in the knowledge that there are places to stop and rest on the way.

The community council is a consultee of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council planning department for all planning applications in the community. This provides another local voice to ensure residents' voices are heard. Community councillors represent the people living in their local area at the closest level to the community.

The community council contributes towards the local playgrounds in conjunction with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. There are plans for a new play area at the top of High Street.

## **Supporting local businesses**

Wherever possible, the community council utilises local businesses and contractors to undertake any work needed. This circular economy approach gives the maximum boost to the local economy by keeping spending local. What goes into the local economy tends to stay local.



## Christmas lights

The council provides, funds and maintains the Christmas light features on lamp posts for a pleasant, festive environment. This year the council provided Christmas trees to local businesses, shops and public houses.



## A greener and more sustainable place

Gilfach Goch community council has a vision of making the village a greener and more sustainable place to live and work. Climate crisis, soaring energy bills that are hitting the poor the hardest, the urgent need to reduce reliance on climate-harming fossil fuels demand we redouble our efforts to find alternatives.

The allotments in Holly Street are being developed and expanded and are already a sustainable source of community food.

We have begun investigating the potential for generating hydropower from our river, the Ogwr Fach. We are aware it has been attempted before, and we will learn the lessons of history. What was unviable before may be viable now. Renewable energy sources are more important than ever as they reduce the impact of fossil fuel-based energy.

The Welsh Government's Energy Saving Trust sets out 30 steps to be achieved in any successful hydropower project. Each step should be completed before passing on to the next. That means the project can be halted at any stage if it is found to be unviable. We have a working group and ideas for using community energy are welcome.

Protecting our biodiversity is also key for a greener society. The community council is taking part in RCT's 'Let's Talk Wildflowers' scheme. It means plotting areas in RCT on an interactive map to be considered for wildflower management.

## ***Edrych ymlaen i 2025/26 / Looking forward to 2025-26***

On 20 February 2025, the community council acquired the White Hut in Cambrian Avenue for its headquarters via the RCT community asset transfer scheme. It is intended to be more cost effective than renovating the existing offices and has the potential to also function as a community resource.



**Gilfach Goch Community Council**  
**Cyngor Cymuned Gilfach Goch**