

***Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6***

***The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019***

**RHOSLLANNERCHRUGOG COMMUNITY COUNCIL**



**INTRODUCTION AND CONTENT**

Rhosllannerchrugog Community Council serves approximately 10,000 residents and 6,000 households. It is made up of 3 County Borough electoral wards being Ponciau with 2 members, Pant with 1 member and Johnstown with 1 member. There are 5 community electoral wards, Rhos, Ponciau North, Ponciau South, Johnstown and Pant served by 18 Councillors. There is also a Youth Council, with representatives of all schools within the community that attend along with representatives from the village that attend feeder schools for seniors.

The Community Council office is situated at Bryn Maelor, Peter Street, Rhosllannerchrugog, LL14 1RG, located at the back of the Stiwt Theatre. There are 2 full time Community Staff, 1 Clerk, 1 Deputy Clerk and a Community Agent.

The precept requirement for 2019/20 was £249,850 and as such falls within the requirement to report annually on its contribution to the Public Service Board Well-being and Future Generations Act Plan.

The following are located within the Community Council boundary:

- **Rhosllannerchrugog Cemetery** - located between Cemetery Road & Stryt Las in Rhosllannerchrugog is fully owned by the Community Council. Passed onto the Community Council from the Church of St John and the oldest grave in place starting in 1884. Records maintained by the Community Council from this date, all have been computerised.

- **Schools** – There are 3 schools in the Community catering for age 3-11years and 1 school of 11-16 English medium mixed comprehensive
  1. **Ysgol Maes y Mynydd** - was established as a result of the amalgamation of three local schools in September 2008. The school is in the village of Rhosllannerchrugog. It caters for pupils aged between three and 11 years, most of whom live in the village.  
Currently, there are 360 pupils on roll, including 38 nursery children on a part-time basis. Around 36% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is above the local and national averages.  
Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity. Around 6% of pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils speak Welsh at home. The school identifies around 22% of its pupils as having additional learning needs and around 1% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
  2. **Ysgol ID Hooson** – Welsh medium school. In September 2007, the school moved to a new site above the village of Rhosllannerchrugog. It is a modern school suitable for the twenty first century. The school is named after the poet I.D. Hooson, who originates from the village and who was renowned throughout Wales as the friend of Welsh children.
  3. **Ysgol Yr Hafod** - Situated in Johnstown, Wrexham part of the Rhos community and are committed to providing a high quality education for children aged between 3 and 11. The school is on 2 sites: Foundation Phase (Melyd Avenue) and Key Stage 2 (on Bangor Road).
  4. **Ysgol Y Grango** – A senior school of 11-16 English medium mixed comprehensive situated on Vinegar Hill, Rhos.
- **Play Areas** - There are nine equipped play areas, which include 4 multi use games areas, a skate park and a BMX track located at Ponciau Banks park. 5 play areas/MUGAs are now in the ownership of Rhosllannerchrugog Community Council, on a full repair lease arrangement from Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC). The remaining areas on Ponciau Banks Park are in the process of being transferred via a full maintenance lease arrangement from WCBC.
- **Bowling greens** – there are 2 bowling greens in the Community, 1 based at Ponciau Banks park where there are 2 greens, 1 maintained to match level, 1 maintained to practise/public use level, site houses a pavilion currently still in the ownership of WCBC. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is based on Bryn Avenue, Johnstown and run locally.
- **Community centres** – There are 2 Community Centres in the Community, 1 based at Heol Eifion, Gardden Road, Rhos. Managed by a Committee, lease transferred to the committee and grants awarded by the Community Council to enhance the facility. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is based on Heol Kenyon, Johnstown.

Devolved to the Community Council in June 2018, managed via self-service access by user groups, fully funded by the Community Centre, awaiting full maintenance lease transfer.

- **Public toilets** – Devolved service in April 2014, work with a local charity Community Café, to open/close/clean etc. Funded by the Community Council with a donation made to the Charity to manage on a daily basis. Garden area and maintenance around the facility managed by the Community Staff.
- **Streetlighting** – 534 streetlights in total, all converted to LEDs in Summer 2018. Funded via an interest free Salix loan, Welsh Government backed project - £69,809. Approximate 60% savings on energy, will cover loan repayments. Approximate 80% savings on annual maintenance costs, will reinvest into extra lighting where required.
- **Football sites** – There are 4 football sites in the Community
  1. All Weather Pitch, Ysgol Y Grango, been in place 15 years, part funded by the Community Council, taken over by the school.
  2. Johnstown Football pitches, Heol Kenyon. Accompanied by changing facility situated next to the Community Centre, under lease by the Johnstown Football club with WCBC. Well used, well supported. RCC awarded grants for new kit etc.
  3. Rhos Aelwyd FC – Based on Ponciau park site, currently undergoing renovation due to landfill grant, new facilities to be built with the required installation of a stand as their league requires. RCC funding towards £25K, well used, well supported facility.
  4. Pant Site – football training pitches available.
- **Rugby Site**– Based on Pant Site bordering Penycae community, supported by Rhos Community. Have been awarded Landfill & Sports Wales grants for improvements such as floodlighting, fencing & new facilities. Rhos CC fully supported.
- **Ponciau Banks** – As appropriately named, on a hill and originally built by the miners in 1920s, formerly the site of surface coal digging. HLF funding allowed a total refurbishment, play area moved back to its original positioning following the infill of mineshafts in the area.
- **Stryt Las** -Located at Cwm Glas Road, Off Park Street, Johnstown and managed by WCBC. The park is open all year and has facilities such as: Car Parking, Access for disabled, School parties, Guided walks/talks. Local schools work on projects within the park.

Stryt Las Park is an important habitat for the Great Crested Newt, lying between Rhos and Johnstown this area of grassland, woodland and ponds provides an excellent home for amphibians. Frogs, Toads, Smooth newts and Palmate newts are all found in the park, but it is the Great crested newts that make the site so special. Great crested newts are rare across their home of

Northern Europe, but the low lying areas around Wrexham are a stronghold for these amphibians. Measuring up to six inches in length, the males grow a spectacular crest to attract females during the breeding season. The females lay their eggs in the ponds in April and May, the young living in the water before emerging onto the land in August. Stryt Las Park along with Bonc yr Hafod is part of the Johnstown Special Area of Conservation due to its Great crested Newts, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

With surfaced pathways around the park, Stryt Las is accessible for you to explore, watch the waterfowl and look out for the giant newt sculpture.

- **Dog Bag dispensers & Bins** – Council have installed 12 dog bag dispensers around the community, 24 hour access to bags and also available from the Community Council office, education and availability. Also installed 20 new bins during 2019/20 to encourage usage.
- **Cenotaphs, Churches & chapels**– There are 2 Cenotaph sites in the Community, 1 based on the High Street in Johnstown, at a junction with traffic lights and 1 based on Hill Street Rhosllannerchrugog. Both maintained by the Community Council and arranged Remembrance Day services are held alternately, using St David’s Church in Rhos and St Mary’s church in Johnstown as part of the service.

There are several chapels still open in the community, with some that have closed down having been converted to residential where possible.

- **Public Houses** – formerly up to 25 plus Public Houses were in the community, only a very few remaining, some of the older properties having been converted to residential.
- **Benches** – Installed several new benches in the community to commemorate the WW1 anniversaries and also support the events with lamppost poppies and a metal poppy display on the hill cenotaph.
- **Landfill site** – Johnstown - Cory Environmental Resource Management announced the acquisition of the Hafod Quarry and Landfill site from Mersey Waste Holdings.

It formerly took over the ownership and operation of the landfill situated in Johnstown, near Wrexham, informing the local community of the change via a newsletter mailed to residents.

The site has a permit from the Environment Agency Wales to accept a range of non-hazardous waste for disposal at the site.

The site currently being managed by Enovert. Working with the local community to implement its high environmental standards and to look at methods of improving the operation of the landfill in the future – liaison committee in place.

- **Llwyd Enion tar lagoon** – The Llwyn Einion chemical lagoon at Rhosllannerchrugog has festered for decades but a new development could signal the beginning of the end for the site. Managed by WCBC who continue working, collecting samples for analysis to obtain updated information about the acid tar. Work continues to resolve the matter of this site.

## Action Report

How the Council assists biodiversity (through functions with regard to land management, grant funding, education activities)

| Action carried out to:                                 |  | Monitored by:   |
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| -embed biodiversity into decision making & procurement | <p>Consideration to the declaration of a climate change emergency ongoing discussion.</p> <p>Converted the internal and external lighting in the Community Council Office to led lamps</p>                                     | <p>Evidence within reports of the Council considering biodiversity as part of its decision-making process.</p> <p>Interest free loans to allow the adaptation of LED streetlights. Included the capital costs within the annual budget to repay the loan. Amount of money spent on projects</p> |
| raise awareness of biodiversity & its importance       | <p>The Community Council encourage litter picks with local groups and schools. Clean up events in the community, arranged mutually with local members and WCBC environmental.</p>  | <p>Excess amount of rubbish collected. Ongoing events within some Wards supported by Keep Wales Tidy. Working with the Principal Authority to provide an effective litter picking service and bin emptying service agreed with the installation by the community council of extra bins.</p>     |
| Safeguard principal species and habitats               | <p>Community Council support local schools, WCBC and other partner organisations to maintain the habitats and tree planting projects -Stryt las Park &amp; Bonc yr Hafod. Includes draining the pool to count the habitat.</p> | <p>Wrexham Parks, Countryside and Public Rights of Way Service offers an extensive environmental education</p>  |

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|  |   | programme. The country parks provide an excellent educational resource for Foundation phase and KS2, to study a wide range of topics covering a number of curriculum areas. |
| Restore & create habitats and resilient ecological networks  | Restore lost trees within the Cemetery boundary due to adverse wind conditions.   | Will be working with local schools, WCBC officers and local members to set a program in place for trees.  |
| tackle negative factors: for e.g. reduce pollution, use nature based solutions, address invasive species | Encourage use of composters in public areas, Cemetery. Support ongoing plastics issue, encourage re-use of plastic flowers at Cemetery site.<br><br>Work with Borough Council housing to hold Clean Up Days.                  | Council better informed<br>Introduced a policy to ban single use plastics in Community Council offices.<br><br>Ongoing dialogue with Principal Authority.                   |
| use improve and share evidence   | ongoing issues of fly tipping, littering etc.   | Contact with WCBC   |
| support capacity and/or other organisations  | The Community Council funds many local groups and encourages involvement with local projects.<br><br>Friends groups formed to continue funding projects, landfill grant applications, with in the area of funding advantages. | Grant applications considered annually, number of grants awarded for community activities and further events throughout the calendar year.                                  |
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## Review of s6 duty

- **What has worked well?**

Encourage local groups to carry out litter picks. Local groups and schools involved. Raising awareness of issues through publicity. Bringing agencies, businesses and community groups together who had not previously worked as partners.

To consider further The Green Infrastructure Project, how it can potentially make a significant difference within the community on issues of biodiversity and ecology.

The Miners half wheel and Ponciau Banks park are a constant reminder of the history in the Community along with the brick display on Church Street junction, all maintained in house.

- **What have the barriers been?**

The Community Council continues to maintain its ground, there are several planters within the community, which are tended by staff and further investigating improvements. Cemetery grounds are growing, more services being devolved to be maintained by the current staff.

Competing budgetary demands can restrict new initiatives and have cost implications.

Challenges to maintain the flow of information to residents within the community is a challenge and can be costly. Not all embrace social media and so inclusivity can be demanding.

- **What will you change?**

Increase liaison with Wexham CBC's Biodiversity Officer and seek advice whenever necessary.

Continue to encourage and support schools, community groups and residents more to fully participate in events and projects to raise awareness.

- **How and when will the s6 duty be monitored and the s6 plan reviewed?**

The Duty will be monitored by Members and the Clerk with a quarterly agenda item at Burial & General Purposes meetings.

The plan will be developed and reviewed in response to new initiatives, Evidence and information that may become available to the Council.