

COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

John Wagstaff – Chair
Kyle Park (stepped down)
Jan Bartlett
Bryn Harries
Dayna Hayes
Rebecca Hughes (Vice Chair)
Keith Jones
Michael Weekes
Vacancy

Community Councillors are elected every five years. As vacancies arise in between elections, residents can apply to become a Community Councillor. Vacancies will be advertised on the village noticeboards and on the Council's website www.penhowcommunity.org

If a vacancy is not filled by election, the Council can co-opt a Councillor to the Council.

Councillors can be contacted through the clerk on clerk@penhowcommunity.org or 07785 747 762



Penhow Community Council

Annual Report September 2024

Welcome to the annual report of Penhow Community Council for the period 2023-24

What is the role of a Community Council?

The Penhow Community Council website gives a well-rounded description of the role of a Community Council. It states,

'The main role of any Community Council is to represent the interests and views of the community which is done by liaising with a Unitary Authority – in our case, Newport City Council. Often this is very mundane work such as reporting potholes in our roads, but sometimes it involves organising public meetings to discuss much larger issues. We are also asked to look at all planning applications put forward for our Village. The objective there is to look out for issues that might affect the community. We may also need to liaise with local Police, Water and Health Authorities or respond to initiatives from private and corporate bodies when their plans may impact on our Village. Individual Councillors are not allowed to take part in discussions of any works that they themselves are involved with.'

The Community Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month except for August in line with most other Community Councils. Members of the public are always welcome to attend the regular Community Council meetings where there is an opportunity to ask questions before the business of the meeting starts. Here individuals can raise issues relating to the village etc.

The Community Council comprises 8 Community Councillors and a Clerk who is also the Responsible Finance Officer. Council elections occur every four years in conjunction with local authority elections.

The Community Council's year starts in May with an Annual Meeting and runs through to the following April.

Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting, a Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the other Councillors for the forthcoming year.



The Council's logo was designed by Cllr Viv Blandford and depicts the community of Penhow.



The Clerk to the Council is the only staff member of Penhow Community Council

Residents can contact the Clerk by email, telephone or by post:

Beverly Cawley

clerk@penhowcommunity.org

07785747762

Yr Hen Berllan,
Common-y-coed, Magor
NP26 3AX

Councillors at the start of the Community Council's year 2023-2024.

At the Annual Meeting in May 2023, Cllr Viv Blandford indicated that she would be standing down. Cllr Blandford is a very talented artist and in fact designed the logo which the Council adopted as the header for all communications. During her time with the Community Council, Cllr Blandford contributed greatly to the Council's development always being involved in what was going on including organising 'Penhow Pickers' (Litter Picking) and being one of the organisers of the very successful 'Party in the Parc' event which recognised a return to some form of normality after the trials and tribulations of the Covid Pandemic. Viv also was a force in initiating the Remembrance display which together with the Women's Institute is situated on Greenmeadow Drive in November each year. Cllr Blandford's input to the Council will be missed.

This meant that at the start of the Community Council year the Council comprised of the following members.

**Cllr Jan Bartlett Cllr Bryn Harries Cllr Becky Hughes Cllr Keith Jones
Cllr Kyle Park Cllr John Wagstaff Cllr Michael Weekes
Clerk and RFO Mrs. Nicola Sutherland**

Cllr John Wagstaff was elected Chair for the coming year and Cllr Kyle Park was elected Vice Chair.

Vacancies

When a Councillor steps down, the unitary authority must be informed, and a notice of vacancy is posted. If there is no response from individuals calling for an election, the Community Council has the right to co-opt an individual onto the Council.

Where there is a call for an election, the unitary authority will arrange a casual vacancy election. These can be very expensive.

Clerk to the Council

Undoubtedly one of the most important roles within the Council set up is that of Clerk. Not only does the Clerk undertake the administrative link to the workings of the Council, taking minutes, displaying them on our notice boards and publishing on our website and preparing documents for official agencies e.g. the yearly audit, they are also the Responsible Finance Officer. This role includes monitoring Councils' finances, providing up-to-date figures for monthly meetings and paying bills where required. Finances are also monitored monthly.

Our clerk, Nicola Sutherland, decided to leave us at the end of the year because she was leaving the area. Mrs. Sutherland was an excellent Clerk and at the time it was felt that it would be difficult to replace her. Nicola's last meeting was in February 2024. We wish her every success in the future!

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

Penhow forms part of the Bishton & Langstone Ward of Newport City Council.

There are two Ward Councillors:

City Cllr Will Routley

william.routley@newport.gov.uk

City Cllr Ray Mogford

ray.mogford@newport.gov.uk

The Community Council works closely with both elected City Councillors.

They regularly attend the Community Council's monthly meetings where they are updated with any concerns or issues that need further action by Newport City Council.

They also update the Community Council with ongoing work that they are involved with *(and able to share the details of)*.

After advertising the post and sifting through applications, the Council interviewed and appointed Mrs. Beverly Cawley to the post (March 2024). Bev has exceeded expectations and has made the role her own. Not only has she brought a plethora of experience to the role but also keeps us in check!

Ward Councillors

Penhow is part of Bishton & Langstone Ward and as such is represented by two Ward Councillors who are elected via the Local Government elections.

At present, our ward Councillors are Will Routley and Ray Mogford. Although they do not have to attend our Community Council meetings, they both attend regularly and help us address Newport City Council issues. They have both been very proactive in supporting Penhow, its Community Council and its residents.

Finance

In looking at the operation of the Community Council, an obvious question to ask is:

'How is it funded and where does the money go?'

The money for the operation of the Community Council is funded from an annual precept. Towards the end of each year, the Community Council reviews expenditure and decides how much is needed to keep things running for the next financial year. The figure agreed is passed to Newport City Council and they add it to the Council Tax raised from each household in the area. The amount is marked up on your Council Tax bills.

Our biggest outgoings are for refurbishment/replacement of playground items, insurance, grass cutting, allocating funds for events put on by the Community Council e.g. 'Party in the Parc' and the proposed 'D-Day' commemoration proposed for June 2024, grants and general administration. Being proactive, if we feel a piece of equipment needs to be replaced or carry out a large project, we plan and put monies aside accordingly.

We provide grants for local organisations e.g. Scouts, Penhow Shop and St John's Hall being good examples. The criteria for funding are quite strict and proof of what is being requested and how it will benefit Penhow in some form is required.

Applications for funding open in June and must be sent to the Community Council by the end of August in any given year. The Council then decides how much, if anything, will be granted to an organisation. Funding per application is limited at present to £350 maximum but this figure is reviewed annually.

The Community Council reports are audited both internally and externally (Wales Audit Office) each year. *(the results of audits can be found on our website)*



What have we addressed this year?

I do not intend to work through the year month by month but to highlight significant developments/ issues etc.

A good place to start is with our financial position at the start of the new 'Community Council' year. On May 19th, 2023, our balance stood at £26,629.69. At the April meeting, 2024 the balance was £14,559.89.

The Community Council's up-to-date finances are published after our monthly meetings and are found either on our website or on the noticeboards which are sited throughout the village. They show outgoings etc.

At the beginning of the Council's year significant payments were made for a new noticeboard on the A48 after the previous one had been demolished due to a car accident. Also, the junior play deck in the play area was totally refurbished by ALS who did an excellent job. Both projects cost significant sums.

Walking Path - A significant development for the Community Council and the village in general was the decision to extend the walking path so that it completed a circuit of the park. Work commenced early in June. The extension of the walking path is an excellent example of forward planning as this project had been discussed for a few years but could only be completed when finances allowed. The advantages of the extension of the path cannot be underestimated. It opened the park to villagers who were unable to access this lovely area due to accessibility issues. On completion, feedback has continued to be favourable. Once again, this work meant a significant financial investment from Penhow C.C.

Interestingly one visitor from Langstone offered to donate to the Council because the park was kept in such good order and was a pleasure to visit. The donation was politely refused as the Council felt that the upkeep of the park etc. was their responsibility and that it was funded accordingly.

Wildflower areas - Since being established, they have continued to flourish. A big thank you needs to go the Cllr Michael Weekes for the establishment of the flower beds and regular maintenance. Cllr Weekes also monitors the weeding on the edges of the walking path and 'keeps them at bay!

Appointment of new Councillor

Having lost a councillor at the beginning of the council year and no-one initially showing an interest in the post, we were permitted to advertise to co-opt a councillor. By the time that we had our July meeting, an individual had come forward. Dayna Hayes attended our July meeting with a view to taking up a seat as a Councillor. At this meeting she held a 'watching brief' looking at how the council meetings functioned etc.





Grant Funding to the Community

In 2023-24 the following grants were given:

- **£500**
St John's Hall
support to help with maintenance of the hall.
- **£198**
Penhow Village Shop
to provide a notice board.
- **£500**
1st Wentwood Scouts
towards new camping equipment
- **£500**
1st Wentwood Scouts
firework display
- **£250**
Penhow Baptist Chapel
towards the lighting of the Christmas tree at the chapel

Dayna was interviewed during the summer recess with a view to taking up a seat at the September meeting.

Park

The good weather that we experienced during the summer months meant the park was well used by walkers, dog walkers and families. The attractions being the children's play area and the great green open spaces.

One of the downsides of the good weather was that visitors stayed on till later in the evening with complaints coming from residents backing onto the park that ball games were being played well after 9 p.m. There were also reports that illegal substances were allegedly being consumed both at the park and on the green at the top of Market Road. Flyers were distributed by the Community Council on what to do if they suspected that there were drug related issues. There was also one example of anti-social behaviour in that a group of visitors put a portable barbeque into one of the bins provided for dog poo bags. As the BBQ was still alight, the bin burnt out. After this was cleared by the Community Council a new one was ordered and sited by Cllrs Wagstaff and Jones.

A highlight of the park calendar is the Bonfire and Fireworks display put on by the 1st Wentwood Scouts. This is always an unmitigated success, and this year was no different. Penhow Community Council supports the event by providing the venue and by giving a donation towards the purchase of the fireworks.

The event was once again very well organised by the scouts. Proceeds from the night finance the scouts for the year. Well done to them and to Ian Henderson who organises the event and supervises the firework display.

During the year ROSPA (June) undertakes an inspection of the park and the equipment which is provided there for visitors. No crucial issues were identified, but those highlighted were addressed by the Council.

To celebrate the accession of King Charles III, it was decided to plant a commemorative oak tree in the park. Cllr Weekes was tasked with looking into sourcing a suitable tree. A site had been identified and the tree would be planted in the Autumn 2023. A plaque would be added later in the year.

Grants

As already stated, the Council makes grants to local organisations. Applications can be submitted from June and grants made in September.

This year, £2,000 was allocated towards grants, with £1,848 being used.
(Details of grants awarded can be seen in the left-hand column)

Useful Information:

Penhow Community Council
07785 747 762
clerk@penhowcommunity.org
www.penhowcommunity.org

Penhow Village Shop
07726 936214

St John's Hall – booking
enquiries Mrs L Stephens 01633
400888 or see website
www.stjohnshallpenhow.co.uk

1st Wentwood Scout Group
01633 892126

Grayhill Surgery, Caldicot
01291 420282

Ringland Medical Practice
01633 277011

Underwood Health Centre
01633 413258

Newport City Council
01633 656656

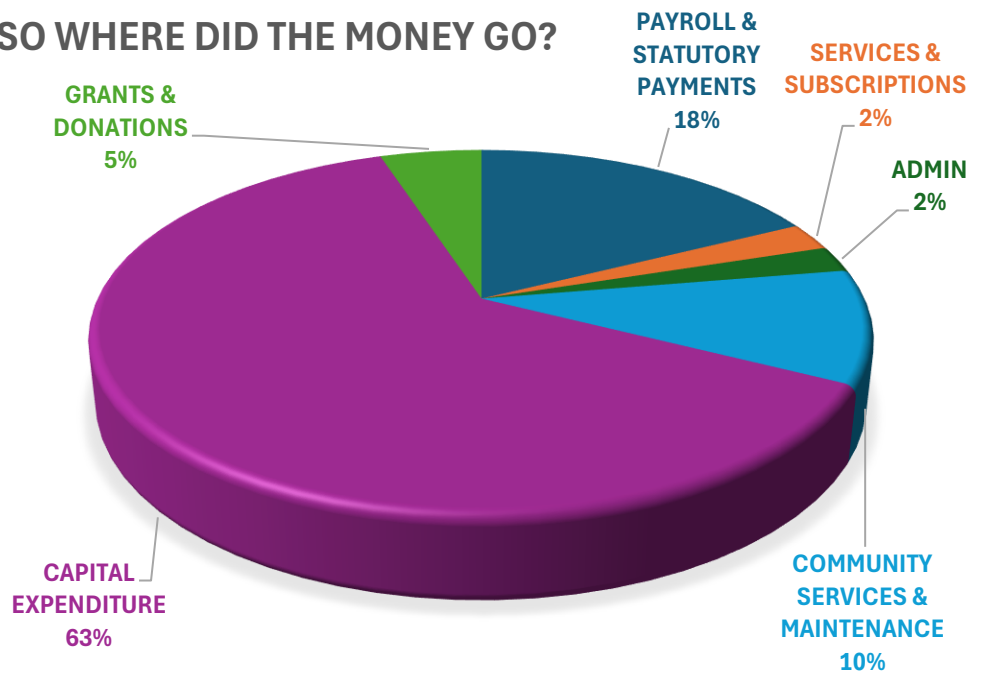
Newport and Gwent
Samaritans
0330 094 5717

Newport Citizens Advice
01633 222622

Childline
0800 1111

NHS Direct 111
Emergency services 999
Emergency services non-
emergency number 101

SO WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?



Village Matters

An ongoing issue throughout the year related to the recycling bins situated on the A48 near Britannia Motors. The bins were full and NCC were not taking action to empty them although they did provide the Community Council with several reasons why this could not be done. Fly tipping had become an issue and as such, on the request of Penhow Community Council CCTV was installed to monitor the situation.

Potholes, parking around the village and speeding issues were also raised on a regular basis both by Councillors and villagers who attended the monthly meetings. A 'day of action' was requested from the Police to raise speeding/parking issues around the village, in particular Market Rd.

The siting of the polling booth in Parc Seymour was also raised by residents living in Rockfield Close. When sited, it took up parking spaces which were usually used by residents. A meeting was held with NCC and after walking around the village, it was decided to ask the Coffee Shop if it could be used for elections. This was agreed.

Newport CC's Replacement Local Development Plan recommended the building of a significant number of houses in the Langstone area. Although this did not directly affect Penhow, the knock-on effect on transport infrastructure, school places, SSSI's, Public transport, Drainage etc. would be significant. Community Councillors attended meetings in relation to this. The Community Council submitted a response to the proposed Revised Local Development Plan drafted by Councillor Harries and agreed unanimously by the Council. At present this situation is ongoing.



**Find us on Facebook- search:
Penhow Community Council**



An ongoing issue concerned the access/exit at Penyworlod Lane. Due to lack of good visibility, turning onto the A48 was becoming increasingly dangerous. Site meetings have been held with NCC, Ward Councillors and residents. The consensus was that action needed to be taken to better the situation. It seems at present that NCC does not have the funds to carry out work on this.

One villager asked if they could run keep fit classes in the park. This provoked lengthy discussions as to how this would affect the Council's lease of the park, any effect on residents living in the vicinity of the park and parking. Discussions surrounding this are ongoing.

A Facebook page and WhatsApp group were set up for the Community Council.

Future events

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Allied Invasion of Europe it was decided to hold an event in the Playing Fields (June 8th, 2024). The beacon would also be lit and a small ceremony to commemorate the event on June 6th. Planning continued throughout the year led by Councillor Hughes.

The annual Bonfire and Firework display will once again take place.

Conclusion

As you will see, the Community Council gets through a mountain of work during the year. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by a group of dedicated Councillors who work very well as a group. The change of Clerk has been very smooth, and the expertise/experience of Mrs. Cawley has helped the Council enormously. If there is anything that I have omitted I apologise, and it is not intentional.

John Wagstaff
Chair, Penhow Community Council



