



Cwmbran Community Council  
Cyngor Cymuned Cwmbrân

## “IMPROVING WELL- BEING IN CWMBRAN”



## Cwmbran Community Council Annual Report 2015



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## **Introduction**

*Welcome to this Annual Report.*

*I hope that you will enjoy reading about the work of Cwmbran Community Council and the people we serve.*

*I would like to thank the elected members and officers of the Council for their hard work this year.*

*I would also like to thank the many individuals and organisations who have worked with us to improve the wellbeing of the communities of Cwmbran. I have been especially pleased to see so many young people taking an interest in our activities and services.*

*Finally, I wish to thank everybody who donated towards my nominated charity this year, SSAFA. So many people have donated money or gifts to help raise funds, and I am very grateful to you all. SSAFA provides lifelong support for our Forces and their families. As we remember the centenary of the First World War, it has been a privilege to support the wonderful work they do.*

Councillor S Evans  
Chairman Cwmbran Community Council  
2014/15

## **About This Report**

This report describes how Cwmbran Community Council has contributed to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Cwmbran using Wales-wide sustainable development principles. The report includes details of some of our objectives for the future.

The report covers the municipal year of Councillor S Evans' year of office as Chairman of the Council.

Councillor Evans' year of office commenced in May 2014 and ran for 12 months.

David Collins  
Clerk to Cwmbran Community Council  
2015

## About Cwmbran Community Council

Cwmbran Community Council serves a population of around 30,000 within Torfaen, in the south eastern corner of South Wales. Torfaen occupies the valleys and hills of Gwent.

Cwmbran was created as a “New Town” in 1949, when its existing and traditional villages were developed into a cohesive and vibrant community. Today, Cwmbran is essentially urban in character but with many areas of rural and unspoilt charm.

Cwmbran Community Council is one of the largest Community (town) Councils in Wales. It provides grass roots services to all parts of a diverse and growing community. The Council’s strategic direction is set by its 21 elected Councillors (“members”) who oversee a small team of staff responsible for delivering services on a day to day basis.

Details of the elected members and how to contact them are available at [www.cwmbran.gov.uk](http://www.cwmbran.gov.uk). Notices of Meetings, agendas, reports and minutes can also be viewed here, along with many governance documents and other information about the Council.

The Council derives almost all of its funds from its precept. That is, an additional amount which is added to Council Tax bills based upon the Council’s estimated expenditure. For the financial year 2015/16 the Council has estimated that it needs to spend £593,060. Of this amount, £561,375 will be made up from the precept and the remainder will be funded from the Council’s Reserves

Further information about the Council’s finances, including its annual accounts, can be seen at [www.cwmbran.gov.uk](http://www.cwmbran.gov.uk).

This Report includes examples of many of the Council’s services which are delivered to all age groups in a variety of forms. From our Playschemes which provide Summer Fun for children from 5 years old, to our Gardening & Decorating service targeted at the elderly & infirm. The Report describes how Cwmbran Community Council delivers services which contribute to the well-being of Cwmbran and its communities.

## **Chapter One: A Prosperous Cwmbran.**

- What we think we did well:

We funded community partners such as Cwmbran Centre for Young People who provide training and career opportunities for young people.

We worked with Torfaen Training to provide Work Experience Placements.

We met representatives of Cwmbran Shopping to help understand the contribution made by Cwmbran Shopping to the local economy and identify opportunities for us to work together.

We discussed the Local Development Plan, planning applications, protection of trees & highways issues.

We encouraged & promoted sustainable solutions to environmental matters. We set up a dialogue with a local community woodland.

- What we think we could do better:

We are building good relationships with the local business community. We will look to improve on this even more.

- Some facts & figures

Our Summer Playschemes employed 90 staff and volunteers last year. Many of these came from the local area.

- What you said about us:

"Two weeks would be good as it offers some experience and insight into the work available." (Torfaen Training)

### Every Picture Tells a Story....



*Putting our army of Playscheme staff through their paces on a training day this year!*

## **Chapter Two: A Resilient Cwmbran.**

- What we think we did well:

We encouraged positive attitudes to sustainability and environmental issues, especially amongst young people. Our Junior Schools in Bloom Competition and Schools Eco Quiz promoted positive values amongst Cwmbran pupils.

Our members closely monitor the way the Council is run to ensure we use our resources wisely.

Organisations which we grant aided include local allotments.

Our community partners include Blaen Bran Community Woodland. Thanks for the Christmas Trees guys!

- What we think we could do better:

We will continue to look at ways of working with the community to encourage sustainability. We will work with our partners to make the best use of our resources.

- Some facts & figures

Our members sit on a range of community organisations, adding value to their work, strengthening community relations and reporting back to the Council to ensure public accountability.



- What you said about us:

"Without the help of people like the Council we could not and would not survive."  
(Cwmbran & District Amateur Radio Society)

### Every Picture Tells a Story....



*Proud winners of our Junior Schools in Bloom Competition 2014*

## **Chapter Three: A Healthier Cwmbran.**

- What we think we did well:

Our partner organisation, Cwmbran Centre for Young People (CCYP), provides a range of services to young people aged up to 25 such as weekly healthy cooking classes, a free to use open access supervised gym and counselling and mentoring for help with mental health. The Council contributes annual funding to CCYP to ensure that this continues.

Our Summer Playschemes deliver a balanced programme of inclusive play opportunities to primary school children in Cwmbran. The children are encouraged to learn & develop through play and given every opportunity to participate in active indoor & outdoor play.

By providing the younger generation with these core skills and values we are helping to ensure a healthier Cwmbran for years to come.

- What we think we could do better:

We will keep the above arrangements under review to make sure that they still help us to serve the community in the best way and comply with any new regulations about our Playschemes.

- Some facts and figures

In addition to contributing funds, the Council is also represented on the management committee of CCYP, helping to shape its strategic direction.

- What you said about us:

“On behalf of the children, young people and families who depend on Ty Hafan for comfort, care and support, thank you for your kind donation of £1270.84 being the proceeds from the sponsored walk carried out by the Summer Play Scheme.”

Lynne Carter, Fundraising General Manager, Ty Hafan Hospice

### Every Picture Tells a Story....



*A picture of concentration from our footballers at the Summer Playschemes – supported by an energetic band of “cheerleaders.”*

## **Chapter Four: A More Equal Cwmbran.**

- What we think we did well:

We supported organisations which help people with particular needs in Cwmbran.

We accessed grant funding to ensure that children who needed a little extra help, could attend our Summer Playschemes.

We work with organisations such as the Cwmbran Centre for Young People, to help young people fulfil their potential.

- What we think we could do better:

We will deliver a Playscheme through the medium of Welsh in 2015.

- Some facts & figures

The Council has increased its budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2015/16. This means that we can support even more organisations who make such a difference to people's lives.

- What you said about us:

"The Wales Gurkha Community wishes to express our sincere appreciation that your diligent support, dedication, warmth, commitment to excellence and exceptionally hard work has made a very positive contribution to the Wales Gurkha Community Family Open Day."

### Every Picture Tells a Story....



*Local Paralympian athlete Kyron Duke was recognised by the Council for his sporting prowess and his example to others.*

## **Chapter Five: A Cwmbran of Cohesive Communities.**

- What we think we did well

We have strong links with the Local Planning Authority, Torfaen County Borough Council and keep up to date with plans for the growth of the town. We have reviewed options to help contribute to the regeneration of Cwmbran.

We keep Neighbourhood Services matters under particular scrutiny.

We maintained strong links with Gwent Police, holding regular public meetings and putting our community safety questions to them. We have kept these matters under review to make sure we make the best use of their time with us.

Similarly, representatives of South Wales Fire & Rescue also regularly meet us to describe their and their own challenges.

- What we think we could do better:

We want to encourage more members of the public to attend our events. We will make this a priority for the future.

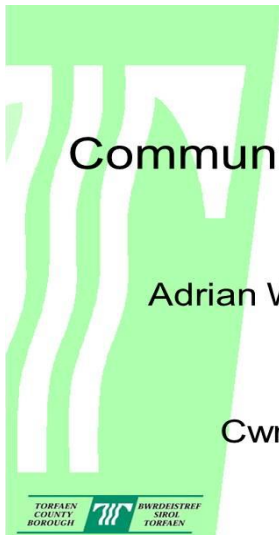
- Some facts & figures

In November, our Chairman met the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent to discuss his role, our experiences of policing in Gwent and ways of working more closely with our local neighbourhood policing team

- What you said about us:

".....it is encouraging to see so many who are active in the community making Cwmbran a better place." Rev Canon Harald Thomas (following the Council's annual celebration of "Cwmbran and Its Communities.")

**Every Picture Tells a Story....**



## The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Adrian Wilcock Principal Planner  
TCBC

Cwmbran Town Council  
18<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **Chapter Six: A Cwmbran of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh language.**

- What we think we did well:

We funded local organisations who promote culture and heritage. Examples include the Congress Theatre and Torfaen Museum Trust.

We also funded Cwmbran Centre for Young People who provide sporting, artistic and recreational opportunities for young people.

We maintained our long-standing cultural links with our twin town of Bruchsal – our Chairman visited Bruchsal as their guest in May 2015 to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bruchsal' s twinning arrangement with the French town of Ste. Ménehould.

We funded local voluntary organisations that promote culture and well-being in Cwmbran. Examples include the Gwent Festival of One Act Plays, Gwent Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers and Torfaen Scouts .

Our Schools Choral Festivals were a great success again this year.

- What we think we could do better:

The Council's Welsh Language Scheme was approved in 2008. We are going to review it soon to make sure that it still meets local needs.

- Some facts & figures

Our contribution towards Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre (Core Funding) this year was £2,000. Our Summer Playschemes provided four weeks of summer fun for around 1,000 local children.



- What you said about us:

"We will be coming in costume to say thanks to you for the cheque we will be presented with. We will come as 'Camulos' the Silure War god, and also 'King Bran' of the valley of Bran (Cwmbran) Hope this is enjoyable to you all at the Community Council

Yn Gywir (Yours Sincerely)"

### Every Picture Tells a Story....



*Councillor Ashley is almost upstaged by Yr Hyddgen Hanes Gwerin a Theatr Cymunedol Torfaen /Gwent at our Grants Presentation Evening.*

## Chapter Seven: A Globally Responsible Cwmbran

- What we think we did well

This report describes how we have contributed to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Cwmbran. In striving towards this, we have had regard, as far as possible, to wider issues.

We entered into an agreement with Cwmbran Shopping to support its Sustainability Awareness Day, working with other partners to promote and encourage sustainable communities.

We worked hard to develop and support community projects, such as improving local woodlands and supporting other community initiatives.

We applied to register a well used local route as a public footpath and scrutinised proposals to revise local waste collection arrangements.

- What we think we could do better.

We will strive to keep our working practices environmentally friendly, supporting sustainable approaches to recycling, waste management and use of resources

- Some facts and figures.

Our Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee met eight times during the period covered by this report.

- What you said about us

"Many thanks for your offer to assist with this initiative which I gladly accept on behalf of the group. Many hands make light work as they say. Look forward to meeting you on Friday. "

Dewi Jones - Head of Fire Crime Unit

(This related to the Council's support for a multi-agency Day of Action in February 2015 to combat Fire Setting, Anti-Social Behaviour and Fly-Tipping in Cwmbran, pictured below).

- Every picture tells a story

Just some of the debris we collected at the Day of Action we supported in February.



## Chapter Eight: A Competent Council

Finally, these are changing times for Community & Town Councils. We face many new challenges and opportunities. It is important that we are ready to face these challenges: to be Fit for the Future.

A number of 'competency' tests are emerging to help Community Councils determine how well equipped they are to meet the challenges ahead. These tests will bring more consistency to the sector, with higher standards of governance and financial management.

These tests might include:

- a democracy test: - Councillors must be elected at either an ordinary election or a by-election;
- a capability test: - the Community Council must employ a clerk with relevant professional qualifications, such as the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).
- a capacity test: - the Council has a minimum annual budget of £200,000; and
- a governance test - the Council has sound financial management and internal control systems. It should also meet other criteria such as having a website on which it publishes agendas, minutes and accounts and is contactable by email.

We undertook an audit during the year, to see how we fared against these tests. Here are our findings:

- All our councillors have been declared elected. None have been co-opted.
- Our Clerk is CiLCA qualified
- Our annual budget is over £200k
- We have sound management and financial systems. Our accounts are scrutinised by others. Agendas, minutes, accounts and contact details can be viewed at [www.cwmbran.gov.uk](http://www.cwmbran.gov.uk). You can e-mail the Clerk to the Council at [david@cwmbran.gov.uk](mailto:david@cwmbran.gov.uk) A Charter is in place to govern our relationship with Torfaen County Borough Council.

## Appendices

### 1. Commemorating the Centenary of World War 1: A Case Study

*This year's Chairman of Cwmbran Community Council, Councillor Steve Evans chose SSAFA (Formerly known as the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) as his chosen charity for his term of office. Councillor Evans said*

*"I wanted to use my term of office to help raise the profile of the centenary of the First World War, when so many local men and women did so much in the struggle for liberty.*

*I also wanted to help a charity that continued to provide support to our forces and their families.*

*SSAFA, who support families throughout Gwent, fitted the bill perfectly."*

*The Council also worked with the community to support events and activities which commemorated the centenary of the above conflict. We invited individuals, schools and other organisations to contact us with details of any events planned in Cwmbran to commemorate the centenary. The pick of these was a story from a local resident who told us of a book she had written about the role of her relatives in the Great War, including one who used a copy of the Pontypool Free Press tied to his rifle as a flag of truce during the Christmas Day truce! We were delighted to forward the story to the Free Press who featured it in the local newspaper.*

*We were also proactive in organising our own activities.*

*These included a poppy display outside our offices, the installation of flagpoles to add dignity & colour to events held to commemorate the conflict, and the erection of a memorial plaque outside our Council offices, generously donated by Mossfords of Cwmbran.*

*We used the Cwmbran Big Event in June 2014 to raise awareness of the centenary, distributing poppy seeds and holding a poppy based children's colouring competition.*

*2014 saw the first celebration of Armed Forces Day in Cwmbran, when numerous uniformed organisations joined the Chairman in paying tribute to our servicemen and women.*

*Each year, the Council runs a summer playscheme for local primary school children. Although this is essentially a play-based activity, we helped the children commemorate the centenary this year through a range of poppy based craft activities. Some of the children helped form a Guard of Honour for a local church service held on 4 August to mark the centenary. The children brought their poppies to this event.*

*We have also supported our community partners, for example we provide core funding to a local art centre - Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre, who launched their '14' exhibition on 26 July 2014 when 14 artists presented their artwork based on World War One.*

*Our "Primary Schools Choral Festival" took place in November 2014, when many schools performed songs and dramatic pieces which reflected the centenary. We also worked with the local church and uniformed organisations to involve scouts, guides etc. in an act to commemorate the centenary of the Fallen as part of our Remembrance Sunday activities. The Council has also purchased limited edition*

*mugs which commemorate the centenary. These are shared with community partners and other groups and individuals.*

*In January 2015, the Council attended a meeting of the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of not-for-profit organisations who are working to commemorate the centenary. This seminar, held by the Imperial War Museum and Cymru'n Cofio/Wales Remembers, was an important milestone in our project plans, allowing us to review progress to date and set a path for the future. Further details of this seminar can be seen at our Facebook pages (23 January 2015.) You can also visit [www.walesremembers.org](http://www.walesremembers.org) to find out more about commemorating the centenary in Wales.*

*Please contact us if you are arranging an event or activity which commemorates the centenary in any way. There may be ways in which we could help, either through helping to publicise your event or other ways.*

*Please contact David Collins, Clerk to the Council via [david@cwmbbran.gov.uk](mailto:david@cwmbbran.gov.uk) if you have any activities or events to tell us about.*

# Heroes recalled in poppy service



WAR SERVICE: Children and staff from Cwmbran Community Council School play schemes with Cllr Steve Evans, chairman of Cwmbran Community Council outside Holy Trinity Church, Pontnewydd.



Cllr Steven Evans, Chairman of Cwmbran Community Council presenting a cheque to Pontnewydd Primary School

## Forces Day

DEAR Editor,  
I wish to publicly thank all those helped to make the commemoration of Armed Forces Day in Cwmbran such a success on June 28.  
We were blessed with fine weather and the many armed forces representatives, uniformed organisations, civic leaders and members of the public all helped to make the event a memorable one.  
Our poppies, planted to mark the centenary of World War One, added further colour.  
I should especially like to record my appreciation to those who took part in the service itself through helping with readings or musical accompaniment.

I am also grateful to the clergy representatives who conducted the service itself.  
This event saw the first public use of new flagpoles outside Cwmbran Community Council's offices and a memorial plaque generously donated by Mossfords

of Cwmbran. I am sure that these features will continue to add dignity to future similar events.  
Finally, I am delighted to announce that voluntary donations from my guests on the day produced the sum of £122.46 which will be donated

to my nominated charity SSAFA, who support members of the armed forces and their families.  
Councillor S Evans  
Chairman  
Cwmbran Community Council

# New leaders for councils

FOLLOWING annual general meetings, Blisnauon Town Council and Cwmbran Community Council now have new leading representatives.  
The new mayor of Blisnauon Town Council is councillor Sylvia Lewis, 63, who has been a labour councillor for that last two years.  
Following the AGM on May 21, she said: "I want to do the best that I can for Blisnauon and make sure that it stays a wonderful place."

The former school teacher has chosen to raise funds for Breast Cancer UK and Torfaen Mind during her year as mayor.  
Cllr Gareth Davies, who served as the mayor for the past two years, was voted in as deputy mayor.  
The new chairman of Cwmbran Community Council is Cllr Steven Evans, who has chosen the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association (SSAFA) as his

chosen charity for his term of office.  
He said: "I wanted to use my term of office to help raise the profile of the centenary of the First World War."  
Cllr Evans will lead the council's commemorations of Armed Forces Day on June 28, at the Council House in Ventnor Road, Cwmbran, at 10am.  
The vice-chairman is Cllr Mike Johnston, who represents the Two Locks ward.



If you had to be stuck in lift with someone, who would it be and why?

My family who, through difficult and adverse times, no matter what, support and help you. I would like to be able to speak with my nan as she died in 2013, aged 93, and I was unable to be there and thank her for helping to shape the person I have become.

What is your biggest fear?

Not seeing my children grow up to have families of their own.

Do you have any superstitions?

Yes, not walking under ladders and spilling muggos.

If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what it be?

Pink - Who Know

What is the most expensive thing you've bought, not including property?

Holidays abroad.

What's the best advice you've had?

To treat anyone older than the same way that you would be treated at that age.



What is your indulgence?

Chocolate

What item could you not live without?

My mobile phone as you can do everything on the move.

## Parade turnout

Please may I publicly extend my thanks to all those who helped to make this year's Remembrance Sunday Parade in Cwmbran such a memorable event.  
It was wonderful to see the community coming together to support this important local event, which had extra poignancy this year, given the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.  
It was a moving experience for me to take part in this parade and I was especially proud to unveil a wreath at the Clock Tower in Old Cwmbran.  
I applaud Cwmbran Community Council's efforts in working with others to deliver such a marvellous event this year.  
I wish to thank all the musicians, individuals and organisations who marched in the parade and the many people who proudly laid a wreath at Cwmbran Park.  
I am also grateful to our community safety partners for ensuring public safety at the event and the many hundreds of members of the public who turned out.  
Councillor Steven Evans  
Chairman  
Cwmbran Community Council