



# HOPE COMMUNITY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22 (MAY 2022)

Hello and welcome to all of our existing and new residents.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, introduced as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, that a community council must prepare and publish a report (an “annual report”) about the council's priorities, activities and achievements during that year. This is our first report which we hope you will find of interest.

There are 14 members on Hope Community Council. Councillors are office holders who sign a declaration of acceptance of office upon their election or appointment - they are therefore a part of the local government structure of Wales. Although they carry out many community activities on a voluntary basis, they are not volunteers.

At the head of the Council is the Chairman, who is elected annually from amongst its serving Councillors. The Chairman for 2021/22 was Councillor Claire Olsen and the Vice-Chair was Councillor Huw Manning.

The council has the opportunity to appoint two Youth Representatives. We currently have one active member, Matthew Taylor and also one vacancy. A Community Youth Representative represents the youth sector and is a ‘voice’ on the Community Council for local issues affecting young people.

We meet formally on the first Wednesday evening of the month at 6.30pm, currently being held remotely with a view once restrictions ease, to return back to Heulwen Close Community Centre, Hope where there will be a hybrid provision for members and public to join remotely. These are very structured meetings with very full agendas. Anyone is welcome to observe and there is an opportunity at the start for public questions, but it is a working meeting rather than a public presentation.

Depending on what projects are being dealt with, in order to be more proactive, members may meet in between monthly meetings as a 'Working Groups' to deal with specific areas/projects to bring back to full council.

## Your Community Council

The Community Council are responsible for Caergwrle Castle, Queensway play area, but also work with FCC on other playgrounds, a selection of street lighting, CCTV / crime prevention, street furniture, Christmas lights, open spaces and are a statutory consultee for many local authority and government issues including planning.

Currently, the council has four Committees; Finance, Planning & Highways, Leisure and Environment which are held on the same date as the full council meeting and the Personnel (Advisory) which is held at least twice a year.

## Your Community Councillors for the Year 2021/22 were:

### Hope Ward

Clr Christine Cunnah (Independent)  
Clr Lynne Davies (Independent)  
Clr Barry Hughes (Independent)  
Clr E Alan Parsonage (no political affiliation)  
Clr David Roberts (no political affiliation)  
Clr Myra Williams (Independent)  
Clr Sadie Waterhouse (Independent)  
Clr Christine Sheibani (co-opted)

### Caergwrle Ward

Clr Claire Olsen (no political affiliation) - Chairman  
Clr Huw Manning (Independent) – Vice Chairman  
Clr Janet Hilton (no political affiliation)  
Clr Rachel Parsonage (Independent)  
Clr Allan Parry (no political affiliation)  
Clr Ian Swain (no political affiliation)

## Virtual Meetings

As a result of the pandemic, during the last 2 years the council quickly adapted and transferred to virtual meetings in order for council business to continue. Under new Government legislation, the council will now be looking to work towards hybrid meetings which will make it easier for members and the public to attend.

## Budget/Precept

The Council's budget for 2021/22 was £108,111 and the precept requirement was £93,706. Here is a brief explanation of how the precept is calculated:

The forecast expenditure for the Community Council was £108,111. In addition to this, we have to allow for having a £26,500 buffer in the bank, so the total we needed to raise is £134,611. By the end of the financial year (31 March 2021), we did not expect to have spent everything that was budgeted for in the previous year and so we were left with money in the bank (£39,505), plus the estimated VAT which will be reclaimed of £1,400. These two figures are taken away from the total we need to raise, leaving a balance of £93,706 to be raised via the precept. The Tax Base for the 2021-22 financial year of equivalent Band D properties is 1846.57 and the cost per Band-D property: £49.12.

At the end of the financial year 31 March 2022 the council had actual spent £120,376.11 which included money held in reserves for Queensway play area improvements (£23,992.42) and Street Lighting Upgrades (£38,550).

## Audits

Each year an Internal and External Audit is undertaken. The Internal Audit completed 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 was for the year ending 31 March 2021 and there was only one recommendation - *'The risk assessment should be updated to include supplier (procurement) fraud including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls'*. As per the recommendation the appropriate controls were put in place. The External Audit undertaken by Audit Wales was completed on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 with no comments or recommendations.

## Play Area Improvements

Queensway is a community council owned play area which we pay a contractor to maintain throughout the year. Also the council together with FCC invested just under £24,000 on the improvements to this junior play area. A public consultation was undertaken to ascertain what equipment was wanted and we were able to provide a toddler climbing frame, zip wire and picnic bench.

## Caergwrle Castle

### Fire

Unfortunately, there was a fire at Caergwrle Castle on 8th June 2021 resulting in 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of land being affected.

### Storm Arwen

Unfortunately, the castle grounds were affected by storm Arwen and there were a significant number of trees down, most were precariously positioned. We therefore had to take the decision to close the site for a number of weeks until the tree works and site was made safe.

### Native bulbs

A big thank you to the Spar (Caergwrle) for their kind donation of £146.50 towards native bulbs which have been planted on the site.

### Bench

We have installed a refurbished cast iron bench on the grounds.

## Rural Adventure Arcades

Pippa Jagger Communication Officer and Flintshire Countryside Services worked with Glyndwr University IT, developing a gaming platform that has been set up around the castle to encourage visitors to get connected to the history and natural environment through gaming.

The games were created by the students as part of their Serious Games and Immersive Technology Assignment. The games are diverse in design some are informative some just fun, themes are Caergwrle Castle and its history, others more biodiversity and environmentally focused.

## Street Lighting

The Council own and are responsible for a selection of street lights throughout the villages and are in a long term scheme to have these columns upgraded and transferred back to Flintshire County Council. The end of last year we had 30 columns upgraded and the commuted sum was paid during 2021/22. This year we have had a further 12 columns upgraded. Any issues or faults with any street lights should be reported to Flintshire County Council, Streetscene on 01352 701234 or [streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk). Alternatively you can report by downloading the [Flintshire App](#)

## Summer Playscheme

In conjunction with Flintshire County Council and Welsh Government, the council financial supported the provision of a 3 week summer playscheme held at The Willows Play Area.

## Annual Grant Applications

The council sets a budget annually to be able to offer financial assistance to local groups and organizations. Applications usually open in October and close in November. For 2021/22 we are pleased to report that we helped 11 local groups/organisations to the sum of £4000.

## Community Engagement

During the year we have been involved with a number of community engagement initiatives:

### Competitions

The council held three competitions throughout the year; Hanging Basket/Planters Competition, The Scarecrow Competition and a Christmas Lights Competition.

### Community Engagement Drop In Session

The council did endeavour to hold a Community Engagement Event on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022, appointment only and offered face to face or virtual appointments. However, there were no requests for appointments at the time.

## Christmas Lighting

There are a total of 40 bracket Christmas lights around the three villages, each village received an additional 2 lights this year.

## CCTV

The council provides and maintains 4 x CCTV cameras, locations below. The CCTV images are only accessed and viewed by North Wales Police.

- The Willows play area Hawarden Road
- Pack Horse Bridge
- Junction of Wrexham Road & Castle Street
- Wrexham Road viewing Caergwrle Castle pathway

## Police

Community Council have always maintained strong links with North Wales Police and our Police Community Support Officers and we regularly review the crime statistics for our area which are relatively low.

The current PCSOs for our area are:

PCSO 4406 Adelina Olaru	Tel: 07814075613	<a href="mailto:Adelina.Olaru@northwales.police.uk">Adelina.Olaru@northwales.police.uk</a>
PCSO 3967 Helen Holden	Tel: 07890 388786	<a href="mailto:Helen.Holden@northwales.police.uk">Helen.Holden@northwales.police.uk</a>
PCSO 3463 Victoria Davies	Tel: 07989162988	<a href="mailto:Victoria.Davies@northwales.police.uk">Victoria.Davies@northwales.police.uk</a>
PCSO 2926 Dan Hughes	Tel: 07896 172979	<a href="mailto:Dan.Hughes@northwales.police.uk">Dan.Hughes@northwales.police.uk</a>

Whilst rates are low, there are incidents reported which are logged. One area of concern for the year was the increased use of nitrous oxide in the community, evidenced by the number of discarded cylinders. Community Council met with our PCSOs and Flintshire County Council Substance and Drug Awareness Team to look at effective ways to engage with our youngsters to help them make informed choices.

## Elections 2022

The 2022 Welsh local elections were held on 5 May 2022 to elect members of all twenty-two local authorities in Wales and Town and Community Councils. Following changes in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 all legal residents of Wales who are aged 16 or over on polling day are eligible to vote in the local elections (16 and 17 year-olds and EU Citizens and citizens of other countries).

Unfortunately, there were only 7 nominations received for the 14 seats, with no nominations for the Ward of Caergwrle. This means the 7 nominations were elected as 'unopposed' and the council are now required to fill the remaining 7 vacancies by co-option.

To view details of your local Councillors, please visit our website [Hope Community Council/councillors](#)

## Key Council Objectives for the Year 2022/23

- Improvements to the castle and grounds
- Continue the street lighting upgrades
- Match funding for Willows or Porch Lane
- Continue to pursue improvements to the aesthetics of the village
- Continue to pursue highway and safety issues
- Improvements to public outdoor areas within our villages.
- Support the Hwb Caergwrle project

## Budget – 2022/23

The approved budget for 2022/23 was £111,735, with a precept request of £113,155. At the start of this financial year the council held £66,487 in reserves for incomplete, delayed or ongoing projects; Caergwrle Castle, Street Lighting, Willow or Porch Lane Match Funding (2021), 20/21 playscheme to be spent on youth and - VE Celebration/Community Celebration.

For more information about the council, council business and to see regular updates please view our website: <https://hopecommunitycouncil.gov.wales/> and follow us on facebook: Hope Community Council.