

Chair's Annual Report

From April 2025 to April 2026

Introduction

Section 52 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that all Community Councils must prepare and publish an annual report. This report gives a brief summary of activities for the year 2025/2026. More information will be found on our website within our monthly Council minutes, our annual Financial and Governance reports.

Cilcain Community Council (CCC) incorporates the villages of Cilcain and Rhydymwyn with the hamlet of Hendre. Our 12 Community Councillors are currently elected or co-opted which comprise of 6 Councillors residing in Cilcain, 5 Councillors residing in Rhydymwyn and 1 Councillor residing in Hendre. We are therefore in an enviable position of having no current vacancies. All our Councillors represent and support collaboratively, these communities and you can find contact details for each, on Cilcain Community Council website.

A brief outline of what we do:

- Carry out a wide range of duties and powers to improve facilities and services for residents and visitors
- Work in partnership with organisations, community groups and statutory bodies
- Represent local residents by raising issues with Flintshire County Council and other organisations
- Committed to protecting and enhancing the environment
- Considers and responds to planning applications
- Responds to local and national consultations
- Supports local community groups and events (financially and physically)

Finance

CCC follow One Voice Wales, Model Financial Regulations for Community and Town Councils in Wales, adhering to set legislations. Each year CCC sets a precept to not only cover any ongoing regular expenditure, but to also support local groups within our communities, via grants. CCC has essentially had a standstill budget for the last two years, so the precept for 2025/2026 was held at £30,800. The closing balances for 13th April 2026 were: Current account: £374, Deposit Account: £42,054

Below indicates some of the ongoing expenditure that the Council finances through each year.

- Car park adjacent to Cilcain Village Hall
- Maintenance of bus shelters in Rhydymwyn and Cilcain Villages

- Fund various street lights in our villages. To reduce the ongoing cost, all lights owned by CCC have been converted to LED.
- Maintenance of a number of notice boards. These are used not only to inform residents of upcoming Council meetings and agendas, but are also a very good source for local community groups to post any upcoming activities.
- The upkeep of a number of public benches within the villages and playing fields
- Maintenance of our play areas. This year Cilcain play area has benefited from a marked upgrade of its facilities, which CCC match funded £5,500 with FCC. This alternates each year between the 2 villages.
- CCC owns 2 cemeteries, one in Cilcain and the other in Rhydymwyn. Apart from grass cutting, which is the responsibility of FCC, CCC funds all other maintenance needs. This year Cilcain cemetery has required some maintenance to ensure safety needs and aesthetics are met.
- Maintaining safety at the Playing Field (The Donkey Field) in Rhydymwyn and Village Green in Cilcain (The Waen) is continuous. This year, has included removing trees affected by Ash Die back or other felled trees, replacing with British native trees.
- Insurance cover for Cilcain Village Hall and ongoing finance support to Clean and Lock (Public toilets at Cilcain Village Hall)

Governance

CCC strives to ensure good Governance in all of its practices, protocols and activities. It recognises the importance of responsibility and accountability. This year there has been a focus on strengthening CCC's Governance duties and evidential recordings.

To enhance this, a Governance working party has been created. The group is tasked to review current policies and introduce appropriate new ones. It will also review the current Council's website, to ensure it is fit for purpose, thus enabling more information to be disseminated to residents and fulfil our aim of being more open and transparent.

CCC has also introduced a fixed public participation session in their monthly agenda. The purpose is to advertise and encourage residents to engage with their council members, by attending our meetings, being permitted to present and comment on any item listed on that month's agenda. Participation such as this helps to inform council members which will enable them to consider a wider opinion and options for any decisions they are required to make.

Engagement

CCC is a pressure group with other local authorities and public utilities, thus to ensure local services are sufficient, identify deficiencies and suggest improvements.

- **Planning applications:** All planning applications received by FCC that pertain to our communities are forwarded to CCC to review. Where appropriate we will liaise with local residents to gather opinions or welcome residents to present at our Council meeting any information they wish to share with Council. This enables CCC to make informed choices if to support the planning request, or not. However, it is important to note, the final decision always sits with FCC's planning department as to whether the application is granted or not. During the year 2025/2026 CCC has received 15 such applications to review.
- **FCC Street Scene:** Through the year CCC has remained committed to close relations with Street Scene supervisors. We have held meetings, undertaken walkabouts through our villages and held various site meetings. By doing so it enables us to enter into a two-way dialogue, ensuring we are not only able to share residents' concerns with the appropriate people and departments, but that we are kept up to date with issues relating to highways, pathways, hedgerows, lighting etc. This has put us in a better position to challenge decisions or lack of action on behalf of FCC and to also thank the supervisors and their teams when they have resolved any issues or concerns.
- **Rhydymwyn Flood Prevention:** In May 2025, Members of CCC participated in a Stakeholders Group meeting at the DEFRA site in Rhydymwyn and a variety of agencies were represented. A number of issues had been highlighted to CCC, around the lack of maintenance relating to the flood gates and catchpits, which was increasing the flood risk in Rhydymwyn. CCC on behalf of our residents, championed a challenge to the relevant agencies, to undertake repairs, and to ensure efficient ongoing maintenance to the site. At the request of CCC, our local MP Beccy Gittins, supported our quest. This has led to a successful outcome, however CCC will continue to monitor to ensure the relevant agencies adhere to their policies and agreements.
- **Flood Risk Management in Hendre:** A lot of work continues on hopefully achieving funding from the Welsh Government for a scheme to alleviate this risk. Despite not being successful in our bid last year (2024/2025), CCC has continued to work with representatives from FCC Flood risk Management team and Waterco. A slightly alternate scheme was submitted in October last year and in April this year, the good news came through that the Welsh Government were considering the options in the report, but requested more modelling data. More site meetings, modelling analysis etc has been occurring which will hopefully result in a successful bid for funding. Once there is information to share, more public engagement meetings will be held.
- **Traffic Issues:** Speeding along the A541 through Rydymwyn and Hendre, has been an ongoing concern for residents and Community Councillors alike. Meetings and site visits with relevant people from the highways and traffic department within FCC have taken place on a number of occasions throughout the year. Discussions and reviews have been held relating to the need of a pedestrian crossing in Rhydymwyn to allow people, especially children and vulnerable people, safe passage across the A541 to the bus stop, Rhydymwyn Garage and

the War Memorial Institute. This has not been an easy issue to resolve, but with the support of Councillor Andrew Parkhurst, CCC is continuing the fight to have a crossing installed.

Hendre: Since the introduction of the 20MPH restriction through Hendre, evidence has shown that the number of speeding traffic incidents have risen very significantly. Again, throughout the year, CCC have been engaging with the relevant people at FCC in an attempt to resolve this issue. Unfortunately, despite everyone's best efforts, this has been a very difficult concern to resolve. However, despite the complexities of having an extremely busy Major A road through a hamlet, we are continuing with much resolve, for the introduction of traffic calming measure in Hendre.

Cilcain: The community of Cilcain are also experiencing speeding incidents along some of their roads and lanes, with an increased risks of incidents being made worse by poor visibility along parts of the road network. This has been highlighted to FCC which resulted in an online meeting, with a mapping exercise taking place between a representative of CCC, Councillor Parkhurst and relevant people from FCC to discuss options. Unfortunately, a resolution to this issue has not been forthcoming, but CCC continue to strive for a successful outcome.

Latest updates

During this year, there has been 2 major areas where CCC has increased its focus:

Biodiversity: In response to Part 1 – Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, CCC has devised a Biodiversity plan. This is an active plan that will be updated accordingly. To help meet CCC's statutory requirements, a Biodiversity working group has been set up. The group has sought advice from our area One Voice Wales Biodiversity officer. This included a site visit to our cemeteries, the Waen, the Donkey Field and our buildings. This was a very informative review, which has given members a lot to think about and introduce. CCC will be applying for grants once One Voice Wales applications become available for the year 2026/2027.

Councillor Training: Section 67 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that all Community Councils must make and publish a Training Plan. There has been a large focus on Councillors ongoing training throughout the year. Most training modules have been provided by One Voice Wales (a governing body for Community and Town Councils). CCC has taken advantage of the free modules to keep costs down, whilst ensuring that the modules completed are pertinent to the individual Councillors and CCC's needs.

Eight certificated training modules have been undertaken this year. These have included Biodiversity and Public Engagement modules, which will support CCC's ongoing endeavours in these areas. More training will be completed once the next round of Modules become available for the year 2026/2027.

Going Forward:

CCC will wholeheartedly continue to support their local communities and strive to ensure that the Villages that we are very proud of, continue to be the healthy, resilient and beautiful areas of North East Wales.

We will continue to be advocates for the needs and concerns of our communities. To achieve this CCC will ensure it actively participates in local and national consultations, making challenges to any authority or agencies whenever appropriate and deemed necessary and being a voice at various forums, committees and focus groups.

CCC will continue to strengthen our Governance Profile, thus ensuring a more open and transparent Council, that promotes strong engagement with the communities that it serves.

I would also like to take the opportunity to give grateful thanks to all our volunteers, who unwaveringly give up so much of their time in supporting CCC. Without the Clean and Lock team, there would be no public toilets available, without the Cilcain Village Hall Management Committee, our Village Hall wouldn't be the modernised, sustainable building that they have painstakingly created, especially during this year 2025/2026, and the volunteers who help in the maintenance of our cemeteries. You are all very much appreciated.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to my fellow Community Councillors and our exceptional Clerk. Your hard work, dedication and commitment, a lot of which goes on in the background, is hugely important to our communities. I have enjoyed the honour of being your chairperson this last year. I think as a cohesive team, together we have achieved some of our goals, and in some areas, created a foundation, that we can build upon.

Councillor Karen Parker

Chair of Cilcain Community Council (Including Hendre and Rhydymwyn)