



Acton Community Council

Annual Report 2023/24

This Report has been prepared to comply with the requirements of Section 52 of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which requires community councils to prepare and publish an annual report (as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year), detailing the council's priorities, activities and achievements over the previous year.

1 Information About the Council

1.1 The administration of Acton Community Council is carried out by the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer assisted by an Administrative Assistant, both of whom work on a part-time basis.

The Council consists of six wards and has various sub-committees. The table below, as of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 May 2023, details the elected representatives and their Role within Council and membership of those sub-committees.

Ward	Name	Role	Members			Representatives	
			Planning Committee	Staffing Committee	Youth Committee	Acton Resource Centre	Little Acton Centre
Acton Central	Carole Roberts	Clerk & RFO					
	Michelle Williams	Admin Asst.					
	Corin Jarvis	Member	Y		Y		
Acton Central	Lizzie Balmain	Member					
Acton Park	Phil Lloyd	Member	Y		Y	Y	
Acton Park	Becca Martin	Member		Y			
Borras Park	Caroline Bettley	Member		Y	Y		
Borras Park	Vacancy	Member					
Borras Park	Debbie Wallice	Member					
Little Acton	Bill Baldwin	Member					Y
Little Acton	Kevin Roberts	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Little Acton	Andy Gallanders	Member			Y		Y
Maesydre	Salli Edwards	Member	Y				
Maesydre	Holly Hewitt	Member	Y		Y		
Rhosnesni	Roger Davies	Member			Y		
Rhosnesni	Anne Evans	Member	Y	Y	Y		
Rhosnesni	Ralph Hardy	Vice Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Rhosnesni	Mike Davies	Member		Y			

1.2 Finance

Information from the audited accounts for the year end account balances for 2021/22 are summarised below:

The amount of £'s reserves brought forward from 2020/21 is	£283,933
Reserve balances carried forward at the end of 2021/22 is	£270,842
Balance for the year 2021/22 produced a decrease in balances of	-£13,091
Income - Precept from Rating (Council kept the precept the same as 2020/21)	£169,000
Income – Other	£2,318
Sub total	£171,318
Expenditure – Staffing Costs	£34,813
Expenditure – Other	£149,596
Sub total	£184,409
Balance – Income less Expenditure	-£13,091

1.3 Policies and Protocols

During the year, Council continued to review the following principal documents and re-adopted them at its meeting on 11 May 2022.

Adopted January 2019:

1. Document Retention Policy and Schedule
2. Data Protection and Information Security Policy
3. Privacy Notices – General, Website and Member/Officer
4. Internet, email and social media policy
5. Model Publication Scheme (FOI)
6. Data Breach Notification Policy
7. Subject access policy and template response letters.
8. Member Officer Protocol
9. Grievance Procedure

Adopted April 2021

10. Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements
11. Disciplinary Policy
12. Local Resolution Protocol for Community and Town Councils

2 Training Plans

The need for Council having training plans were not required prior to November 2022. Therefore, a retrospective plan is not available.

All Community Councillors attend an induction Training Course at the beginning of their service. They have access to all Planning Aid Wales training and a broad range of training options delivered by One Voice Wales. The Council is currently undertaking an assessment of Councillors' training attended and will develop a formal Training Plan going forwards. A copy of the 2022-27 Training Plan is attached at Appendix 1 to this Annual Report.

3 Activities and Achievements

3.1 Objectives

Guidance tells us that it will be good practice for the Council's Annual Report to show how the work undertaken, in the past year and going forward, incorporates the five elements or principles set out in the "Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015". These are; Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention.

The Council did not publish a list of "Objectives" for this reporting year, nor for 2022/23. However, the following details some specific achievements made over the 2020/21 period. Section 3.2 contains some of the Objectives under consideration by Council for 2023/24 which embrace the "Well-being Principles".

3.1.1 – Community Engagement

The Council embarked upon a social media public consultation exercise with the general Acton public seeking their views about their needs, wants and perceived problems within the Acton area.

Responses indicated several common themes. These included:

- a lack of awareness about what the Community Council did
- what was available at Acton Community Resource Centre, how to book sessions and costs
- the extremely poor state of the Acton Park children's play area

3.1.2 – Youth Club

During the year 2021/2022 the Youth Club was impacted by Covid. The Council had made the decision to continue funding the youth club during this period. The numbers attending the club had decreased but we felt it was important to support this Group of Young People during this period. Some outreach work was attempted, but as a Council, we felt this was not as successful as having a base to work from. Towards the end of the year, numbers have picked up and are thankfully back to their original levels. The Club continues to provide an excellent service to the Acton Community and is something we are very proud of.

3.1.3 – Youth in the Community

For the second year the Council made the decision to fund youth groups such as the Brownies and the Rainbows. If this funding had not been available they would have ceased to exist due to lack of funds. These groups have been in existence for 40 years and is something that we could not allow to happen. Their attendance averages 25 girls per Club and continues to flourish.

Earlier this year, Council members were invited to the Brownies Jubilee party as a thank you for the support given by the Council. Helen Walker (Brown Owl) said "they don't know what they would have done without the support of the Council".

3.1.4 – Park Ranger

The Council continues to fund the Park Ranger role. There have been a huge variety of events in the Park during this period, for example, an Easter egg hunt, Halloween trail, various information events, history trails and tree identification events. All these have been very well attended and, in some cases, attended by well over 100 people.

The Ranger continues to assist and supervise the Park volunteer group whose continued work is a massive help in keeping the park at a Green Flag standard.

3.1.5 – The Young Blacksmiths



O & H metalwork have been involved with two projects for the Council. Initially a Fish made from teaspoons which has been placed in the Lake in the park. The work was self-funded by the Blacksmiths with donations of spoons made by the public.

The second project is a small monument placed at the Smithy Pond off the Chester Road. This piece of work was designed to remember Joey the swan and, in addition, to inform residents of their family history. This memorial was funded by the Council, who felt it important to keep the history of Acton alive.

3.1.6 – Dean Road

After careful consideration, the Council decided to support a resident's group which had been set up to oppose Glyndwr University's outline planning proposal, via Wrexham County Borough Council, to permit Housing development upon the field. Thereafter there was a proposal to dispose of the land to a developer. The Council also agreed to make a grant of £1,000 to the resident's group to enable them to engage professional advice and services in support of their continued objection at the Appeal Stage against the University's application to overturn the Planning Committee's decision to deny planning permission.

3.1.7 – Nine Acre Field

After careful consideration, the Council decided to support the resident's group which had been set up to oppose Wrexham County Borough Council's proposal to build a new school upon the site. The Council agreed a grant of £1000 to enable the resident's group to engage professional advice and services in support of their objections to this application and to deny planning permission.

3.1.8 – Defibrillators

Council embarked upon a policy of paying for the supply and installation of a defibrillator in each of the six wards. 2021/22 saw the beginnings of this priority with the deployment of a defibrillator in the following locations: Cunliffe Arms Jeffreys Road, Acton Resource Centre, Little Acton Community Centre and the Maesydre Power House. The Council also contributed to the fundraising by residents to provide another defibrillator on the Fairways Estate, St Andrews Crescent. Deployments at Barkers Lane School and the Borrass Park shopping arcade were completed in 2022/23.

3.1.9 – Restoration of Fencing on Jeffreys Road

It has long been reported of the need to repair and repaint existing metal fencing on Jeffreys Road. Residents have volunteered to assist with the repainting of the fencing once it has been repaired to an acceptable standard. Wrexham Council (the owners) have been consulted about assisting with this project. It is reported that their preference is to remove the fencing. They have agreed to supply limited assistance providing health at work protocols. However, despite the Community Council setting aside a limited budget, the project continues to stall and is no further forward since it was first raised in 2018.

3.1.10 – Section 137 Grants

Were made to 24 organisations with a total value of £7870. Priority is given to local clubs and groups that are used by residents from the Acton Community area.

3.1.11 – Maesydre Power House



The Council purchased this unusual building in 1993 to prevent the then Manweb from removing the mock tudor second floor. This is the only building the Council owns. It is structurally sound and the Council must keep the building in a good state of repair. Work is planned to carry out repairs and repainting to protect the external façade from wind and weather damage.

3.2 Priorities Going Forward

The Council did not publish a formal list of “Priorities” for this reporting year, nor for the current year 2022/23. However, discussions are currently ongoing between Members of Council to prepare a list of priorities for the coming 2023/24 year. It is intended that this process should take place alongside and in conjunction with the 2023/24 budget setting process. Some suggestions are included below. These are not listed in priority order.

3.2.1 – Jeffreys Road Fencing

The local Member is keen to progress this project to a conclusion whereby the fence is repaired and painted.

3.2.2 – Section 137 Grants

The Chair is keen to develop the Section 137 grants element of our budget to provide annual support to local groups who are within the Acton Community Council area and who struggle for financial support. There are several groups that without Council support would not be in existence.

3.2.3 – Acton Park Playground

The Council provides funding to ensure the continued existence of three play areas owned and managed by Wrexham CBC within the Acton Community.



Figure 1: Acton Park Play area

Aran Road Play area





Little Acton play area

A task group was previously established to look at all three play areas, but little progress has been made to date. Progress development of this theme to design, estimate and budget for the provision of a new play space. Consider using reserves and investigate possible grant funding streams, e.g. National Lottery, Welsh Assembly grants, to bring this about. Set the project as a key objective with measurable achievements going forward

3.2.4 – Little Acton Community Centre

Some time ago initial discussions were held with Wrexham CBC about the future ownership, costing and sustainability of the Centre. Council should seek to progress those discussions to a point whereby the future of the Centre can be determined going forward.



3.2.5 – Christmas Celebrations

A number of Members have suggested that in order to support resident's wellbeing and in common with some other local Community Councils, Acton Council give consideration to the placing and funding of Christmas Trees and Lighting at various places within the area.

3.2.6 – To monitor and reduce Speeding within the Community

To enhance the safety of residents, consider the installation of further Electronic Speed Boards at strategic locations within the area. Suggestions include Jeffery's Road.



ACTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

TRAINING PLAN FOR 2022-27

This training plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 67 of the 2021 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Introduction

- This training plan has been prepared based on the guidance issued by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- Councillor roles and employee roles have been assessed by reference to a set of core competencies for each role. This assessment has enabled the Council to prioritise its resources to enable all roles within the Council to be supported by a well thought approach to its training and development needs.
- The commitment contained in this training plan will assist the Council to enhance its approach to the delivery of high-quality services to its community.
- The plan will be reviewed at least on an annual basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and accounts for the changing needs of councillors and employees as well as any turnover of councillors or employees.

The Training Plan

- One Voice Wales (OVW) provides a monthly training programme which the Clerk forwards via email to all Councillors. Councillors are asked to identify their training needs and to contact the Clerk to book the training event(s)
- The Clerk will also forward other training opportunities as they become available for Councillors. However, Councillors may identify other training opportunities which will be considered carefully by the Council based on relevance and cost.
- Councils should ensure that Councillors and Staff have sufficient skills and understanding in all key areas. These include Induction for Councillors; the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities in Wales; Financial Management and Governance for Councillors and the Society of Local Council Clerk (SLCC) Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) for the Clerk

Course	Required	Timescale
Code of Conduct	All Councillors/Clerk	Within 6 months of being elected
Understanding the Law	All Councillors	Within 6 months of being elected
Chairing Skills	All Chairs/Vice Chairs	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council Meeting	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once in the Council Term
The Councillor	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once in the Council Term
Effective Staff Management	All Members of the Staffing Committee	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council as an Employer	All Members of the Staffing Committee	Within 6 months of being elected
Introduction to Community Engagement	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Community Engagement Part 2	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Health & Safety	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Creating a Community Plan	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Information Management	Two Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once during the Council term
Equality & Diversity	Two Councillors	Once during the Council term
Mediation and Conciliation	Two Councillors/Clerk	Once during the Council term
Planning	Two Councillors	Once during the Council term
Respect & Civility	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once during the Council term

Include below any specific comments about how the training will be arranged or how other development needs will be addressed through other methods;

- Code of Conduct is to meet requirements of Council's Code of Conduct whereby each Councillor is to attend one training session on the Code in each electoral term.
- A Survey has been completed in respect of past and future training needs.
- The Clerk, and the Administration Assistant where appropriate, to attend SLCC branch meetings, SLCC conferences and SLCC/OVW Training (Wales) to ensure their knowledge remains up to date and as part of their Continuing Professional Development.
- The Clerk and the Administration Assistant to complete the ILCA qualification.
- Cyber Security online courses to be arranged for all Councillors who wish to attend, and the Clerk and Administration Assistant.
- Where appropriate and more cost effective, group training to be organised on a face to face basis, rather than individual online training.