

Carmarthen Town Council Annual Report

Civic Year 2021-22

Introduction

Outline of Council	<p>Carmarthen Town Council serves the area of Carmarthen and its population of around 14,600 residents. It has 18 councillors, covering the North, South and West Wards of Carmarthen.</p> <p>The Town Councillors during the 2021/22 period were:</p> <table><tr><td>Gareth John (Mayor and chair)</td><td>Angharad Jones-Leefe</td></tr><tr><td>Miriam Moules (Deputy Mayor)</td><td>Alun Lenny</td></tr><tr><td>Wyn Thomas (Sheriff)</td><td>Arwel Lloyd</td></tr><tr><td>Julia Ault (left in Dec 2021)</td><td>Ken Lloyd</td></tr><tr><td>Danny Bartley (left in Dec 2021)</td><td>Dr Ioan Matthews</td></tr><tr><td>Rev Tom Defis</td><td>Emlyn Schiavone</td></tr><tr><td>Dr Baba Gana</td><td>Jeff Thomas</td></tr><tr><td>Phil Grice</td><td>Dr Matthew Thomas</td></tr><tr><td>Peter Hughes Griffiths</td><td>Barry Williams</td></tr></table> <p>Mayor's Chaplain: Rev Beti Wyn James</p> <p>The Town Council meets every month (apart from August), and it is supported by two principal Committees – the General Purposes and the Finance Committees respectively, who also meet on a monthly basis and report and make recommendations to the Council at the end of every month. The Management Committee meets routinely, as and when required.</p> <p>The Council employs 18 full or part time members of staff, and the Clerk of the Town Council is Mr Alun Harries. A review of the staffing structure resulted in the creation of a new post (to replace two former agency worker roles) – the Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Manager (Mrs Emma Smith).</p>	Gareth John (Mayor and chair)	Angharad Jones-Leefe	Miriam Moules (Deputy Mayor)	Alun Lenny	Wyn Thomas (Sheriff)	Arwel Lloyd	Julia Ault (left in Dec 2021)	Ken Lloyd	Danny Bartley (left in Dec 2021)	Dr Ioan Matthews	Rev Tom Defis	Emlyn Schiavone	Dr Baba Gana	Jeff Thomas	Phil Grice	Dr Matthew Thomas	Peter Hughes Griffiths	Barry Williams
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Carmarthen Town Council is responsible for many services in the town, including:

- Carmarthen Park, incorporating the tea shop, velodrome and rugby ground;
- Other public parks in Carmarthen including Johnstown Park, Penllwyn Park, Parc Hinds and the play areas at Russell Terrace, Maes y Wennol and Allt Ioan;
- Most of the town's public footpaths;
- St Peter's Civic Hall;
- Carmarthen Cemetery;
- Footway lighting across the town;
- Events and activities including the annual Christmas lights 'switch on' and reindeer parade, the Carmarthen Town Sports Awards, the Mayor's Races on May bank holiday, and the St David's Day celebrations in the town centre;
- Activities and events held at Carmarthen Park throughout the year, including the extensive summer programme of entertainment and facilitating the Winter Wonderland;
- The town's hanging basket scheme and other floral displays;
- Providing financial grants and other support for local organisations and good causes.

Since 2018 Carmarthen Town Council has been recognised by One Voice Wales for its high level of service and performance in a number of areas, as follows:

- Best Heritage Project (Carmarthen Velodrome Redevelopment) - **Winner**
- Best Sustainability Initiative (Red Court Solar Farm Grants Scheme) - **Winner**
- Best Environmental Project (Red Court Solar Farm Grants Scheme) – **Winner**
- Best Tourism Initiative (Tour of Britain activities) - **Winner**
- Best Community Engagement Initiative (use of social media) – **Highly Commended**
- Best Local Council Service (Carmarthen Tea Room & Summer Events Programme) - **Commended**
- Best Annual Report – Highly **Commended**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 was implemented in January 2021, and many of the Act's provisions have implications for town and community councils across Wales. Some of the Act's requirements do not come into place until later during 2022, but the following have already been introduced by CTC:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi location meetings – where council meetings must provide for councillors and members of the public who wish to attend remotely, using video or telephone conferencing facilities• Reporting on council decision-making within 7 days of a meeting• Requirement to publish Annual reports - these have been published by CTC since 2016• Training Plans – the first training plan will be published as soon as possible after the local elections taking place in May 2022• General Power of Competence (GPOC) – this new legal power enabling local councils to be more innovative with the use of its finances and resources will be considered by councillors soon after the May elections.
What is the Council’s Vision/Objectives?	<p>Carmarthen Town Council adopted the following five-year strategy and plan in 2017:</p> <p><u>Strategy</u> ‘To enhance the Well-being of the people of Carmarthen and to be ambitious in providing excellent service and value for money’.</p> <p><u>Plan</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To develop a strategy and plan for the period 2017-2022;2. To engage widely with the diverse communities of Carmarthen and identify priorities from that engagement and public consultation;3. To create an engagement and consultation strategy in support of 2 above;4. To identify effective ways of engaging with younger generations and create opportunities for the voice of young people to be heard and enable them to influence Council decision making;5. To promote and enhance the well-being of Carmarthen and its people and to respond as necessary to the requirements of the Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan;6. To consider the relevance of a ‘Community Plan’ and a ‘Place Plan’ for Carmarthen town;7. To be as efficient as possible in the delivery of the best possible service to the people of Carmarthen town and those who visit the area;8. To work closely with neighbouring and other town and community councils;9. To continue to work with neighbouring and other town and community councils. <p>The above strategy will be reviewed by CTC following the local elections taking place in May 2022.</p>

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2021/22

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Council's operations started to recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic seen in the previous year. While income was not back to normal, hire of St Peter's Hall, the velodrome and the rugby and football pitches was able to continue during the year. Confidence has grown during the year and by the end of the year, bookings were increasing. Council was fortunate to benefit from Welsh Government funding of £4,983 towards the Christmas celebrations in town, which included the Christmas lights switch on event and the reindeer parade.

The **Council Precept** is the main source of Council income and represents the amount of council tax paid by households in Carmarthen that is allocated to the Town Council. The annual precept (£138.42 per Band D household) raised a total of £779,129 for the Town Council during 2021/22 (the Town Council does not receive anything from business rates). It also received income from the provision of its services such as:

Carmarthen Cemetery: £65,012

Carmarthen Park Tea Shop: £43,735

Parks (including velodrome): £5,451

Other income received was £25,594 giving total income for 2021/22 of £918,922.

During 2021/22 **Council expenditure** (including staffing costs) was:

Parks and Tea Shop	-	£174,730	Street Lighting	-	£22,199
Cemetery	-	£154,460	Hanging Baskets	-	£9,212
St Peter's Civic Hall	-	£52,677	Civic	-	£5,436
Allotments	-	£1,214	General administration	-	£294,833
Grants	-	£10,805	Other expenditure	-	£5,423
Events	-	£23,655	TOTAL	-	£754,644

The Council retains **reserves** of £150,000 to deal with unforeseen contingencies and emergencies.

Expenditure on **capital projects** during 2021/22 included:

- Repairs to the paths in Parc Hinds - £10,310
- Disabled toilets at St Peter's Civic Hall - £1,580
- Replacement Safety Doors at St Peter's Civic Hall and Carmarthen Park Store Shed - £2,974
- Carmarthen Skate Park - £4,100
- Maintenance and repairs to of the roof at St Peter's Civic Hall - £3,654
- Procurement of Replacement Vehicle for the Maintenance Team - £10,750
- Defibrillators – £2,415

Progress against the Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan Objectives

Carmarthenshire PSB Well-being Objective	Steps taken by the Town/Community Council that contribute to the Well-being Objective	How have the 5 Ways of Working been used to shape your activity? (Summary in Appendix A)	Which national Well-being Goals does this work support? (Summary in Appendix B)
<p>Healthy Habits: People have a good quality of life, and make healthy choices about their lives and environment</p>	<p>1. Public Parks & Play Areas</p>	<p>The Town Council manages several public parks, and these are important community facilities that the Council uses to promote health and fitness and improve people’s physical and emotional sense of well-being.</p> <p>Each of the Council’s public parks has play and other equipment, and the main park in Morfa Lane provides space and equipment for all generations. During 2021/22 significant improvements were made to the public pathway at Parc Hinds and a new replacement slide was installed at Penllwyn Parc. The former public conveniences and bus shelter at Johnstown has been decorated by Men2Men Carmarthen, a newly formed group of volunteers who provide support and activities for people who may need emotional support. This group approached the Town Council during the year and have already carried out several projects, including planting and maintaining flower borders.</p> <p>The skate park at Carmarthen Park was redecorated following a consultation with the users.</p> <p>The Tea Shop at Carmarthen Park is a popular venue for very many different social groups, and activities and events have gradually returned to the Park during the past year. Plans are progressing to hold a significant food festival at the Park this coming summer, and an additional indoor seating and eating area at the Tea Shop will be developed later this year.</p>	<p>Prosperous Wales Healthier Wales Cohesive Communities More Equal Wales</p>

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	2. Carmarthen Velodrome	<p>Carmarthen Velodrome is managed by the Town Council and has a strategy to engage with cyclists and clubs across south and west Wales, and to work to improve the health and well-being of users and create more outdoor opportunities for all levels of cyclists, ranging from novices to those at the elite level.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the use of the Velodrome by individuals, various groups and organisations during the last year.</p>	<p>Healthier Wales Cohesive Communities</p>
	3. Keep Wales Tidy	<p>In February 2022, the Mayor led a 'Spring Clean' campaign that resulted in the Town Council working very effectively with its key partners from Carmarthenshire County Council and very many volunteers and other organisations to undertake litter picks and street cleaning initiatives. This has taken place during recent months, and many volunteers continue to carry out litter picks across the local area. The initiative proved very successful, and it is planned to continue with this sort of focussed campaign every year.</p>	<p>Cohesive Communities Globally Responsible Wales Resilient Wales</p>
Carmarthenshire PSB Well-being Objective	Steps taken by the Town/Community Council that contribute to the Well-being Objective	How have the 5 Ways of Working been used to shape your activity? (Summary in Appendix A)	Which national Well-being Goals does this work support? (Summary in Appendix B)
Early Intervention: To make sure that people have the right help at the right time; as and when they need it	1. Loneliness	<p>In September 2021 the Deputy Mayor Cllr Miriam Moules launched a consultation with interested stakeholders to try to improve the level of support for lonely people in Carmarthen. Several organisations and interested parties attended a series of online meetings over a 6 month period during the year, and many suggestions were made about how the Town Council might wish to support lonely people and also support the existing work of organisations that already work in this area. These included the need to deliver bilingual information</p>	<p>Prosperous Wales More Equal Wales Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language</p>

	<p>platforms for all including digital and face-to-face information; harness heritage and culture in all we do; be inclusive in our journey to be a fairer society; discover innovative approaches to community ownership of ideas and activities; create a more sustainable approach to what we do; and make a greater effort to include those more marginalised in our society.</p> <p>One of the key outcomes was the production of a ‘Carmarthen Directory of Services’ that people could use to more easily identify and access support networks and organisations. This work was undertaken by two students undertaking an internship programme with the Town Council.</p> <p>The Town Council’s network of volunteers grew substantially during the pandemic (the ‘Community Care’ initiative) and many of those volunteers continue to support people in the Carmarthen area. These include organisations such as the Round Table, Men2Men, the Civic Society and many individuals.</p>	
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Strong Connections: Strongly connected people, places and organisations that are able to adapt to change	1. Annual Civic Events	With the gradual removal of lockdown restrictions linked to the pandemic, community and civic events have re-appeared during the last 12 months. For the second successive year the council’s Annual Meeting including the Civic ceremony to mark the appointment of the new Mayor took place via remote video, and all Council meetings are now undertaken on a so-called ‘multi location’ basis in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Cllr Gareth John was re-elected Mayor of Carmarthen (and therefore chair of the Town Council) for a second successive year - an unusual	Cohesive Communities Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language Resilient Wales

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		<p>occurrence, but one that reflected his strong and positive leadership of the Council throughout the challenges of the pandemic during the previous year.</p> <p>Carmarthen Round Table’s annual fireworks display at Carmarthen Park attracts a huge attendance, and several thousand people witnessed the return of this popular community event in 2021.</p> <p>This was followed in November by the annual Civic Remembrance events held in partnership with the Royal British Legion at St Peter’s Civic Church and the County Memorial in Priory Street.</p> <p>The traditional Christmas lights switch-on and reindeer parade took place after a break caused by the pandemic during November and was attended once more by several thousand people from across southwest Wales.</p> <p>The annual celebrations linked to St David’s Day again took place during February and March (see 4 below).</p>	
	2. Information Sharing	<p>The Town Council acts as a critical source and communicator of information across local communities, and its various social media platforms have been developed into a virtual community hub. These are used to convey key messages to the community to promote health and well-being and also to highlight the numerous events and activities that take place within the local community, thereby creating opportunities for people to come together. This ‘signposting’ role continues to work particularly effectively and has grown considerably as the Council has increased its involvement with initiatives such as the loneliness project.</p>	<p>More Equal Wales Cohesive Communities Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language</p>
	3. Schools, Colleges and other Community Groups and Organisations	<p>The Council has retained its strong links with local schools and colleges.</p> <p>Following on from the previous success of the scheme, a further four students from Trinity St David’s University have worked on internships with the Town Council during the reporting period and they have undertaken different</p>	<p>Cohesive Communities More Equal Wales Prosperous Wales Resilient Wales Healthier Wales</p>

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		projects on behalf of the council. These included a new sports directory for our website, a guide to places to visit in the town, and the wellbeing directory.	Globally Responsible Wales
	4. St David's Events	Since 2016 a series of cultural events and activities have taken place in Carmarthen during February and March to celebrate the life of the patron saint of Wales. Co-ordinated by the Town Council, over 30 cultural and activities (including several online events, following the success of the previous year's approach) culminating in the return this year of the annual parade from St Peter's Church to the Guildhall. This year's event also very poignantly demonstrated the town's support towards the suffering being experienced by the people of Ukraine following its recent invasion.	Prosperous Wales Cohesive Communities Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh language
Carmarthenshire PSB Well-being Objective	Steps taken by the Town/Community Council that contribute to the Well-being Objective	How have the 5 Ways of Working been used to shape your activity? (Summary in Appendix A)	Which national Well-being Goals does this work support? (Summary in Appendix B)
Prosperous People and Places: To maximise opportunities for people and places in both urban and rural parts of our county	1. Town Centre Recovery Plan from the Covid Pandemic – Supporting the local economy	The Town Council has continued to play a leading role in the economic recovery of the town following the pandemic. Led by the Mayor Cllr Gareth John, the Town Centre Recovery Group - consisting of business leaders (Chamber of Trade, Carmarthen Business Improvement District, Carmarthen Market), individual key business representatives and traders (e.g. Merlin's Walk, St Catherine's Walk), and officers from Carmarthenshire County Council continue to meet on a fortnightly basis to ensure that the town is doing everything possible to return to 'business as usual'.	Prosperous Wales Resilient Wales Healthier Wales More Equal Wales Cohesive Communities Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language
	2. Carmarthen Regeneration Forum	The Carmarthen Regeneration Forum is a County Council managed group of key stakeholders responsible for the economic development of the town. It continues to be chaired by the Mayor of Carmarthen, and several other councillors and officers are members of the Forum and its various sub-groups, all of whom work together to improve the prosperity of Carmarthen.	Prosperous Wales

	<p>3. LocalMotion</p>	<p>LocalMotion is a totally new concept featuring a group of private investors who have identified Carmarthen as one of 6 towns and cities across the UK (it is the only location in Wales) who will benefit from an initial £350,000 (eighteen-month investment in the town from February 2022 to September 2023). It will be followed by an eight-year investment until 2030. A large number of stakeholders including the Town Council are members of the group and significant sums of money are earmarked to be invested on different projects. Currently ‘Llais Caerfyrddin’ is being developed and will be a strategic town engagement project linking with residents from housing estates, intergenerational groups, and organisations. Consultation is the key objective in this project, ensuring this engagement empowers the future work of LocalMotion in the community. Llais Caerfyrddin will visit communities all over the town and engage to develop an idea of what people want for Carmarthen. A large community event is also being planned, to bring a vibrant art-based feel to Carmarthen. Talks, exhibitions, workshops, and educational links to colleges and schools are all being planned for this large-scale event. Working together is exciting and challenging, therefore we all have to be mindful of respecting the process. Hopefully after these initial trials in the first eighteen months, we can take stock of what is possible and develop the future LocalMotion projects in the town.</p>	
	<p>4. Public Realm – Appearance of the town centre</p>	<p>The Town Council continues to play a leading role in ensuring the town looks at its best for its residents and visitors. It is responsible for all of the local parks and most of the floral displays in the town centre. It also has a role in highlighting and co-ordinating concerns about matters outside of its scope of responsibility via the Town Centre Recovery Group and its membership of the Public Realm Sub-Group of the Town Regeneration Forum.</p> <p>The Town Council provides the hanging basket scheme and other floral displays that brightens up the appearance of the town and helps to attract visitors and shoppers to the town from southwest Wales and beyond. In order to help</p>	<p>Prosperous Wales Cohesive Communities</p>

		<p>businesses affected by the pandemic the Town Council once again provided over 150 baskets free of charge during the year.</p> <p>In February 2022, the Mayor led a 'Spring Clean' campaign that resulted in the Town Council working very effectively with its key partners from Carmarthenshire County Council and very many volunteers and other organisations to undertake litter picks and street cleaning initiatives. This has taken place during recent months and many volunteers continue to carry out litter picks across the local area. The initiative proved to be very successful indeed, and it is planned to continue with this sort of focussed campaign every year.</p>	
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Biodiversity Duty Report to Welsh Government

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 - Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report

- The Council provides a range of local services and manages a number of green spaces. These include several public parks, play areas and Carmarthen Cemetery. A butterfly garden was created at Carmarthen Park during 2020 and wild flowers were also seeded on the banks of the velodrome.
- The Council published a 'Biodiversity and Environment Development Action Plan' in September 2018 and it also has a Council Sub-Committee - Sian Johnston Committee - which deals specifically with matters relating to the environment and sustainability. This makes recommendations to the Town Council on these matters. **This Action Plan will be reviewed by CTC following the local elections in May 2022.**

Appendix A: 5 Ways of Working

Long Term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Appendix B: National Well-being Goals

National Goal
<p>A Prosperous Wales: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the Global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately, and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>
<p>A Resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.</p>
<p>A Healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood</p>
<p>A More Equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>
<p>A Wales of Cohesive Communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities</p>
<p>A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language: where we have lots of opportunities to do different things and where lots of people can speak Welsh</p>
<p>A Globally Responsible Wales: where we look after the Environment and think about other people around the World</p>