

ANNUAL REPORT
HARLECH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL
2025/2026

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN – CLLR. CHRISTOPHER BRAITHWAITE

It is a privilege to present Harlech Community Council's fourth Annual Report for 2025/2026. This past year has been one of progress, reflection, and continued commitment to the wellbeing of our community. Our shared vision remains at the heart of everything we do: to ensure Harlech is a safe, welcoming, and vibrant place for people of all ages — a town where residents feel supported and connected, and where visitors experience the unique character that makes our community so special.

Throughout the year, the Council has continued to deliver work that supports the economic, social, environmental, and cultural life of Harlech. We have maintained essential public spaces, supported local groups and organisations, and worked closely with partners to ensure that services and facilities remain available to residents and visitors. The Council has also continued to invest in community events and initiatives that strengthen local pride and bring people together.

This has also been a year of change. The closure of Harlech swimming pool has required careful consideration and ongoing discussions about the future of the site. I am grateful to the Members who have taken an active role in these conversations and who continue to work towards a positive outcome for the community. At the same time, we have seen strong engagement from local groups, schools, and volunteers, whose contributions remain vital to the life of the town.

I would like to thank all Councillors for their dedication and service over the past year, including those who joined or re-joined the Council, and to acknowledge the contribution of Cllr. Rhian Corps, who stepped down during the year. I also extend my sincere thanks to our Clerk, Annwen Hughes, whose professionalism and commitment underpin the smooth running of the Council's work. This year also marks a personal transition. Due to increasing commitments outside the Council, I will be stepping down as Chairman at the end of this term. However, I want to emphasise that

I remain fully committed to Harlech and will continue to serve as a Councillor. I look forward to staying actively involved in the work of the Council and supporting the new Chair as we continue to move our community forward.

As we look ahead, our priorities remain clear: to protect and enhance the character of Harlech, to support the wellbeing of our residents, and to work collaboratively with partners and community groups to secure a positive and sustainable future for our town. It has been an honour to serve as Chairman, and I remain proud to continue serving the people of Harlech.

Membership

Cllr. Christopher Braithwaite (Chairman)

Cllr. James Maxwell (Vice Chairman)

Cllr. Reg Chapman

Cllr. Edwina Evans

Cllr. Giles Bentham – (elected back to the Council in November 2025)

Cllr. Rhian Corps – (resigned September 2025)

Cllr. Ceri Griffiths

Cllr. Gordon Howie

Cllr. Martin Hughes

Cllr. Tegid John – (elected back to the Council in April 2025)

Cllr. Wendy Williams

Cllr. Simon Turner

Cllr. Mark Lewis

Two Councillors represent the area on Gwynedd Council namely Cllr. Annwen Hughes and Cllr. Gwynfor Owen.

Unfortunately Cllr. Rhian Corps resigned from the Community Council in September 2025 and Cllr. Giles Bentham was elected back onto the Council. Cllr. Tegid John was elected back onto the Council in April 2025.

Staff

The Council has one member of staff, Annwen Hughes, who is the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. She works part-time. The Clerk may be contacted by e-mail Enquiriescyngorharlech@outlook.com, letter to Crafnant, Llanbedr, Gwynedd LL45 2PH or phone 01341241613/07919582741.

Meetings

Normal meetings of the Council are held monthly except for August at the Old Library in the town on the first Monday of every month apart from May when the meeting is held on the second Monday because of the bank holiday.

Website

By now the Council has it's own website and information about the Community Council including agenda for meetings, policies and news is available on the Community Council's website

www.cyngorcymunedharlech.co.uk

EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP

The Community Council is a member of One Voice Wales, which is the main representative body for Community and Town councils in Wales. The Community Council elects Members to other external bodies, namely, Old Library Committee, Memorial Hall Committee and the Governing Body of Ysgol Tan y Castell.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Community Council has adopted a Member's Code of Conduct and a register of interests is kept for each member. Each Councillor has to declare any interest they have in items to be discussed at the start of each meeting and these are noted in the minutes. The Community Council is audited by internal and external auditors annually. The internal audit is undertaken by the Audit Department of Gwynedd Council and the External Audit by the Wales Audit Office.

FINANCE AND EXPENDITURE

The Community Council sets a budget annually and monitors expenditure against budget throughout the financial year by receiving a regular report from the Clerk. The main source of income for the Community Council is the precept which is set annually and presented to Gwynedd Council in January for the following financial year. The precept is collected on behalf of the Community Council by Gwynedd Council and is the only source of tax revenue available to Town and Community Councils. The process of deciding on the level of precept includes the preparation of a draft budget on the basis of the financial situation of the Community Council by considering the likely costs, plans for projects, setting an amount for contributions - within the guidelines published annually - and any other financial matters. Consideration is also given to the reserves held by the Community Council to ensure an appropriate precept is set. The level of precept has been raised to £85,000 for 2025/26. In addition, the Community Council received £6,685.56 from the 10% Parking Scheme by Gwynedd Council which it joined a few years ago.

Income & Expenditure 2025/26

	Income	Expenditure
	£	£
Bank Interest	1,696.53	
Precept	85,000.00	
Cemetery Income	2,931.50	
Allotments Rent	445.00	
Reimbursement Car Parks Income	6,685.56	
Reimbursement Footpaths Cutting	990.35	
V.A.T Reimbursement	3,580.87	
Reimburse survey Penygraig land	1,226.00	
Wildflower Garden Grant	1,308.32	

Magnox Grant	520.00	
Gwynedd Ni Grant	6,960.52	
Footpaths		2,542.00
Grass cut playing field		2,196.00
Grass cut cemetery		2,185.00
Cemetery Expenditure		1,530.00
Fall trees by Nature Trail		2,875.00
Inspection of tree by Nature Trail		300.00
Survey of Penygraig land		4,171.20
Eradicate japanese knotweed		350.00
Christmas Lights		21,238.61
Sundries for Christmas event		499.00
Toilets materials (castle toilets)		139.59
Toilets caretaker (castle toilets)		1,815.91
Welsh Water (toilets)		707.20
Toilets Partnership		12,000.00
Welsh Water (allotments)		77.15
Allotments path and cut grass		870.00
Removal of fence		540.00
Memorial Hall Committee		2,000.00
Old Library Committee		2,000.00
Cylch Meithrin Harlech		2,000.00
Cyfeillion Ysgol Tanycastell		3,000.00
Ardudwy YFC		500.00
Meirionnydd YFC		500.00
Teulu Castell		500.00
contribution to HAL		1,700.00
Contribution to junior badminton		1,560.00
Loan to King George V playing field		1,000.00
Clerk's Wages		1,764.00
Clerk's Costs		664.55
Office Expenditure		500.00
New Laptop for the Clerk		499.00
Microsoft Licence		104.99
zoom Licence		155.88

Tax on Clerk's Wages	439.80
P.A.Y.E on line	228.00
Tennis Court Rates	96.56
Upkeep of tennis court	168.00
Council's website	2,360.00
Translator	1,105.00
Penygraig Legal Costs	2,156.14
Training courses	290.00
Councillor's Allowance	468.00
Wildflower Community Garden	1,077.20
Council's Insurance	2,452.45
play parks inspection	368.00
Emptying Bins Playing Fields	960.86
Annual contract to eradicate vermin	200.00
External Audit 22/23 a 23/24	3,755.00
Internal Audit 2024/25	408.00
One Voice Wales Membership	370.00
SLCC Membership Fee	85.00
Defib Pad	154.80
Various	22.20
Bank Charges	42.00
	£111,344.65
	£97,856.71

BUDGET

The Council's precept is £85,000 and is earmarked as follows:-

Donates £12,000 to Gwynedd Council to keep the public toilets open (the one in Bron y Graig Isaf car park, Min y Don car park and the one near the Queens hotel and are open all year round)

Since 1st August 2024, Harlech and Arduwy Leisure has closed, and so this means that the swimming pool has also closed. Since the start of this financial year, the Council no longer contributes financially every month but as needed. Some of the HAL Board Directors who

are also Members of the Community Council are in discussions with various agencies regarding the future of the site.

The Council now pays a translator to attend Council meetings each month and has spent £1,105 during this financial year.

During this financial year, £846.79 has been spent on maintaining the public toilets near the Memorial Hall, and the Council has also paid £1,815.91 to a caretaker for cleaning these toilets daily. The Council closes these toilets during the winter season so that more maintenance work can be carried out on them.

The Council spends a substantial sum to cut the grass in the public cemetery, LLyn y Felin play park and King George V play park regularly every two weeks between April and October. Also the grass on various public footpaths in the area are cut at least twice a year. The cost of all this work in this financial year was £6,923. The Council also spent £1,530 as expenditure for opening graves in the public cemetery.

The Council contributes to various organizations in the area annually and has contributed £3,000 to Friends of Tan y Castell School, £2,000 to Harlech Nursery School, £500 to CFFI Arduwly, £500 to CFFI Meirionnydd, and £500 to Teulu Castell. £2,000 annually is contributed to maintaining the Memorial Hall and the Old Library because the Community Council are Trustees of both of these establishments. These contributions are included in the Council's precept. The Council has also contributed £1,560 to the Youth Badminton Club from the Engagement and Community fund.

During this financial year, the Council has contributed £21,737.61 towards the Christmas lights in the area, and there was great praise from everyone that the town looked very festive. A very bright Harlech lighting evening was held on the 29th of November, which

included a parade through the town down to the Castle, and Father Christmas was present.

Council work and responsibilities

Property management

2 play parks namely King George V and LLyn y Felin

The Public Cemetery

The Public Footpaths

Bron y Graig Nature Trail

Bus shelters in the area

Plinth at Pen y Graig

The Old Slaughter House

Public Seats

Allotments

Piece of land in front of the Church

Noticeboards

Administration

Gwynedd Council appointed as Internal Auditors 2024/25

Allowances – review six Councillors claimed allowances of £156

Council website

Keep a risk assessment.

Keeping a record of interest

