

## **ILSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL. NEWSLETTER JULY 2021**

Dear resident

Thank you for reading this newsletter and we hope you find it informative.

You might wonder what your Community Council does and what is its role within the structure of local government?

Community councils were set up in 1972 under reform of local government. They superseded the previous system of parish councils. Community Councils provide a very local connection and deep knowledge of the communities they serve, because all councillors reside within the boundaries of the Council. They therefore provide a local voice for residents and have an in-depth knowledge of the area and local community. This can often be important in small rural communities such as ours.

Community Councils are the lowest tier of local government. The next tier is the City and County of Swansea who are known as the Principal Authority and manage many of the resources including the majority of the finance and statutory functions such as highways, social care, housing, education etc.

With such a huge spread of responsibility sometimes seemingly small issues that affect the quality of life of local residents can be overlooked by the Principal Authority who understandably may be unaware of the finer detail. Currently Ilston Community Council sits within the Gower Ward of the City and County of Swansea. However, a review of boundaries has recommended that we should sit within the Pennard Ward. This is a far more compact area and is adjacent to us. In many ways it could be seen as a positive move.

The Community Council meets at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of every month, except August and December, in Penmaen and Nicholaston Village Hall. During the Covid pandemic meetings have been held online via Zoom. Members of public are welcome to attend meetings at the hall when they resume in July and can request to raise an issue in person. This is done in the first ten minutes of the meeting before the main agenda items.

Minutes of each meeting are published on the Ilston Community Council website.

There are currently 11 members of the Council. Most are elected, however if a vacancy occurs between set elections the council has the option to co-opt a new member until scheduled local government elections take place.

Community Councillors are entitled to claim legitimate expenses and a set sum per year for their efforts. At present by personal choice none of your councillors receive any such remuneration. The Councillors are equally spread across the area ie Perriswood, Nicholaston, Penmaen, Parkmill, Lunnon, and Ilston.

The Council has a paid part time clerk who besides carrying out most administrative duties such as minute taking and correspondence also provides advice and guidance to the councillors.

Ilston Community Council has annual budget of £5,460. This comes from a precept on the local Council Tax collected by the principal authority and the Community Council reserves. The precept currently stands at £15 per household. From our budget is taken the pay and expenses of the Clerk, maintenance of the website, training, upkeep of assets such as street furniture, signage, payment of insurance and licences to name just a few things.

The past 18 months have been particularly challenging for everyone and we hope we have stepped up to the mark to support our community as effectively as possible.

Below are some of the matters attended to by your Councillors in what we think are the best interests of our community.

Probably the most challenging issue at the start of the pandemic was that of communicating with our residents during lockdown. The Principal Authority while having the names and addresses of almost all residents had no way of making individual contact on a regular basis other than by letter. This was a problem we resolved by sending out a letter to each resident most hand delivered by volunteers inviting each resident to supply our Clerk with their email address, phone number or other means of contact. As a result of this within weeks we were able to build a database of contact details.

This was to become important as the lockdown continued and it was necessary to deliver important messages and give reassurance on behalf of the Principal Authority such as the changes in social care provision. We were also able to forward messages directly from the Welsh Government such as changes to restrictions and support for businesses.

We have worked with local businesses who continued to support residents by supplying essential goods and in some cases providing free home deliveries. In addition, we set up some practical support for vulnerable residents and those who were shielding by establishing a team of volunteers who were willing and able to carry out such tasks as shopping and collecting prescriptions from the pharmacy etc. It was fantastic to see our community working together for each other.

A telephone helpline staffed by volunteers and Councillors was also established for any resident wishing to report concerns seek advice or simply to talk to someone during the lonely months of lockdowns.

Of the more day to day issues the Councillors scrutinise planning applications with the benefit of local knowledge and taking account of opinion, comment appropriately to the planning department. One of many plans examined and commented on was the One Planet application for starter smallholdings at Lunnon.

Other matters include off road motorcycling and indiscriminate parking on Cefn Bryn where we continue to work with the Principal Authority and other agencies such as police to find solutions to problems.

Highway matters are often on the agenda and include matters such as speeding traffic through Parkmill, defective road surface at Lunnon Hill and safety concerns due to the nature of the road at Penmaen Cross.

We report hazards such as one of the stepping stones being broken at Three Cliffs Bay exposing jagged steel reinforcing bars as well as defective public footpaths and damaged gates. We have installed signage to remind visitors of the continued risk of covid and thanking the NHS and essential workers. Also, signage asking people to take their litter home.

Issues such as unsafe trees and proliferating knotweed in Parkmill are often considered and where there is no one else appropriate to deal with the matter funds from the budget are used.

The Community Council also make donations towards the RNLI Lifeguards at Three Cliffs Bay, and the Welsh Air Ambulance as well as two local humanitarian charities that have seen an upsurge of demand during lockdowns namely Swansea Women's Aid and Matthews House.

We regularly apply for grant funding towards specific projects that will enhance our communities and environment.

As we look ahead, we are expecting an unprecedented influx of visitors to the area during school holidays due to the uncertainty of foreign travel. If not carefully managed this will impact our businesses, residents and landscape alike. We have asked the responsible authorities what their plans are and have enlisted the support of our local MP to help plan the way forward. This will be of particular concern to the businesses and residents of Parkmill, Penmaen and Nicholaston.

The members of Ilston Community Council wish to thank all those individuals and businesses who have stepped up to the challenges and given their support during the pandemic.

This newsletter is general in nature due to the two-year span of events since the last issue which of course has been dominated by the pandemic. There are so many issues not touched on but we hope it gives you a flavour of how Ilston Community Council works for you.

If you are interested in joining the Council or wish to know more you are welcome to attend our monthly meetings or contact our Clerk Mrs Charlotte Toft at [clerk.ilstoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.ilstoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com) and on 07464612580.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Kind regards

Dale Ponting  
Chair

### **Local Group Raising Money to Harvest Unwanted Apples For Food Banks**

Cyfoeth Y Coed Abertawe / Sweet Pickings Swansea is a project to harvest surplus apples, and other tree fruit, that are otherwise unpicked, to give to food banks and other community food providers via [Fare Share Cymru](#). This project is creating a new, annual, low carbon food source for Swansea.

The startup money for this project is a one time expense to create the foundation for future harvests at minimal cost. This is being done by creating a database of the fruit picking information (e.g. tree locations, volunteer records, permission and insurance documents, harvest schedules) and buying fruit picking equipment. The equipment (picking poles, ladders and hard hats) will be kept at the Tool Library at the Environment Centre, giving people the means to harvest more fruit for themselves.

The project is now raising money on the Crowdfund Swansea platform to reach its target of £8,568. It is now over 75% funded and the fundraiser ends on June 16th. This is an all or nothing model so that unless the project reaches its target it gets nothing. Please make a pledge so that all those apples, and other wasted fruit, can become the nutritious local food they should be.

### **Tenovus**

Tenovus offer a free Support Line (0808 808 1010) so anyone affected by cancer within our community can have the support they deserve.