

CTC 37

Ymgynghoriad ar rôl, llywodraethiant ac atebolrwydd y sector cynghorau tref a chymuned

Consultation on the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Cymuned Sain Ffagan

Response from: St Fagans Community Council

# St. Fagans Community Council

12 Hollybush Close  
Church Village  
CF38 1PR

18 October 2024

## Sent by e-mail

Local Government and Housing Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Dear Sirs,

### **Inquiry into the Role, Governance, and Accountability of The Community Council and Town Council Sector**

My members have asked me to forward their response to your calls for comment.

Taking on board the Terms of Reference for the inquiry - **The Role and Value of Community & Town Councils in Wales** - by examining this statement it begs the question, why did Welsh Government set up this organisation some 20 years ago, or have they failed to internally manage the sector to their standards.

The sector has been impacted by many changes in the working practices since their creation including recent developments such as the digitalisation agenda, introduction of hybrid meetings, and statutory arrangements by the Local Government & Elections [Wales] Act 2021.

Without community and town councils, how would local authorities (in our case Cardiff Council) cope with the additional and increasing workload undertaken by town & Community councils? The answer is that they do not have the capacity or inclination to replace this sector.

#### **Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape**

As a small member of the sector 1/732 St Fagans Community Council is fit for purpose and strongly objects to your suggestion, it is not. Past and current councillors give, and have given, their time over many years and your suggestion is completely without thought and evidence. Obviously if you have written evidence, we would be pleased to receive it. This is a loaded question on the basis it could be asked of Welsh Government and local authorities etc.

**When considering fitness for purpose consideration should be given to the benefits of having town and community councils.** Community councils contribute to the wellbeing of communities by considering their residents' needs on a local basis. Councillors are offered only a small remuneration, yet they provide hours of their time to talk to residents, undertaking projects, and working to improve the environment. Helping to represent the views of residents, arranging events to bring people together, strengthening neighbourhoods, are just some of the benefits delivered which can be measured in both personal and financial terms.

**Governance & scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency**

We abide by the Nolan principals, Code of Conduct, Standing Order [Reviewed Annually], Audit Rules, and visits from Cardiff Council Standards & Ethics Committee. Our Policies are reviewed on a regular basis and new ones implemented when necessary. All these arrangements show and prove accountability and transparency.

**Scope of digital & new technology to improve decision-making, service provision & participation in local democratic processes**

To improve decision making etc., the Finance & Governance Toolkit, which was introduced in 2022 is the new Bible for our sector. Democratic Governance, Annual Reports, and the General Power of Competence are the order of the day. As mentioned earlier, Hybrid Meetings and Digitalisation Agendas are incorporated into our planning to safeguard future decision making.

**How new powers & responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities**

Town & community councils are ideally situated to react to new powers etc. as they are flexible organisations. In our sector, or tier of Government, although financial restriction will obviously apply [as in all levels of local democracy], we at grass roots level can develop support from our community in agreeing an increase in the precept to continue this support. At an Area Level, the sector meets on a regular basis to discuss and action, if necessary, new powers to support communities.

Yours faithfully,

**Hilary Dyer**

Clerk to St Fagans Community Council

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