



Bangor City Council Annual Report 2023 - 2024



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(1) Introduction

This annual report sets out to inform the residents of Bangor City about the activities undertaken by the City Council during the period May 2022 to April 2023 and highlights its ambitions for the 2023 – 2024 municipal year. The report will contain a brief outline of the structure of the Council, including election wards, Councillors and staff and will also detail an overview of the Council’s activities. The Report will also explain how the Council contributes to the well-being of its area in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

As in recent years, Wales faces a number of challenges, including the economic downturn, climate change, poverty and health inequalities. To tackle these challenges, each region and each community will be need work together in order to give current and future generations a good quality of life. It is essential that consideration is given to the long-term impact of the decisions that are being taken today, especially in relations to biodiversity, sustainability and climate related issues. With the primary impacts of Covid19 in the rear view mirror, the economic aftereffects, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine are having a significant impact on the national economy and therefore also on our local communities.

Included within this report, is the City Council’s 2023 -24 Well-Being Future Generations Report. The report is a requirement of the (Wales) Act 2015, and provides a legally-binding common purpose – (the seven well-being goals) – for national government, local government, local health boards and other specified public bodies. It details the ways in which specific public bodies must work, and work together to improve the well-being of Wales.

(2) The Council

Bangor has a long history that dates back to post Roman period. St Deiniol’s Cathedral was founded in 525AD and there has been a permanent occupation ever since. Geographically, Bangor sits in a valley between two ridges that run North East to South West and this valley is buffered at the North East end by the sea. This geographical location gives the City a diverse biodiverse ecosystem. The coastal area is suffering from coastal erosion and work will commence in the coming years to improve the flood defences.

Bangor City Council (BCC) was formed in 1974 and serves a City, which has eight Wards and boasts a population of over 18,000 people (as of 2019). This permanent number of residents is supplemented by some 12,000 students, giving Bangor one of the highest ratios of students to permanent residents in the United Kingdom. This demographic spread gives the City unique benefits and unique challenges.

The recent onset and restriction caused by the Covid 19 pandemic have created challenges and restricted the City Council's ability to progress its policies.

The City Council consists of 20 Councillors representing seven Wards distributed as follows:

Ward	Number of Members	Members Names
Garth	1 Member	Huw Wyn Jones
Glyder	3 Members	Gareth Parry Gwynant Roberts Elin Walker Jones
Marchog	4 Members	Dylan Fernley Nigel Pickavance Delyth Russel vacant
Menai	3 Members	Jac Jones Shane Parsons Meic Pattison
Dewi	3 Member	Gareth Roberts John Wyn Williams Eirian Williams Roberts
Hendre	3 Members	Medwyn Hughes John Wyn Jones Lisa Toth
Hirael	3 Members	Steve Bell Mark Roberts Salamatu Fada

The above Ward separation and Councillor list was amended following the local

government elections in May 2022. Corresponding to this election there were some boundary changes, the most notable of which was the erasing of the previous known Deniol Ward. Following the election, the Council actively attempted to fill the six vacancies. Over the twelve months since the election there have been further changes to the list of Councillors. The list above represents the situation as of May 2023, when there remains one vacancy for the Marchog Ward.

For the most up to date Councillor list, please visit the Council's website: [Bangor City Council - Cyngor Dinas Bangor - Home](#) or email the City Director at townclerk@bangorcitycouncil.com.

In keeping with traditional, and other local Councils, Bangor City Council elects a Mayor and Deputy Mayor each year from among its Members, to act as chair and figurehead to the Council. The current Chair is Councillor Elin Walker Jones, of Glyder Ward who will serve until the Annual Meeting in May 2024. The current Vice-Chairman is Cllr Gareth Parry also of Glyder Ward. Custom and practice dictates that the Deputy Mayor will become Mayor the following year, although this is now laid down in statute or regulation and can, sometime, be deviated from.

The Council has one primary committees, that being the Assets, Resources and Projects Committee. This Committee is chaired by Cllr Medwyn Hughes and his Deputy, Cllr Steven Bell chairs in his absence. Each Councillor sits on this committee. The Council also establishes sub-committees as the need arises, such as an Appointments Committee, the Nantporth Committee and the Covid Resilience Committee.

The City Council usually meets at least once per month, except in August. Meetings take place at 6.30 pm on Monday evenings at Penrhyn Hall, although during Covid these meetings were held remotely. Following a change in Welsh Government legislation in 2021, hybrid meetings are being undertaken, although the Council still experiences sound issues in this format and residents are advised to attend the meeting in public whenever possible to ensure they can hear the proceedings. It is one of the Council's priorities for the coming year to address the hybrid sounds to improve the remote meeting experience. Details of Council meetings are published on the Council website. For a list of scheduled meetings please see appendix A.

The Council owns a number of significant assets that require managing, these include

- Garth Pier
- Penrhyn Hall
- Nantporth Football Stadium
- Ashely Jones Fields
- Menai Woods
- The Pier Restaurant
- Dargie Fields

- Hafan Community Centre
- Pier Workshop
- Pier Master’s House
- Garth Road Car Park
- Town Clock
- Various bus shelters, benches and street furniture.

To assist the Mayor and the Council run efficiently and manage the assets, the Council employs five full-time staff. These have in the past been supplemented by two additional seasonal staff, although since Covis this practice has ceased and some elements contracted out. The senior position is that of a City Director, a role which incorporates the duties of Proper Officer, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

City Director – The current incumbent of the City Director role, Dr Martin Hanks, took-up the full-time position in September 2022. He is an experienced Town Clerk, a Principal Member of the SLCC and sits on the National Executive of the ALCC.

Administrative Officer - The previous Administrative Officer, following a period of long-term sick leave, retired in July 2022. The City Council appointed replacement in October 2022 and the current Officer is also undertaking formal training as a Deputy to the City Director.

Projects Officer – Bangor City’s Project Officer undertakes numerous roles, including overseeing the renovations and the regular maintenance to the Bangor Garth Pier. Other activities includes organizing events, maintaining the Council’s assets, liaising with the Cyngor Gwynedd on technical matters and assisting the City Director.

Senior Council Maintenance Officer (SMO) The Senior Maintenance Officer took his current position in February 2023, although he has been in the employ of the City Council for some 16 years. He, together with the Maintenance Officer, undertakes numerous supervisory and physical outdoor duties.

Maintenance Officer – this officer undertakes numerous outdoor duties, including grass cutting, cleaning, regular pier maintenance, bus stop maintenance, bench maintenance etc.

(3) Summary of Council Activities - 2022/23

This summary of activities is modelled on the seven well-being goals identified in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, namely:

Well-Being Goal	Description of the Goal
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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 (including acting on climate change); 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
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 (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 defines sustainable development as a process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking steps, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, which aim to achieve the well-being goals. In this respect the Council recognizes its role in promoting sustainable development and the way in which it is fulfilling its duty under the Act while working for, and with, local communities.

The well-being goals are completely integral to each other and explain what is meant by the well-being of Wales. The Council welcomes these well-being goals and will place these goals at the heart of its planning and decision-making arrangements to improve the overall quality of life (well-being) within its administrative area.

In applying these well-being goals to the functions, activities and services provided by

the City Council, the Act requires the Council to think longer-term, work better with people and communities and other public bodies, to look at preventing problems arising, and to take a more coherent approach. Many of these aims and the activities identified overlap and complement each other.

The remainder of this Report corresponds to the 7 well-being goals in the Act.

It should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic struck during March 2020 and that its effects continue to be felt. The Council played a pivotal role within the community, in order to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the City and its inhabitants and stands ready to re-initiate the measures required should the need arise.

1. 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 (including acting on climate change); 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”

The City Council has representatives on a number of relevant bodies in the City and beyond, which seek to deliver schemes that grow the City’s economy. These include:

- School Governing Bodies;
- Bangor Strategic Partnership
- Bangor University Community Board
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Maesgeirchen Partnership
- Nantporth CIC;
- Friends of Garth Pier;
- One Voice Wales;
- Bangor Civic Society;
- Garth Community Centre.

Bangor is twinned with Soest (Germany) and works to increase cultural links with Europe. 2023-2024 sees the 50th anniversary of this Twinning and a delegation from Germany are expected in October, with a view to reinforcing these cultural links. The City Council have begun discussions to establish a Community Interest Company, which will be tasked with identifying and managing properties on the High Street that can be purchased, improved and offered to community enterprise or third sector operators. Similarly, there are plans to establish a Community Interest Company to manage Garth Pier and surrounding area. This will assist in maximizing the economic benefits of one of the City’s major attractions.

2. A Resilient Wales

"A nation which maintains and enhances the biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to change (for example as climate change)".

The City Council has invested in more efficient and environmentally friendly use of energy sources, which has resulted in a reduction in its carbon footprint and a significant reduction in energy costs.

Changes to energy suppliers have also improved both efficiency and costs.

The installation of internal doors has significantly reduced the annual energy costs in the Council offices.

The increased use of low energy lighting at Christmas displays has had the same effect, and also reduced the annual costs of Christmas lights.

The increase use of modern technology is assisting to take the administration towards a paperless future. Although there is more work to undertaken.

Council payments are made electronically, reducing the need for paper.

To offset the Council's carbon footprint, more areas of the Council's land is being sown as wild flower orchards.

The City is establishing links with local groups and volunteers with a view to increasing bio-diversity and enhanced the greening of Bangor. It is planned that during the 2023 – 2024 municipal year that the City Council will act as facilitator to establish a voluntary green Bangor group.

3. A Healthier Wales

"A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximized and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

The City Council aims to support organisations that promote healthy living. To achieve this the Council provides financial support to any organization that can demonstrate an objective to this goal. Community group which are enhancing the green areas of the City, sports clubs and well-being centers have received support from the Council.

Additionally the City Council is investing heavily in parks and playparks in the City, despite that these are owned by Gwynedd Council. Over the coming twelve months fifty thousand pounds has been set aside to improve the City parks and playparks.

Investment too, is being made on the City Council's land to maintain them for public use.

Garth Pier has, especially since Covid 19, become a popular outdoor centre for experiencing the outdoors. To build on its popularity it is planned to establish a cycle hire centre at the Pier entrance, which will include electric cycles (and charging points).

The City Council have begun discussions with Cyngor Gwynedd with a view to an asset transfer of the Beach Road sports facilities. This will allow the Council to improve the sports facilities here.

The Beach Road facilities also includes two car parks and it is situated within easy walking distance of Garth Pier. This transfer will allow for visitors to Bangor to park at Beach Road and, following a short walk, hire a bicycle or electric cycle with which to enjoy the City and surrounding area.

4. A more equal Wales

“A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).”

The City Council continues to provide financial support to a number of diverse groups across the City and is also represented by Members on many community groups and organisations.

Many of these groups work towards a more equal Wales, from improving education to giving residents an opportunity to develop new skills. For example, the City Council recently approved financial support for M-Spark on the Road to be located on the High Street, which offered help and advice to businesses and individuals.

The Council recently accepted a university student on work placement who otherwise was struggling to find relevant experience and it is also working closely with secondary school youth councils to encourage engagement in public service from young people of all backgrounds.

The Council continues to provide financial support to the Citizens Advice Bureau and a Council Member sits on its Board to ensure robust communication.

A range of initiatives have been introduced to help those struggling financially, from supporting food banks, to offering discounted hire of Penrhyn Hall for events and weddings. The Hall has kitchen facilities, disabled access including and a hearing

loop.

The Council has a new website to facilitate compliance with legislative requirements.

The Council treats the Welsh and English languages on an equal basis and ensures that the Welsh language has a prominent place in all its activities.

To enhance enjoyment of the City and increase wellbeing the City Council organizes and supports a programme of events throughout the year, many of which are accessible free of charge and therefore can be enjoyed by people of all financial and cultural backgrounds.

5. A Wales of cohesive communities
“Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities”

The City Council is planning to invest heavily in improving the attractiveness of the High Street, work has begun on preparing an application to the Welsh Government for assistance with this matter.

The Council works closely with other agencies, including the Police, the Bangor First, (formerly Business Improvement District) and Cyngor Gwynedd to improve the safety of citizens and visitors.

The Council continues to be involved in issues affecting everyone in the City, especially planning decisions, Welsh government legislation and liaison with the Unitary authority. The City Council plays an important consultative and linking role between multi-agencies.

It is accepted that over recent years, even before the Covid pandemic, there was a void in the communication between agencies and communities groups in the City. The Council is now working hard to improve such interorganisational communications.

The City Council does continue to fulfil an important community role:

- a) organizing Remembrance Sunday;
- b) erecting Christmas lights
- c) organizing summer festival (this will be the 1st year for several that this event will be held).
- d) organizing Firework Night (this will be only the 2nd year for several that this event will be held).
- e) organizing Christmas Cracker event (this will be the 2nd year for several that this event will be held).
- f) supporting the organization of events on the Pier, including Christmas

Carol service, May festival etc.

The City Council erects hanging baskets along the High Street to improve the aesthetic look of the City.

6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

“A society that promotes and protects Welsh culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sport and recreation.”

Bangor City is proud to be the most Welsh city in the World. In contrast, Bangor is also the most culturally diverse city in North Wales. This contrasting facts, sit side by side extremely well and the City Council makes every effort to protect the Welsh language and culture will making every other culture welcome.

To protect and promote the Welsh language every meeting is held bilingually and all Council paperwork, including minutes, reports and policies are available in Welsh and English.

Anyone who contacts the City Council through the medium of Welsh or English, whether it be verbally or in writing, will be responded to in that language.

The Council also promoted annual cultural events, including Gwyl Dewi Sant (St David's Day) when a parade occurs through the City and other events to promote the language and culture are organized.

The Council also works closely with Menter Iaith to continually assess and improve the Welsh language.

There are also a host of international organisations based in the City and the Council welcomes and supports each of them. For example, the Mayor introduces new Japanese students to the Trinity Foundation annually and attends the annual Confusius Society Chinese New Year event. The Council works closely with the Jamaica Society and the African and Caribbean Society. During the coming twelve months both the 75th Commemoration of the Windrush event and the annual Jamaica Day will be hosted from the Council's Penrhyn Hall.

7. A globally responsible Wales

“A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.”

The information set out above clearly demonstrates how the City Council contributes to improving the well-being of people locally. The Council can be justifiably proud of the leading role it has played, and continues to play, in so many

aspects of Bangor’s economic, social, environmental and cultural life.

By retaining its focus on the future needs of local people and continuing to work in close partnership with local communities, and other key stakeholders with a broader remit, including Gwynedd Council, Bangor City Council can become confident that it contributes positively to national well-being and indeed to global well-being.

(4) Financial Summary

Income and Expenditure forecasts for the year to March 2022 - 2023	
Brought forward from 2021 – 2022	£65,000
Income	
Precept	£401,350
Other, inc Pier Kiosk and entrance, Nantporth, Car park etc	£76,050
Total Forecast Income	£477,400
Total Brought Forward and Income Forecast	<u>£542,400</u>
Expenditure	
Assets and Buildings (excluding Pier)	162,100
Pier Maintenance	76,200
Administration and Insurance	52,250
Events and Entertainment	34,700
Operational Cost inc staff	205,400
Civic Costs	11,750
Total Forecast Expenditure	<u>£542,400</u>

(5) 2023-2024 Budget Report

Bangor City Council – 16th January 2023

BUDGET FOR 2023 - 2024

City Director’s Report

Overview.

The 2022 – 2023 financial year was something of a transformative year for Bangor City Council. The election in May resulted in a significant change within the Council, with over half of the Members sitting for the first time thereafter. The appointment of a full-time City Director on the 1st of September was followed by the appointment of a permanent administrator and trainee Deputy Clerk on the 1st of November, thus stabilizing the Council's administration and support with a new team, which is geared towards continuity and longevity. The Council's committee structure has also evolved again this year and procedures and protocols continue to be amended and updated.

While generally, the national economic picture looked quite bleak for the second half of 2022 and into 2023, and there is no doubt that Bangor High Street is feeling the brunt of this, there are reasons for optimism. Covid 19 no longer requires social restrictions and life for most has returned to something of normality. This has allowed the Council, aided by the appointment of the City Director, to become much more active in the City and in the community. This is, in turn, leading to some interesting joint working possibilities which will maximize the benefits of the Council's financial output.

Some other notable financial successes during 2022 have been led by the continuing relationship with Friends of Garth Pier and the excellent work being undertaken by that group of volunteers. Booking of Penrhyn Hall has continued to increase both from its use as a wedding venue and by commercial bodies during the working week.

Some significant expenditure on the Council's assets has been completed, including the pier pumping station and associated pipework to the mainland, the underpinning of the Pier Master's house, tree work at Menai Woods and some repairs to the room of Penrhyn Hall. The renovation of the Town Clock will also have been completed by the end of this financial year. Despite the completion of these major projects, the Council's finances remain healthy, with a significant brought forward figure being witnessed.

It is envisaged that £220,000 will be brought forward from the 2022-2023 financial year into the new municipal year. Of that, £115,000 is classified as

statutory reserves and should be kept for emergencies. The residual £105,000 has been incorporated into the 2023-2024 financial budget.

RECOMMEND: to maintain the general reserves at £115,000 (i.e. 25% of the precept as per Welsh Government recommendations).

1) Review of Council Prices, Charges, and Rents

(a) **Penrhyn Hall:** As mentioned above booking for Penrhyn Hall has increased over the year. The Hall continues to be promoted and it is envisaged that a steady but noticeable increase in use will continue over the coming year. No price rises are currently recommended, which will encourage greater use. However, given the significant increase in fuel and heating costs experienced recently, these costs should be monitored closely. A smart meter is being installed to facilitate this monitoring.

No. of sessions	1	change	2	change	3 (full day)	Change
Weddings	£50	-				
Rehearsal	£25	-				
Local Groups/Charities	£25	-	£33		£42	
Business/Others	£60	-	£90		£105	+£5
*With Kitchen facilities	£10	-	£15		£20	-
Block bookings by negotiation						

RECOMMENDED: to maintain current charges for the 2023-2024 financial year but review them each quarter.

(b) Bangor Pier:

	2022/23	2023/24
Kiosk Rental	£635 pa	£635 pa
Entrance Kiosk Rental	£370 pa	£370 pa

Pavilion Café	£8,000 pa	£8,000 pa
Car Park	£1.50	£1.50
Car Park Overnight Parking	£20.00	£20.00
Pier Entrance	50p. £10 Annual Pass. ⁴ £20 Lifetime Pass	50p. £10 Annual Pass £20 Lifetime Pass

It is recommended that the kiosk rentals and car park charges remain unchanged for the next twelve months. Entry fees for the Pier were amended at the August Council meeting and therefore it also recommended that these remain unchanged at this time.

RECOMMENDED that the Rents, Pier entrance, and the Pier car park charges be approved for the forthcoming financial year.

2) Capital Works at the Pier

As well as routine maintenance, the current year has seen the successful completion of the pumping station and associated pipework to the mainland and the underpinning work to the Pier Master's House. By the end of this financial year, safety reports will have been received on the two outstanding renovation phases (phases 5 & 6), as well as to the Pier's electrical system.

While the results of these reports cannot be anticipated, one area of the Pier that should be prioritized for attention during 2023-2024 is the section that incorporates the second row of kiosks. This renovation work will be undertaken underneath the main walkway and will not affect general access to the Pier, although kiosks 3 and 4 should be closed during the work. As has been highlighted in the last two annual reports regular renovation work does be undertaken to negate, or at least delay, the need for major structural renovation in the future. Indeed £20,000 was transferred to reserve funds at the beginning of the current financial year to contribute to such works. It is expected that a total of £75,000 will be required to complete this renovation work.

External funding will be required to undertake phases five and six. There is

currently no immediate need to undertake these phases but, from a safety perspective, as well as an economic perspective, they should be undertaken within the next five years. During that time efforts to identify external funding will continue.

The City Council continues to work closely with the Friends of Garth Pier (FoGP) both on the day-to-day operations and in organizing events. The Council has already approved the initiation of discussions on the feasibility of establishing, in conjunction with FoGP, a Community Interest Company to manage the Pier and surrounding area and make it economically and operationally self-sustaining. These discussions have begun and the Council should expect developments during 2023-2024.

RECOMMENDED: The Council allocates £75,000 to structural maintenance required in the vicinity of kiosks 3 and 4. That the search for external funding to facilitate the completion of phases five and six continue when practicable.

3) Other Property Matters

With the financial challenges being experienced by all unitary authorities in Wales, including Gwynedd, it is envisaged that resources to undertake none statutory maintenance will be stretched even further. It is therefore anticipated that the deterioration of services will impact open spaces, especially parks, playing fields and the availability of public toilets across the county. Bangor City Council, like many community councils, will be left to decide whether to accept these reduced services or to pick up the baton locally. During 2022-23 the Assets, Resources, and Projects committee prepared the foundations of a programme of works that will improve the level of maintenance experienced at Bangor's playing fields, parks and the maintenance of public footpaths. Over the next financial year funds will be required to build on these projects.

Opportunities for asset transfers from Cyngor Gwynedd and for joint working with other major stakeholders in the City, such as Adra and Bangor University are likely to arise over the next twelve months. The City Council should be flexible and receptive to any opportunity that allows it to improve services to its communities. The Assets, Resources and Projects committee will require funds in 2023-2024 to

develop and improve the Council's assets and allow it to maximize opportunities.

RECOMMENDED: the Council allow the Assets, Resources and Projects committee the responsibility to explore any opportunity that arises to improve the Council's assets, subject to final approval by Council. The Assets, Resources, and Projects committee be allocated £10,000 to use to maximize the value of existing or additional assets and resources.

The details below on Council property are included for guidance on the budgetary requirements of each asset in the coming year and are not intended to overlap with the plans or initiatives of the Assets, Resources, and Projects Committee.

Much of the regular and planned maintenance work was curtailed during the Covid 19 pandemic. However, much of this maintenance has now been caught up and the Council's estate is in good overall condition:

- **Nantporth Football Stadium.** Leased to Nantporth CIC – Uncertainties around the future of Nantporth Stadium and the viability of CIC remain. As the Council will be aware, the CIC remains in substantial rent arrears, although, at the time of reporting, partial rent payments have been received for the last two months. Given the uncertainties around this asset, it is recommended that the Council set aside £10,000, as a contingency fund for unforeseen costs.
- **Hafan Community Centre for the Elderly and Disabled.** Leased to Age Cymru Ynys Môn a Gwynedd. No foreseen expenditure.
- **Pier Master's House, Garth.** This building is located on a low cliff immediately above the high-water mark. The requirement to unpin the property following coastal erosion has been completed. The property is now vacant and a decision as to the long-term future of the property should be made early in 2023-2024.
- **Pier Workshop Building.** There are no major issues here. The search for an alternative store to free up this valuable space has begun, with the land behind Nantporth looking like a viable alternative.
- **Town Clock.** Works to repair the Town Clock will be completed by the end of 2022-2023. No anticipated requirement during 2023-2024.
- **Penrhyn Hall.** The external fabric of the hall is generally in good condition. However, repairs to the slate roof have been required at intervals over the

last 3 years, the latest being in early 2023. The latest repair will suffice for a time but it is recommended that £25,000-£30,000 (at current values) be allocated in the financial year 2024-2024 to re-slate the roof.

Internally, Penrhyn Hall is aesthetically in good condition. Again, however, the boiler is old and uneconomical as is the heating. The Council should consider upgrading this over the next two or three years.

- **Mayor's Parlour.** No current issues, although the Parlour has suffered from problems from the room reported above.
- **Council Offices.** The first and second floors above the Council offices are divided into self-contained offices, which share a communal entrance. Both floors are now filled on an all-inclusive basis. Given the significant rises in fuel and heating costs, these rents should be reviewed during 2023-2024. A smart meter has been recently installed to aid with the review of heating costs. While the ground floor of the Council offices is functional, they are dated and do not portray a 'professional' image. It is recommended that over the coming two or three years the Council explore means of improving its image for visitors.
- **Bus Shelters.** Regular repairs and painting have taken place over the year and an improved programme of inspection and maintenance is being prepared for 2023-2024.

4) Woodland Maintenance.

Menai Woods remains under the Council's management. Regular checks of the vicinity are undertaken by Council staff and expert advice is sought whenever it is felt necessary. Maintenance work is undertaken as required.

Some significant works was undertaken in the current financial year to address Ash Dieback, therefore it is anticipated that only regular maintenance or emergency work will be required on the trees during the next fiscal year. In contrast, the two main footpaths through the woods are in need of attention. The lower path is generally in good condition and requires seasonal maintenance. The upper footpath path is in need of greater attention and a decision will need to be made, following receipt of professional advice whether to upgrade the footpath or to close it. Knotweed has been identified in this area, and this will need to be addressed over the coming year.

5) Open Spaces and Play Areas

- **Ashley Jones Fields.** A number of improvements were made in 2021, including the introduction of thirty Japanese Sakura trees, an information board (kindly sponsored by the Trinity Foundation), three new memorial benches, and the Beatles Friendship bench. Decisions will need to be made regarding continued improvements.
- **Dargie Field.** The Council commissioned a chartered surveyor in 2021 to assess the possibility of selling the site. It was decided that this was not advisable due to a number of factors, including the topography. The Field continues to throw up challenges as it is regularly used by undesirables, with needles and empty alcohol containers found on site. The Council will need to be innovative in its thinking for Dargie Fields. It is recommended that external funding streams be obtained to assist with a renovation or change of use.
- **Play Areas.** The Council is responsible for the Storiel playground. It is low maintenance overall but requires repairing equipment or purchasing new items from time to time due to overuse/vandalism. The £25,000 allocated to improve parks and play areas in 2022-2023 (which was not spent) be carried forward and added to an additional £25,000 in 2023-2024. This would allow the Council £50,000 to upgrade all the play parks to a minimum standard from which a programme of works should be introduced to maintain the standard.

RECOMMENDED: that funds be set aside for the necessary works as contained in the budget schedules.

6) Town Centre Initiatives

Bangor High Street continues to experience challenging times. Enforcement standards by Gwynedd Council have not resulted in an improvement of offending premises and a number of empty units compound the overall image problem.

- **The Weekly Market**
The weekly market returned towards the end of 2021 and this initially had a positive response. However, several complains have been received from

retails regarding the number and type to stall holders operating in the market, which is having a detrimental impact on fixed businesses.

- **Bangor Strategic Group**

The Bangor Strategic Group meets quarterly and brings together the key players to improve and regenerate the city. With Gwynedd Council now leading on the 'Our Area 2035' Regeneration plan for the Bangor area (including Felinheli & Pentir), the future structure of Bangor groups and forums needs to be discussed.

- **Bangor Business Improvement District (BID)**

Communications with the Bangor Improvement District are, at the time of writing, still unreliable. A very positive meeting with the BID manager in October was followed by two months of failure to respond to emails or telephone messages.

- **Welsh Government Place Making Grant Application**

Following the failed grant application, submitted in 2021, a new Expression of Interest has been submitted to the Welsh Government's Transforming Town grant (submitted via Cyngor Gwynedd), with a view to improving the High Street and wider City Centre. While this is only an Expression of Interest, Cyngor Gwynedd has insisted on additional information to a level of detail usually expected with the full application, and work is currently underway to supply this.

The initial EOI is for a grant totalling £84,000 to which match funding of around £36,000 will be required. These totals are likely to reduce, should the application get to the next level, and various stakeholders will be approached to contribute to this match funding total. £20,000 of the City Council budget has been set aside as its contribution to this application.

RECOMMENDED: the Council considers setting aside funds to contribute to a Welsh Government Transforming Towns Grant to aid Bangor City Centre Improvement.

- **Property acquisition on the High Street**

Following a recent Council resolution, work has begun to identify potential High Street properties that the Council could acquire. Such properties fall

roughly into two categories; properties that are in relatively good condition and could be quickly used to offer facilities to community organizations or business start-ups, such as pop-up shops and the like. Alternatively, the Council could purchase properties in poor conditions, and renovate them, accessing Welsh Government grants to assist. Both approaches are designed to improve the image of the High Street. An initial budget of £80,000 has been allocated to begin this process. It is likely that additional funds will be needed, depending on the which project is ultimately identified and pursued.

8) Staffing

A full-time City Director was appointed on the 1st September 2022, followed shortly after by the appointment of a permanent part-time administrator and a permanent part-time trainee Deputy Clerk. These two posts are being fulfilled by the same person. The Council's Project Office is planning to retire at the end of the current financial year. The two maintenance officers are filled by permanent full-time employees. Therefore, the Council staff are, on the whole, now stable and apart from a decision on how to replace the Project Officer, little change is expected.

RECOMMENDED: That the Project Officer's post (which previously included organizing events) is filled by a part-time Events Officer and a Project Manager is employed for the duration of any specific project as and when they are required.

Martin Hanks
City Director/RFO

January 2023

MEETING DATES 2023 - 2024

2023	May	22nd	ANNUAL MEETING
	June	5th	Council Meeting
	June	26th	Vision of Bangor Workshop
	July	10th	Council Meeting
	August		
	September	11th	Council Meeting
	October	2nd	Council Meeting
	October	30th	Council Meeting
	November	20th	Council Meeting
	December	11th	Council Meeting
2024	January	15th	Council Meeting
	February	12th	Council Meeting
	March	11th	Council Meeting
	April	8th	Council Meeting

May

13th

ANNUAL MEETING

To give the Council some flexibility, this schedule does not specify whether the meeting will of the full Council, the Assets committee or both. This will be dictated by the business that is required at the time.