

VANTAGE NEWS

VAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



Chair's Welcome

OUR FIRST EDITION



Tony Graham
Chair
Van Community Council

Welcome to the first edition of 'VANTage' the newsletter from Van Community Council.

Firstly, may I thank my fellow Councillors for the confidence they have shown in voting me Chair of the Council for this year, and what a year it has been!

These past 12 months have been unprecedented in many of

our lifetimes and incredibly challenging for so many of you. I want to thank all those who have been on the frontline and caring for the most vulnerable, ill and struggling members of our community.

With each day comes more good news, more vaccines being administered and the number of hospitalisations and deaths decreasing daily. We hope that these figures continue to go in the right direction and that the easing of restrictions continues through the Spring and into the Summer.

The past year has, unfortunately, not allowed the Council to provide the events it had planned which has been incredibly disappointing but hopefully the coming year

will enable us to return to more activity, interaction and provision of services for our community. We currently have a vacancy on the Community Council and a by-election is planned on the same day as the Senedd and Police & Crime Commissioner elections. (*Thursday 6th May*). I encourage you to consider standing and to exercise your right to vote in the election and to choose who you would like to represent you on your local Council.

Contact details for current Councillors can be found in this Newsletter and if you have any concerns or suggestions please feel free to contact us.

Yours,

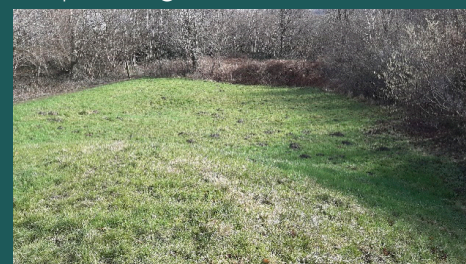
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Land at Van Terrace

Some years ago, there was a small children's play area on a patch of land located at the end of Van Terrace. This area has not had any specific use for some time. It is now under the ownership of Van Community Council, and we would like to know what YOU would like to use this area for.

We intend to consult with the community on this issue over the next year, but in the meantime, if you have any comments that you would like to share with us, please get in touch!



LOCKDOWN

How Was it For You?

Over the last year, we have had many local and national lockdowns. We have all missed so much and many important occasions and celebrations, including birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day etc. For many of us, we have hair like a mop, our belts are getting tighter by the day, and we can feel things are getting on top of us.

We may be feeling physically fine, but our mental health has taken a pummeling. It's not just the being cooped up now; it's the worry and anticipation of reintegrating as the restrictions lift. If it helps, you're not alone, even if it does feel like it at times! It's OK not to be OK, there is help out there and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Helplines, Information and Support



theparishtrust.org.uk/care
02921 880 212

An Arts and Mental Health charity delivering art workshops and activities across Gwent.



smallwoods.org.uk
07759 954 088

Citizens advice for topics such as debt, law and rights, healthcare, education and more.

For help with prescription collection, food parcels, shopping, and telephone support.

info@inside-out-cymru.org



Discover local woodland projects, learn woodland skills and find support to manage your own small woodland!

citizensadvicecbg.org.uk

**citizens
advice**

For more information about mental health services available in Wales, visit wales.nhs.uk/health-topics/conditions/mentalhealth. Samaritans can also be contacted for free on 116 123 or visit samaritans.org



EVENTS

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions over the last year or so, Van Community Council has not been able to put on events as hoped. This included the councillor's surgeries, Christmas events and the 2020 *Summer Play Scheme*. Sadly, with the ongoing uncertainty around COVID-19 restrictions, Van Community Council has made the difficult decision not to have a summer playscheme at the Van Community Centre this year. However, we do have some other plans in the pipeline so watch this space! See our website for more details. www.vancc

Despite not being able to go ahead with events as planned, Van Community Council tried to help bring some Christmas spirit to a difficult time with Light up to Cheer up! The Christmas display competition encouraged the recycle and reuse of everyday items to make the display. We were not disappointed, with the use of pallets, old socks, tree trunks, left over bits of wood, and knitted objects!

The Van Council area is split in to three wards, Porset, Brynau and Lansbury. Each area was judged by the Councillors and a first, second and third prize of Morrisons vouchers were awarded to the winners in each area.

LANSBURY

1ST

The Evans Family

2ND

The Smith Family

3RD

The Graham Family (no relation to the Councillors!)

PORSET

1ST

The Evans Family

2ND

The Williams Home

3RD

The Williamson Household

BRYNAU

1ST

The Page Family

2ND

The Bryant Home

3RD

The Brightman Household

We hope that you all had fun taking part and viewing all the lovely displays!

Grants Awarded

2020 / 2021

VANCC.CO.UK/BUSINESS/GRANTS

The Community Council sets aside a budget allocation each year that is used to support local organisations. Any organisation or group can apply for a grant. An application should be completed, which will ask you to provide details on how the money will benefit the residents within the Van Community Council area. Here are a selection of awards made in 2020 / 2021:

- Bridging Together
- Eisteddfod y Cymoedd
- Wales Air Ambulance
- Trevelyan Court Residents Association
- Castle Park
- Shelter Cymru
- Tenovus
- Bowel Cancer

Van Community Council are particularly keen to hear from local organisations and services who help and support Van community residents. You can contact your Councillors or the Clerk for further information or more detail and the application form can be found on our website.

A Grant Success: *Christmas 2020 in Castle Park*

By resident Kelly Brightman

For Castle Park the first lockdown was much the same as everywhere else, people missing loved ones, scared to go out and not knowing what was to come. However, it wasn't all negative and we saw the community come together in a fashion that was seen many decades ago. Many started helping out neighbours who before the lockdown were virtually strangers. We started saying hello and looking out for each other, and chatting over the pavement quickly turned into regular walks around the block, a street party for VE day and weekly chatting over our clapping for the NHS. Some streets did fish and chip shop nights, and the Facebook page did its best to make sure no one was forgotten.

After such a confined year and all the local Christmas festivities being cancelled, it was really important for us to do something for the children who had missed out on so many play dates and opportunities, not to mention missed school and the agony of home schooling. A quick Facebook post brought together a small group of

enthused individuals who started to plan how we could bring Santa and some Christmas spirit to the estate.

Money was raised in the community and Van Community Council invested £250, and the Santa costume was kindly lent to us by Caerphilly Lyons club. We managed to raise enough money to buy every child on the estate a selection box and got Santa a brand-new beard and wig to keep him safe.

"We managed to raise enough money to buy every child on the estate a selection box and got Santa a brand-new beard and wig"

Many of Castle Park's residents are older people and they too had suffered enormously during the year. We wanted to use some of the money to show that they were being thought of and developed a 'nominate a neighbour' scheme. It was lovely as neighbours started to nominate each other celebrating good deeds, people that had helped them and identifying those that were potentially lonelier. We had 60 nominations and Santa delivered chocolate, biscuits and some bottles of wine to adults around the estate.

The event had to be brought forward by a day because the Welsh Government announced another lockdown for the date we'd planned to do it at 5pm. The team were panicked and didn't know what to do. We

wanted everyone to stay safe but knew that the community had invested so much into the event. Santa himself suggested that we do it that night and with less than an hour notice, the elves were dressed, the car was decorated, and we were ready to go! It was amazing, some recipients cried when they received their gifts because they were so touched. The children loved seeing Santa and people stood on their doorsteps singing along with the carols.

Thank you to Van Community Council for the financial support, Caerphilly Lyons and Castle Park Neighbourhood Watch for enabling us to host Christmas 2020 in Castle Park and spread some Christmas cheer during a lonely year.

Education Support Grants

Van Community Council is committed to financially supporting local young people to assist access to educational, sporting and training opportunities that they would otherwise not be able to benefit from due to affordability.

Van Community Council has committed a sum of funding during this financial year to provide financial help to local students to buy books, equipment, travelling expenses, etc., to help with the cost of education and training opportunities.

Fare Share: Van Community Centre

Before the lockdown started in March 2020, Van community Centre Committee members would collect surplus stock from local stores 5 days a week, and then distribute to the community free of charge. This added up to 291+ collections from stores and prevented 4920+ kg of food going into landfill - the equivalent to 11,715 meals! This helped people who were struggling to put meals on the table, with the request for a small donation to cover volunteer's fuel.

Due to the pandemic, this had to stop. However, the volunteers have continued throughout the whole pandemic to provide food bags, which contain approximately £10 worth of food, which are usually provided for a charge of £2. From March to December 2020, we have given free bags to members of the local community person who were shielding – over 900+ bags of food. Unfortunately, from January 2021, the £2 has been reinstated as we no longer have funding to provide for free.



Fare Share:
**"291+ collections from
stores, preventing
4920+ kg of food going
into landfill"**

Contact Info

For more information about *educational support grants*, please visit our website:

[https://www.vancc.co.uk/
business/grants/](https://www.vancc.co.uk/business/grants/)

Or contact the Clerk at:

07387 885 132
clerk@vancc.co.uk

If you would like to know more about *Fare Share*, please contact Tammy via text at:

07875339812

We would like to thank everyone for their continued support over the years and we hope to see you all soon. We hope you all stay safe during these challenging times.

Christmas Competition

St James Primary

In the Autumn of 2020, Van Community Council ran a Christmas Card design competition in conjunction with the head teacher, Mrs Dargie, and staff of St James Primary school.

The Councillors who judged the Christmas cards were very impressed by the variety and standard of work that the children had produced. It was a difficult task, but the Councillors had to decide on a winner for each of the thirteen classes.

Due to Covid, the Councillors were unable to join the



assembly in person to make the presentations, but we are grateful to Mrs Dargie, who arranged for Councillors to join remotely by video. The winners were presented with an art set and a certificate, and all the children received a selection box from Van Community Council. The school and Council worked together closely to ensure we met with Covid regulations with the quarantine of cards and prizes to minimise the risk to all involved and Council are grateful to the teachers and staff at the school for their help to make this a success.

Get in Touch...

Where?	Who?	How?
Lansbury	Cllr Barbara Jones	07973 118 543 jonesb12@caerphilly.gov.uk
Lansbury	Cllr John Leek	07950 737 458 john.leek@vancc.co.uk
Lansbury	Cllr Pam Nelder	07772 382 170
Brynau	Cllr Norma Graham	07946 751 911 norma.graham@vancc.co.uk
Brynau	Cllr Fay Gay	02920 869 514
Porset	Cllr Shiela Jones	07999 802 516 sheila.jones@vancc.co.uk
Porset	Cllr Shiela Newbury	02920 869 468
Porset	Cllr Tony Graham	07827 696 163 tony.graham@vancc.co.uk
Porset	Cllr Linda Williams	02920 860 600
Office	Marcia Jones, Clerk	07387 855 132 clerk@vancc.co.uk c/o 26 Lon yr Ysgol, Bedwas, Caerphilly



Please Like, Follow and Share us on Facebook for information & photos on events, projects and other council business.

Staying up to Date

Local Notice Boards

Pen Y Cae, Mornington

The Van Community Centre

Lon yr Odyn in Porset Park

Castle Park Entrance (NEW)

If you have information you would like to display in the notice board, please contact the Clerk.

Our Website

In 2020, Van Community Council also introduced a new and accessibility friendly website. We are hoping to develop the 'Your community' section of the website and we would welcome information from you on events, local groups and services, photos of the area, good news stories and more! If you have any ideas, please get in touch with the Clerk. at clerk@vancc.co.uk