

Rhigos Community Council 13.03.2023- County Councillors' Report

Police issues

- Requested PCSOs to carry out patrols near farmland with it being Lambing Season. If there are concerns in Rhigos, please let us know. Shared post to our Facebook page.
- Shared concerns with car parked at bus stop on Heol-y-Graig to PCSO. The stop is not an active public bus stop and has no traffic lines restricting parking. The PCSO has shared with the owner to be considerate when parking there.
- This month, a new PCSO representing Rhigos and Penderyn will start.

Heads of the Valleys

- Reported a noise complaint due to work vehicles using their horns during overnight works at Rhigos Roundabout. Dealt with by FVC, also forwarded to Public Health.
- Requested dirty cones to be cleaned.
- Queried when the lampposts above the Hirwaun-Trevaun underpass will be turned back on- Future Valleys have adjusted their tower light to light up the area more.
- Shared weekend closure of A465, between Glynneath junction and Rhigos roundabout.
- Shared three-way traffic lights that were installed between Hirwaun and Rhigos roundabout.
- Shared overnight traffic lights that were installed on A465, Croesbychan to Nant Melyn.
- Shared temporary road closure of Crematorium Road.
- Shared an overnight closure on A465, between the Cefn coed junction and the Hirwaun roundabouts.

- Public meeting of 06/03/2023

- Footpaths will be made wide along the roads at Rhigos roundabout.
- A culvert runs under Rhigos roundabout, a larger one will be put in.
- Residents shared confusion of diversions- Future Valleys (FV) responded that "Every closure has a signed route".
- Residents expressed concerns with lighting at Rhigos roundabout.
- Dirty cones are still an issue.
- Work vehicles are still causing disruption- FV responded with "If we don't put out sweepers, people will complain the roads need cleaning." They have 7/8 road sweepers out through the day. The first tip of the day is important, they need sweepers out at those busy times in the morning.
- Future Valleys vehicles only use main carriageways, they are not allowed to use B roads.
- Work vehicles have been seen to be driving too fast. Car number plates would be needed to identify who owns vehicle and if they are part of the team.
- It was requested to jet wash work vehicles.
- Concerns were shared that the sweepers only push the dirt away- FV responded that "vehicles use a vacuum and brush."
- Utilities is a big issue at Trevaun.
- No date of underpass closure. The pedestrian bridge will open when closed.
- It was encouraged for residents to report speeding vehicles to Go Safe.

- 130,000 trees will be re-planted along the network.
- The Heads of the Valleys roads are designed for 70mph.
- Residents expressed confusion with what vehicles are Future Valleys or not- There are different companies working for Future Valleys, they are not all branded the same. If there are vehicles of issue, contact Future Valleys to give an answer on vehicles of concern.
- If the project is late finishing, Future Valleys will be hit with a financial penalty.

- Liaison meeting of 09/03/2023

- Future Valleys held two well-attended public meetings on the 6th of March. Expressed our support for more public meetings to be held.
- 12 complaints were sent to Future Valleys in the past month.
- Cones should be reflective along the network. There is no cycle for cleaning, done ad-hoc.
- Work is progressing at Trewaun roundabout. There is expected to be a traffic switch in April. Brecon Road is expected to be open in 2024.
- Concerns were shared about cracks appearing in and outside some properties. Future Valleys offer property surveys before they start work in particular areas, those properties have to be within a certain distance of the works. It was shared about the importance of doing surveys through the works, not just before starting.
- Air Control monitoring is not constantly done. Reluctant to carry out in winter season.
- Ramp signs are needed at a few locations and will be put up.

Scheduled works:

- Temporary closure of Crematorium Road- Monday 20th March-Monday 22nd May. Is needed to allow a new roundabout to be constructed at this location, which will become part of the final junction layout at Baverstock.
- Overnight closure on A465, between the Cefn Coed junction and the Hirwaun roundabouts- Monday 20th March. During the closure, Future Valleys will be updating road markings.

Bus Travel

- Throughout March there is free bus travel within RCT. This applies to journeys that start and finish within the county boundary, regardless of operator.

Streetcare

- Reported fencing in a bad state and falling on Heol Pendarren.
- Requested a litter pick on the Old Glynneath Bank.
- Requested the pavement to be swept from school up to Heol Esgyn.
- Requested the pavement from Rhigos roundabout past Tower site to be swept, and more regularly.
- Reported pillows that have been dumped at bus stop on Heol-y-Graig.
- A request has been put in for a bin outside playground as the shop has reduced the size of their large bin.

- Pavement outside Community Hall is a trip hazard- Officer response "issued a works ticket for some eroded tarmac, missing cement filler and passed to supervisor to carry out repairs."

Highways

- The road between Rhigos and Penderyn was in a bad condition- Officer response "I have made it safe with traffic cones. Issued a works ticket and passed to supervisor for repair."
- Reported potholes near Penywaun Farm- Officer response "inspected this road today and marked up all potholes that fall outside of our safety criteria for repair."
- Reported that Heol-y-Graig is in a bad state with potholes.

Flooding/Ice

- Recently shared a yellow weather warning of snow and ice.

Parish Road

- There are still concerns with litter, flytipping and many vehicles using the road. We have asked Celtic Energy if they can share who owns the land which was theirs along Parish Road. We have also put in a request with Corporate Estates.

Footpaths

- Temporary right of way closure- Heol-y-Graig to Rhigos Road. On-site meeting of 24/02/2023:
 - Work is being planned to install a liner to the culvert (extending beyond the collapsed section) and to reinstate the embankment above.
 - This right of way has been closed due to the collapse of part of the culvert underneath.
 - Notices of the closure have been removed from the site a few times.
 - Will be treated as emergency works.
 - Vegetation will have to be removed. It has been requested to re-plant trees but the Council's preference is to let vegetation grow back naturally.
 - Scaffolding will be put up and a crane will have to be used to put pipe in.
 - Work will mobilise in two months, with work lasting for 3 months.

Noise complaints

- If residents are disturbed by noise, complaints can be logged by the Council and those complaints can be investigated. The council would need your name, address and contact details to do so. Alternatively, 101 can be called and those complaints are shared with the Council. We have made the Council aware of the noise complaints shared on the Rhigos Chat, the matter has been passed to Public Health.

Hirwaun Power

- Planning was granted in 2015 by Westminster. RCT and the Brecon Beacons National Park were consulted. After being granted, RCT had to grant permission for some of the conditions and underground pipes.

20mph speed limit

- We attended a meeting and discussed where the speed limits will be reduced to the default 20mph in residential areas. This will be in effect from September. The other roads that we have discussed with the Rhigos Community Council that are to be reduced should be included in this project.

Walters Community Benefit

- We met with representatives before Christmas and provided them with a list of qualifying groups and contact details in the ward. We are aware that some groups have already been contacted and received grants. We also managed to acquire 2 coal drums and are liaising with RCT Tourism to coordinate a project to place 1 in Hirwaun and 1 in Rhigos. We will ensure the Community Council are consulted and would welcome your support.

RCT Council Meeting

- Question submitted to Council:

"Can a statement be given to residents who have concerns with the planned 3-weekly refuse collections?"

- Budget

Council Tax increase to 3.9%. We expressed concern that this combined with the 3% increase to the Rhigos Community Council Precept and the Police and Crime Commissioner increase is going to cause hardship to many residents especially during the Cost of Living Crisis.

We also expressed concern that the cuts to services and increased charges may prove to be a false economy within the budget if there is reduced uptake of services and costs are increased in other departments e.g. flytipping, social care.

Charges/fees to be increased:

- School Meals Sales- £0.15 per meal increase for primary and secondary school meals
- Bulky Waste Collection Income- £17 (from £12.75)
- Pest Control Service Charges (Domestic / Public Health)- 5.00% increase
- Day Nursery Fee Income- 5.00% increase
- Library Hire Charges and Photocopy & Printing Charges- 5.00% increase

Full list here- <https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s39281/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

We also sought assurance that the council would not be looking at outsourcing/privatizing school meals.

On a positive, we were pleased that through the scrutiny process and making it clear what our (Plaid Cymru) expectations were, that the school budget allocation for 23/24 is much better than it would have been and there is no significant detrimental effect on the social care budget.

- **Single Transferable Vote**

There was also a debate regarding the Single Transferable Voting System which aims to ensure that every vote counts and improve the democratic process. Disappointingly the Labour group voted against undertaking an Information and Consultation Exercise with the residents of RCT. We would have preferred residents to have a choice, especially as turnout at local elections are so low.