



St Athan Community Council Annual Report 2025-2026



Foreword by Chair Councillor Sandra Toker

As Chair of the St Athan Community Council during 2025/26,

I present this annual report to all residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all councillors past and present representing the wards of Flemingston, Gileston and St Athan Village, and the Proper Officer for their commitment and support given during the past 12 months for the good and benefit of all residents.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide residents with information about St Athan, the councils proprieties and budget, overall performance, key achievements and service improvements we have made over the last 12 months.

Location

St Athan, Wales

Latitude: 51° .40' 5.22" N Longitude: -3° 41' 5.22" E

Principal Council/ Westminster Constituency: Vale of Glamorgan

Senedd Constituency: Pen-y-Bont Bro Morgannwg

Post Code: CF62 Dialling Code: 01446

Key Statistics (2021 Census)

All residents: 4167

Male Population: 48.3%

Female Population: 51.7%

Number of Households: 1940

Average Household size: 2.60

Area (hectares): 1.161 ha

Population density (people per hectare): 358/Km2

There has been a substantial increase in housing stock since the above census with the current population now estimated go well exceed 5000.

Historical Data

Over 200 years ago the village was known as "Llandathan" (The holy place of Tathan). Legend has it that Tathan was a son of an Irish King who landed in Portskewett Gwent and evangelised the area. However, it is also said that was the son of Amwn Ddu and Anna, daughter of Meurig King of Glamorgan. It was believed that he trained in Llanilltud and founded a church in Llandathan (Sain Tathan) in the 6th century.

In later years St Tathan contained two castles (Manor Houses) quite close together at East and West Orchard. West Orchard was first destroyed in 1158 and finally in 1648. It is believed these castles were built to protect the Royal Orchards in the area, hence the names. East Orchard overlooked the River Thaw and is believed to have been built much later in the early 14th century by Sir William Berkerolles, whose tomb is in the south chapel of the church.

The present church of Sant Tathan dates to the 12th century but is mostly 14th-15th century in structure. In more modern times, the most significant change to area was in 1936 when the Air Ministry purchased 1000 acres of land from over six farms, including the whole Eglwys Brewis Manor Farm, the largest farm in the Vale at the time. The old farmhouse can still be seen 'behind the fence line' by the North Gate at Eglwys Brewis. Subsequently, 36 hangers were built, and first airman arrived in 1938. During the war years because of the high casualty rate on Bomber Command operations St Athan was training approx. 5000 men at any one time, with around 500 'passed out' each week.

In 1966 the coastal skyline changed again when Aberthaw Power Station opened, built on what was previously a golf course. At the time of its opening, Aberthaw A was the most advanced power station in the world. Aberthaw B was added in the 1970's. Both stations are now closed, and the site purchased by Cardiff Capital Region, a consortium of 10 Welsh Local Authorities with a view to developing a green energy park.

The former airfield, after several false starts became Bro Tathan Enterprise Zone with various businesses now on-site including Aston Martin Lagonda and the South Wales Aviation Museum. Further development is planned over the next few years bringing much needed jobs into the area including the now empty East Camp site. In recent times, St Athan has grown significantly, with housing stock increasing by around 50%. The Draft Replacement Local Development Plan envisages a further 1400 houses and possibly a supermarket being built in St Athan by 2036, which would increase our population to circa 10000 together with possibility of new train station. Your community council is actively responding to all proposals and various projects underway to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Priorities & Values

To ensure that everyone can live well and safely together.

To Protect and enhance the environment.

We Listen to our residents – We will work with the people of St Athan

We are responsible and we will ensure that resources are used wisely.

We will act in the best interests of St Athan ward – Putting our residents first.

Achievements

Ward improvements

Your community council is conscious that St Athan is significantly expanding with the new housing estates and potential large employment opportunities, and we offer a very warm welcome to all newcomers. We do, however, need improvements to public transport and more local facilities to support our significantly increasing population. Your council continues to put forward residents concerns to the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Over several of our public events we have had comment boxes available allowing our residents to let us know what they want to see in the future of St Athan. This has led to a number of projects being started for the community and representations being made to the Vale of Glamorgan Council for community improvements.

We are working to increase the profile of St Athan within the Vale and beyond, given the increasing population, Bro Tathan enterprise zone including prestigious employers such as Aston Martin Lagonda. Appropriate representations have been made to the County Council, the Senedd and Westminster representatives on ongoing issues around the RLDP, Train Station, Medical Centre and other issues. Your community council is looking to visually improve aspects of the village including the war memorial area, signposting etc in an endeavour to raise the awareness for visitors and generate greater pride in the local area.

The changes to the council chambers are on-going, over the previous 12 months we have made improvements to the roof and electrics, and over the coming 12 months we will be refurbishing the toilet blocks and redecorating the council chamber.

We continue to represent your interests on various committees to ensure that local views are properly communicated, which include reviewing and commenting on local planning applications to the county council.

Ward Upkeep

In addition to normal maintenance works in the ward, the council has arranged repair, and restoration works to be undertaken at various locations to ensure that St Athan Ward continues to look good and well cared for.

New Biodiversity Plan

St Athan Community Council has continued to develop its biodiversity work under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, focusing on improving habitats, supporting pollinators, and involving local residents in environmental action. The ward includes St Athan, Gileston, West Aberthaw and Flemingston, and benefits from coastal landscapes, wildlife corridors and important local species including grass snakes, polecats, kestrels, curlew and reintroduced water voles in the River Thaw catchment.

During the reporting period, the Council's main achievement was the BeeKind Campaign, which brought together schoolchildren, residents, Air Cadets, Brownie groups and other community partners. The campaign supported changes to grassland management, including reduced cutting and a cut-and-collect approach, helping wildflowers and pollinators to thrive. Funding through the Vale Local Nature Partnership enabled 10,000 wildflower seeds to be sown across the villages.

The Council also worked to establish bee-lines and link pollinator habitats across six areas, while promoting biodiversity at community events such as the Summer Fete. Partnerships were strengthened with organisations including Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, The Wildlife Trust, Keep Wales Tidy, local farmers and Cardiff Capital Region.

Additional practical improvements included pollinator-friendly planters, bird and bat boxes at St Athan Golf Club and the Paul Lewis Community Centre, and further tree planting in spring 2025. The Council has also engaged with housing developers and other stakeholders to encourage biodiversity protection in future development.

Overall, St Athan Community Council has made clear progress in raising awareness, improving local habitats and embedding biodiversity considerations into community projects and planning discussions. The Council's future priority should be to build on these partnerships, monitor existing projects, and continue expanding connected habitats across the ward.

Residents' Concerns

Concerns have been raised by residents about the development at Church Farm regarding the entrance on Gileston Road for the possible 20000sq food supermarket being included on the site, the council has made representations stating we believe the entrance should be from the B4265 as the village cannot cope with amount of potential additional traffic and possibly alternative sites for the supermarkets should be considered.

We continue to support residents in their concerns with the loss of green spaces because of potential building. Whilst we understand the need for council housing in the area there needs to be better consultation about the possible location.

Concerns continue to be raised by Gileston residents about the dangers in crossing the B4265 by the Memorial, which your council raised at County Council, Welsh and UK Government levels. This

crossing has now been included by the Vale of Glamorgan in an Active Travel Plan, and we are hopeful safety improvements will be made soon.

Concerns continue to be raised about vehicles speeding through the ward and your council is working with your local PCSO about setting up a new Community Speed Watch Group to raise awareness and act as a deterrent. However, all groups were put on hold firstly due to Covid and then due to instigation of the 20mph speed limit. The group has now been reactivated so please look out for them! But if you would like to volunteer please contact the council's Proper Officer as we could always use more volunteers.

We regularly hold council drop-in sessions which gives residents a chance to meet with the councillors in person to raise their concerns about anything going on in the area or just to have a cuppa and a chat.

Your Council has had an active and successful year, during which various well supported events took place, details of which are below:

Family Fun Day – 03rd May

Our first Family Fun Day was held at the Gathering Place, this was well attended, with free crafts, face painting and fair rides. The event was enjoyed by all who came along. We look forward to making this an annual calendar event.

Civic Ceremony – 22nd June

Our Civic Ceremony was well attended by various dignitaries, including our MS, Vale Mayors, Community Council Chairs and representatives, local councillors, members of the church, and the public. Following a formal service led by Rev Emma Street at St Tathan Church, we processed to the Paul Lewis Community Centre, where presentations were made to Community Champions in recognition of their service and contribution to making our community a wonderful place to live. This was followed by a speech from the Chair of the Council, after which an excellent buffet was enjoyed by all.

Village Fete – 19th July

The Fete was well attended by the residents of St Athan and visitors from further afield. Despite some initial parking chaos, the event went smoothly. The weather was dry and warm, the various stalls and entertainments including the free children's rides and visiting Alpacas proved very popular. We look forward to welcoming Bert and Ernie back again this year.

Remembrance Sunday – 09th November

Remembrance Day is a very important to St Athan and its residents not least because of our continued military connections. There was a great turnout at the service and considerable number in addition at the monument. Our thanks to the representatives of the church for leading the service. A buffet and drinks were provided in the Paul Lewis Community Centre afterwards which allowed people to get together on this prestigious occasion.

We again supported the British Legion and were assisted by the RAF Cadets in placing the large poppies on lamp posts throughout the village. We hope to extend this to more areas as time goes on. The bus stop by the memorial was also decorated with remembrance with a net of red, white and purple poppies. Our thanks to the local crafters for helping to make this happen. We have also added two soldier silhouettes to the entrance of the village and one at the Gathering Place, we hope to add a second at the Gathering later this year.

Christmas Market #1 – 15th November

We welcomed Father Christmas along with local stall holder to the Gathering Place for a Christmas Market. Our thanks to the local business who donated sweets and selections boxes so all children who attended could receive a gift from. We also setup a post box to enable to the children of St Athan to contact the North Pole with their important requests for Father Christmas.

Paul Lewis Community Centre/ Light Switch On – 29th November

The council supported the Christmas market in the Paul Lewis Community Centre which proved very successful and was well attended despite clashing with a number of other local Christmas events. Thanks to the staff & volunteers of the Paul Lewis Community Centre for organising this event. Afterwards we made our way to the square where the members of the public joined councillors to sing carols and switch on the lights. Thanks for to the Head Boy and Head Girl from Year 6 of St Athan Primary School for doing the honours. A Christingle service was subsequently held in St Tathan Church. This was a fantastic way to start the community's festive season.

Flower Baskets

The council continues to arrange and maintain the flower baskets in St Athan thought out spring and summer for the benefit of the community.

Bee-lines Project

The bee-lines project continues to help deal with national and local loss of flowers, pollinators and to improve our local environment. The results of which are being seen throughout the village and surrounding areas.

Litter Picks

Various litter picks have been undertaken throughout the ward during the year by councillors and residents. Many thanks to all those who took part, giving up their time to improve our local environment and hopefully helped restore some community pride.

Planning

The council reviews all planning applications within the ward and following consideration of all aspects, forwards approvals or objections to the county council to be included in their decision-making process. Your council continues to meet with potential developers regarding proposed houses and now supermarket in the RLDP and have expressed the residents' views and concerns. We are aware of strong views on some current planning applications, and we continue to meet with residents, developers and members of the planning community to try and ensure that developments are keeping with the existing village and includes the facilities needed.

Environment

The Community Council continues to work hard to place the environment at the heart of what we do – from looking after our villages with regular litter picks to becoming the first pollinator village in the Vale. We are in contact with Welsh Government via Keep Wales Tidy “Local Places for Nature” with whom we collaborated with the cadets to produce a wildflower area.

We continue to work with St Athan Golf Club and Paul Lewis Community Centre to install Bird and Bat boxes, we are looking to add these boxes to The Gathering Place. We are looking for an area where we can work with Local Place for Natures and provide a small orchard within our green spaces.

We also continue to work with the Restore the Thaw biodiversity project which has seen water voles released back into the wild. (From the website ‘Restore the Thaw landscape is an exciting project

which will deliver biodiversity improvements in the catchment area of the River Thaw in the Vale of Glamorgan. The project is being funded by the Vale of Glamorgan Council Project Zero, the Waterloo foundation and Nature Networks, a fund delivered by the National Lottery Heritage fund on behalf of Welsh Government and in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.

Restore the Thaw Landscape aims to benefit local wildlife, landowners, and the community, and will provide various opportunities for organisations, community groups, and volunteers to help with the conservation work.)

War Memorial

The Memorial has received a professional clean in the last 12 months and is now looking its best again. We have added to two soldier/land girl silhouettes to the entrance by war memorial and are looking for other improvements. However, these have been placed on hold until we know how potential developments nearby will affect the site.

Budget – 2025/26

(a) Income total

Breakdown of Income

Bank Balance Carried forward from 2025	£26,291.75
Income from local tax (precept)	£87,800
Rent from Council Building	£12,000
Refund from HMRC	£4,535.57
Events	£450
Other	£4,366.88
Total	<u>£135,444.20</u>

(b) Expenditure total

Break of Expenditure

Administration	£57,840.66
Council Building	£30,090.22
St Athan Ward	£18,716.29
Chairs Allowance	£280
Grants/ Donations	£2,290
Total	<u>£109,217.17</u>

(c) End of Year Balance (a)-(b)

£26,227.03

Future Objectives

Your Community Council will continue to work with our residents and utilise our resources wisely to protect and enhance our environment and communities to ensure everyone can live well and safety together.

We continue to strive to be as inclusive as possible ensuring all residents are able to access our services without fear of discrimination.