



Bangor City Council Annual Report 2025 - 2026



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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 2024 to April 2025 and highlights its ambitions for the 2025 – 2026 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.

Firstly, a few words from our outgoing Mayor Cllr Gareth Parry

Annual Report from the Mayor of year 2024-2025

The year has been extremely energetic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the City Director, the city council team, my fellow councillors, as well as other stakeholders and volunteers who have contributed to the vibrancy of Bangor this year and who have given their time and energy to continue making Bangor such a vibrant and supportive community. Thank you to you all.

It was an honour to represent the city at the official opening of the Hirael Flood Gates. I took a positive stance in the media following the publication of a novelty ranking of the UK's best and worst seaside towns. It was a pleasure to represent the city at Bangor University's summer and winter graduations, supported by the Mace Bearer, Mr. John Chamberlain, which helped further cement the links between the city and its university.

A Mayor's Clean-Up Day was organised in July, bringing together many citizens and receiving support from local company Hogan Brothers Ltd. A huge thank you to all who participated and shared their pride in our city. It was a great pleasure to open this year's summer festival. Thank you to all organisers and volunteers who made the festival such a resounding success.

Co-working with the North Wales Jamaica society on building "Bridges of Friendship" with Maypen, Charendon, Jamaica. Representing the City of Bangor to the National Catalan Delegation in London on the National Catalan day.



The Mayoral Civic Sunday was held in September with the kind support of St. Deiniol's Cathedral. It was well attended by communities and stakeholders from across the city, and raised £300 for the Cathedral foodbank. This year, Canon Reverend Tracy Jones has kindly acted as Mayor's Chaplain, and I am especially grateful for her support, as well as that of all the clergy and laity of St. Deiniol's Cathedral.

My thanks also go to the Reverend Josie Godfrey for hosting the question and answer sessions for the Tarranon Festival and for contributing to the Bro Deiniol publication "Buchedd". Sul y Cofio was a reflective and sombre event, as expected.

We remember and share our heartfelt condolences with all those who have been, or are today, affected by war all over the world. I am pleased that we

continued to honour the sacrifices of those who served both on the front line and on the home front with the Beacon Lighting on the 80th anniversary of VE Day—a combined effort with Bangor University and St. Deiniol’s Cathedral. Many invitations were received to attend events over the Christmas period, including the exceptional Christmas Cracker organised by the Bangor Community Group. It was fantastic to help Sion Corn that day despite stormy conditions. It was an honour to attend the following events:



- Eryri Co-operative coffee mornings at Y Gorlan and Cae Garnedd.
- Bangor Rotary Club.
- RWF Comrades, Bangor.
- Ysgol Friars Awards Ceremony.
- Bangor Cricket Club 150th Celebration match vs. Bangor, Northern Ireland.
- West End Academy award ceremony and performance at St. Deiniol’s Cathedral.
- The Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May, in the company of Reverend Canon Tracy Jones.
- Caernarfon Town Council Civic Sunday and Beaumaris Town Council Civic Sunday
- The Bangor–North Wales Kerala Group Vishu celebration, in the company of the Mace Bearer, Mr. John Chamberlain, and Mrs. Sheila Chamberlain.

In May 2025, Cllr Medwyn Hughes was elected Mayor 2025-2026, after serving as Deputy Mayor to Cllr Gareth Parry.



Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for granting me the honour of serving as Mayor of this great City, particularly in this a very special year for Bangor. This year we celebrate the 1500th anniversary since St. Deiniol established his religious settlement here in 525 AD.

Bangor has been continuously settled since, making it the oldest ‘City’ in Wales and one of the oldest in the United Kingdom. This year we have an opportunity to shine a positive light on our great

city.

I would like to thank Cllr Gareth Parry for all his hard work, especially over the last twelve months, and will endeavour to emulate his leadership and service. My colleagues will confirm that I am passionate about Bangor and I will work tirelessly to improve the economic, social and environmental landscape of this City.

*Cllr R Medwyn Hughes
Mayor 2025 -2026*

(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. This means that this is a particularly significant year, as the City celebrates its 1500 year anniversary. To commemorate this significant milestone, the City Council in leading the community to organise an ambitious programme of events that will run throughout the year.

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 is almost complete on the new Hirael flood defences.

Bangor City Council (BCC) in its current form 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 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 Elin Walker Jones Jackie Spence
Marchog	4 Members	Dylan Fernley

		Nigel Pickavance Delyth Russell Simon Hibbs
Menai	3 Members	Meic Pattison Gwynant Roberts Vacant
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 Salamatu Fada Vacant

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.



Councillor Attendance Record 2024-25

<u>Cllr Name</u>	Jun-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-24	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	Total (/12)	%
Cllr. Gareth Parry	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	92%
Cllr. Medwyn Hughes	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	10	83%
Cllr. Steve Bell	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	11	92%
Cllr. Salamatu Fada	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	7	58%
Cllr. Dylan Fernley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	100%
Cllr Simon Hibbs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	3	25%
Cllr. Huw Wyn Jones	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	5	42%
Cllr. John Wyn Jones	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	100%
Cllr. Elin Walker Jones	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	10	83%
Cllr. Meic Pattison	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	8%
Cllr. Nigel Pickavance	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	6	50%
Cllr. Gareth Roberts	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	5	42%
Cllr. Gwynant Roberts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	92%
Cllr. Eirian Williams Roberts	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		x	10	83%
Cllr. Mark Roberts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	92%
Cllr. Delyth Russell	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	7	58%
Cllr. Jackie Spence										✓	✓	✓	3	100%
Cllr. Lisa Toth	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	6	50%
Cllr. John Wyn Williams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	100%
Cllr. Beverly Jones	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				2	22%
Officers														
Martin Hanks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	100%
Admin Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	100%

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 Medwyn Hughes, of Hendre Ward, who will serve until the Annual Meeting in May 2026. The current Vice-Chairman is Cllr. Delyth Russell of Marchog Ward. Custom and practice dictates that the Deputy Mayor will become Mayor the following year, although this is not laid down in statute or regulation and is sometime deviated from.

The Council has several committees and sub-committee including the Assets, Resources and Projects Committee, the Finance Committee, the Waste and Decarbonisation Committee, Staffing Committee and the Nantporth sub-committee.

The City Council usually meets about once per month, with every other month being dedicated to committee meetings, except in August. Meetings take place at 6.30 pm on Monday evenings at Penrhyn Hall, although they are also accessible electronically via 'Microsoft Teams'. 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 Hub
- Pier Workshop
- Pier Master’s House
- Garth Road Car Park
- Town Clock
- Various bus shelters, benches and street furniture.
- Garth Gardens & Garth Road Public Toilets are, since July 2025, leased from Cyngor Gwynedd

To assist the Mayor and the Council run efficiently and manage the assets, the Council employs six full-time staff. 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). The current incumbent of the City Director role, Dr Martin Hanks, took-up the full-time position in September 2022. He is an experienced CiLCA qualified Town Clerk, a Principal Member of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) and sits on the National Executive of the ALCC (Assn Local Council Clerks).

(3) Summary of Council Activities - 2024/25

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
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 next section of this Report corresponds to the 7 well-being goals in the Act.

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
- 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. 2024-2025 witnessed the 1400 anniversary of the establishment of Soest and three delegates from Bangor Council, at their own expense, attended the celebrations in Germany to reinforce these cultural links.

The culmination of the visit was a commemoration service at the Cathedral and a re-signing of the declaration of friendship between our communities. The City Council have begun discussions to establish a Community Interest Company, which will be tasked to manage Garth Pier and surrounding area. This will assist in maximizing the economic benefits of one of the City's major attractions.

In December 2023, the City Council were successful in being awarded a Welsh Government grant to improve the look of the central part of the High Street. This £100,000 was used to repair buildings, fix vinyl's photographs of local attractions to empty premises, undertake a deep clean of the area, purchase new street furniture, hanging baskets and flowers. This upgrade is considered to be a first stage to Transforming Bangor and the Council is working on additional projects and funding to continue the momentum that has begun.

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 City has installed an electric vehicle charging point at its depot and has ordered its first electric van.

The increased use of low energy lighting at Christmas displays has had the same effect, and also reduced the annual costs of Christmas lights. Additionally to this, the Council liaising with a Christmas Lights company that used 100% recyclable materials.

The increase use of modern technology is assisting to take the administration towards a paperless future. With this in mind the objective during 2024-25 is to issue every Councillor with a electronic device which will negate the need to use paper.

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 Council is also supporting Cyngor Gwynedd's project to plant wild flowers and pollinators on the approach road into the City.

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 2024 – 25 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 centres 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.

A gathering of representatives of the City's third sector organisations was held in January 2024. This event proved hugely successful and linked individuals and organisations working on similar issues across Bangor. The overarching message from this conference was the need by a community hub in the centre of Bangor.



Following the third sector conference, the City Council is playing a leading role in trying to establish a community hub in the

centre of the city, which could be used by a host of third sector organisation to assist with residents well-being.

Garth Pier is 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 (charging points already installed).

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. While these discussion are on hold until the current sea defence and Welsh Water works are completed, the City Council is keen to progress this transfer thereafter.

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.

To promote and assist science students across North Wales, the City Council, in conjunction with Lancaster and Bangor Universities, organised and hosted the Young Researchers Competition and Conference. This competition was open to every A-level or AS level student and encouraged and assisted the applicant to undertake and communicate their own individual research. The event to sponsored by Network Rail, Lloyd’s Bank and EDF and gave the applicant transferable skills that they would not normally obtain until University.

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.

City Councillors offer their services to sit on the Board of Governors at all the schools and educational institutions in the City.

Representatives of the Council attend Bangor University Court meetings and sit on the University's Community Board, where the City Council have a standing agenda item to inform the University of what is happening across the



City.



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. The Welsh Government grant, referred to above is the first step of this initiative but there are hopes to purchase and renovate some of the aesthetically poor buildings in the city, as well as undertake some public consultation on how best to prepare the City for the future.

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. Again over the last twelve months the Council has paid to have additional CCTV cameras installed and there are plans to extend these further in 2024-25.

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.

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

- a) organizing Remembrance Sunday;
- b) erecting Christmas lights
- c) organizing summer festival.
- d) organizing Firework Night.
- e) organizing Christmas Cracker event.
- f) supporting the organization of events on the Pier, including Christmas Carol service, May festival etc.
- g) Preparing for the Bangor 1500 event in 2025.

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.

Annual cultural events are promoted, 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 2023 both the 75th Commemoration of the Windrush event and the annual Jamaica Day were 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.”

In August the Mayor’s clean-up day was supported by people and organisations from across the City.

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 2024 - 2025	
Brought forward from 2023 – 2024	£152,191
Income	
Precept	£563,580
Other, inc Pier Kiosk and entrance, Nantporth, Car park etc	£247,095
Total Forecast Income	£810,675
Total Brought Forward and Income Forecast	<u>£962,866</u>
Expenditure	
Statutory Reserves	£130,000
Assets and Buildings (excluding Pier)	£248,013
Pier Maintenance	£150,130
Administration and Insurance	£77,702
Grants, Events and Entertainment	£106,165
Operational Cost inc staff	£243,143
Civic Costs	£7,713
Total Allocated Funds	<u>£962,752</u>

(5) 2025-2026 Budget Report

Bangor City Council – 16th January 2025

BUDGET FOR THE 2025 – 2026 MUNICIPAL YEAR

City Director's Report

Overview.

During the 2024 - 2025 financial year Bangor City Council continued its evolution. With a new addition to the administrative team being appointed just before the beginning of the year, the team was well placed to continue to adapt and grow. The more proactive strategic philosophy, adopted some twelve months prior to the start of 2024-2025, began to show results during the year. The successful completion of the High Street Transforming Town project, was followed by other significant public engagement, such as responding to the third sector conference conclusion for the need of a town centre Town Centre Community Hub, which opened in August, the establishment of a hot food project every Saturday and resolving the long standing dispute between the Church in Wales and Cyngor Gwynedd over the maintenance of Bible Gardens. In an acknowledgement of the City Council proactive endeavors, 2024 saw the first ever national award being presented to the City Council. The award was presented by One Voice Wales at its national award ceremony for the third sector engagement.

Outside influences continue to impact significantly on the Council and the wider City. Inflation reduced from its high level seen in 2023 but continues to be higher than planned for 2024-2025. In May, the London government changed and, while this had little initial impact on financial policy, the first six months of this government witnessed mixed economic results.

The financial constraints experienced by Cyngor Gwynedd, like many unitary authorities in Wales, continue to cause issues. Again 2025-2026 will experience another significant budgetary shortfall within the County Council and therefore there will be continued and increasing pressures on services. Given that statutory services, by definition have to be funded, Gwynedd will be forced to curtail some of its non-statutory services. This, in turn, will increase the pressure on the City Council to help fund or adopt these services. The maintenance of parks, play parks, footpaths and management of public toilets are all examples of services considered under threat.

On a more positive note, Bangor High Street has, during the current financial year, begun to witness the green shoots of recovery. The Transforming Town grant, together with City Council investment resulted in some £150,000 being spent improving the aesthetics of the High Street. Additional investment has been made in greening and planting of flowers.

Commercially, Group Llandrillo Menai are at an advanced stage of opening an Adult Learning Centre on the High Street, which will also house Bangor University's Legal Advice Centre, work has begun on the former Peacock's building to convert it into offices and accommodation, six new businesses have opened their doors in previously empty High Street buildings, the Deiniol Centre has been purchased by a new owner, with experience of owning shopping centres in other parts of the North West of Britain, and Menai centre continues to attract business, some

off the High Street but several new outlets. In addition, the latest news is that the planned medical hub is again progressing, albeit slowly and will eventually lead to some 400 new medical staff working in the Menai Centre.

2025 is a particularly significant year for Bangor when the City will celebrate 1500 years since St Deiniol established the first religious settlement here and launched Bangor into being one of the earliest 'cities' in the United Kingdom. To mark this milestone the City Council is leading a wider diversity of stakeholders to organize an ambitious programme of events that will, it is hoped, bring the city together and highlights its attributes to the wider region and the nation. Much of the preparation and planning for this programme has been undertaken during the 2024-2025 financial year.

Overall, the Council's finances remain healthy, despite a notable increase in support for community groups and projects. It is envisaged that £220,000 will be brought forward from the 2024-2025 financial year into the new municipal year. Of that, £120,000 is classified as statutory reserves and should be kept for emergencies. The residual £100,000 has been incorporated into the 2025-2026 financial budget. This means that there will not be any carried forward sums from 2024-25 to 2025-26 in any specific budget line, as all surplus funds are included in the overall figure.

RECOMMEND: to maintain the general reserves at £130,000 (i.e. in keeping with Welsh Government recommendations).

1) Review of Council Prices, Charges, and Rents

(a) **Penrhyn Hall:** The Hall continues to be in regular use by community groups and for weddings. For much of the current year, financial institutions, namely Barclays Bank and Halifax have used the Hall during weekdays, while the Hot Food Project uses the Hall most Saturdays. It is envisaged that the coming year will see some changes in the regular usage, as the agreements with the financial institutions come to an end. There have not been any process rises in Hall charges for several years, this despite significant increases in heating and electricity costs. The installation of a new heating system has improved efficiency, however, some price increases are recommended to keep pace with costs

No. of sessions	1	change	2	change	3 (full day)	Change
Weddings	£60	+\$10				
Rehearsal	£35	+\$10				
Local Groups/Charities	£25	-	£30	-\$3	£40	-\$2
Business/Others	£70	+\$10	£90		£120	+\$15
*With Kitchen facilities	£10	-	£15		£20	-

	Block bookings by negotiation
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RECOMMENDED: to adopt the increase in fees as detailed above the 2025-2026 financial year and to continue to review them each quarter.

(b) Bangor Pier:

	2024/25	2025/26
Kiosk Rental	£635 pa	£650 pa
Entrance Kiosk Rental	£370 pa	£385 pa
Pavilion Café	£8,000 pa	£8,000 pa
Car Park	£1.50	£2.00
Car Park Overnight Parking	£20.00	£20.00
Pier Entrance	50p. £10 Annual Pass. ⁴ £25 Lifetime Pass	£1.00. £10 Annual Pass locals £20 Annual Pass non-locals £40 Lifetime Pass

The coming twelve months will see the Pier maintenance costs rise significantly above normal inflation with the imminent retirement of the Council’s Projects Officer. For this reason, it is recommended that the kiosk rental fees, which have not changed in at last five years, are increase at least in line with inflation. Due to the difficulty in policing the car park, no change is recommended to those charges for the next twelve months. It is similarly recommended that individual entrance fees are increased as per the above recommendations. The City Council is also working closely with Friends of Garth Pier to improve monitoring of the numbers of visitors to the Pier to assist both from a safety and financial viewpoint.

RECOMMENDED that the above proposals be adopted regarding the Rents, Pier entrance, and the Pier car park charges 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 latest stage of renovations, totaling some £90,000, including the replacement of many of the Windtrusses identified in last year’s report. Rather than sandblasting and painting the replacement metal, as is the usual procedure, it was decided to move quickly to replacing the remaining Windtrusses and the final phase of structural metalwork. This work will continue into the summer of 2025.

By Autumn 2025 all the renovation of the structural elements of the Pier will be completed.

Work will still be required to complete the sandblasting and painting of the final two sections but this is less onerous and can be completed after the departure of the Council's Project Manager, which is expected in September/October 2025. In this way, all works will be completed in the most efficient and economical way. This would complete the major renovations of the Pier and it is envisaged that apart from the regular annual maintenance, no further major renovations will be required for some fifteen years

There will be increased financial pressure on the Council to fund these continued works, which had originally been planned for 2026, while funding the Bangor 1500 events. However, considering the planned staff changes during 2025, this joint priority plan is the most prudent.

In the event of the Pier renovation costs increasing more than expected, the Council should consider obtaining a PWLB loan to complete the structural works prior to the departure of the current Project Officer. This is because, despite considerable efforts, a replacement Officer, either in the form of a direct employee or a self-employed consultant would be financially restrictive in the current market. It is considered essential that the Council maximized the benefits of the current Officer until autumn 2025.

3) Pier Management

Garth Pier continues to increase in popularity. This is in no small measure to the efforts of the Friends of Garth Pier (FoGP). The FoGP supported by City Council staff, organized a growing series of events and this, as well as manning the gate and collecting entrance fees, has increased both the visitor numbers and the exposure of the Pier, leading to increased income. FoGP have also begun contributing to repairs and renovation of the kiosks and look-outs on the Pier, thus allowing the City Council to reduce its maintenance costs and re-direct funds to other parts of the City.

Discussions have continued regarding a FoGP led Community Interest Company managing the Pier and surrounding area in the future. The next step is to prepare a financial plan to ascertain the viability of such a CIC. However, like the Council, it is imperative that an operational structure is established to ensure new system of safety checks and oversight to repairs and maintenance, following the departure of the current Project Officer. Until the costs around any new such system can be finalized, it is impossible to examine the financial viability of a CIC or indeed the Council's ongoing costs.

RECOMMENDED: The Council allocates £65,000 to continue to replace windtrusses and the structural renovation of the Pier.

4) Other Property Matters

With the continued financial challenges being experienced by all unitary authorities in Wales, including Gwynedd, it is envisaged that resources to undertake non-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. To address these issues the City Council has set aside a further £25,000 to upgrade its play parks. Negotiations have begun with Gwynedd regarding the future management of other land and parks in the City and an additional £20,000 has been allocated for this purpose.

Other land acquisition opportunities have arisen over the current year and budget allocations have been included for Bible Gardens, and for the land adjacent Sackville Road and a small track adjacent Farrar Road.

The City Council successfully obtained a grant of £18,000 for the renovation of the Bible Gardens. This grant has been received and this amount had been budgeted to spend in 2025-26. A grant application has also been submitted to improve the land adjacent to Sackville Rd. While the outcome of the application is currently unknown, the budget contains an initial sum of £10,000 to begin the process of developing a community space at this location. It is anticipated that the Farrar Road land can be incorporated into the Council's current land management without major investment.

The City Council should continue to be flexible and receptive to any opportunity that allows it to improve services to its communities. The Assets, Resources and Projects committee will again have access to £6,000 during 2025-2026 to allow it to respond to developing situations or to improve the Council's assets.

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 again be allocated £6,000 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.

- **Nantporth Football Stadium.** Leased to Nantporth CIC – This lease is being fully complied with and all payments are up to date. The CIC, following the introduction of additional investments, appears to be stable and working well. The stadium has also benefitted from significant investments and has improved noticeably over the current year.
- **Hafan Community Centre.** This property which was previously leased to Age Cymru Ynys Môn a Gwynedd is, at the time of writing, empty following the decision of Age Cymru to withdraw. The Council are currently exploring options for this property, with a growing momentum towards opening it as a community hub. The property benefitted from an upgrade eighteen months ago through the S4C 'Prosiect Pum Mil' television programme and therefore is unlikely to require significant funds to re-open. However, a budget of £1,000 has been allocated as an initial fund. This fund should be seen as additional to the £12,000 already allocated to the community hub.
- **Pier Master's House, Garth.** Structural underpinning work was completed just over a year ago and apart from new patio doors the property is in a good state of repair.

- **Pier Workshop Building.** There are no major issues here. The search for an alternative store to free up this valuable space continues.
- **Town Clock.** Works to repair the Town Clock has been completed and while some additional work is recommended this will not be required for another 2-3 years. No anticipated requirement during 2025-2026.
- **Penrhyn Hall.** The external fabric of the hall is generally in good condition. A new heating system was installed during the current year. The Hall's roof was repaired and plans and quotations have been agreed to install solar panels, which when installed will reduce heating costs. By the beginning of the 2025-2026 year, the decision on whether to install solar panels to Hall will have been made and that, together with a major face lift, to which £25,000 has been allocated, will form part of the coming year's upgrade plans. Other features of the plan includes a new carpet, a re-paint of the interior together with the erection of two flags poles.
- **Mayor's Parlour.** No current issues, problems that were experienced last year, caused by the issues with the slate roof frontage, have been repaired and the parlour redecorated.
- **Council Offices.** The first and second floors above the Council offices are divided into self-contained offices, which share a communal entrance. Both floors continued to be rented on an all-inclusive basis. Given the significant rises in fuel and heating costs, these rents should be reviewed during 2025-2026. 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, it is dated and does not portray a 'professional' image. Therefore, as recommended (and adopted) in last year's report, an allocation of £10,000 had been included to improve the aesthetics of the Office and improve 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 2025-2029.

5) 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 work was undertaken both in 2023 – 2024 and 2024 - 2025 to address Ash Dieback. The previously identified maintenance work has now been completed. However, it is proposed to allocate £10,000 to the upcoming financial budget to ensure that in the eventuality of an issue being raised the Council has the funds to deal with it promptly.

6) Open Spaces and Play Areas

- **Ashley Jones Fields.** Some maintenance is undertaken seasonally but, overall, there is no additional proposed work required or planned for this area. However, over the coming years it is proposed that funds are considered to renovate this land and create sections of variously managed areas.
- **Dargie Field.** The topography of this site restricts the potential usage. However, a local community group, supported by the City Council, has now taken an active part in managing this land. In an excellent example of the Council and community working

together, a joint group and Council grant application was successful, which allowed for a £5,000 investment to be made in the current year. This investment is facilitating the establishment of a community orchard at the site.

- **Play Areas.** The Council is responsible for the Storiell playground. This is a low maintenance area but requires repairing of equipment or purchasing new items from time to time due to overuse/vandalism. The Council is in the process of receiving an asset transfer of Maestryfan play park, together with Cae Doctor next door from Cyngor Gwynedd. The daily management of these two areas will be undertaken by the Maestryfan Community Group, however, overall responsibility for the safety and maintenance of the play equipment will fall on the Council. The remaining parks and playparks in the City are owned and managed by Cyngor Gwynedd. However, given Gwynedd's budgetary pressures, maintenance on these is reducing. Bangor City Council has commenced discussions on taking over the management of some of these community areas. £25,000 has been allocated to continue the improvement of these parks and play areas.

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

7) Bangor 1500

It is widely accepted in religious and historical circles that Bangor was established as a religious centre by St Deiniol, who arrived here in September 525 AD. There has been a settlement here ever since and while that does not make Bangor the oldest settlement in the area, it does make it the first in Wales to contain the elements that would later be described as 'a city'.

To make this milestone, the City Council proposes to organize an ambitious programme of events with the objective of uniting the City in celebration. This is also an ideal opportunity to promote Bangor to the wider region and, indeed, the rest of Great Britain. In preparation for these celebrations, Council has already held a competition for year 9 & 10 children to design a logo, planted 18000 daffodils around the city and consulted with most of the 'other' Bangors across the World. At the time of writing, an exhibition has just opened in Storiell, which will, over the coming twelve months highlighted details of various Bangors. St Deiniol's Cathedral opened the Bangor 1500 programme, on the first Sunday of Advent, the commencement of the religious year, with a service attended by all the Bishops of Wales and led by the Archbishop of Wales.

It is proposed to allocate a significant budget to the 1500 anniversary events programme and to supplement this budget with private sponsorship and apply to Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government for support.

There are five major events in the programme that will be led and funded by the City Council, and a series of smaller events that will require external funding or will be self-funding. The major events include; a major parade in May, a re-enactment weekend in June, the summer festival in August, a History weekend in October and the Christmas 2025. An average of £20,000 each has been allocated for these events. A further £10,000 has been budgeted for equipment, including the purchase of a second-hand marquee and additional marketing,

publicity and staff resources has been taken into account. An additional £10,000 has been included to assist with the smaller, generally self-funded events, which will include; talks by the Welsh football manager, both male and female, beer festival, comedy night, folk music night, etc.

RECOMMENDED: that funds be set aside for the ambitious programme of events that will bring the City together in celebration and promote Bangor to the wider community and the nation.

8) Town Centre Initiatives

Bangor High Street continues to experience challenging times but the green shoots of recovery are evident. The Transforming Town grant work complete early in 2024 has made a noticeable improvement to the aesthetics of the centre of Bangor, reinforced by other initiatives, including the removal of some of the seating outside the Cathedral, which were gathering points for some undesirable elements. As mentioned above Group Llandrillo Menai are opening an Adult Learning Centre on the High Street, which will also house Bangor University's Legal Advice Centre, work has begun on the former Peacock's building to convert it into offices and accommodation, six new businesses have opened their doors in previously empty High Street buildings, the Deiniol Centre has been purchased by a new owner, with experience of owning shopping centres in other parts of the North West of Britain, and Menai centre continues to attract business, some off the High Street but several new outlets. In addition, the latest news is that the planned medical hub is again progressing, albeit slowly and will eventually lead to some 400 new medical staff working in the Menai Centre.

There are still several buildings dragging down the image of the City, not least the former Relics building and four buildings near Dean Street, three of which have benefited from hoarding covering the worst of the image. Cyngor Gwynedd is now looking to take a more active role in enforcing building controls which should see an improvement in some of these empty units.

- **The Weekly Market**

The weekly market continues to attract regular complaints from retailers regarding the number and type of stall holders operating in the market, which, it is claimed, is having a detrimental impact on fixed businesses. However, it is also clear that this market is an attraction that brings people into the city.

- **Bangor Strategic Group**

The Bangor Strategic Group has recently been reconstituted and now meets quarterly to bring together the key stakeholders with a view to aiding the regeneration of the city.

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

The City Council now enjoys regular communications with the Bangor First (formerly the Business Improvement District) and, following an invitation from the Council, the BID manager is located in the Council Offices. This has resulted in improved communication and the BID and the Council engaging in joint initiatives and projects.

- **Welsh Government Place Making Grant Application**

As previously reported, the City Council was successful in its application to the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns grant. This grant allowed for the aesthetic improvements to the High Street, with a £140,000 upgrade. This work was always intended to be a first phase.

Regarding Phase Two - £10,000 of the previous grant was allocated to appoint a landscape architect to look at additional ways to improve the High Street and this work has now begun. A report from this landscape architect is expected during 2025-2026. On receipt of this report the Council should look to identify grant funds to undertake the work it identifies.

RECOMMENDED: the Council helps to identify further steps to improve the High Street and identify sources of funding.

- **Property acquisition on the High Street**

With the range of initiative and new businesses being seen establishing themselves on the High Street, as reported above, the motivation to acquire a property on the High Street has reduced. However, should the opportunity arise to purchase a property that is detracting from the current improving trend, such as the former Relics building, the Council should be open to reviving this policy.

9) Staffing

The Council now has a full-time complement of support staff. The City Director/RFO is qualified to CiLCA standard. There have been some changes within the administration staff. However, the full-time administrator, who is already ILCA qualified has now commenced his CiLCA qualification. This bodes well for the future of the Council and staff continuity.

The Council's Project Office has offered to delay his retirement until the Autumn of 2025 so that he is present to help with the 1500 celebrations and to complete this summer's structural work on the Pier including the windtrusses. This represents significant financial saving to the Council, given that the cost of appointing a replacement, either directly or through contractor is expected to be substantially more expensive. YGC has, in the last few days, agreed to work with BCC following the Project Officer's retirement.

The full impact on the Council's finances of the Project Officer's retirement will not be seen until the 2026-2027 municipal year, as very little upgrade work is usually undertaken on the Pier during the winter months. However, £27,500 has been allocated to cover the cost to an additional safety checks during this period. The Council should be aware that in the 2026-27 financial year an increased allocation should be included to cover the additional costs of having YGC undertake Pier oversight.

One of the Council's two current full-time maintenance officers is also due to retire, this time in June. Similarly, he is offering to stay until the end of the greening season in the Autumn. A third maintenance officer has been appointed on a temporary basis in the current year and it is proposed to extend this contract to help facilitate the additional work experienced and expected and, all being well, he will replace the Officer who is retiring in due course.

RECOMMENDED: The Council to approve staff extensions and to allocate funds to replace the Project Officer as detailed.

Martin Hanks
City Director/RFO

January 2025

MEETING DATES 2025 - 2026

2025	May	12th	ANNUAL MEETING
	June	9th	Council Meeting
	July	14th	Committee
	August		No Meetings
	September	8th	Council Meeting
	October	13th	Committee
	November	10th	Council Meeting
	December	8th	Committee
2026	January	12th	Council Meeting
	February	9th	Committee
	March	9th	Council Meeting
	April	13th	Committee
	May	11th	ANNUAL MEETING

Finance Committee meetings will be held immediately before each Meeting at 5.30 pm on the dates specific on this schedule unless otherwise notified.