



St Asaph City Council Annual Report 2022-2023

Foreword by the Mayor of St Asaph 2022-2023 **Cllr Colin Hardie**

I feel immensely privileged to have been chosen as our city mayor for 2022/23 and am proud to have represented St Asaph at numerous civic events throughout the year.

2022/23 was an exceptional year and truly memorable with regard to my civic duties:

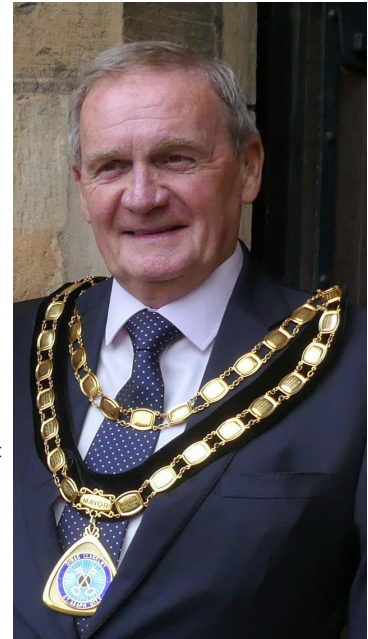
Celebrating Her Late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, followed soon afterwards in commemorating her sad death and in reading the Royal Proclamation of the succession of King Charles III and then the celebration of his coronation.

Our community is slowly growing in number with the building of numerous new homes along Upper Denbigh Road. It still remains a peaceful and friendly community and the large environmentally attractive areas along the banks of the River Elwy, Roe Plas, Mill Race Meadow and wild flower areas which allow free access to everyone greatly improves our community's health and well-being.

My fellow Councillors and I continue to maintain and improve the city's natural assets so as to improve the biodiversity of our open access areas whilst still giving large open spaces for recreation.

Unfortunately, as with many areas, we are plagued with large amounts of litter being scattered about the area which not only looks unsightly, but could be dangerous to young children and animals. I am truly grateful to those individual members of our community and volunteer groups who regularly collect discarded litter.

I think we are really lucky to live in such a beautiful and peaceful area and hope we can all continue to work together to maintain it so.



What do we do?

St Asaph is divided into East Ward and West Ward and there are seven City Councillors in each ward. The Council's role is to represent the electorate of St Asaph and to manage facilities for its residents:

Amongst other things, the Council is responsible for:

- Representing the views of the community
- Working with partners such as North Wales Police, Denbighshire County Council and Natural Resources Wales to deliver services for the community
- Maintenance and management of the Council's land at Roe Plas, The Common and Mill Race Meadow
- Street furniture—such as benches, bus shelters on the High Street and litter bins
- Play areas at Lower Street, Llys Dyffryn, Bryn Gobaith, the Trim Trail and the MUGA at Roe Plas
- Christmas Lighting
- Events, such as the Winter fair and the Remembrance Sunday parade and service at the War Memorial

We serve approximately 3500 residents. The precept for 2022-2023 was £109,736

Meetings

The Council meets on the second Wednesday of every month, except August. Due to changes in Welsh legislation, the City Council now has to offer the opportunity for the public and members of the public to attend its meetings via remote attendance. In November last year, following the installation of fibre broadband as part of a UK Government rollout, the Council held its first hybrid meeting, offering attendance either in person, or via Zoom. A meeting owl was purchased to provide a speaker and microphone.

What did we do in 2022-2023

Events

Platinum Jubilee

The Events Committee worked with Community Groups to provide a weekend of events to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee and the tenth anniversary of City Status in June 2022. Over the bank holiday weekend, the community celebrated Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's historic 70 year reign with beacon lighting, a flower show, a photography exhibition, a history walk, afternoon tea and a fair at Roe Plas. We lit the Cathedral up in purple to mark the occasion. The Afon Elwy Environment Group planted floral displays on the High Street.



Operation London Bridge

Following the sad death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2023, St Asaph came together to pay tribute with two special services at the Cathedral. On 11th September, there was a service at which the proclamation for the reign of the new King, Charles III was read by the Mayor, Cllr Colin Hardie. On Sunday 18th September there was a special service of thanksgiving for the life of Her Majesty, which was very well-attended, with standing room only for some.



Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day

The Remembrance Sunday service and parade were very well-attended. This year attendance had returned to pre-covid levels. The Council was especially proud to raise the flag of the Royal British Legion on the flagpoles for the first time.



Commonweath Day 2023

St Asaph was invited by the Royal Pageantmaster to take part in a special commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth charter by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Civic dignitaries were invited to the event, which took place in the grounds of the Cathedral. It was an especially blustery day, although everyone enjoyed taking part.



Projects 2022-2023

City Plan

A new City Plan Working Group has been formed to produce a medium-term plan for the Council. We are working with partners at Denbighshire to plan future projects

Standards

Following the successful pilot of the Self-Governance & Finance Toolkit, the Council has continued with the project to ensure that the right policies and procedures are in place to operate lawfully and effectively. The Council has also taken the Civility & Respect pledge to commit to high standards of behaviour in public office. All Councillors now have official Council e-mails for internal mail to improve our Data Protection standards.

Seating

A new bench was installed in the newly planted Jubilee Copse in Mill Race Meadow. This is a beautiful spot to watch nature and the Council is managing the copse for biodiversity, with just one annual cut & collect, so that wildflowers can grow.

Access to the Wildflower garden

A new dropped kerb has been added to make access to the wildflower garden easier for everyone.

City Flag

The City Council was very proud to commission the new City Flag, for use by the community of St Asaph. The flag was designed by Bishop Gregory Cameron and was flown for the first time on 1st December 2022.

Flagpoles

A third flagpole was installed at Roe Plas and so we could fly the flag of Ukraine, in addition to the two national flags

Inclusive Play Equipment

A new inclusive swing seat was installed in each of our three play areas for primary school age children. The Council was proud to provide the opportunity for all children to play together, regardless of ability, or disability.

Path to Bryn Gobaith Play Area

A new footpath was installed at Bryn Gobaith to provide better access to the play area for all.

Lighting

The Council purchased new lighting for the Christmas tree on the High Street and extended its Christmas scheme along the Lower Denbigh Road.

We also purchased new coloured lights for the cathedral, so we can light up the building to mark major events.

Compost Bins

Three new compost bins were constructed at Roe Plas, so that the Council's contractors can compost grass cuttings and green waste.

Fingerpost Signs

All three new fingerpost signs are now in place and the Council is very pleased to see them take pride of place.

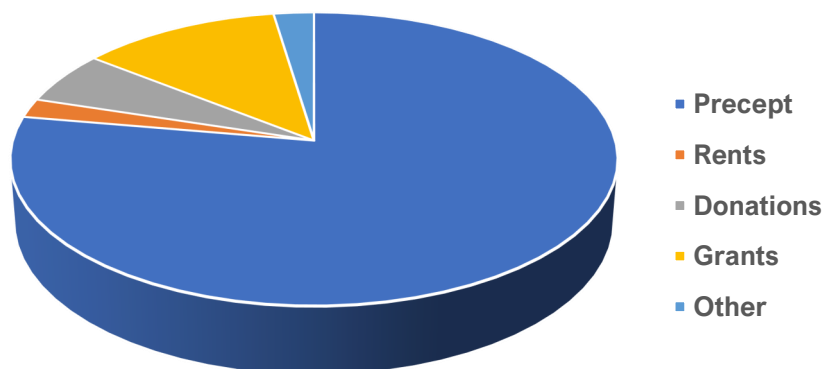


Finance

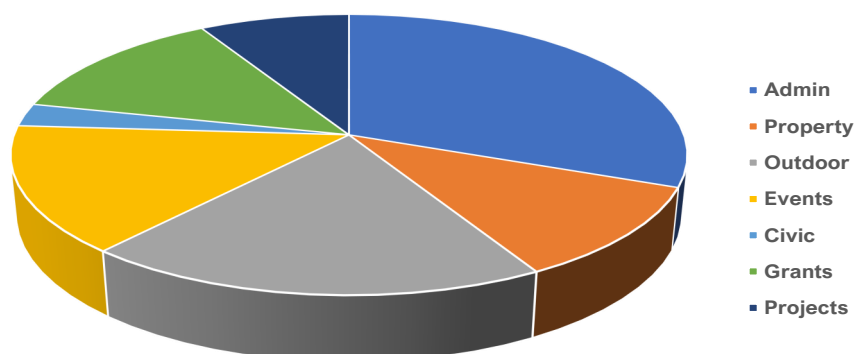
Where we get our funding:

Precept	£109736	(78%)
Rents	£2950	(2%)
Donations	£8160	(6%)
Grants	£16999	(12%)
Other	£3417	(2%)

St Asaph City Council Receipts 2022-2023



St Asaph City Council Payments 2022-2023



How we spend our money:

Administration	£51191	(31%)
Property	£18062	(11%)
Outdoor Costs	£32329	(20%)
Events	£24313	(15%)
Civic Costs	£4323	(2%)
Grants	£21703	(13%)
Projects	£13588	(8%)

Grants Awarded 2022-2023

The City Council has a small budget for grants, which are available to community groups. The Council contributes £12,000 each year towards the upkeep of the Library to ensure that this popular and essential service is retained for the community. This is how we spent our budget in 2021-2022.

Organisation	£
Denbighshire County Council Library Services	12000
NWIMF	1000
St Asaph Cathedral—for display board for Letters Patent	950
St Asaph Bowling Club	1701
St Asaph cricket Club	1701
St Asaph Football Club	1701
Royal British Legion	249
St Asaph City Times	200
Repairs to riverside path (not City Council land) undertaken for the safety of residents	2200

Biodiversity

St Asaph City Council provides services to its local community which have an impact on biodiversity. We promote sustainability and biodiversity practices whenever possible. Most of our land has open access to Members of the Public and we attempt to manage all areas as sympathetically as possible to the biodiversity whilst allowing total freedom to members of the public. The City Council works with officers from Denbighshire and Natural Resources Wales to ensure that its land is managed sympathetically.

Mill Race Meadow

This land is left to grow naturally and is grazed by a large flock of sheep so that no pesticides or herbicides are ever used. One third of an acre has been set aside for use as a community orchard and some twenty fruit trees of different heritage varieties were planted. Jubilee Copse was added in 2021-2022.

This area has a large amount of gorse growing along the riverside which is left to grow naturally and only occasionally is this cut back to prevent over-intensification.

A section of this land has been set aside as an allotment area for some twenty plots.

Roe Plas

Fifty per cent of this area is set aside as a football facility and this grassed area is cut as necessary by personnel from the Football Club.

The remaining area is a mixture of open grassland and woodland. The grassland is trimmed to a height of 65mm six times a year and the woodland is tended to ensure safety of Members of the Public. We have about six mature black poplars in this area.

The Afon Elwy Environment Group have worked with the City Council for many years to improve and enhance biodiversity. The AEEG was awarded the green flag in 2020 and 2021.

Approximately 100 whips have been planted on the small bund near the car park and along the hedge line adjoining Mill Race Meadow

The Common

The Common is almost entirely grassland with a small area of woodland. The grassland is again cut to a height of approximately 65mm six times a year to enable Members of the Public to enjoy the space.

All three areas are bounded by River Elwy.

What do we do?

- ⇒ Maintain footpaths and kissing gates on these three sites and provide litter bins
- ⇒ We leave the woodland wild and do hedge layering
- ⇒ Sections of the flood bank have been seeded with wildflower mixes, which include clover, yarrow and meddick. We have developed a bee and butterfly garden
- ⇒ We frequently plant new trees at various locations across these three areas
- ⇒ Most of the hedgerows are planted with trees which bear berries. These attract large numbers of Winter migratory birds
- ⇒ Each year our contractors trim any Himalayan Balsam along the riverbank and dispose of the arisings
- ⇒ Some areas of dead wood are left for wildlife
- ⇒ We encourage other organisations, such as the WI, local schools and Rotary Club to participate in our endeavours
- ⇒ In 2020, approximately 64 Sakura cherry trees, gifted by the Japanese Consul were planted on four sites across the city
- ⇒ We have noticeboards, strategically sited, to give information about flora and fauna in this area

Flora and Fauna

- ⇒ We have identified five different species of winter migratory birds which roost along Roe Plas and Elwy meadow
- ⇒ At least one otter holt has been identified on the riverbank
- ⇒ Native bluebells and other spring flowering bulbs have been planted in several different areas
- ⇒ We have several badger setts
- ⇒ Along the riverbank there are herons, dipper, kingfishers and goosanders
- ⇒ The river is populated by salmon, sea trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, lamprey, eels, minnows and bullheads

New Projects

Wildflowers

We have created wildflower areas on the west side of the Common, near the Trim Trail and opposite the Doctors' surgeries, which is called the wildflower garden. These areas are left uncut, with just one cut and collect undertaken at the end of August. Jubilee Copse is managed in the same way to allow wildflowers to grow. Yellow rattle was sown in the Wildflower garden to reduce the volume of grass.

This is the second year for the wildflower garden. In Spring 2021 a Denbighshire Biodiversity Officer conducted a species count on our behalf and identified:

Ribwort Plantain, Daisy, Dandelion, White clover, yarrow, common mouse ear, creeping buttercup, ivy-leaf speedwell, germander speedwell, forget-me-not, lords and ladies, garlic mustard, nettle, spear thistle, dock, herb roberts, common mallow, meadow buttercup, primrose, shining crane's bill, hawkweed, foxglove, lesser celandine, bluebell and *apiaceae* spp.

Trees

In common with other responsible landowners, the Council has had an inspection of its mature trees in 2021-2022 and remedial work has been completed.

In 2020, we were delighted to receive a gift of 64 Sakura cherry trees from the Japanese Consul. These were planted on four sites across the city:

- ◆ By the Trim Trail
- ◆ In the Wildflower Garden
- ◆ At Roe Plas
- ◆ The avenue across the Common

Sadly, some of the trees have been vandalised and we have had new tree guards constructed on the Common avenue to protect the trees.



Jubilee Copse

Approximately a third of an acre adjoining the community orchard has been fenced off and planted with native trees to form Jubilee Copse. It was a fitting way to participate in the Queen's Green Canopy and to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

Planting included quercus rober, field maple, red maple, copper beech, wild cherry, holly, red hawthorn, rowan and pandora cherry trees

Thanks to a generous donation of twenty Denbigh Plum trees from one of our residents we are delighted to include these heritage fruit trees.



Our Plans for 2023-2024

- ◇ Land behind the Library—we continue to liaise with NRW for the restoration of this site which was used as a compound by NRW's contractors during the flood defence works. The plans include a story circle by the library.
- ◇ We hope to extend the wheelchair access at the wildflower garden to improve the accessibility of this area for all residents.
- ◇ A new noticeboard is to be installed at Roe Plas so that information about the Council can be shared with residents.
- ◇ The City Council is to offer the Freedom of the City of St Asaph to the Royal Welsh Regiment later this year, with the first freedom parade taking place on 8th July. We hope that this event will promote our beautiful city.
- ◇ We are continuing to work on the city plan and will meet from officers from various departments at Denbighshire to explore ways of improving the services offered to the community.
- ◇ We continue with the Self-governance review. The initial review has been completed and we now need to write and consider policies to ensure the Council has the correct procedures in place.
- ◇ Access to the compost bins is to be improved to ensure that our contractors can make full use of the facility.
- ◇ The red dog bins are to be removed at the end of March. Bagged dog waste can be placed in the black litter bins, or in your domestic black bin.
- ◇ The Council is to use the trade waste service from Ash Waste. All waste is recycled, with very few exceptions. Any items which can't be recycled will be sent to produce energy. This reduces the Council's carbon footprint.
- ◇ The City Council was sad to hear the Rotary Club of St Asaph had closed the Club at the end of 2022. The Rotarians' parting gift to St Asaph was a kind donation of £2500 to be used for the provision of defibrillators in the Community. The Council are to meet with North Wales Ambulance Service to plan the best use of this generous gift.

Should you have any questions regarding the City Council's work, please contact the Clerk:

Mrs Jill Ellison- Email: clerk@stasaphcitycouncil.gov.uk Tel: 07521 641756