



Cyngor Dinas Llanelwy St Asaph City Council

Annual Report 2024-2025

Foreword by the Mayor of St Asaph 2024-2025

Cllr Colin Hardie

It has been a great honour to have served once again as City Mayor during the year 2024/2025 and to have represented the city at numerous events throughout North Wales.

St Asaph is an extremely healthy environment and is generally free from serious crime. The land along the banks of the River Elwy provides a wonderful environment for our community to freely enjoy. However, this last year's winter storms caused extensive damage to many of our mature trees, including the extremely rare "Black Poplars". The regular inspection of all the trees resulted in the need for extensive tree surgery to make them all safe. This work has been carried out at considerable cost. The Council works closely with Denbighshire County Council's Biodiversity team to maintain and improve the biodiversity of all our land to help the natural flora and fauna.

Some wooden benches and a stone bus shelter have been wonderfully decorated by a local artist and the Council will continue with this programme as finances allow. Unfortunately, as always, there is a small number of individuals who vandalise play areas and trees throughout our communal areas. To ensure the continuing safety of these areas the Council urgently repairs the damage, again at a huge financial cost.

The Winter Fair, held once again in the cathedral, was a great success and the Council was pleased that Santa's Grotto was a great attraction for our young children who all left with free Christmas presents.

I must again thank all my fellow Councillors for their support during the past year. Finally, thanks must also be given to all the local volunteer groups e.g. Afon Elwy Environment Group, Invasive Plant Group, local school children and many others who constantly help with litter picking to maintain our City as an attractive and safe area for everyone to enjoy.



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 and bus shelters on the High Street and litter bins
- * Play areas at Lower Street, Llys Dyffryn, Bryn Gobaith and the MUGA at Roe Plas
- * Christmas Lighting
- * Events, such as the Remembrance Sunday parade and service at the War Memorial

We serve approximately 3500 residents. The precept for 2024-2025 was £157,419

Meetings

The Council meets on the second Wednesday of every month, except August. The meetings are held at the Council Meeting Room at Roe Plas and also with remote attendance. The Council has standing committees, for example the Environment & Assets Committee which oversees the management of the Council's land and buildings. If you would like to attend a Council meeting, please contact the Clerk for details.

What did we do in 2024-2025?

Events

Remembrance Sunday

The Remembrance Sunday service and parade were very well-attended in November. This is always an important date on the calendar in St Asaph and so many residents turned out to commemorate the fallen.



The beautiful poppy curtain, created by the members of the WI was on display in the Cathedral.

D-day

On 6th June, we gathered at the War Memorial to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-day, which marked the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe.



Grotto at the Winter Fair

The City Council provided the grotto at the Winter Fair in the Cathedral. The grotto looked beautiful and provided a magical experience for our youngest residents.



The Councillors worked hard, purchasing and wrapping gifts in the workshop and decorating the grotto ready for the arrival of Father Christmas. Special thanks must go to Cllr Groves who planned the grotto and decorations.

Projects 2024-2025

City Plan

The City Plan Working Group continues to work to produce a medium-term plan for the Council. This year we have met with Denbighshire Officers from Streetscene, Highways, Economic & Business Development, Tourism, Climate Change, Clwydian Valley Landscape and the Footpaths Teams. We are planning future projects for the benefit of our community and its residents.

Standards

The Council is continuing its work on 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.

Open Spaces

The City Council is unique in North Wales in managing approximately 50 acres of open space land, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors, alike. Maintenance of this land represents approximately 45% of the Council's expenditure.

This maintenance includes cutting the grass, and providing litter bins to manage litter on our land.

This year the wheelchair access path in the wildflower garden was completed.

We take four bins into storage from the end of September until the week before Easter, to reduce the risk of them being swept away if the river rises.

We have had tree surveys completed in November and January to assess the work required after this winter's storms. Our tree surgeon is currently completing the most urgent work to approximately 28 trees.

Defibrillators

Residents, and users of Roe Plas now have access to a lifesaving defibrillator, thanks to a generous donation to St Asaph Football Club. Our grateful thanks go to Intellec Ltd, who installed the device free of charge for the benefit of the Football Club and the community. The defibrillator is now installed near the entrance door of the football pavilion (facing the pitch). Pictured are (from left) Chris West of North Wales Ambulance Service, Cllr John Roberts, and Wyn Williams, Chairman of the Junior Section of the Football Club. The Council will be guardians for the device and responsible for maintenance.



Benches & Bus Shelters

Talented local artist, Chloe Dymond, has been brightening up the centre of St Asaph. This year she has restored the beautiful poppy bench, sponsored by Goodfish, outside the Cathedral. Thanks to generous sponsorship from Salisburys Accountants, Chloe designed and painted the bench outside Salisburys.

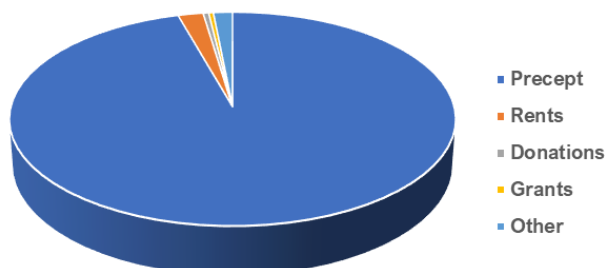


Chloe also designed and painted a mural in the bus shelter opposite the Cathedral, donating her time to the Community.

Pictured are Chloe, Aled Roberts from Salisburys Accountants and the Mayor, Cllr Colin Hardie.

Finance

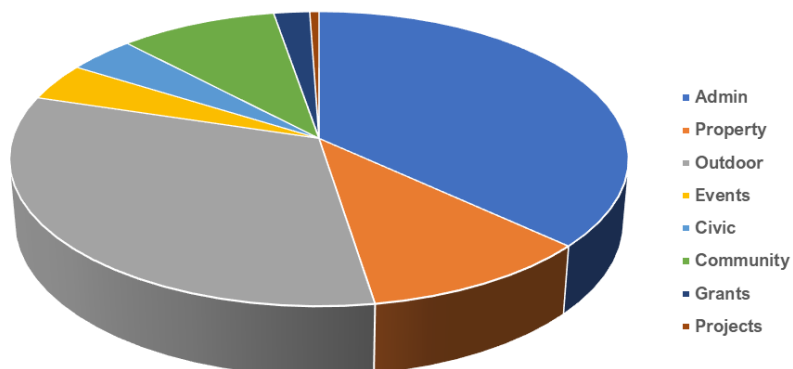
**St Asaph City Council Receipts
2024-2025**



Where we get our Funding:

Precept	£157419	(96%)
Rents	£3350	(2%)
Donations	£730	(0.4%)
Grants	£618	(0.4%)
Other	£2545	(1.6%)

**St Asaph City Council Payments
2024-2025**



How we spend our money:

Administration	£47484	(37%)
Property	£13757	(10.7%)
Outdoor Costs	£36932	(28.6%)
Events	£5336	(4.1%)
Civic Costs	£5201	(4%)
Grants	£2762	(2.1%)
Community	£12130	(9.4%)
Projects	£715	(0.6%)

Grants Awarded 2024-2025

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 2024-2025

Organisation	£
Denbighshire County Council Library Services	12000
NWIMF	750
St Asaph Cathedral—for repairs to the Cathedral clock	750
Awarded 2023-2024, paid in 2024-2025	
Royal British Legion	255
St Asaph City Times	200
Elwy Invasive Plants Group	157
St Kentigern	500
Welsh Air Ambulance	50
Dementia Friendly St Asaph	100

Biodiversity

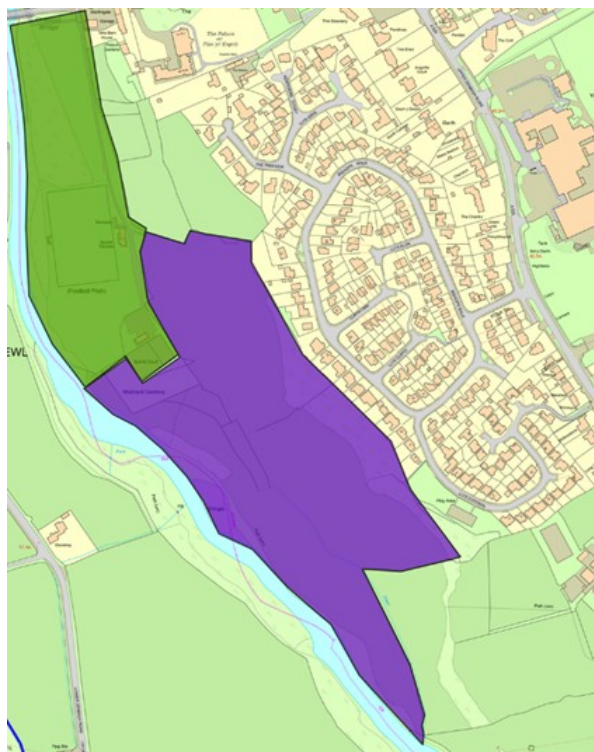
St Asaph City Council provides services to its local community which have an impact on biodiversity. We promote sustainability and biodiversity practices whenever possible. Most of our land has open access to Members of the Public and we attempt to manage all areas as sympathetically as possible to the 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

(Shown in purple on the plan right)

The field was purchased by the City Council in 2008. It is private property, as it is leased to a local farmer for grazing, although a public footpath does run through it.

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. The field 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

(Shown in the darker shade of green on the plan above right)

The land was given to the St Asaph Parish Council (now St Asaph City Council) in 1946 as a celebration of the victory of the Allied Forces in the Hostilities 1939-1945, for recreation and leisure.

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 grass 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 mature black poplars in this area, which are the only ones in the UK of the St Asaph variety.

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 every year from 2020 onwards.

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

St Asaph Common

(Shown in the plan, right, in darker green)

The Common is almost entirely grassland and has been managed by the Council since 1897. The grass is cut to a height of approximately 65 mm six times a year to enable members of the public to enjoy the space. It provides a home for St Asaph Bowling Club. On the west of the river there is a Seating area and the wildflower garden, which includes a small area of woodland.

All three areas are bounded by River Elwy.

Land behind the Library

(Shown on the plan, right, in purple)

This provides an informal parking area. Denbighshire Library Services are managing a project to provide a wildlife garden in this area.



River Elwy

Like all landowners whose land adjoins the river, the City Council is responsible for the river where it meets its property, to halfway across, as riparian landowner. In practice, however, NRW deals with much of the maintenance for the river and the bunds as they form an important part of the flood defences.

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 strim 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 Afon Elwy Environment Group 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.

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, dippers, kingfishers and goosanders.
- ⇒ The river is populated by salmon, sea trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, lamprey, eels, minnows and bull-heads.

Special Projects

Wildflowers

We have created a wildflower area on the west side of the Common, opposite the Doctors' surgeries, which is called the wildflower garden. This area is left uncut, with cut and collects undertaken at the end of March, June, and August.

This is the fourth 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.

We continue to work with the Denbighshire Biodiversity team who are advising us on the best way to manage this site.

At Jubilee Copse and in the Community Orchards, we have the grass strimmed back just once or twice a year to ensure the trees have enough nutrients and water to thrive.

Trees

In common with other responsible landowners, the Council has had an inspection of its mature trees in 2024-2025 and remedial work is currently in progress. We are especially proud of our mature black poplars, which are the only ones in the UK of the St Asaph variety.

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 Seating Area, Common West
- .. In the Wildflower Garden
- .. At Roe Plas
- .. The avenue across the Common

Sadly, some of the trees have been vandalised and we have had tree guards constructed on the Common avenue to protect the trees. This year we will take delivery of further trees to replace those which have not survived.



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.



Other

- ⇒ The Clerk works from home, which reduces travel to work. Councillors share travel when attending events outside St Asaph.
- ⇒ As far as possible, we compost our green waste.
- ⇒ Where appropriate, the Council supports improvements to sustainable travel networks to encourage active travel.
- ⇒ The Council's Environment Policy is published on its website.

Our Plans for 2025-2026

- ⇒ Land behind the Library—we use local contractors to cut the grass and maintain this area. The Denbighshire Library Team is developing a wildlife garden on a small area of this land.
- ⇒ We continue to work with Denbighshire Biodiversity Officers towards achievement of bee-friendly status.
- ⇒ We are continuing to work on the city plan and have met 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.
- ⇒ The City Council is continuing to work with North Wales Ambulance Service to provide further defibrillators for St Asaph and to improve coverage. Thanks to a generous donation, St Asaph Football Club has installed a new defibrillator at the football pavilion at Roe Plas.
- ⇒ We have installed waymarker posts at Mill Race Meadow, to inform the public where they are permitted to walk on this private land. The City Council, in agreement with its tenant, is applying for two short stretches of permissive footpaths to extend the footpaths.
- ⇒ We have applied for grant funding to increase the provision of wildlife sculptures, seating and litter bins on our land.

Thank You!

The Mayor and Councillors would like to like to express their heartfelt thanks to all those who volunteer their time and have done so much to help the Council and the Community, including the following:

- * To North Wales Ambulance Service for their continued support in helping to improve access to defibrillators in St Asaph, and for arranging the installation of a further device at the football pavilion.
- * To Intellec Ltd for installing the latest defibrillator at the football pavilion, free of charge.
- * To Salisbury's Accountants for their generous sponsorship, which has resulted in the fabulous "Cathedral Window" bench.
- * To Chloe Dymond for her hard work in designing and painting the bus shelter mural, donating her time free of charge.
- * To the Afon Elwy Environment Group who have given unstinting support to the City Council over so many years.
- * To Denbighshire Officers who have generously given their time and expertise to support and advise the City Plan Working Group.

We couldn't have done it without you

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