

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2022-23





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## **History of Maesteg**

Maesteg, meaning “Fair Field” is a town and community in Bridgend County Borough, which lies at the northernmost end of the Llynfi Valley, close to the border with Neath Port Talbot. It is nestled in the heart of the Llynfi Valley and surrounded by the neighbouring villages of Nantyffyllon, Caerau, Garth, Cwmfelin and Llangynwyd.

Historically a part of Glamorgan, the growth of the town started with the opening of ironworks in the 1820s and 1830s. Once a coal mining area, the last pit closed in 1985. With the decline of the coal industry and, more recently, the closure of one large factory producing cosmetics and another manufacturing vehicle components, the valley has become a residential / dormitory area for the Port Talbot, Bridgend and Cardiff journey-to-work areas.

Before the development of industry in the 1820s, the Llynfi Valley was a sparsely populated area of scattered farms. The nearest settlement was the village of Llangynwyd located on the hillside about two miles south of the present-day town centre of Maesteg. Close to Llangynwyd is an extensive earthwork known as Y Bwlwarcau ("the bulwarks"), an Iron Age enclosure that is probably a remnant of the earliest settlement in the Llynfi district.

During the Middle Ages the valley was part of Tir Iarll (the Earl's Land), an area "famous for its game coverts, its woods and sparkling streams" that was set aside as a hunting reserve by Robert Fitzhamon, Earl of Gloucester, the Norman conqueror of Glamorgan. Up to the 18th century many of the farms of the Llynfi Valley were centres of local culture. For example Llwydarth, the home of the influential Powell family, was a centre for writers and poets in Glamorgan in the 17th century.

Maesteg has a number of 'claims to fame'. Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau (Land of my Father's, the Welsh National Anthem) was first publicly performed at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel of Tabor on 1st March, 1856. Composed by James James and his father, Evan James, of Pontypridd, it was sung by 16-year-old Elizabeth John - also from Pontypridd - as part of a St David's Day concert under its original title, 'Glan Rhondda'.

Aside from Maesteg's strong musical and choral repertoire, the surrounding mountains pay tribute to the valley's historical past, from early burial mounds and the earthworks of a Roman camp to the last remaining signs of the once



great and powerful iron mining industry which sustained the people of the valley.

### Industrial history

The origins of the present-day community in the Llynfi Valley date from the late 1820s when the area's considerable coal and iron ore resources were developed on an industrial scale for the first time. The establishment of the Maesteg Ironworks and the Dyffryn Llynfi and Porthcawl Railway (horse drawn) which was constructed between Maesteg and a dock at Porthcawl, providing the essential means of transport for materials. Some ten years later the Cambrian Iron and Spelter Company set up a second ironworks at Maesteg which, after changes of ownership, became known as the Llynfi works. To local inhabitants the two iron manufacturers were always the “old” and new” respectively.

The necessary coal and ironstone were obtained mainly from levels in the hills surrounding the town. Despite fluctuation between prosperity and periods of inactivity, iron remained the stable local industry for 50 years. The long years of depression after 1875, and other factors, brought about the demise of ironmaking at Maesteg, the last furnace being blown out in 1886.

Fortunately, the rise of the coal industry was at hand, and world markets opened up for deep-mined steam coal. This was anticipated by the sinking of the Coegnant pits in 1882. All the assets of the iron companies were taken over 1889 by North's navigation Collieries, the company sank Caerau and St John's Collieries, and remained the major employers in the area for more than 50 years. At its height, coal produced from local mines reached well over one million tons annually. Steam railways handled the coal traffic to the docks and elsewhere: the Llynfi Valley railway (later the Great Western) opened in 1861 and the Port Talbot Railway in 1897.

For many years after the Second World War the local coal industry employed well over 2,000 workers and new jobs were created in local Government-built factories and in new industries in the Port Talbot and Bridgend journey-to-work areas. Due to the buoyant coal industry and the success of the new factories during the years 1950-75, the population of Maesteg and district stabilised at about 20,000, roughly the figure today. With the creation of more jobs in the Bridgend and Port Talbot districts, the Llynfi Valley gradually became a



residential area, a process which speeded up with the terminal decline of the coal industry during the period 1977 to 1985.

### Education

Maesteg has six primary schools within our boundary:

- Caerau Primary,
- Garth Primary,
- Nantyffyllon Primary,
- Plasnewydd Primary,
- St.Mary's and St. Patrick's Catholic School,
- Ysgol Cynwyd Sant Welsh medium primary school.

Maesteg also has one comprehensive school within our boundary: Maesteg Comprehensive School.

The pupils of St. Mary's and St. Patrick's pursue their secondary education in Archbishop McGrath Catholic Comprehensive School, located in Brackla, a few miles to the south. Pupils of Ysgol Cynwyd Sant continue their education at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd.

### **Overview of Local Councils in Wales**

Unitary Authorities in Wales – (<https://law.gov.wales/local-government-bodies>)

Wales' 22 unitary authorities (county and county borough councils – also known as 'principal councils') deliver a wide range of services. Some, for example education, they are required by law to make available; others are provided at the discretion of individual authorities. A typical list of local authority services includes:

- alcohol, entertainment and gambling licensing
- education
- environmental health, refuse and recycling
- health and safety
- housing
- libraries, leisure and tourism
- planning and building control
- social services.
- trading standards
- transport and highways

While the history of local government in Wales stretches back at least to the 16th century, the existing 22 Welsh single-tier, unitary authorities date from 1996 having been established by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. They are not divided into county and district councils, as local authorities are in much of England. On a more local level, community and town councils provide services in their immediate areas.



All local authorities are democratically accountable through elections held every 4 years. Local authorities have a cabinet style executive with the dominant political group or coalition making decisions under the scrutiny of the council as a whole. They employ large numbers of staff headed by a chief executive, who works with other senior officers on day-to-day business and decision-making.

The unitary authorities in Wales are:

1. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
2. **Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)**
3. Caerphilly County Borough Council
4. Cardiff Council
5. Carmarthenshire County Council
6. Ceredigion County Council
7. Conwy County Borough Council
8. Denbighshire County Council
9. Flintshire County Council
10. Gwynedd Council
11. Isle of Anglesey County Council
12. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
13. Monmouthshire County Council
14. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
15. Newport City Council
16. Pembrokeshire County Council
17. Powys County Council
18. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
19. City and County of Swansea
20. The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
21. Torfaen County Borough Council
22. Wrexham County Borough Council

All unitary authorities in Wales are members of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). The WLGA represents their collective views and interests and advises and supports individual authorities.

### Community and Town Councils in Wales

Community and Town Councils are the grassroots level of local governance in Wales. There are over 730 community and town councils throughout Wales. Some represent populations of fewer than 200 people, others populations of over 45,000 people. Their purpose is to improve the quality of life and environment for citizens in their area.





Community and Town Councils are accountable to local people and have a duty to represent the interests of the different parts of the community equally.

Within BCBC there are 20 Community and Town Council, 4 of which are Town Councils (Bridgend Town, Maesteg Town, Pencoed Town & Porthcawl Town). Further information on the other Community & Town Councils within BCBC can be found on BCBC website:

<https://democratic.bridgend.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?ls=12&SLS=5&bcr=1>

Community and Town Councils can provide a range of services to the community that they have a statutory power and duty to do so. A duty is an action that must be taken by law while a power is an action that the council can choose to undertake.

There are many statutory powers and duties Community & Town Council can achieve and some of them are listed below (a full list of Powers and Duties can be found in the Welsh Government ‘The good councillor’s guide’ For Community and Town Councillors, Published: 10 June 2022):

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Powers and Duties</b>	<b>Statutory Provisions</b>
Annual report	Duty to publish an annual report about council priorities, activities and achievements	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Section 52
Annual meeting of the council	Duty to hold	Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 23
Attendance at meetings by persons not in the same place	Duty to ensure meetings can take place virtually or partially virtually	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Section 47
Bus Shelters	Power to provide and maintain shelters	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953, s.4
Christmas Lights	Power to encourage visitors	Local Government Act 1972, s.144
Code of conduct	Duty to adopt a code of conduct Duty on councillors to comply with the code of conduct	Local Government Act 2000, s. 51 Local Government Act 2000, s. 52
Environment (keeping it safe)	Duty to promote and enhance biodiversity	Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6
Finance	Duty to make arrangements for the proper administration of the council’s financial	Local Government Act 1972, s151



	<p>affairs and to secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs</p> <p>Duty to make a budget Calculation</p> <p>Power to issue a precept to a billing authority</p> <p>Duty to keep accounts for Audit</p>	<p>Local Government Finance Act 1992, s.50</p> <p>Local Government Finance Act 1992, s.41</p> <p>Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014</p>
General power (s137)	Power to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised	Local Government Act 1972, s. 137

## **Maesteg Town Council**

### **Building**

Maesteg Town Council purchased the free hold of the land from Norths Navigation Collieries 1889 for £2,000 which did not include the mineral right. The building was designed by the Council surveyor and engineer Mr. Samuel James Harpur, the construction was undertaken by Mr. Philip Gaylard of Bridgend.

Work started on the building in the May of 1913 and was completed by November 1915, the building being officially opened on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1915 by the then chairman of Maesteg Urban District Council Mr. Henry Laviers Esq. J.P.

The building constructed on three levels, the lower level containing Toilets, Strong room and storage space, the ground floor level an oval entrance hall with further office space and the Council chamber. The upper level having more office space and an assembly room with seating for 100 people.

In January 1916 the chamber was used to listen to the appeals of persons against their notice of conscription in the armed forces of World War One. Maesteg did not have a Police Court, all prosecutions were tried in the Police and Magistrates court in Bridgend. The Council Surveyor Mr, S. J. Harpur converted the large assembly room into a police court the first cases being heard on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1921.

Maesteg Town Council building was Grade II\* listed on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1997 due to its ingenious design and its integrated building in an unusual style.





Maesteg Town Council took back ownership of the building in 2004 to ensure that it was retained by the community of Maesteg and endeavoured to refurbish it to its former glory, both internally and externally.

### Maesteg Town Council

At the Council's Annual General Meeting on 19th May 1992, Maesteg Community Council became known as Maesteg Town Council in accordance with a Minute dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1991 bringing it in line with the other major towns within the County. It was also agreed at that time that the title of Chair be retained. However, in September 1999 it was decided to mark the millennium by changing the title from Chair to Mayor, effective from January 2000.

Maesteg Town Council is made up of seventeen Councillors representing four electoral divisions or Wards: Caerau (4), Maesteg East (5), Maesteg West (5) and Nantyffyllon (3).

Elections are typically held every four or five years, the last election for this report being in May 2022. Councillors are elected to represent the residents within their wards.

### **Councillors 2022-23**

<b>Caerau</b>	<b>Maesteg East</b>	<b>Maesteg West</b>	<b>Nantyffyllon</b>
Cllr A R Davies	Cllr F Abedalkarim	Cllr R Collins	Cllr C Davies
Cllr P Davies	Cllr P Jenkins	Cllr R Martin	Cllr R Lewis
Cllr A James	Cllr C Knight	Cllr R Penhale-Thomas	Cllr G Thomas
Cllr M Rowlands	Cllr A LeGeyt	Cllr L Thomas	
	Cllr I Williams	Cllr G Williams	

Contact details of the current Maesteg Town Council Councillors can be found on the Maesteg Town Council website: [www.maestegcouncil.org](http://www.maestegcouncil.org) In addition to this during 2022-23, 5 Town Councillors were also BCBC Councillors.

### Council Meetings

During a Full Council meeting, members discuss any recommendations from sub-committees, matters arising from the previous full council meeting, correspondence, list of payments from the month leading up to the full council meeting, correspondence, consultations, financial applications (S137 Grants) and planning applications (look at planning applications as a consultee, approval / denial can only be given by BCBC). Only full council and



extraordinary council can make any decisions on behalf of the Council unless individuals are given delegated powers to act on behalf of the Council.

Full Council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month throughout the year via hybrid means whereby Councillors and the public can attend at the Council Chamber (located on the ground floor of Maesteg Town Council Offices) or via Microsoft Teams remote link to the meeting beginning at 6.30pm.

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person or request an online link to any meeting of the Council. However, from time to time, there may be business conducted at said meetings which may be deemed private and confidential, in which case, you are kindly requested to leave the Chamber / online meeting and will be invited back into the meeting once the confidential item has been discussed.

Committee membership is listed within the AGM minutes which is held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May. These sub-committees meet as and when the Chair of the Committee calls for a meeting, the sub-committee can only provide recommendations to full council and do not make decisions on behalf of the Council.

#### Town Council Staff

##### Maesteg Town Council

1. Town Clerk /Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs S Teisar
2. Deputy Clerk / Deputy RFO, Mr M Thomas
3. Community Maintenance Officer, Mr D Passey
4. Cleaner, Miss E O'Brien

#### Rights of Way (ROW)

Maesteg Town Council have an agency agreement with BCBC for the maintenance of Public Rights of Way. Sixteen of the twenty Town and Community Council's within the County Borough have signed Agency Agreements to carry out maintenance work on the Rights of Way network within their area meaning 465.85 Km of the total network of 585 Km of public rights of way are covered by the Agreement.

The new rate of £59/Km confirmed for 2021-22 and beyond is still in place.

The full list of community and town councils is shown on the below Table.



COMMUNITY	LENGTH OF PROW (KM)	TOTAL PAYMENT BASED ON £59/KM
Bridgend	5.04	£297.36
Cefn Cribwr	29.62	£1747.58
Coity Higher	20.93	£1234.87
Cornelly	50.00	£2950.00
Coychurch Higher	37.59	£2217.81
Garw Valley	92.10	£5433.90
Laleston	17.34	£1023.06
Llangynwyd Lower	18.76	£1106.84
Llangynwyd Middle	33.78	£1993.02
<b>Maesteg Town</b>	<b>66.75</b>	<b>£3938.25</b>
Merthyr Mawr	16.20	£955.80
Newcastle Higher	14.98	£883.82
Pencoed	22.01	£1298.59
Pyle	6.77	£399.43
St. Brides Minor	28.37	£1673.83
Ynysawdre	5.61	£330.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>465.85</b>	<b>£27,485.15</b>

### Floral Displays

Maesteg Town Council has a contractor who looks after 11 street planters along Commercial Street and Talbot Street and the flower beds at the entrance to Garn Road; In addition to this the contractor also maintains the 3 planters in the Maesteg East Ward and 1 additional planter in Maesteg West Ward. In the Winter these are planted up with Winter bedding and are then replanted for the Spring/Summer. During the Summer months the same contractor collects and installs the 96 hanging baskets from a different contractor and installs them around the Town and waters these throughout the Summer.

At the end of 2022-23, Caerau Ward purchased the following:

- 6 hanging baskets planters and these will be installed in 2023-24
- 3 x planters outside Noddfa Community Centre.

Maesteg Town Council purchased and distributed over 1,250 kg's of Spring bulbs in readiness for Spring 2023. The bulbs were given to numerous community groups who have planted the bulbs throughout the boundary of Maesteg. If you are a community group that would like bulbs for next year, please contact the Clerk to register your groups interest.



### Litter Picking

Maesteg West, Nantyffyllon and Caerau wards have purchased litter picking equipment from their ward specific funds. Various litter picks have been conducted up and down the valley evidenced by the transparent red bags you may have likely seen awaiting pickup. Maesteg East have taken a more permanent approach with the purchasing of several new bins for Garth Park. Maesteg Town Council thank the members of the public and voluntary organisations who have conducted these activities and assisted in keeping the valley clean. If you would like access to litter picking equipment, please contact Keep Wales Tidy Hub in Caerau Development Trust.

### Dog Poo Bags

Free dog poo bags can be collected from the Council Offices and from the following locations:

- Caerau Development Trust - 01656 810225
- Caerau Market Garden - 07908 945179
- Caerau Men's Shed workshop
- Fairfield Centre (Special Families) – 01656 856950
- Maesteg Library
- MAWS Bookshop in the Market Square
- Noddfa Community Centre - 01656 738866

Please contact the organisation for their opening hours.

### Grit Bins

Maesteg Town Council have gone into partnership with BCBC to increase the number of grit bins available for the residents to use in inclement weather. Additional grit bins have been ordered in 2022-23 to be installed in 2023-24 for the following locations:

- Caerau Ward – outside CDT
- Maesteg West Ward – Church Place at the junction with Brynmawr Place
- Maesteg West Ward – end of Upper Street, near to the footpath to TESCO
- Maesteg West Ward – outside Special Families
- Nantyffyllon Ward – Union Street, at the junction with Uplands Drive / Duffryn Maddog



### Christmas

Maesteg Town Council made the decision to reinstate the Christmas Parade in December 2022 with 15 groups taking part in the parade. The Christmas Parade was a successful day. Some of the official photographs taken on the day can be found on our website using the below link:

<https://maestegcouncil.org/christmas-parade-2022/>

and a video of the parade on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/nR9t6wVF4ZY>

Maesteg Town Council would like to thank the following for being part of the parade:

- Alex Blower,
- Caerau Dragons Boxing Club,
- Caerau Men Shed,
- Centregreat
- epm MARKETING
- Lee Jukes, 106.3 Bridge FM Radio,
- Liquid Lounge,
- Llangynwyd Rangers U11's,
- Maesteg Celtic RFC Mini's & Juniors,
- Maesteg Fire and Rescue,
- Maesteg Harlequins RFC Mini's,
- Maesteg Park FC Mini and Juniors,
- Maesteg RFC mini's,
- Maesteg Slimming World,
- Maesteg Ukulele Club,
- Nantyllyllon Rfc U10's,
- Noddfa • Kids & Community Project Caerau,
- South Wales Police - Maesteg,
- Steve Maddern - Town Crier
- UDC Dance

In addition to the Christmas Parade, Maesteg Town Council worked in partnership with BCBC, EPM Events management company and local community groups and provided the following at the end of November and throughout December 2022:

- Santa Selfie Grotto
- Mince Pies & Hot Chocolate in the market square
- Performances in the market square
  - ❖ Funk Force
  - ❖ Llynfi Valley Council of Churches
  - ❖ Alex Blower
  - ❖ Bois Goetrehen
  - ❖ Maesteg Ukulele Club



- 1608 Selection boxes for the 6 primary schools
- Toiletry gift bags for the residents in care homes
- Paid towards the Christmas Tree in Caerau
- Paid for a Christmas Tree in Nantyffyllon

The surplus of selection boxes from the Santa Selfie Grotto were distributed between the following community initiatives:

- 4 groups of Early Years and Flying Start Bridgend in Maesteg (Blaenllynfi, Caerau, Garth & Plasnewydd)
- Big Bocs Bwyd in Garth & Nantyffyllon Primary Schools
- Food Pantries in CDT, Cwm Calon & Noddfa

### Community Engagement

Whilst Maesteg Town Council endeavour to provide an effective service to all members of the valley, if you feel that other areas of the town need addressing or other needs need representing in the form of projects or assistance then we would love to hear from you. Please contact [clerk@maestegcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@maestegcouncil.org) or telephone the office on 01656 732631

### Finance

All Councils need to have in place standing orders and financial regulations which need to be regularly reviewed, fit for purpose and adhered to.

The Council must appoint an officer responsible for financial administration known as the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). Ultimately the council as a corporate body and Councillors individually are accountable for the management of public money

Maesteg Town Council financial year begins 1<sup>st</sup> April and ends 31<sup>st</sup> March. Maesteg Town Council adopted its current Financial Regulations on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and can be found on the website:

<https://maestegcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FINANCIAL-REGULATIONS-09.02.21.pdf>

These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of the financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the





Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These financial regulations are designed to demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities.

Maesteg Town Council gains the majority of its fund through its precept. The Precept is a tax that Community and Town Council's charge their local electors to meet their budgetary requirements. Community and Town Council's do not receive any direct funding from central government and rely on their Precept plus any other income they generate from services or facilities they provide. Here in Maesteg in addition to the precept, we generate a small income from room hire and storage hire.

Income 2022-23

The Council's precept for the financial year 2022-23 was £330,919.00, which was the equivalent to £58.90 on the average Band D property per year.

Income Analysis 2022/23

	TOTAL £
Bank Interest	83.08
BCBC CAT Grant Reclaim	2,000.00
BCBC GRANT - CHRISTMAS	4,000.00
BCBC ROW Reclaim 2022-23	3,938.25
BCBC T&CC Grant 2012-23 & 2013-14	20,000.00
Cash Deposit (Christmas Parade)	120.00
Cheques written back	3,820.00
HMRC VAT	40,252.22
Llan MCC (Chamber Hire)	100.00
Llan MCC (dog bags)	122.50
Llan MCC (Office hire)	2,600.00
Precept	330,919.00
Public Sector Depository (Investment Dividends)	13,502.04
Refunds (Defib World, EDF, Wilko)	627.98
Vault Rental	1,500.00
Welsh Government – CADW GRANT	15,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME 2022-23 Excluding money transferred between accounts</b>	<b>£438,585.07</b>



Expenditure 2022-23

<b>EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Spend to Date £</b>
<b>Capital projects &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>26,330.52</b>
<b>Car park toilet</b>	<b>32,553.66</b>
<b>CAT</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>
<b>Cenotaphs</b>	<b>2,237.00</b>
<b>Children's Playschemes</b>	<b>5,850.00</b>
<b>Christmas Celebrations</b>	<b>63,035.64</b>
<b>CMO equipment allowance</b>	<b>1,289.42</b>
<b>Defibrillator Maintenance</b>	<b>784.93</b>
<b>Dog waste bags</b>	<b>3,595.40</b>
<b>Elections</b>	<b>7,237.00</b>
<b>Floral displays</b>	<b>9,554.00</b>
<b>General Fees</b>	<b>20,087.00</b>
<b>Grade II* Listed Building Fees</b>	<b>22,184.07</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>3,434.64</b>
<b>Maesteg Cemetery</b>	<b>1,125.00</b>
<b>Maesteg Festival</b>	<b>7,627.39</b>
<b>Mayoral Office</b>	<b>2,980.00</b>
<b>Members expenses</b>	<b>3,502.71</b>
<b>Office costs</b>	<b>3,601.10</b>
<b>Premises running costs</b>	<b>15,875.55</b>
<b>S.137 donations</b>	<b>13,955.00</b>
<b>S.145 donation</b>	<b>4,880.00</b>
<b>Staff costs</b>	<b>79,182.13</b>
<b>Telephones and IT</b>	<b>4,932.92</b>
<b>Van</b>	<b>1,784.63</b>
<b>VAT</b>	<b>33,295.20</b>
<b>Ward Specific - Caerau</b>	<b>12,425.60</b>
<b>Ward Specific - Maesteg East</b>	<b>1,566.06</b>
<b>Ward Specific - Maesteg West</b>	<b>1,703.05</b>
<b>Ward Specific - Nantyffyllon</b>	<b>2,948.95</b>
	<b>394,558.57</b>

Grant Funding

Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has discretionary powers to award grants to local groups or organisations for “purposes, which may bring a direct benefit to the area or any part of it for



some or all the inhabitants”. To be considered for an award, applicants must answer all the questions on the application form and provide the necessary details as requested.

A limit for this funding is set each year by Welsh Government for allocation to Section 137 payments, based on the number of local electorates.

For 2022-23 the figure was £8.82 x 13322 (actual figure provided by BCBC Electoral Services) = £117,500.04 maximum

Within the Precept, Maesteg Town Council budgeted £30,000 (to include financial assistance applications, Power of Wellbeing and Warm Hubs)

### **S137 POLICY – adopted 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – Updated December 2022**

- All applicants to submit the S137 application form
- All applicants can apply for one payment per year. In exceptional circumstances the full council may grant additional grants in addition to the annual request
- All applicants to be asked to submit a financial statement for consideration within the application where they can outline earmarked funds so the Council can make an informed decision
- National & Local Charities: up to a maximum of **£500**
- All applications above the **£500** maximum to be referred to the Finance Committee for recommendations
- Local Groups/Clubs (including sporting clubs):
  - i. An application from the parent club: **£500**
  - ii. Applications from Individual section (age groups): advise to apply through parent club
- Local Comprehensive and Primary Schools: **£300** however to be earmarked for a specific project within the school.
- Groups representing the Country on a World or European stage: maximum **£500, to be determined by the Finance Committee for recommendations.**

Grants are to be on the condition of the supply of copies of invoices/receipts on completion of projects / purchase of goods. Should organisations refuse to supply the requested copies of invoices / receipts then they should no longer receive council funding in the future.



Application forms for S137 funding can be found on the website <https://maestegcouncil.org/financial-responsibilities/> alternatively residents can phone or email [clerk@maestegcouncil.com](mailto:clerk@maestegcouncil.com)

Applications are reviewed in full council meetings which occur the first Tuesday of each month unless stated otherwise. As per the terms of the agreement where an application for an organisation is in excess of the amount that full council can grant then this would require the finance committee to approve who meet at intervals throughout the year, further details will be provided by the clerk in such cases.

### **Audit**

At the end of the financial year, Council must prepare accounting statements to summarise accounts and include an annual governance statement. This is then audited by the internal auditor (not by a Council employee or a councillor) and together these have to be scrutinised by Full Council before being sent to the external auditor (Audit Wales).

Audit Wales have now introduced a new three-year programme for the audit of community and town councils. The schedule can be viewed on the Audit Wales website with the following document details:

Audit Cycle 2021-22 Onwards – Community and Town Councils in Wales

Audit year: 2021-22 onwards

Date issued: March 2022

Document reference: TCC2021-22

[https://audit.wales/sites/default/files/Community Town Councils Audit Arrangements 2020-21 Eng 9.pdf](https://audit.wales/sites/default/files/Community_Town_Councils_Audit_Arrangements_2020-21_Eng_9.pdf)

The schedule lists the community and town councils in Borough order, Maesteg Town Council sits within Bridgend County Borough and has the following timetable for basic audit and full audit. Within the schedule the term basic audit means the limited procedures described in the October 2020 document. The term full audit refers to the new audit procedure that involves detailed testing of transactions.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Maesteg Town Council	Basic	Full	Basic



Audit Wales also provides the dates for electors to exercise their rights to inspect the accounts under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect the council's accounts. If you are entitled and registered to vote in local council elections, then you (or your representative) also have the right to ask the Auditor General questions about them or challenge an item of account contained within them.

When a local government body has finalised its accounts for the previous financial year, it must advertise that they are available for people to look at. Having given reasonable notice of your intentions, you then have 20 working days to look through the accounts and supporting documents. You will be able to make copies of the accounts and most of the relevant documents from the body. You will probably have to pay a copying charge.

You can only ask the Auditor General questions about the accounts. The Auditor General does not have to answer questions about the body's policies, finances, procedures or anything else not related to the accounts. Your question must be about the accounts that are subject to audit. The Auditor General does not have to say whether he thinks something the council has done, or an item in its accounts, is lawful or reasonable.

The right to object to the accounts If you think that the body has spent money that they should not have, or that someone has caused a loss to the body deliberately or by behaving irresponsibly, you can object to the Auditor General by sending a formal 'notice of objection', which must be in writing to the address below. You must tell the Auditor General why you are objecting. The Auditor General must reach a decision on your objection. If you are not happy with that decision, you can appeal to the courts. You may also object if you think that there is something in the accounts that the Auditor General should discuss with the council or tell the public about in a 'public interest report'. Again, you must give your reasons in writing to the Auditor General at the address below. In this case, the Auditor General must decide whether to take any action. The Auditor General will normally, but does not have to, give reasons for their decision and you cannot appeal to the courts. You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against the body.



If you wish to make a personal complaint or claim, you should take these complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre, or your solicitor. You may also be able to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales if you believe that a Member of the body has broken the Code of Conduct for Members. The Ombudsman can be contacted at: 1 Old Field Rd, Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 5LJ, tel: (01656) 641150  
<https://www.ombudsman.wales/complaints/>

Instead of objecting, you can give the Auditor General information that is relevant to their responsibilities. For example, you can simply tell the Auditor General if you think that something is wrong with the accounts or about waste and inefficiency in the way the council runs its services. You do not have to follow any set time limits or procedures. The Auditor General does not have to give you a detailed report of their investigation into the issues you have raised, but they will usually tell you the general outcome.

Local government bodies, and so local taxpayers, must meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. When the Auditor General decides whether to take your objection further, one of a series of factors they must take into account includes the costs that will be involved. They will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. If you appeal to the courts, you might have to pay for the, action yourself.

If you wish to contact the Auditor General, please write to: Community Council Audits, Audit Wales, 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9LJ

### **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Act is unique to Wales attracting interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.





There is specific guidance for community and town councils and can be found <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/spsf-4-collective-role-community-councils.pdf>

The Act establishes public services boards. Those boards are required to assess the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the local authority area they serve and then prepare local well-being plans setting out objectives for improving the well-being of the area and the steps the members of the board propose to take to meet those objectives.

What does the Act require community and town councils to do?

The Act places a duty on certain community and town councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan that has effect in their areas. If a community or town council is subject to the duty, it must publish a report annually detailing its progress in meeting the objectives contained in the local well-being plan.

The Act requires public services boards to involve community and town councils in the process of improving the well-being of their areas, regardless of whether the duty in section 40(1) of the Act applies to those councils. All community and town councils are classed as “other partners” of public services boards and must be consulted by those boards on the assessment of local well-being and subsequently on the local well-being plan. They will also have the opportunity of engaging with the public services board when invited to do so.

#### Bridgend Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/working-together/bridgend-public-services-board/>

Bridgend Public Services Board (PSB) was established on 1 April 2016 and brings together public bodies, who deliver services locally to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Bridgend by setting objectives that will achieve the well-being goals outlined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations 2015 Wales Act.

The PSB does this by:

- Assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in the area



- Setting objectives that are designed to maximise the PSBs contribution to the well-being goals.

They must do this in accordance with the sustainable development principle which means the PSB needs to make sure that when making decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

The Well-being Plan outlines how to improve well-being in Bridgend County Borough. It also shows how the plan will help us meet the Well-being of Future Generations Act's seven wellbeing goals:

- 1) A prosperous Wales
- 2) A resilient Wales
- 3) A healthier Wales
- 4) A more equal Wales
- 5) A Wales of more cohesive communities
- 6) A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- 7) A globally responsible Wales

The plan can be viewed <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/14431/psb-wellbeing-plan.pdf>

## **Contact Maesteg Town Council**

Write to: Town Clerk  
Maesteg Town Council  
Talbot Street  
Maesteg  
CF34 9BY

Email: [clerk@maestegtowncouncil.org](mailto:clerk@maestegtowncouncil.org)

Telephone: 01656 732631

Website: [www.maestegcouncil.org](http://www.maestegcouncil.org)