

One Voice Wales National Awards Conference 2025 shows best of Welsh Councils!

Community and Town Councils across Wales, met up recently for their 2025 awards ceremony at the Royal Welsh Showground in Llanelwedd, sponsored by [Unity Trust Bank](#).

The annual ceremony, hosted by [One Voice Wales](#) - the national representative body for Community and Town Councils - celebrated and showcased the work of local Councils across many strategic and operational categories. A rigorous assessment process was evidence of the integrity of the awards.

In opening the event, Councillor Mike Theodoulou, Chair of One Voice Wales, paid tribute to the achievement of so many Councils who delivered grassroots services at the heart of their communities. He also spoke of changing times and the importance of establishing a true understanding of the role and purpose of Community and Town Councils.

Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales, thanked Councils for engaging with the event and praised their commitment to sharing their innovations.

Lyn described the challenges facing Councils across Wales, which included helping communities recover from COVID-19 and respond to the Cost-of-Living crisis. Supporting biodiversity, managing community asset transfer, and delivering vibrant, sustainable place-based services were further significant challenges. Councils could also play a key role in driving local economies.

Community and Town Councils were subject to more scrutiny than ever. Issues arising from external audits had brought increased focus on their work, alongside a recent Senedd [Inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector](#) and a review of the [democratic health of community and town councils](#). Community Boundary Reviews also painted an uncertain future for many Councils.

Lyn reminded delegates of how One Voice Wales supported Councils in meeting these challenges. The Awards provided a unique opportunity to show how Councils had performed against independent, third-party assessment. Lyn described record membership levels, increased funding from Welsh Government and a Memorandum of Understanding with the [WLGA](#) to help manage an important partnership. Important governance changes were also being put in place within One Voice Wales.

Lyn looked forward to attending the forthcoming WLGA Annual Conference, which would be an opportunity to showcase the work of One Voice Wales and the achievements of many Community and Town Councils. Other partnership work was also continuing.

A comprehensive programme of [training](#) was in place to help local Councils navigate a rapidly changing world, as Lyn encouraged Councils to take advantage of the development opportunities provided by One Voice Wales. He also commended the Finance and Governance [Toolkit](#) as an important resource to help Councils manage their affairs.

The conference launched the new One Voice Wales [website](#). The new site was a repository for Community and Town Councils to access important information, developed in collaboration with colleagues at CORE Internet Solutions. Many delegates took the opportunity of a digital “site visit” facilitated by One Voice Wales staff. A refreshed and rebranded logo had been developed alongside the new site.

Lyn took questions across such as the governance arrangements of One Voice Wales, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, anti-racism policies and how to ensure representation on Councils from young people.

Inspired by the Chief Executive’s words, delegates soon knuckled down to a series of thematic Workshop Practice Sessions, which identified and disseminated Best Practice in areas such as environmental projects, digital solutions, youth engagement and tourism.

A workshop about community engagement and democratic health was typical of the lively sharing of information sharing that took place on this busy day. Delegates listened with interest as the Mayor of Blaenavon Town Council, Councillor Nathan Matthews and Sophie Johnson, Community Well-being Development Officer, skilfully described how community engagement helped inform Council strategy in this historic Gwent town.

All eyes were on the awards though, and the afternoon session lifted the lid on the winners. Record entry levels had set a tough task for the judges, but the trophies were eventually allocated. Here is the full roll of honour.

1. Best Governance Initiative

[Pontypool Community Council](#) and [Blaenavon Town Council](#) (Joint Winners)

2. Best Democratic Health Initiative

No outright winner

3. Best Use of Digital Resources

[Rhossili Community Council](#)

4. Best Sustainability Initiative

[Carmarthen Town Council](#) and [Mumbles Community Council](#) (Joint Winners)

5. Best Environmental Project

[Mumbles Community Council](#)

6. Best Heritage and Culture Initiative

[Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council](#)

7. Best Tourism Initiative

[Guilsfield Community Council](#)

8. Best Community Engagement Initiative

[Blaenavon Town Council](#)

9. Best Youth Engagement Initiative

[Mold Town Council](#) and [Pontypool Community Council](#)

10. Best Older Persons Initiative

[Mumbles Community Council](#)

11. Best Devolution of Service or Asset Project

[Buan Community Council](#)

12. Best Initiative addressing the Cost-of-Living Crisis

[Mumbles Community Council](#)

13. The Caerwyn Roberts Best Local Council Service of the Year, sponsored by [Unity Trust Bank](#).

[Mumbles Community Council](#) and [Guilsfield Community Council](#) (Joint Winners)

This had been a celebration of local council life. A celebration of the people and communities of Wales.

Councillor Theodoulou drew proceedings to a close, describing a wonderful day. But he issued a final challenge. Councils needed to return to their communities and “shout” about their achievements, he declared! These were challenging times for local democracy and Community and Town Councils were ideally placed to engage and galvanise communities.

Delegates left the arena, thrilled at what they had heard and excited about the future.

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The 2025 Awards Conference is sponsored by [Unity Trust Bank](#).