

## **Submission**

### **Llanrhidian Higher Community Council**

#### **Transfer of Graig Y Coed Playing Fields / Graig Y Coed Woodland Area**

##### **1) What went well?**

The transfer of Graig Y Coed Playing Fields and Woodland Area were completed as two separate matters. The playing fields, including the pavilion, were transferred in 2019 and the Woodland area in 2020.

The Community Council received £24,000 funding in respect of the transfer of the playing fields, which was a very welcome sum and meant the transition was much smoother financially. This allowed the Community Council to budget effectively over a three-year period to accommodate the additional costs.

In addition, at the time, there were experienced Swansea Council officers in charge of the facilities, some of whom lived locally. They provided excellent advice and worked closely with the Community Council's Ground Maintenance Contractor. This was the case with regards to the transfer of both areas.

##### **2) What was most challenging?**

The most challenging aspect was the overall delay in transferring the facility. The transfer of the playing fields had been discussed for many years but it took quite a while (at least 5 years) to get to the transfer stage, which was very frustrating. Whilst the goodwill was there, all parties would have benefitted from a swifter transfer.

##### **3) What risks and barriers did you face? How did you overcome or mitigate them?**

The £24,000 funding was a significant issue in getting the transfer completed without the Community Council having to substantially increase its precept in order to cover the additional costs. This was the biggest risk faced.

Once the transfer was completed, the Community Council used its own contractors to manage the facility. This is still the case going forward.

In addition, maintenance issues going forward remain a risk as the facility is over 30 years old.

##### **4) What guidance, advice and support were you given? Including in relation to funding and applying for grants?**

As stated, the grant funding provided was a significant factor in the Community Council being able to financially manage the sporting facility more smoothly than would have been the case otherwise.

The woodland area was transferred specifically to enable the community to apply for Lottery funding to develop the site. Unfortunately, two unsuccessful bids were submitted. However, the Community Council was successful in a bid for Levelling Up funding managed by the Rural Anchor Team.

The guidance and support was provided by Swansea Council officers who were in charge of the facility.

**5) What have been the main community benefits to the transfer you have found since?**

There was a general feeling at the time prior to the transfer that Swansea Council was reducing the amount it was spending on the facility and in order to retain it for the local community, the Community Council had to look at the asset transfer.

There has been significant community benefit to transferring facilities. This has been through increased usage by both local football and rugby clubs. In addition, the Council has undertaken significant maintenance to the facilities, which would not have been completed by Swansea Council, given the ongoing budget pressures.

**6) Have there been any particular disadvantages or challenges found since the transfer?**

The facilities did suffer from a lack of investment prior to the transfer which has resulted in additional ongoing spending for the Community Council. One of the biggest issues faced has been on pitch and car park drainage issues, which are ongoing. However, we have received excellent support and advice from Swansea Council in this respect when they cleared the drainage outlets which had been blocked for some years. This also linked into road drainage problems being faced locally.

**7) What consultation did you (or was) carried out with regard to the transfer?**

The Community Council consulted widely with the local community and local clubs who were using the facility. There was overwhelming support for the Community Council proceeding with the asset transfer.

This was also the case with the woodland area where the volunteer were widely supported in the grant applications to improve the facility.

**8) Do you think the asset transfer process could be improved, if so, how?**

We fully expect the asset transfer to have improved since our transfers. As stated, there was significant delay in transferring the sports facilities but once underway, everything went reasonably smoothly.