# Port Talbot Gas Welfare Club celebrates relaunch after financial struggles



Port Talbot Gas Welfare Club, a staple of community life in Port Talbot for 75 years, has recently celebrated its relaunch after navigating a precarious financial situation exacerbated by steep energy costs. The club, founded in 1949 for the workers of Wales Gas Board, has become a vital social hub for residents but was facing potential closure due to rising operational costs that had reached between £700 and £900 a month.

The recent ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by local dignitaries including Cllr Matthew Crowley, Mayor of Port Talbot, and Stephen Kinnock, MP for Aberafan, marked not just a celebration of survival but a renewed commitment to serving the community. Peter Johnson, serving as the club's secretary for the past eight years, voiced the challenges the club faced. He explained, “We were struggling and on the verge of closing because of massive energy costs. It felt like every penny we made was going right out the door on bills."

Initially reluctant to increase the price of a pint, Peter faced a critical decision when it became clear that maintaining low prices was unsustainable. He revealed, "I was adamant about keeping the prices the same, but my bar manageress Julie pulled me to the side and said, 'Peter, if we don't do something - we're going to close.'" The result was a modest increase of 35p for beer, which still allows prices to remain competitive compared to other establishments in the area. "If you look at our price list—our lager is still around £3.40, while other places sell the same drink for £7 or more," Peter noted.

In light of these challenges, the club has also found a way to alleviate some financial pressure through the installation of solar panels, funded with a £20,000 grant from the Welsh Government and National Lottery. Peter mentioned that, “The club gets credited for every kilowatt of power it feeds into the National Grid, which will then help with energy costs over winter months.” This initiative, alongside the increase in bar prices, has provided the club with fresh hope and sustainability.

The Gas Club has carved out a niche as a place committed to community spirit and inclusivity, providing a venue for youth football teams, darts clubs, and even hosting children's parties with amenities like a bouncy castle. "The community really relies on this place," Peter said, indicating the club's role as a social hub.

In addition to its recreational offerings, the Gas Club asserts a strong charitable ethos, having donated approximately £90,000 to various local causes over the past 45 years. Events such as regular quiz nights and community gatherings raise funds for charities, including Ty Olwyn’s children’s cancer charity and Marie Curie.

The club’s dedication to high-quality entertainment has also played a role in its survival, with Peter taking pride in booking well-regarded acts. Notable performances have included tributes to renowned artists like Elvis Presley, with Ciaran Houlihan, regarded as the second-best Elvis tribute in the world, being a long-term fixture.

Reflecting on the broader context, Peter remarked on the changes in social habits, noting that many pubs and clubs are struggling or shutting down due to rising costs. "All the social clubs from yesteryear would be packed, but now they are all gone," he stated, highlighting the club’s unique position in promoting an accessible social environment for its patrons.

As the Gas Club looks towards the future, Peter remains optimistic. He commented, "I hope this club will be here for another 75 years, although I obviously won't be around to see if that happens," signalling a commitment to preserving the legacy of the establishment for the benefit of generations to come.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.stephenkinnock.co.uk/port-talbot-gas-club/> - This URL supports the claim of Port Talbot Gas Welfare Club's recent switch to solar panels, highlighting its role in reducing energy bills. It also mentions the club's long-standing presence in the community.
2. <https://rnli.org/news-and-media/2024/october/13/port-talbot-rnli-celebrates-outstanding-volunteer-achievements> - While not directly about the Gas Club, this article showcases community spirit in Port Talbot, aligning with the club's community focus and charitable ethos.
3. <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This document does not directly relate to the article but highlights the importance of legal and procedural details in community or organizational settings, indirectly relevant to managing a club like the Gas Club.
4. <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - Similar to the previous Virginia courts document, this source does not directly relate to the article but touches on legal aspects that could be relevant to community organizations in a broader context.
5. <https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/RecurRpt/25rs_90_Day_Report.pdf> - This document focuses on legislative actions and budgetary decisions in Maryland, which does not directly support the article but highlights community funding and budget management challenges faced by similar organizations.
6. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk> - Wales Online could potentially provide local news on Port Talbot, including stories about community clubs like the Gas Club and their efforts to combat rising energy costs. However, a specific article link is not provided in this response.
7. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/edge-abyss-steeltown-social-club-31404995> - Please view link - unable to able to access data