

REPORT BY OUT-GOING MAYOR YEAR 2018/2019 – Cllr W Powell, out-going Mayor, circulated his annual report for the AGM on 15 05 2019, in advance of the meeting, as follows:

Since my election as Chair of Talgarth Town Council in May 2018, it has been a considerable privilege to work alongside Town Councillors, past and present, and well-motivated individuals from across our community to develop and promote the town that I call home.

I reiterate my gratitude to everyone for their commitment and efforts throughout the past year. Within the Town Council, everyone contributes according to their experience, knowledge and talent, towards the betterment of Talgarth and its adjacent communities. Despite the challenges thrown up, and the turbulence that has been our lot, we have worked effectively together to achieve our shared objectives.

The past 12 months have been enjoyable and interesting, with numerous activities, events and engagements. Prominent amongst those special occasions was the opportunity, as Mayor, to join fellow School Governors and members of our wider community for the official opening of Ysgol y Mynydd Du, by Welsh Education Minister and local AM Kirsty Williams and Leader of Powys County Council, Cllr Rosemarie Harris, with other County Councillors, Brecon and Radnorshire MP Chris Davies and Joyce Watson, AM for Mid and West Wales amongst our guests.

In June, I was delighted to meet and greet participants in the 2018 Black Mountains Classic Tour and to distribute medals to those successfully completing the rally. In November, I was proud to lay the wreath on behalf of Talgarth Town Council as part of the local service of Remembrance, to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice. Shortly afterwards the newly reinstated Town Hall Basement was the venue for the splendid World War One Ball. Congratulations to everyone associated with that event and particular thanks to Cllr Richard Reid for his steadfast efforts in overseeing the building works, with support from Cllr Andrew Bufton.

We have also hosted three One Voice Wales meetings during the past year in the Town Hall, including a special session focussed on Road Safety and Speed Enforcement issues, with Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd

Llywelyn, several senior Police and PCC Highways Officers. This followed an outreach event on speed issues that I organised with the Commissioner at Ysgol Y Mynydd Du earlier that day, Friday 29th January. It also served as a catalyst to reenergise the Community Speedwatch Scheme, in which Town Councillors and other volunteers have been participating.

Talgarth Town Council continues to lend support to many local events, helping to define Talgarth as a dynamic and welcoming destination, and which contribute to the local economy in challenging times. These include Talgarth Festival of the Black Mountains, Talgarth Walking Festival and Talgarth Lights Group events, to highlight just a few. All Town Councillors are elected to serve the interests of the whole community, and both as Powys County Councillor, but also as Town Council Chair during the past 12 months, I am grateful for that collective service. This included the Town Council contribution to the consultation on the Mid Wales Hospital Development Brief, which entailed a huge effort on the part of colleagues, most notably our Town Clerk. The Town Council did its utmost to act as a conduit for community opinion, whilst facilitating debate but remaining within our statutory remit. The proposals were naturally contentious in a number of areas, but the Town Council rightly fought for a 40 day extension to the period of consultation, and for an inclusive, independently chaired BBNPA consultation event, held in Talgarth. The more recent BBNPA Meeting, at which the Brief was approved, also gave opportunity for the Town Council - and for a range of local voices - to be heard.

During the year, the Town Council has been proactive in other strategic planning issues, including expressing community centric views on the future of PCC owned sites in our Town, These, principally the former school site, with its three distinct parcels of land, and the defunct Highways Yard, on its split site, occasioned considerable work back in January, when a suite of candidate site submissions were made by Talgarth Town Council to the BBNPA, as part of its upcoming LDP process. There will be a need for vigilance and proactive engagement with the wider community on the future of these sites, all in PCC ownership. A significant part of this will fall to Talgarth Town Council and other relevant groups. This will also feed into the next phase of the Talgarth Town Plan 2018 - 2020, where Talgarth & District Regeneration Group members have kindly taken a leading role hitherto.

The liaison meetings with GP Biotec have continued to assist the Town Council in acting on behalf of the wider community in monitoring the environmental situation together with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). It would be appropriate once again to thank those colleagues, past and present, for their tireless efforts in this regard, engaging with the operators, the wider community and other interested parties to ensure that processes are safe and appropriate regulation respected. Together with Hay on Wye, Bronllys and other adjacent Town/Community Councils Talgarth Town Council continues to be represented on the Bronllys Wellbeing Park CLT Ltd. The instigators are to be congratulated for their perseverance, in securing the Memorandum of Understanding with Powys teaching Health Board, which will be crucial to unlocking the potential of the project.

Powys County Council, in common with all other local authorities across Wales, have continued to devolve many services and assets to local communities. Talgarth Town Council have now taken over the toilets, Sports Pavilion and playing fields and are still in the process of taking on the Talgarth Bowls Club asset, which has proved a time consuming and protracted process. I would like to thank the Town Clerk for her diligence in these matters, as well as fellow Town Councillors who have given selflessly of their time. This relates both to the ongoing procedures for the Bowls Club, as well as the extensive works at the Sports Pavilion, following the water leak that occasioned considerable damage and inconvenience this spring. Thanks again to those who went well beyond the call of duty, with special mention to Cllr Richard Reid for his fastidious approach to supervising the work. Heartfelt thanks also go to all who are working to facilitate relations between Talgarth Town FC, the constituent members of TaDSCA and the Town Council

The departure of two experienced, long-serving Council Members, in Neil Bally and Jacqui Wilding, means that the Town Council misses their distinguished contribution but their legacy to our community, where they continue to make a contribution, is considerable. Their successors, Cllrs Louise Elston-Reeves and Chris Voyle, elected in a by election last December, have already made a significant impact in our Town Council work. We have also been privileged to have the continued valuable input of Youth Councillor Amy Argent in our deliberations.

Again, I offer my genuine gratitude to all our community organisations, charities and the many individual volunteers for their commitment and tireless efforts to improve our community. From the TiRC and the Talgarth Luncheon Club, with their decades of service, through to the freshly constituted Grow for Talgarth/Talgarth in Bloom and the Talgarth Energy Cooperative and many more, they deserve our recognition and our thanks.

Although it has been a challenge at times, it has also been an immense privilege to serve Talgarth Town Council as Chair these past 12 months. While there are areas that require fresh impetus and new direction, I have done my best to serve the greater good of our town during this period. My wife Ria has given me her support throughout the year, for which I am very grateful. I thank my Deputy Chairs Cllrs Pip Turner and Phil Lewis for their steadfast support and wise counsel. The determination and input of all the Town Council, together with the dedication and sheer hard work of our Town Clerk, Josephine Rumsey, has allowed us to achieve a great deal. I offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has played their part. Diolch yn fawr!

Cllr William Powell

May 2019