

Talgarth Town Council



Annual Report
2023/2024

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to the annual report 2023/2024, which we hope will provide you with an insight and information of the Town Council throughout this year, as well as ongoing and future plans for the community.

It has been a challenging year for us all with the closure and relocation of our main store The Co-operative. This sadly resulted in reduced footfall in our Town Square. However, a review of Talgarth's strengths and weaknesses was undertaken this resulted in the production of a Town centre Placemaking Plan. Funding for a project is available from the Transforming Towns initiative and a project seeking all residents views is underway. This project is visionary and will transform our Town Hall basement.

This year saw the 103rd birthday of our oldest resident Mr John Gwynne, it was a privilege to be invited to his home to enjoy a celebration tea. The Town Council wish to thank Mr Gwynne for his service to the town and also his country during WW2.

Personally, it has been an honour and privilege to serve as Mayor and Chair of the Council. Community volunteers and groups support many events and make our town an idyllic place to live. We as a Council are proud to represent you.

Best Wishes

Louise Elston-Reeves

Chair and Town Mayor 2023/2024

About The Council

Town Councils are known as the first tier of local government, the tier closest to the residents they represent and consisting of local people working to benefit the local area.

During the year 2023/2024, the Council originally comprised of 12 Councillors who were fully committed to representing the residents of Talgarth, Pengefford and Trefecca, providing them with services and facilities designed to enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of the community.

Your Town Council Members in 2023-24 to date

2023/24 Mayor, Cllr. Louise Elston-Reeves

Telephone: 07717294332

Email: louise.elston-reeves@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I was born and raised in our lovely town and left to do my nurse training in 1992. My early career was spent in the Southeast of England working in the speciality of Burns and Plastics. I returned home to Wales in 2015 with my daughters seeking a slower pace of life. I was elected as a Town Councillor in 2018.

2023/2024 Deputy Mayor, Cllr Andrew Lord

Telephone: 07432009308

Email: andrew.lord@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I first moved to this part of Wales in 1981 having previously worked here. My wife and I moved to Trefecca in 1995. Since 1981 I have worked in computer engineering until retirement this year. I have been a Town Councillor for 13 and half years and currently I am Deputy Mayor.

2023/2024 Cllr Andrew Bufton

Telephone:07774631312

Email: andrew.bufton@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

2023/2024 Cllr Malcolm Dodds

Telephone: 07982776857

Email: Malcolm.dodds@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I am Leslie Malcolm Dodds and originally from the North of England. I have been in Talgarth since 1981, working at the Mid Wales Hospital and Powys Health Authority as Director of Nurse Education. I have been an elected Town Councillor for over 25 years, plus membership of a number of community organisations for many years.

2023/2024 Cllr Glyn Jones

Telephone:07976649382

Email: glyn.jones@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

2023/2024 Cllr Douglas Coleman

Telephone: 07568391873

Email: douglas.coleman@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I was born in the West Pennines and after a career working in a research laboratory I began working for the Government. I retired to live in Talgarth in 1993 and was co opted to become a town councillor a couple of years ago.

2023/2024 Cllr Carol Briggs

Telephone: 07515728819

Email: carol.briggs@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I was born in Hanover in Germany, a child of the military I have lived in many places and have met many people along the way. I have lived in Talgarth for 11 years, now with my mother and 2 children aged 15 and 5. I work as chief cook and bottle washer at Gwernyfed Rugby club.

2023/2024 Cllr. Christine Green

Telephone: 07484333419

Email: Christine.green@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

Served as a Magistrate for some years; also involved in setting up one of the first women's refuges in the UK. Moved to Wales in 1980s; worked as Geographic Information Systems Officer, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Since retirement, have been involved in many roles as a volunteer.

2023/2024 Cllr Jon Evans

Telephone : 07814345715

Email: Jon.evans@talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk

I was born in Talgarth, following in the footsteps of numerous generations before me. Leaving to gain a degree in Computer Science at Aberystwyth in 2005; I returned and have been working in that profession since. I became an on-call Firefighter at Talgarth Fire Station in 2015 and become a Town Councillor in June 2023

2023/2024 Cllr William Powell

Telephone: 07703 112113

Email: Cllr.William.Powell@powys.gov.uk

I was born and raised on the family farm at Pengeffordd and left Gwernyfed High School in 1983 to study Modern Languages at Pembroke College, Oxford.

My first career was in teaching Modern Languages in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, latterly as Head of German and European Officer at Hereford Sixth Form College.

I returned home to Wales full time in 2004, when elected as County Councillor. I have subsequently been elected to the Town Council and served a term in the National Assembly for Wales (now Senedd) 2011 – 2016.

Since 2017 I have served as a member of Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Panel and since 2022, have re-joined BBNPA.

I am committed to capacity building in Talgarth and beyond and want to continue to play my part in the regeneration of my hometown, whilst celebrating the stunning beauty of the Black Mountains.

The community and the Town Council wish to thank Cllr K Burns, Cllr Jodie Bond and Cllr Catherine Bufton-Davies for their commitment and valued service to the council and community.

Due to resignations to date (April 2024) the Council comprises of 10 current members. May 2024 will see the Council commence the process of filling of these 2 vacancies.

The council has two employees: A Clerk to the Council, Proper Officer, Responsible Financial Officer and main contact for the Council:

Josephine Rumsey, Ty Carreg, Bronllys road, Talgarth, Brecon, Powys. LD3 0HH - 01874711565
Tel 07970 547996 Email: clerk@talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk

Josephine has served the council and the town of Talgarth for many years. We thank her for her selfless service.

Our Caretaker/Cleaner for the Town hall and public conveniences is Emma Hayles. Emma does an exceptional job and has received compliments on how clean our premises are.

The town council meets regularly face to face however we have the technology to offer hybrid meetings.

Town Council representatives have also attended the quarterly meetings of:

PCC and Town and community councils.

OVW, Brecon and Radnor area committee meetings.

Members are appointed annually to serve as Council representatives on the following external organisations and sub-groups:

One Voice Wales

Burial sub-group

Town Hall works and development.

Financial planning group

Communications group

GDPR

All Planning Applications are considered at a full meeting of the Town Council.

There are six appointed members on the burial sub-group who submit recommendations for the full Council's decisions— final decisions made by the full Town Council. Fees are reviewed annually and align with the Church in Wales charges. The Council has a Memorandum of Understanding and does not charge for burials of those under the age of 18.

An appointed Councillor carries out regular health and safety inspections of all assets and one Councillor is appointed to oversee accounting procedures.

Members volunteer to serve on our towns volunteer and community groups:

Christmas lights group

Talgarth festival group

Grow for Talgarth

On the Verge/Ar yr Ymyl

Talgarth information centre

Talgarth and District Regeneration Group

Talgarth health groups

Ysgol y Mynydd Du
TADSCA
Walkers are Welcome
GP Biotec Liaison group

FINANCIAL INFORMATION.

An annual audit of accounts and procedures is carried out. A person independent of the Council is appointed as internal auditor annually. They carry out 3 quarterly internal audits and an annual internal audit in April. Wales Audit office then follow on with an external audit of the council. The Council is grateful to the current internal auditor and the Town Clerk for their work.

The Council sets a budget annually which is funded by residents of the community via the Council Tax collected by Powys County Council and paid to the Community Council, known as the precept. Councillors set the precept value when the budget is considered and do everything possible to keep the value to the minimum possible.

The Annual Return of the Council for the year ending 31st March 2024 is published on the Council website:
www.talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk.

Summary of accounts is:

Opening Cash at Bank- £8,250

Total Income received (including precept)- £95,990

Total Expenditure (Inc. wages, running costs etc.) – £79,294

Closing Cash at Bank - £24,946

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales produces an annual report in February of each year, which allows members of the council to receive certain statutory allowances.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRINCIPAL COUNCIL.

The Council worked in partnership with County Councillor William Powell the County Councillor for Talgarth. He has attended most meetings of the Council providing a written report for each meeting and listened to issues raised by councillors relating to the responsibilities of Powys County Council and took up matters for action with relevant officers as appropriate.

The council would like to thank County Cllr. William Powell for his continued loyalty and commitment to the residents of Talgarth.

COMPLAINTS.

No complaints were received about the work of the Town Council during the year.

CODE OF CONDUCT.

Councillors have been trained in the Code of Conduct and are fully aware of their commitment to the Council.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2023/2024

On the Verge/Ar yr Ymyl

One of our community environmental groups carry out wild planting in and around Talgarth. Promoting the benefits of biodiversity and educating the future generation.

They have successfully spread their message to other groups around Talgarth and are taking part in Powys County Councils initiative on Biodiversity.

The Town Council fully supports this initiative as it incorporates our vision and commitment to section 6 responsibilities.

The group launched the successful 1-meter matters campaign again with support from TTC which is flourishing and has been embraced by residents.

Our beautiful river Enig bank has been planted with pollinators.



	WOODLANDS AVENUE PLAY PARK TALGARTH
	WE'RE BACK - COME AND HELP GET THE VEG RAISED BEDS READY FOR SOWING SEEDS
SUNDAY 7TH APRIL 11am - 1pm	Tips, tricks, inspiration and friendship for growing your own vegetables.

A food triangle formed for community food growing and sharing, Coed Y Bryn orchard, Woodlands community garden and the recently acquired TTC allotment, has all been made possible by successful Powys, Local nature partnership grants.

Woodlands Park Group

Fundraising by Regeneration of Woodlands park group have obtained grants and charitable donations in the region of £27,500, to refurbish the play equipment. The park is certainly enjoying a new lease of life.

Walkers are Welcome

Yet again this year WaW managed to have a sold-out walking festival over the early May bank holiday. This event attracts more and more each year which in turn increases the turnover of our local businesses.

Victorian School Project

Two years ago, T&DRG submitted a bid to PCC under the ARWAIN programme jointly funded by the WG and EU to seek views on refurbishment of our 1875 Victorian School. Views were that the old school should be regenerated in a way that retains a community dimension. Black Mountains College has stepped up as a lead partner and been successful in securing a grant of £1,400,000 from the Community Ownership Fund to reinstate this community building. Special thanks to PCC, Cllr Matthew Dorrance and Fay Jones MP for their backing in this ambitious project.

Tuesday Lunch group

Tuesday Lunch Club continues to go from strength to strength. This is a well needed asset to the community and TTC continue to provide free rental of the Town Hall to assist the group with ever spiralling costs of living.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas lights event 2023 was another success, huge thanks and congratulations to the Lights team, Festival Group and Grow For Talgarth

Talgarth Community Hall

The former Church Hall is now known as the Community Hall, now run by local charity trustees, Tony James and Doris James. The Council wish to thank them both for their commitment and hard work in developing this valuable community asset.

Festival Group

August 2023 saw another fantastic bank holiday festival organised by the Festival Group who continue to bring vibrancy to our town attracting residents and visitors alike.

Grow For Talgarth

GfT continue in the efforts in keeping in the town looking vibrant. Thank you to all your volunteers for their hard work, commitment in keeping the town looking vibrant.

Dyfed Powys Police

The Town Council works closely with Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) Community Support Officers on any issues that arise in the community.

A monthly PCSO surgery happens in the committee room for residents to attend to discuss any matters of concern.

They are engaged in training and assisting members of the Community Speed Watch (CSW) team in a constant bid to deal with prevention of speeding vehicles in the community. DPP resources and budgets mean that they are limited in how much time they can spend enforcing speed limits, so we encourage residents to come forward and join the CSW team.

Annual Act of Remembrance

Following our annual act of Remembrance 2023 a tea was held at the town hall. The hall had been decorated with the help from local volunteers and the whole community came together to remember those fallen in conflict and those still suffering.



This year, 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of D Day on 6th June. The Council will work with the community to support commemorative events.

6th June at 11:00 hrs there will be a wreath laying accompanied by a lone piper and bugler. At 21:15 hrs 6th June there will be singing by Talgarth Male Voice Choir and the lighting of the beacon. Saturday 8th June there will be road closures in the Square for a day of commemorative activities for the community.

ASSETS

Talgarth Town Council's full Assets Register, as of 31 March 2024, is on the Council's website and includes the following:

Town Hall

St Gwendoline's Churchyard: Following a tender process every three years, a grass cutting contractor is appointed to maintain St. Gwendoline's Churchyard.



King George V Playing fields/Pavilion/Children's Play area/Tennis Courts
Bowling Club House/Green
War Memorial
Bus Shelter, Trefecca - and land that it's built on
Red Phone Box – disused at Trefecca – In memory of Cllr Reid the phone box will be renovated to become a box loaning library/Defibrillator
Various Gates, Seats/benches (Town Centre & surrounding areas), 2 Gazebos/3 Picnic Tables (Town square area), Speedwatch equipment, Zoll Defibrillator, Computer equipment.

Policies

The Council has limited legal powers to operate as a corporate body and has several policies to comply with, which are reviewed annually. These include Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, General Data Protection Regulations/Security & Confidential, Complaints, Freedom of Information, Financial and Management Risk assessments, Insurance and Councillor Code of Conduct, Equality and diversity.

St Gwendoline's Churchyard Management, St Gwendoline's Churchyard Risk Assessment, Town Hall – Fire Risk Assessment, Town Hall Risk Assessment, Public Conveniences Risk Assessment.

All councillors have completed a personal training needs analysis. Our deputy mayor has now submitted our on-going training needs plan.

The Council website, [Home - Talgarth Town Council](#) is regularly updated with the work of the Council and is also subject to several legislative requirements, such as accessibility. All agenda, minutes, notices, and policies can be viewed on the website.

The Council does not currently directly engage on any Social Media platforms. Information about public events and important notices are posted on the Town's notice board, and website.

Biodiversity Plan

ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016

PART 1 – SECTION 6

THE BIO-DIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY

It is now the duty of the council to plan yearly to meet the above requirement.

Moving forward a subgroup of councillors will need to scope and formulate a plan for coming years. This would involve our various community groups who will also have to incorporate this act in any future planning.

The Council manages sites that are ideally suitable for the development of bio-diversity initiatives as follows:

St Gwendoline's Churchyard

King George V Playing fields/Pavilion/Children's Play area/Tennis Courts

Bowling Club House/Green

The Town Hall

Swift boxes have been placed around the town hall to encourage these migrant visitors. This was suggested by a local resident and member of the Brecon and District Swift group, and we thank them for pursuing this.

PCC have been advised to please not use herbicides/fungicides and pesticides on our town's verges and pavements this is supported by On the Verge, Grow for Talgarth and Black Mountains College. The PCC have accepted this request and for the short term no pesticides shall be used.

As cited previously TTC have agreed to pay the yearly rental for a community allotment. Work has started on the plot and vegetables are already growing.



Statement Going Forward.

The Town Council aims to continue to represent the views of residents on differing topics and where possible provide services to meet local needs, to support and develop any initiatives to enhance our community life and the well-being of our residents now and for future generations.

As a council we need to look more at sustainable energy projects, Emergency planning for the town and the cost of living crisis.

There has been much disquiet about parking in our town square and surrounding roads, we shall looking at a whole town parking review in the next financial year.

Compliance with any new legislation will be actioned and the development of the required training plans will be completed.

Community engagement and participation by Town Councillors will continue as always. This will be achieved by Councillors being part of community life, being visible and attending community group meetings.

We will continue to work with our partners Powys County Council and BBNPA.

The Town Council continue to work alongside County Councillor William Powell to ensure optimum outcomes for the residents of Talgarth.

How Can the Council Help You?

The Town Council is interested to know what you want from your council.

If you have any ideas for future projects, please do get in touch.

Please note the following matters fall under the County Council and the Town Council can lobby for action or change but cannot insist.

County Council Matters are:

Highways

Street sweeping

Refuse/Recycling

Road Signs

Education

Council Housing

Social Services

Planning

The Powys County Council phone number is: 01597 826000