

# Talgarth Town Council - Annual Report 2021 – 2022

During the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the Town Council has continued to meet regularly on a remote basis using Skype. Preparations are now being put in place to comply with The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 coming into force, with many implications for the council, one of which is for multi-location or 'hybrid' meetings. This means that some equipment may need to be purchased and some upgraded. Thankfully the Town hall, where meetings are usually held is equipped with broadband which will assist the Council with these hybrid meetings. We encourage the participation of the public in our monthly meetings.

The council held 11 monthly meetings, 1 Annual General Meeting and 11 other meetings during the last year.

Town Council representatives have also virtually attended the quarterly meetings of: PCC and Town and community councils. OVW, Brecon and Radnor area committee meetings.

The council has two employees: A Clerk to the Council, Proper Officer, Responsible Financial Officer, advisor, Data Protection 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](mailto:clerk@talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk)

A Caretaker/Cleaner for the Town hall and public conveniences:

Emma Hayles Tel 07487602689

Talgarth Town Council has 12 members for the Talgarth area which includes Pengenfford and Trefecca. The election term of a Community Councillor is 5 years.

Members in post to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 are listed below; their contact information is displayed on Council noticeboard and on our website.

**Philip Lewis**

**Louise Elston-Reeves**

**Andrew Bufton**

**Malcolm Dodds**

**Glyn Jones**

**Andrew Lord**

**Terry McClatchy**

**Rachel Parry**

**William Powell**

**Richard Reid**

**Chris Voyle**

**Chris Green**

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

Christmas lights group

Talgarth festival group

Grow for Talgarth

On the Verge/Ar yr Ymyl

Talgarth information and resource centre

Talgarth and district regeneration group

Talgarth health groups

Ysgol y Mynydd Du

TADSCA

Walkers are Welcome

GP Biotec group

Financial planning group  
Communications group  
GDPR

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

The Council owns St Gwendoline's Churchyard in Talgarth and there are six appointed members on the burial sub-group. 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.

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 an internal audit in April. Wales Audit office then follow on with an external audit of the council.

The audit for 2020/21 was completed satisfactorily, with an unqualified audit and no issues raised. The Council is grateful to the current internal auditor for their work.

Following the electoral process in May 2022, the Council will see the retirement of three Councillors who have loyally served the community. On behalf of the whole community, the Council would like to express deep gratitude to William Powell, Chris Voyle and Terry McClatchy for their dedicated service and wish them all the very best for the future.

Retirement of members as of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 will see the Council commence the co-option process for the 3 vacancies.

The Council would like to thank County Councillor William Powell for his work representing the Powys County Council Ward of Talgarth during his five-year term in office.

Town Council members look forward to working with County Councillor William Powell who was re-elected on 5th May 2022.

## **Finance Matters**

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 Governance Statement of the council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 is published on the Council website [www.Talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.Talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk). Summary of accounts is:

Opening Cash at Bank - £42,539  
Total Income received (including precept) - £66,494  
Total Expenditure (Inc. wages, running costs etc.) - £ 84,236  
Closing Cash at Bank - £ 24,797

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has a policy, adopted by the Council, which allows for payments to be made to members of the Council as a contribution towards costs incurred. Five Councillors have opted to receive this payment.

## **Assets & Policies**

Talgarth Town Council's full Assets Register, at 31 March 2022, is on the Council's website and includes the following:

Town Hall

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

Various Gates, Seats/benches (*Town Centre & surrounding areas*), 2 Gazebos/3 Picnic Tables (*Town square area*), Speedwatch equipment, Zoll Defibrillator, Computer equipment.

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

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

We currently do not have policies covering Equality & Diversity, Social Media, Payments to Councillors and Welsh Language. These policies will need to be compiled and implemented going forward.

The Council website, [www.talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk) 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 notice board, and website.

Many issues and concerns have been discussed in the last year including:

The redevelopment of the former highway authority maintenance yard for the purposes of a single A1 unit and commercial unit (new CO-OP); no planning decision by BBNPA has been made to date.

Speeding in and around Trefecca, meetings with PCC officers, Police and Crime commissioner, Dyfed Powys Police were held. New members for speed watch have been recruited in Trefecca who will carry out monitoring as required in the Talgarth and Trefecca areas.

Following a successful bid for COVID 19 environmental work around the Town, the shade garden was completed by the Grow for Talgarth group, and a covered seating area and safety bollards were erected in the Town square, these facilities are very well used by locals and visitors alike.

The major repairs to the A479 were finally completed allowing some normality to return to the area.

Major improvements to the children's play area at King George V playing fields will hopefully be completed this summer (2022) following some successful grant applications made by TADSCA, plus financial contributions made by TTC and TADSCA.

The purchase of a new Defibrillator positioned on the Town hall.

The redecoration of the Town hall and new stage curtains including back drops will be completed by July.

Talgarth will be hosting the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Wales in Bloom awards ceremony in September; this is a prestigious event for the Town, well done to the Grow for Talgarth group for making this happen. Also, congratulations to GfT on winning the gold award in the RHS Wales in Bloom competition in the large village category and the overall winners in this category for the whole of Wales.

On the Verge/Ar yr Ymyl, one of our community environmental groups, has engaged in many projects in and around the Town including Ysgol y Mynydd Du where they maintain a wildflower bed. They also achieved Bee friendly status presented to them by Welsh Government; "Action plan for pollinators taskforce". Well done to all involved.

Talgarth nature recovery management plan is to provide a framework for the management and enhancement of sites within the Town for 2021/22 with a view to a more long term programme of delivery. There are two areas of green space within the Town which have been chosen; King George V playing fields and Woodlands play area. This project has been funded by the Welsh Government local places for nature fund 2021/22 and supported by Brecon Beacons local nature partnerships coordinator. Work has started in both areas and we wish all involved every success with the venture; it can only benefit all especially our children.

Health and safety audit of memorial stones etc. carried out at St Gwendoline's churchyard there were some failures which are currently being dealt with.

The pollution of the Afon Llynfi; despite a year+ long investigation into this incident no completed outcome was made by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). We find this unacceptable and have pursued further updates; to date no acceptable response has been received.

The Christmas lights were put up as usual despite COVID and again looked wonderful, huge thanks and congratulations to the lights team.

On-going complaints concerning smells from GP Biotec from residential areas throughout Talgarth; concerns are discussed with GP Biotec as they happen, but this is becoming a major nuisance area for the community which will need wider discussions if the smells continue.

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

Dog fouling in public areas. This remains an on-going problem as there appears to be many irresponsible dog owners both living in and visiting Talgarth. In the near future a dog fouling action day will be organised with the hope this may help the problem.

The Council is a statutory consultee to planning applications in the community, consulted by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). 2021/22 has seen another year of considering these applications remotely. The Council has to be consulted being the level of government closest to the people. It is disappointing however, when concerns raised by the Town Council about planning matters in some cases appear to be insufficiently noted and considered by the planning authority.

Although Councillors have been in regular contact with residents throughout the pandemic and Council updates have been provided through our website and notice board, there were very few opportunities during the year to engage collectively with our community face to face. We hope to have more chances to do so as restrictions decrease.

As 2022 is the year of the Queens' Platinum Jubilee, the Town Council thank all those involved in organising the community events to celebrate this historic occasion. The Town square will be closed to traffic on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June for a street party and there is a celebration/fun day taking place at the King George V playing fields on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June (Appendix 1 below). There are also local street events taking place over the bank holiday weekend. The Town Council have purchased 107 commemorative £5 coins to be presented to all the pupils of Ysgol y Mynydd Du at the school on the afternoon of Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

The Town Council aims to continue to represent the views of residents on many different topics and where possible provide services to meet any 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. 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, making ourselves known to the community as currently Talgarth appears to have a changeable community demographic, informally engaging with residents on a daily basis and more formally as and when needed.

The Council are keen to encourage and further develop collaborative working with Powys County Council, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, and other external bodies. The Town Council will continue to work alongside our County Councillor William Powell to ensure the best outcome for the residents of Talgarth.

Philip Lewis  
Chair of Talgarth Town Council  
17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## **Appendix 1**

### **Thursday June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Gwernyfed RFC Huge Jubilee Celebration 12pm til late.

4pm Traditional Irish Piper processes through the town – Tower Hotel yard 4.45pm ending Castle Hotel 6pm - where fish'n chips and spam fritters will be available.

Gwernyfed RFC live music from 7.30pm + hog roast.

Beacons being lit town centre and Mynydd Troed at 9.45

### **Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

4 Towers walk starting 9.30am – 4 miles – booking at [info@talgarthwalkingfestival.org](mailto:info@talgarthwalkingfestival.org)

Right Royal Quiz 7.30pm Castle Inn, Pengenfford.

### **Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup>**

Family Fun Day 2pm King George V playing fields.

Everything for the children plus Dog Show.

Live Music 7pm

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June**

Service of Celebration St. Gwendoline's Church 10.00am

Exhibition of the school children's Portraits of the Queen. Church Hall 12 – 4pm

From 2.30pm Picnic-on-the-Square – BIG get-together! Bring your own food.

3pm Talgarth Male Voice Choir.