

Talgarth Town Council

Annual Report

2022/2023



1. CONTEXT

During the year 2022/23, the Council originally comprised of 12 Councillors who were fully committed to representing the residents of Talgarth, Pengenfford and Trefecca, providing them with services and facilities designed to enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of the community.

The councillors who were in office during the year were:

- Cllr Philip Lewis, Former Mayor until his resignation, due to mobility issues, on 19 Oct 2022
- Cllr Louise Elston-Reeves, Formerly Deputy Mayor and Mayor since 19 Oct 2022
- Cllr Rachel Parry, until her resignation, due to work commitments, on 31 Mar 2023
- Cllr Richard Reid, Resigned as being Deputy Mayor and remained as a Councillor on 8 Feb 2023 due to his illness. Noted Cllr Richard Reid sadly died on 15 Mar 2023
- Cllr Andrew Lord, Deputy Mayor since 8 Feb 2023
- Cllr Andrew Bufton
- Cllr Malcolm Dodds
- Cllr Glyn Jones
- Cllr Kerry Burns - Co-opted 28 Sept 2022
- Cllr Chris Green
- Cllr Douglas Coleman - Co-opted 12 July 2022
- Cllr Jodie Bond - Co-opted 14 Dec 2022
- Cllr Catherine Bufton-Davies - Co-opted 28 Sept 2022

Due to retirements and an untimely death to date (May 2023) the Council comprises of 10 current members. May 2023 will see the Council commence the process of filling of these 2 vacancies.

On behalf of the whole community, the Council would like to express deep gratitude to Philip Lewis and Rachel Parry for their dedicated service and wish them all the very best for the future.

The community and the whole of the Council miss Richard Reid and extend their sincere sympathies to his wife, daughter and family. We thank him for his selfless commitment to the town and loyal civic service.

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 –

Tel 01874711565 Mob 07970 547996 Email: clerk@talgarthtowncouncil.co.uk

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

The Town Council meets regularly face to face however we have the technology to offer hybrid meetings due to updated technology purchased due to a successful Arwain grant.

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

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 Liaison group
Financial planning group
Communications group
GDPR
Speedwatch team

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

The audit for 2021/2022 was completed satisfactorily, with an unqualified audit and no issues raised. The Council is grateful to the current internal auditor and the Town Clerk for their work.

2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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 2023 is published on the Council website: www.talgarhtowncouncil.co.uk.

Summary of accounts is:

Opening Cash at Bank - £24,797

Total Income received (including precept) - £100,063

Total Expenditure (Inc. wages, running costs etc.) – £116,610

Closing Cash at Bank - £8,250

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.

3. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRINCIPAL COUNCIL

The Council worked in partnership with Councillor William Powell the County Councillor for Talgarth. He has attended the majority of meetings of the Council providing a written report for each meeting. He 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 William Powell for his continued loyalty and commitment to the residents of Talgarth.

4. COMPLAINTS

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

5. CODE OF CONDUCT

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

6. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2022/23

The key achievements during the year were as follows: Major improvements to the Children's Play area at King George V playing fields were completed by Summer (2022) following some successful grant applications made by TADSCA, plus financial contributions made by TTC and TADSCA.



The redecoration of the Town hall and new stage curtains were completed by July 2022 in time for the hosting of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Wales in Bloom awards ceremony in September 2022; this was a prestigious event for the Town, well done to the Grow for Talgarth (GfT) 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. GfT continue to maintain key sites around Talgarth adding much needed colour and biodiversity.



On the Verge/Ar yr Ymyl, one of our community environmental groups successfully 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 Council's initiative on Biodiversity.

This year saw the re-commencement of a Lunch Club in Talgarth, now known as the Tuesday Lunch Club. It is already popular and proving to be a success. This is a well needed asset to the community. Thank you to all those involved.

A health and safety audit of memorial stones carried out at St Gwendoline's churchyard identified some unsafe headstones which have been made safe.

The Christmas lights were put up as usual on a smaller scale and again looked wonderful, huge thanks and congratulations to the Lights team.

On-going complaints concerning smells from GP Biotec continue to be expressed - these concerns are discussed with GP Biotec as they happen. Due to this becoming a major nuisance complainants are now advised to contact environmental health at PCC and NRW - details can be found on our website.

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 with the problem.

Sadly following an extremely successful platinum jubilee celebration weekend within Talgarth, Queen Elizabeth II died on 8th September 2022. Talgarth Town Council marked this sad event by flying flags at half mast, instigating a book of condolence and having flowers at our War Memorial as requested via the Palace. These flowers have been composted in preparation for the planting of a memorial tree.

Talgarth and District Regeneration Group and The Castle Hotel Talgarth organised an Irish piper to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, this was an absolute delight for all residents. Thanks to The Castle hotel and fish bar.



Following our annual act of Remembrance 2022 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.



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

We are due to mark the event of the Coronation of King Charles III on the weekend of 6th May 2023. Events have been organised by our hard-working community groups and businesses. Talgarth Town Council has purchased commemorative mugs for all children at Ysgol Y Mynydd Du.



A successful Coronation tea has been held in the Town Hall – thanks to Town Councillor Catherine Bufton-Davies, on behalf of the Talgarth & District Regeneration Group, supported by Helen Colbert, on behalf of the Tuesday Lunch Club. The afternoon was a wonderful community event, funded by group donations. Thank you to all those volunteers involved.



A Mayor's Parlour was organised on 22 February 2023. The event was well attended by almost 60 members of our community groups. The aspiration for this event was to bring community groups together and promote a more collaborative approach to working.

A funding fair will take place in May 2023 instigated by Mr John Williams of Perthyn in collaboration with PAVO.

7. ASSETS

Talgarth Town Council's full Assets Register, as at 31 March 2023, 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.

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

8. 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.

We are currently creating policies covering Social Media, Payments to Councillors and Welsh Language. These policies will be compiled and implemented going forward.

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 notice board, and website.

9. 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 sub group 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 are to be 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.

A funding application by On the Verge has been submitted to the Environment group to plant an orchard on green space around Coed-Y-Bryn.

10. 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.

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 Brecon Beacons National Park Authority – now known as Bannau Brycheiniog.

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

I am honoured and privileged to have been elected as Mayor following the retirement of Cllr Phil Lewis. I would also like to thank all Talgarth Town Councillors for their continued support in the past year and look forward to the future.

Cllr Louise Elston-Reeves, Mayor
Mayor, Talgarth Town Council 2022-2023