



Todmorden Town Council
Annual Report
April 2021 To March 2022

Annual Report of Todmorden Town Council 2021-2022

Cllr Patricia Taylor

Mayor's Report

As my Mayoral year ends, I would like to say what a fantastic year I have had serving Todmorden and its people.

It has been a great honour both for me and for my Consort, David Taylor. My thanks go to David for all his help and support throughout the year.

As Mayor in the role as Chairman of the Council, it has been my pleasure to Chair 9 Full Council meetings. I would like to thank the Committee Chairs, all Councillors and Officers for assisting me in this, during what has turned out to be a really busy year for the Town Council.

Whilst a lot of business and activity is carried out under the guidance of our Committees and delivered through our Officers, many items come to Full Council for consideration and decision making.

Whilst procedurally there are always the first 5 items of business at every meeting, in total full Council has either received presentations, information on, or made decision on some 114 items.

Add to that the work of the Committees and the extent of physical projects delivered it has perhaps one of the busiest years yet for the Town Council in their ambitions to help the residents of Todmorden.

In my role as Mayor I have had a very busy year as Town Mayor, which was extremely welcome after the pandemic called a halt to the usual pattern of civic duty.

It has been wonderful to see Todmorden return to life over the last 12 months and a privilege to have been part of that re-emergence, my heartfelt thanks go to all those who invited me to their meetings, events and celebrations this year.

Looking back at my diary I can see that I had 101 Mayoral invitations and over the year was able to attend 97.

There have been many highlights to my year from my first engagement at the opening of the canal side Play Barge area to one of the latest, the 100th birthday of Terry Halstead, son of Todmorden and probably Britain's oldest, active bell ringer.

I have enjoyed outstanding theatrical and musical entertainment; I have had the pleasure of visiting our schools who have been instrumental in helping us deliver some fantastic new festive lights for the town in 2021.

I have been to two 100th birthday celebrations, enjoyed a karaoke session with the Nightlife group, stood with our service people and their families on Remembrance Sunday and alongside women of the town on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

I've helped to celebrate the victories and landmark events of community groups, I've seen our voluntary organisations and citizens rally round to provide services and funds for those in need of support within our town and beyond, most recently the incredible efforts made in aid of the people of Ukraine.

I've judged competitions, I've started races, I've even tried my hand at crown green bowling and attended some incredibly well organised and enjoyable community events from fun days to climate summits. I have even been photographed on a skateboard!!!

As Mayor, I have also been able to see some major projects come to fruition most notably Todmorden Town Council's Wheelspark which came about with the help of the Town Deal's Accelerator Fund and also the redevelopment of Patmos Gardens, a Town Council funded project. I have also seen Tod College, where the Town Council Officer's are based, burst back to life under the stewardship of a dedicated group of volunteers and staff.

It has been a most varied year and at every engagement I have been made to feel welcome and supported and for that I am so grateful.

I am also grateful to those that have helped me in my role as Mayor over the last 12 months.

My Deputy Mayor, Cllr Denis Skelton, and all members of the Council. It has been a pleasure to work with all of them and I have valued their friendship, counsel and support.

The Reverend John Jukes, who every year allows us to use St Mary's Church for our Town Carols.

The Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Climate Officer and particularly my Mayoral Officer, Nicola Pugh who has just done an incredible job in supporting me in so many ways. All of our Officers work hard behind the scenes to keep us all on track and help the Town Council to keep on delivering.

Last, but by no means least, a big "thank you" to my chosen charity, Slow the Flow. They do such vital work, and it has been my honour to support them this year.

Finally may I extend my best wishes to the Mayor Elect, Cllr Liz Thorpe. I wish her and her Consort Paul Thorpe a successful and enjoyable year ahead in this most extraordinary honour of being the Mayor of Todmorden.

Cllr. Denis Skelton – Chair of Resources Committee and Leader of Todmorden Town Council.

1. Number of Resources Committee Meetings

1.1 There were 7 meeting of Resources Committee between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022.

2. Number of Grants Awarded

2.1 There were 12 grants awarded under our discretionary grants award scheme to local groups and organisations totalling £27,515 with 1 application refused.

2.2 In addition grant awards were made to the Todmorden Information Centre of £23,536 to help with core funding provision, and to the Police Commissioner of £35,808 in respect of an additional 2 PCSO's (50/50 funded)

3. Projects Delivery

3.1 As the Council with Todmorden, moved out of lockdown, 2021/2022 saw a gradual return to normal business and a year of delivery of major projects on the ground.

3.2 The successful funding bids made in 2020/21 for financial assistance from the “Accelerator Fund” as part of the initial Town Deal Funding, resulted in the opportunity to deliver one of the Town Councils long outstanding ambitions, a Wheelspark, that has been so well received by the towns youngsters and indeed, many older participants.

3.3 A difficult and complex project to make happen, the Resources Committee worked closely with the Town Clerk to ensure that it was delivered on time and within the overall £250,000 budget set aside for this project

3.4 As part of the Accelerator Funding we also completed the Festive Lights Scheme with 8 stunning children’s displays lighting paced along the Bramsche Car Park side of the Market Hall over Christmas.

3.5 Continuing the theme of the Town Councils involvement with the Town Deal Fund, the Town Council took on the challenging responsibility of becoming Sponsor to the Centre Vale Park projects to enable the renovation of the Bandstand, a Bowling Association Pavilion extension, a new Tennis Court and refurbishment of existing courts, a new Multi Use Games Area and refurbishment of the Conservatory and energy/environmental improvements to Fielden Hall, all to move forward.

3.6 The Town Council is currently working with volunteers from these groups to help achieve in the first place, an approved Treasury Business Case by the first week in August 2022 that, once approved, will then release further funds to take the projects to the next stages of delivery,

3.7 Once approved, Todmorden Town Council will work with the groups where needed, to attract external grant funds and assuming successful in this, to then oversee and project manage construction pending then on completion, each group assuming operational and financial responsibility for ongoing delivery.

3.8 This is a very substantial commitment with the Town Council having allocated £10,000 by way of contribution to fund dedicated officer time to achieve this Business Case stage. It will then decide how best to resource the project delivery stage.

3.9 All Centre Vale Projects will enhance the Parks overall offer and the Town Council is pleased to enable this to happen, all for the benefit Todmorden residents.

3.10 Continuing the theme of externally funded projects, the Resources Committee agreed to a very late bid in early March 2022 to be made for funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities Welcome Back Fund.

3.11 A successful bid for circa £29,000 was made which saw delivered by the end of March 2022, some 32 new benches, 8 Town Centre and 8 Lever Street area planters, wall top seating on the canalside at Lever Street Car Park, two picnic tables at Patmos Gardens and 5 Gazebos that in due course that will help the Town Council to assist groups.

3.12 During this year, we also took the opportunity to deliver improvements to Patmos Gardens, including a new lighting scheme and new pathways. This lovely area that is so well used, is a focal point in the town centre and as other parts of Todmorden will start to benefit from Town Deals Funding, we wanted this to also to reflect our pride in Todmorden.

4. Governance, Finance and Transparency

4.1 The Councils financial position continues to be considered at every meeting of the Resources Committee, together with the forecast end of year position in order for Members to prudently manage additional spend requests to the budget as set out at year start

4.2 Financial provision has been made to enable some improvement works to be carried out at Lobb Mill and for renovation/upgrading of other benches. Both of these projects had to be held back as other time critical opportunities arose during the year but will now be progressed in 2022/23.

4.3 Governance and Financial Management remains strong with all policy documents reviewed in year with both subject to both internal and external audit scrutiny as part of in year and end of year processes.

4.4 As can be seen from the financial report accompanying this overall annual report, the Town Councils financial position remains robust to deal with its known commitments

4.5 All financial reports together with minutes of decision making and details of all payments made are available to view on the Town Councils website as are all statutory returns

5. Enabling others

5.1 In addition to awarding of grants and taking on the role of sponsor for the Centre Vale Projects we have also helped Walsden Cricket Club take forward their ambitions, by granting a new lease to them over the Cricket Ground.

Cllr. Steve Martin – Chair of Development Committee

Before outlining the work of the Development Committee, I wish to acknowledge the contribution made and the outstanding commitment to the work of this Committee that our friend and councillor colleague Christine Potter, made prior to her recent passing.

1. Number of Development Committee Meetings

1.1 There were thirteen meetings of the Development Committee between April 2021 and 31st March 2022.

2. Number of Planning Applications Consulted on

2.1 The Development Committee was consulted by Calderdale MBC on 112 planning applications during the year.

3. Participation in Other Consultations

3.1 As well as being consulted on planning applications, the Development Committee has been consulted on the following:

- The A646 corridor improvements
- The naming of the new housing at the old MG caravan site on Burnley Rd
- The siting of a mobile mast at Robinwood Countrystores
- The position of additional cycle storage points in Todmorden

4. Number of new Issues on the Development Register

4.1 The Development Committee dealt with 106 enquiries from Councillors and residents affecting Todmorden, enabling either information and or resolutions to be delivered. These included, for example:

- blocked drains
- speeding on local roads
- flooding
- blocked rights of way
- damaged walkways
- road gridlock due to roadworks
- problems with waste collection
- problems with dog and cat fouling
- fly tipping.
- school bus services
- changes to shop premises in the Conservation area where no planning permission has been given
- the proposed removal of large areas of trees in Portsmouth
- street cleaning
- broken facilities at Centre Vale park
- sheep grazing on main road
- overgrown trees/ unauthorised felling of trees
- use of volunteers
- use of brownfield sites rather than greenfield

5. Presentations Received

5.1 The Development Committee has received presentations during the year on a variety of issues including from:

- Yorkshire Water (following the serious water outage in August 2021),
- Quickline Broadband/CMBC concerning the work they are doing to upgrade broadband speeds in the area,
- Suggested canalside improvements at the Lever St carpark
- The new Upper Valley Coordinator, Catherine Bann

6. The Neighbourhood Plan

6.1 Work has been continuing on the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan for Todmorden will be consistent with but separate to the Calderdale Local Plan which is due to be completed later this year/early next year.

6.3 This work started in 2015 and has had to be revisited to include greater focus on issues such as the climate emergency, the need for affordable and sustainable housing and employment in Todmorden and alignment with Town Deal Fund ambitions.

6.4 A considerable amount of work has also been carried out to identify those properties in Todmorden that are not listed, but that are of value to Todmorden because of their history, location, type and or nature of the building.

6.5 Separately, a list of 'green' sites is being developed so that green sites as well as important properties in Todmorden can be included in the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that additional consideration will be given to them if planning applications are received.

6.6 As part of Green sites consideration, the Town Council wrote in detail to the Planning Inspector objecting to the allocation of housing development by Calderdale MBC for Denis's Field site .

6.7 There is further work needed to revisit the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Since it was originally compiled in 2015, it is highly likely that further consultation will need to be given to check its current relevance.

6.7 The target date for completion is to submit this for approval within 6 months after the new Calderdale Local Plan is adopted.

7. Flooding

7.1 The Development Committee has been active in the issues surrounding flooding in Todmorden. It has expressed serious concerns to Calderdale MBC about certain applications for planning permission in areas susceptible to flooding as well as the need to enforce planning conditions.

7.2 The Development Committee has recognised that the issue of flooding is a complex one involving drainage capacity, old planning application approvals which potentially today would not obtain approval, topography regarding water run - off, the assessment of flood risk and the increasing need for permeable surfaces to be standard on new development.

7.3 The Town Council has not felt able to support several applications where it felt that the benefit of new housing, of course needed in Todmorden, was outweighed by building in an area susceptible to flooding where in the event of heavy rainfall, the existing drainage infrastructure from experience is likely to be overwhelmed.

7.4 Flooding is such an important issue. It has been agreed to set up a working group to deal specifically with flooding so that a clear and comprehensive understanding of the issues can be gained, and a strategic and practical plan be put into place with key stakeholders to deal with the reoccurring cycle of the cause and effect of flooding.

7.5 It is acknowledged that many organisations are involved or have an interest in flooding. The plan would need to include effective partnership and collaboration. These organisations are likely to include:

- Calderdale MBC
- The Environment Agency
- The Canal and River Trust
- Yorkshire Water
- Local organisations
- Other town councils in the Upper Calder Valley

7.6 A subgroup of the Development Committee has been working with representatives of CMBC and the Todmorden Flood Group to agree a collaborative approach and emergency plan in the event of a flood emergency.

Cllr. The Revd Graham Kent – Chair of Climate Emergency Committee

1. Number of Climate Emergency Meetings

There were five meetings of the Climate Emergency Committee between April 2021 and 31st March 2022.

2. Appointments

2.1 In July 2022 the Staffing Committee, following Full Councils decision to agree to the appointment of a Climate Officer, agreed Job Descriptions and successfully recruited a new Climate Officer on fixed terms contract basis until May 2023 to be a dedicated asset to the projects.

3. Initial projects

3.1 The Climate Emergency Committee's work has been primarily focused on the development and implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, a key task list drawn up following the town council's declaration of a climate emergency. Development of an information base and effective communications has been built up over time, with the development of the town council's Climate Emergency web feature.

3.2 Over the past year, progress has also been made with establishing links with local voluntary-based groups and organisations whose work aligns with climate change mitigation and improvement of the local environment, as well as keeping abreast of similar efforts of neighbouring local authorities. The committee is grateful for the collaboration and support from such groups and external organisations, and looks to continue promoting and supporting their work, and building upon existing relationships.

3.3 Members have shared their suggestions for implementing tasks on the points of the action plan. Actions taken forward have included liaising with local groups and representatives to seek expert advice on tree planting/maintenance, seeking out various schemes for planting initiatives, consulting CMBC regarding increasing recycling and making decisions going forward based on the outcomes of the above.

3.4 As a means of ensuring public engagement with efforts to tackle climate change, the committee has made strides with the development of the Climate Emergency Pledge. After much careful consideration and revision, the pledge has been successfully developed and made available both in paper form and online, for anyone who wishes to take part in this green initiative.

4. Marketing

4.1 To ensure as many people as possible know about the work of Todmorden Town Council's Climate Committee to date, funding opportunities for small scale climate projects, and how to get involved in local climate efforts, including pledge participation, arrangements are under way for promotional market day events at Todmorden Market, with the designing and ordering of promotional materials in the form of stall banners, pens, stickers and leaflets.

5. Participation in Other Consultations/ Funding Applications

In January, a joint application was put forward by Todmorden Town Council and Hebden Royd Town Council in a bid to gain training being offered by the Local Climate Engagement Programme – a new training and support scheme that will help local authorities deliver high quality public engagement projects on climate change and to enable more effective ways to achieving net-zero targets. Despite the highly

competitive nature of the application process (as there was 75 local authorities applying for it) our application was successful.

Talks have already commenced between the councils, mainly to discuss shared project ideas as an outcome of the training provided. Decisions arising from this will be based on where our town council's action plans overlap and what issues are relevant to both communities. Both councils are very much looking forward to getting started on the training programme and working together to achieve shared objectives.

Collective action is imperative for tackling climate change issues. This necessity is reflected in the Climate Emergency Committee's approach to formulating and implementing climate action at local level, through a consistent consideration of the needs of the local community.

Clr Mary Carrigan – Chair of Staffing Committee

1. Number of Staffing Committee Meetings

1.1 This Committee convenes on an as and when needed basis.

1.2 During this year it met on two occasions in July and September on both occasions to consider staff recruitment Issues

2 Appointments

2.1 In July 2022 the Staffing Committee, following Full Councils decision to agree to the appointment of a Climate Officer, agreed Job Descriptions and successfully recruited a new Climate Officer on fixed terms contract basis until May 2023.

2.2 Following the decision of the then Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to retire, recruitment commenced initially in July but was initially unsuccessful. With the agreement of the then Town Clerk/RFO to remain in post until a successful recruitment could be achieved.

2.3 Following the need to re-evaluate the role in September 2022 against others being advertised, a successful recruitment of this key post took place in October 2022, with the successful candidate starting the role at the end of February 2022.

2.4 To aid an effective handover and provide some initial continuity, the previous Town Clerk has agreed to stay initially until the end of May 2022 to help with handover, accounting year end, delivery of some outstanding projects and lead officer for the Town Council in its role as Sponsor of the Centre Vale Park Projects, continuing this specific role on a needs only basis until August 2022

3 Policy Work

3.1 The volume of work necessary for the small office team to deliver what has been delivered, has meant that staffing policy reviews as intended, did not take place. These will be reviewed this year.

3.2 Staffing appraisals were last completed formally in October 2021 following also a review held as part of a re-evaluation of job roles. Given the recent appointment of the Town Clerk /RFO future appraisals will be carried out annually in February.