



Todmorden Town Council Annual Report April 2023 To March 2024

Cllr Tyler Hanley, Mayor's Report

I would like to place on record my thanks first and foremost to Anna, the Mayoress, without whose love, understanding and steadfastness I could not have fulfilled my role.

The support provided by our indefatigable Officers ensures that the mayoralty continues to run professionally and efficiently, in the chamber and in the wider community. They are exemplary, and they all deservedly have my gratitude.

My elected council colleagues have been willing to share their wisdom, advice and guidance throughout my year, and have always been forthright in doing so. They placed their faith in me to be their Chair at Full Council and to be Todmorden's principal ambassador, for which I hope I have duly repaid them. Our Councillors are hard-working, civic-minded leaders that have the best interests of the town at heart. My Deputy, Cllr Press, has willingly obliged to step into several engagements in my absence, and I am grateful for her service.

Equally deserving of thanks are my family and friends, who after handling so well the shock of finding out that I had become Mayor, quickly became accustomed to and highly supportive of my new responsibilities.

Since May 2023, I have chaired ten Full Council meetings (including one extraordinary session), which have considered a breadth of issues pertinent to the town in an invariably judicious and courteous fashion. Councillors have deliberated on, although not exclusively, Town Deal plans, flooding, bus services and community awards, regularly with members of the public in attendance.

Beyond the formality of the chamber, as of today I have attended 84 engagements.

My mayoral term opened with the celebration of Todmorden Information Centre's 35th anniversary, which doubled as an opportunity to acquaint (or reacquaint) myself with many people active within our community. As summer awakened, I participated in the seasonal rites of the town's calendar, including the Carnival and, later, the pastoral Country Fair. As the months passed by, I began to collaborate more closely with EMpowered People, who I chose to sponsor as my mayoral charity. Their work in enabling people living with disabilities into cycling is admirable and quite unique. But they are far more than the sum of their parts; they can be rightfully characterised as community spirit in microcosm. In July, they facilitated the Mayor's Summer Garden Party, which raised funds for their charity and heightened positively the profile of both them and the mayoralty. Furthermore, the summer months saw our first invitations to Todmorden Orchestra's recitals, performances from

Music for the Many and shows at the Hippodrome, each of them a beloved institution in our town's cultural life. The warmer season closed with what must be the highlight of any municipal calendar: that is, the official grand opening of a new toilet, albeit one that is ultra-accessible and situated centrally in the Tod College building.

Throughout autumn, the mayoral diary became increasingly busy. I was given the honour of unveiling a Blue Plaque dedicated to the people who had lived and worked at Stansfield View Hospital; a particularly poignant moment, as among them include members of my own immediate family. At another moving ceremony, on Remembrance Sunday I paid respect, on behalf of our town, to the memories of those affected by the horrors of war. As an aside, both these events, I feel, demonstrated the totemic power and validation that the mayoralty ought to bring to moments of collective solemnity. The position is one that can be looked to for inspiration. It was in a not too dissimilar vein, then, that I addressed Todmorden High School's leavers' assembly and awards presentation. In doing so, I sought to present myself, without vanity, as an example that stereotypes of age and appearance are in fact quite brittle. My message to them was to embrace their uniqueness and to find their own voice, and that if a door opens, to walk through it. I later drew inspiration for myself from the women's network, the Lionesses of the Valley. Having met them towards the end of 2023, I was left in no doubt that their group was a model of solidarity and cooperation that could be emulated by others to the benefit of the town. October, November and December were, inevitably, incessant, as Todmorden came alive for the festive period. My frequent duties during this time culminated in the traditional Christmas Eve service at St Mary's Church. I was joined by so many people who had come together to share in yuletide magic, and I was glad to offer to a packed-out hall my own words of love and gratitude.

Prior to the New Year, I had approached members of our Mosque to introduce myself as Mayor. I was delighted, then, when they proposed a visit in January after Friday prayers, which I accepted and accordingly met with their Imam, president and elders. Our Muslim community is long-standing and its contribution to the life of our town enriches us all. That was evident later at the community Iftar, where we gathered to share in our neighbour's faith and fasting. I have welcomed St Mary's new vicar, Dr Catherine Shelley, whose interest in environmental activism will undoubtedly be an asset we come to value, and I also accompanied St Joseph's Catholic church along the Easter Walk of Witness. Recently, in a more secular fashion, I opened the Harriers' Red Hot Toddy race, and alongside Anna proceeded to run the route. Together, we raised £710 in donations for the food bank and café facilities at the Cornholme Old Library.

The entire length of the mayoral term has been permeated by countless civic services in towns across our region, including the spectacular Yorkshire Day. And, of course, the aforementioned engagements are merely a small selection of all those that I have attended so far. The year is not over yet.

However, when the time comes, I will leave having done all that I can in the service of Todmorden, and although met with challenges, nevertheless content to stand by my record. I will hand over the chains to a new Mayor, safe in the knowledge that they will become an integral part of the life of a town like no other, unrivalled in its kindness and creativity. I wish my successor only the very best for their coming year.

In preparing this annual report, I am reminded of the dedication to our community of so many people in our town. Love and pride abound. I will be eternally grateful to everyone that has welcomed me into their lives.

Let us celebrate who we are and look to the future with optimism.

Resources Committee

Cllr. Denis Skelton, Chair of the Resources Committee & Co -Leader of Todmorden Town Council

1. Number of Resources Committee Meetings

There were 6 meeting of Resources Committee between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

2. Number of Grants Awarded

There were 26 grants awarded under our discretionary grants award scheme, to local groups and organisations totalling £88,755.47. These grants include awards made to the Todmorden Information Centre of £9,032 to help with core funding provision, and to the Police Commissioner of £39,732.00 in respect of an additional 2 PCSO's (50/50 funded) and £1,500 to CROWs.

3. Projects Delivery

3.1 As the Council and Todmorden has returned to normal business we have had a year of delivery of major projects on the ground.

3.2 The successful funding bid made in 2023/24 for financial assistance from Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Charity – The Abraham Ormerod Fund - allowed Todmorden Town Council to install 7 defibrillators throughout the town.

3.3 The Town Council has continued with the challenging responsibility of acting as Sponsor to the Town Deal Centre Vale Park projects. In this role the Council is working to enable the renovation of the Bandstand, a rebuild of the Bowling Pavilion, the refurbishment of the Tennis courts, and the creation of a new Multi Use Games Area.

3.4 The Town Council is working with volunteers from a range of groups to help these Town Deal projects in the park come to fruition. As needed the Council has been working with the groups to to attract external grant funds, to then oversee and project manage construction and then, on completion, to support each group in assuming operational and financial responsibility for ongoing delivery.

4. Governance, Finance and Transparency

4.1 The Councils financial position continues to be considered at every meeting of the Resources Committee, together with reviews of the forecast end of year position so that Members can 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 the renovation/upgrading of benches around the town. Both of these projects had to be held back as other time critical project opportunities arose during the year, however they will now be progressed in 2024/25.

4.3 Governance and Financial Management remains strong. All policy documents were reviewed in civic year and our governance and financial management will have been 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 Council's financial position remains robust and able to deal with its known commitments.

4.5 All financial reports, 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 several discretionary grants to enable the work of voluntary groups within the town we have continued with our work as Sponsor of the Town Deal Centre Vale park Projects.

5.2 Members have acknowledged the urgency of addressing the current cost of living crisis. Work has been undertaken to develop signposting information on the Council website, aiming to guide residents towards the necessary support. An email network has been established for groups and professionals aiding Todmorden residents through the Cost of Living Crisis, fostering collaboration. In 2023, two events were hosted at the Town Hall to facilitate collaboration among network members, with additional events slated for 2024/25.

6. Town Deal Sponsor – Centre Vale Park Projects

The last twelve months have seen a flurry of activity overseen by our project Manager Colin Hill. As ever, several challenges are still to be met but overall, we are on track with most projects. The Bandstand and Bowling Pavilion are now at the stage of design approval to submit for planning permission and Architects are starting to prepare tenders for actual construction.

Whilst funding is in place with the award of a National Heritage Lottery Fund Grant, we are still waiting on the outcome of a bid for £250k made to the Community Ownership Fund in respect of the Bowling Pavilion.

These are our two priority projects. If all goes to plan work will start late Sept 2024 on both projects with a completion date for March 2025. Permissions including those from the Environment Agency are outside of our control, but as we report, we believe these will be forthcoming.

Refurbishment of the three Tennis Courts has started. Our ambition is to introduce floodlighting to enable more use.

Feasibility Studies for the new Multi Use Games Area are under way. This is as part of a wider Calderdale MBC initiative with the Football Foundation. If successful, then with Football Foundation Grant support and a contribution from the Town Deal Fund, this scheme will be fully funded and potentially delivered Autumn 2025.

The Energy Refit for Fielden Hall requires additional funding and a bid for £250k has also been made to the Community Ownership Fund for this project – outcome unknown at time of writing.

In priority terms, the last of the projects to be considered is that relating to the War Memorial Garden. This will be revisited once a clearer picture as to overall funding availability is known.

In tandem with the actual physical projects themselves, the Town Council has been actively working with end user groups for the future running of the facilities as well as resolving several issues regarding land ownership of the Bandstand and Bowling Pavilion, which will eventually be held under lease.

Finally to round off a busy year, the Town Council has launched a specific section on its website to provide historical and up to date information as to how these projects are progressing – [Centre Vale Park Projects \(todtccentrevaleparkprojects.org.uk\)](http://todtccentrevaleparkprojects.org.uk)

Development Committee

Cllr. Steve Martin, Chair of the Development Committee

1. Number of Development Committee Meetings

1.1 There were thirteen meetings of the Development Committee between 1 April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

2. Number of Planning Applications Consulted on

2.1 The Development Committee was consulted by Calderdale MBC on 82 planning applications during the year (plus those from the 27/3 DC meeting).

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 Kilnhurst Weir Engagement
- Mass Transit in West Yorkshire
- Review of parking charges for car parks that are currently free
- Calderdale Placemaking & Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- Calderdale Flood Risk and Drainage Supplementary Planning Document

4. Number of new Issues on the Development Register

4.1 The Development Committee dealt with 86 new enquiries relating to Todmorden (plus those received until the end of March 2024) from Councillors and residents. Some of these issues were also subsequently dealt with at Development Committee meetings.

Issues included, for example:

- Blocked drains
- Unauthorised building
- Tidiness and general condition of Cornholme and Portsmouth
- Speeding on local roads
- Livestock on the A646 in Portsmouth
- Flooding
- Blocked rights of way
- Problems with waste and recycling collection, especially in rural areas

- Fly tipping
- The burning of waste
- Non-collection of waste and recycling
- Condition of Todmorden Leisure Centre
- Condition of outdoor gym at Centre Vale Park
- Planning enforcement issues, especially in the Todmorden Conservation area
- Highway issues
- Closure of Tipside bridge
- Poor drainage on London Rd
- Unauthorised sign on Centenary Way
- Flooding issue below Lumbutts Rd
- Problems with the supply of recycling containers
- Investigating the ownership of land – possibility of its use as a community garden
- Issues with the new bus timetable causing issues for those attending school, work appointments
- Changes to shop premises in the Conservation area where no planning permission has been given.
- Issues arising from the A646 Corridor Improvement works
- The condition of Todmorden Bus Station, including the amount of rubbish
- Debris in Rochdale Canal weir in Walsden
- Rat sightings
- Dog fouling
- Slippery flagstones
- Collapsed walls in public areas
- Spread of Himalayan Balsam in Todmorden area
- Damage to road and drains because of work at Victoria Rd building site
- Condition of road and signage, for example at Stansfield Hall Rd
- Damage to Stoodley Glen Canal Bridge and requirement for better signage
- Graffiti, especially on Network Rail and Northern Powergrid property. Liaison to possibly create community art project on Hallroyd Rd Bridge
- Collapse of road and wall near Calder River at Lobb Mill
- Instability of houses on Halifax Rd
- Traffic issues in Cornholme, Portsmouth and Walsden
- Concern about potential flooding issues on Halifax Rd and Derdale St
- Liaison with Yorkshire Water and Calderdale Council about fresh water and sewage leaks on Stansfield Hall Rd and the Hollins
- Liaison with First Bus West Yorkshire concerning issues with the new bus timetable
- Proposed windfarm Walshaw Moor Estate
- Anti-social behaviour and the provision of activities for young people in Todmorden

5. Presentations Received

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

- Presentation by Ms Lauren Spensley, Calderdale Council Planning Officer and Ms Kate Peach, Calderdale Council Principal Conservation Officer
- Presentation by Ms Sarah Robinson and Ms K Foster from Yorkshire Water on 28 February 2024

6. The Neighbourhood Plan

6.1 A substantial amount of work has been continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide.

6.2 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 the alignment with Town Deal Fund ambitions. It was also thought to be prudent to delay the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan until the Local Plan was finalized which was in 2023. The Todmorden Parish designation was originally gained in 2017 and it was restated in 2022.

6.3 A series of committee meetings and public consultation days were held in 2023. Then a consultation on the draft plan took place from 21 September to 2 November 2023 (Regulation 14) which was submitted to Calderdale Council on 31 January 2024. Calderdale Council is currently in the process of the Section 16 Regulation consultation where the public are invited to comment on the draft. Further stages in the adoption process include submitting the Neighbourhood Plan to a public referendum. Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will be in place until 2032 with 5-yearly reviews.

7. Flooding Emergency Planning

7.1 The TTC Emergency Plan has been reviewed with the Todmorden Flood Group, the Calderdale Neighbourhood Coordinator, CAFM, the Town Hall Centre Manager and Calderdale Emergency Planning.

Climate Emergency Committee

Cllr Jane Williams, Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee

1. Number of Climate Emergency Meetings

There were 4 meetings of the Climate Emergency Committee between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

2. Initial projects

2.1 The Climate Emergency Committee's work has been primarily focused on the development and implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Climate Pledge.

2.2 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.

2.3 Members ran a very successful tree initiative called 'My Tree Promise' for the second year running which saw 100 trees, with a pot and compost given to residents within Todmorden and has agreed to continue to run this as an annual initiative.

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

3. Marketing

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, and the committee ran 2 promotional market day events at Todmorden Market, with promotional materials in the form of stall banners, pens, stickers and leaflets.

Staffing Committee

Cllr Mary Carrigan, Chair of the Staffing Committee and Co-Leader of Todmorden Town Council

1. Number of Staffing Committee Meetings

This Committee convenes on an 'as and when needed' basis. During this year it met on one occasion to consider staffing and related issues that have arisen.

2 Appointments

The Town Council has not needed to recruit any additional staff this year but this is constantly being reviewed.

3 Policy Work

3.1 Due to the workload handled by the small office team, staffing policy reviews, which were planned, were not conducted as intended. These reviews will now be reassessed in 2024/25.

3.2 Formal staffing appraisals were last conducted in September/October 2023, coinciding with a review of job roles. All staff received highly positive appraisals.