

Trellech United Community Council (TUCC) Annual Report 2024-25



It is a pleasure to present Trellech United Community Council's Annual Report which aims to give a taste of the work of the TUCC Community Council during 2024/25 and our commitment to work together with the community and partner stakeholders to achieve this.

We hope you enjoy reading the report and find it useful.

Cllr. Rosemary Decker-Thomas, Chair, on behalf of the TUCC Community Council

1. Community Council Background

Community and town councils are the grassroots level of local government in Wales, with statutory powers to influence decisions on behalf of the people in the community ward that they represent.

Community Councils provide a voice for the Community in decision making within the County Council and are often consulted. They can provide residents with help and information about how to access services, provide feedback and raise concerns with the County Council. For this reason, they are a vital part of any community. Their work falls into these main categories:

- representing the local community
- helping to deliver services to meet local needs
- striving to improve quality of life in the Community
- liaising with the County Council to ensure that local concerns/needs are understood

The most common topics that they get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, helping local groups, managing open spaces, providing grants to support the work of local groups and village halls and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities.

The work of the Community councils is paid for through a precept, which is an element of the council tax paid by all residents. Each householder, through their council tax contributes to the running of the TUCC and is shown separately in your Council Tax statement. The precept is set annually and presented to Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) in January for the following financial year who collect it on our behalf.

The process of deciding on the level of precept includes the preparation of a draft budget, by considering the likely costs, plans for any projects, and setting the amount for contributions - within the guidelines published annually - and any other financial matters. Consideration is also given to the reserves held by TUCC to ensure an appropriate precept is set.

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2. Community Councillors

Trellech United Community Council is made up of 14 Councillors, representing the seven wards of Trellech Town, Penallt, The Narth, Catbrook, Llanishen, Trellech Grange and Whitebrook.

We work closely with Monmouthshire County Councillors, Jayne McKenna and Richard John, who attend our meetings to discuss local issues.

Eleven councillors have been elected or co-opted on to Trellech United Community Council. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected at the annual meeting in May. Cllr. Rosemary Decker-Thomas was the Chair of the Council in 2024/25 and Cllr. Leanne Wakerley the Vice Chair.

As at the end of the 2024/5 Financial Year the other members were Cllr. David May, Cllr. Nikki Scarr, Cllr. Stuart Geddes, Cllr. George Weston, Cllr Sallie Roderick, Cllr Ed Webb, Cllr Kate Darlow, Cllr Alan Poulter and Cllr Peter Ash.

We carried Cllr vacancies for The Narth and Catbrook Wards into the 2025/26 financial year and would welcome recruiting more Community Councillors.

More information about your Community Councillors and their contact details can be found on the TUCC website at <https://trellechunited-cc.gov.uk>.

3. Staff

The Council has two part-time members of staff, Sue Baker, FCCA ILCA, who is the Clerk and Hayley Rouse who is the Financial Officer (RFO). The Clerk and RFO may be contacted by e-mail or phone as below. A separate Staffing Committee is in place for staffing matters.

admin@trellechunited-cc.gov.uk or phone. 07895449756

finance@trellechunited-cc.gov.uk or phone 07594 515 701

4. Meetings & Website Information

Normal meetings of the Council are held monthly on the third Monday evening of the month and considers planning applications, grants to local groups and any other matters referred to it by local residents, Monmouthshire County Council and by other statutory bodies. All meetings are open to the public and there is a forum where members of the public can raise concerns and ask questions about agenda items. As per the Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021, TUCC holds multi-location meetings - namely face-to-face meetings at Pelham Hall and remotely via 'zoom' and are in English.

Information about TUCC including the agenda for meetings, policies and news is available on the Community Council's website www.trellechunited-cc.gov.uk.

The Community Council has adopted a member's code of conduct and a register of interests is kept for each member. Each councillor has to declare any interest they have in items to be discussed at the start of each meeting and these are noted in the minutes.

To support the Council, specific working groups which have been established to focus on items such as Staffing, Rights of Way and Finance.

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5. External Memberships

TUCC benefits from being a member of One Voice Wales, which is the main representative body for community and town councils in Wales and provides legal advice, training, and professional advice.

The Clerk and RFO are members of the "Society of Local Council Clerks" SLCC, which is a source of information and good practice in the sector, and which also offers training courses and conferences.

TUCC also elects members to other local external bodies, as detailed below.

- Wye Valley Villages Delivery Group- TUCC has two representatives on the Wye Valley Villages Delivery Group which looks at common issues across different local Community Councils including rights of way, local services and environmental concerns.
- Llanishen Village Hall and Pelham Village Hall, Catbrook Educational Trust and the Trellech School Governing Body.

6. Legislation and Policy

As set out through relevant legislation and rules, TUCC have the following:

A Training Plan is in place for staff and Councillors and is regularly reviewed. One Voice Wales and SLCC provide opportunities for training and advice on specific issues.

The Community Council publishes an Annual Report which includes a Forward Plan.

A Biodiversity Report will be published in 2025/26 on the Biodiversity Duty and Ecosystem Resilience in response to the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1- Section 6.

We held our Annual General Meeting in May 2024 to elect officers, review policies, risk assessments, working groups and asset registers.

7. Audit and Accounts

TUCC is audited by internal and external auditors annually. The internal audit is undertaken by Microshade and External Audit by the Wales Audit Office. In addition, a Finance Working Group is in place to provide additional scrutiny and support for financial matters. Key finance and accounting documents are available to view on the TUCC website under 'Finances'.

Results of Internal and External Audit of the Community Council

An internal audit of TUCC for the financial year 2023/4 resulted in a positive outcome. Audit Opinion: "Assurance can be declared in the governance arrangements and accounting statements of TUCC for the financial year 2023/4 based on the tests carried out." The relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been satisfied. The result of External Audits of Accounts 2023-24 confirmed that the audit of accounts by the Welsh Audit Office had been completed successfully with an unqualified result.

8. Finances

TUCC sets a budget annually and monitors expenditure against the budget throughout the financial year by receiving a regular report from the RFO.

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- The level of precept for 2024/25 was £46,384.
- A total of £33,925 was spent during the year, with a further £8,450 carried into the next financial year for outstanding known costs from 2024-2025.
- TUCC reclaims the VAT paid for goods and services during the year and £710 was repaid for 2024/25.

Summary of Income and Expenditure 2024/25:

	Budget	Actual
Administration	£18,969.81	£20,547.81
Land Management	£4,784.44	£3,233.30
Community Facilities	£16,680.00	£9,243.90
Charities & CAB	£5,950.00	£900.00
	£46,384.25	£33,925.01

9. Achievements 2024/5

TUCC supports the local community by providing grants for projects and facilities in the TUCC area each year and these are set out below for the Financial Year 2024/5 that were approved in the budget.

Decision under Power S145 towards running costs of the local Village Halls: running costs include utilities, broadband, insurance etc.	
Pelham Hall	£500
Whitebrook Hall	£500
Llanishen Hall	£500
Catbrook Hall	£500
The Narth Hall	£500

General Power s137 LGA 1972 Grants for local projects approved in 2024/5

Life of Manor Wood Project	Arts in the Woods, book and launch events	£724.22
Pelham Hall	Carpets	£2,077.27
Manor Wood	Tree Walk	£40.00
The Narth Village Hall	Replacement Garage Door	£1,000.00
1 st Wye Valley Brownies	Running costs for a local group in the Narth	£495.00
Trellech School	Bike Shelter	£1380
Pelham Hall	External Secure Storage Container	£740.17
Whitebrook Village Hall	Improvements to outside space	£3,000

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Decision under Power S137-for Charitable Donations 2024/5	
Severn Area Rescue Association	£300
Friends of the River Wye	£300
St David's Hospice Care	£300
Wales Air Ambulance-£300	£300
Welsh Women's Aid-Monmouth Refuge-	£300
Decision under LGA 1972 section 144 power to support Citizens Advice	
Citizens Advice Monmouthshire-provision of services for free advice to residents within our Wards.	£2,750

Defibrillators 2024/5

TUCC manages 7 defibrillators across the ward, which are all visible for use on the national defibrillator portal The Circuit. This work involves regular checks to ensure that defibrillators are in good condition and are available for use, as well as ensuring that pads and batteries are replaced as necessary.

Defibrillators are available in

- Catbrook – Village Hall
- Penallt – Village Hall
- Penallt – former phone box
- Whitebrook – New Mills – former phone box
- Trellech – Babington Centre
- Llanishen – Village Hall
- The Narth Village Hall

Babington Meadow (Penallt Recreation Ground) Charitable Organisation 2024/5

TUCC are the Trustees of the Charity that fund the maintenance of Babington Meadow and playpark and complete the Charity Commission returns. A refresh of the Charity is planned for 2025/6.

Decision under Power S137 for Charitable Expenditure	
Penallt Recreation Ground (Babington Meadow) 2024/5 payment	£1,376

Land Holdings and Playparks and Dog Waste Bins 2024/5

TUCC has responsibility for several pieces of land across the Wards and we work in partnership with local volunteers and MCC for grass cutting, tree management and bio-diversity management of these. We promote and consider sustainability and biodiversity in our approach to our work and through our partners. We have made a commitment to carry out appropriate remedial tree works in the area in 2025/6 following the MCC Tree Survey.

Grass Cutting is managed and funded by TUCC in the following areas:

Pen Y Fan Green
 Catbrook Village Green
 Broadstone play Park
 Llanishen Village Green
 Babington Meadow

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Playparks

We manage two playparks in Penallt and Broadstone and undertake annual playpark inspections to ensure the safety and enjoyment for users. We plan to refurbish the Broadstone playpark in 2025/6.

We provide 13 local dog waste bins across the Ward to ensure our green spaces are able to be enjoyed by all and fund the regular collection of waste. We are also part of a wider Monmouthshire County Council Group that focuses on dog fouling issues.

10. Consultations and Stakeholders

Planning 2024/5

TUCC was consulted on 44 planning applications by Monmouthshire County Council across the different TUCC wards by the MCC Planning Department and provided feedback on all of these, taking into account local issues of surface flooding, light pollution, foul sewage, residential amenity, biodiversity, Wye Valley National landscape/Sites of Scientific interest/conservation areas, impact on character of landscape and road safety.

TUCC worked with MCC directly and with our MCC County Councillors in raising concerns around the following:

- Rights of Way issues, blocked paths, maintenance of rights of way for residential access, footpath orders and definitive map changes. Extensive input and discussion with external agencies regarding unclassified roads in the area and the usage of them by off road motorbikes. A new rights of way working group has been set up in 2024/5 to focus on highlighting concerns to the relevant authorities, collating all the issues raised by residents and identifying actions that can be taken.
- We liaised with Devauden Festival and MCC licensing over the management of the Festival raising concerns from residents on traffic, noise and wildlife.
- Sewerage 101 application in Trellech (also including Welsh Water and NRW)
- Local flooding issues and blocked drains
- Local ongoing planning enforcement issues raised by local residents.
- Trellech School Nursery Building
- Repairing the Speed Indicator Signs in Llanishen.

TUCC also work with MCC Planning Enforcement, local footpath groups, Village Halls and other voluntary organisations in supporting local services or raising local concerns. We received presentations from

- Friends of 65 bus
- Local footpath groups
- Community police officer
- GAVO Community Spaces Outreach Officer.

11. Forward Community Plan

To publish a bio-diversity report and action plan

To undertake Tree Surveys on Land Holdings and develop a forward plan of works

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To refresh the Babington Meadow (Penallt Recreation Ground) Charity

To refurbish the Broadstone Playpark

To engage further with stakeholders on rights of way issues, including the local volunteer footpath groups.

To continue to engage with local Village Halls in the delivery of local services.

To continue to engage with MCC on planning matters.

12. Thanks

TUCC would like to say a big thank you to all the partners, associations and individuals who have assisted with the work done during the year. Many of our achievements would not have been possible without this support. Thanks also to Community Councillors, County Councillors, MCC and the many volunteer groups in the community who are actively involved in the Community.