



Annual Report for Hay Town Council 2025–26

WELCOME FROM CHAIRPERSON

We have had a very busy year this year, this report outlines the work we have undertaken during the 2025–2026 financial year and demonstrates how the Council has continued to serve the residents of Hay-on-Wye.

The Council has maintained its focus on managing community assets, supporting local initiatives, and meeting its statutory responsibilities. Despite financial pressures, we have continued to deliver services efficiently and transparently.

I would like to thank Councillors, staff, and community partners for their continued support. Unfortunately for a variety of reasons, we have 2 vacancies on the council at present, if you would like any information or to join us please contact the clerk.

Cllr Fiona Howard

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Welcome from Chairperson .	1
Context.....	2
Key achievements.....	2
Events Report.....	3
Meet the Councillors	3
Estates Report	5
Premises Report	7
Committees.....	8
Public Consultation	9
Precept & Finance.....	10
Town Enhancements	12
Looking Ahead	12
About Us.....	12

CONTEXT

During the year 2025-2026, the Council comprised of 11 councillors who were fully committed to representing the residents of Hay on Wye and providing them with services and facilities designed to enhance the social and environmental well-being of the community. The councillors who were in office during the year were as follows:

Cllr Fiona Howard, Chair

Cllr Jeff Morgan

Cllr Gethin Williams

Cllr Ken Elleson co-opted Nov 25

Cllr Alan Powell

Cllr Wendy Bielska

Cllr Alex Bielski

Cllr Burton Paul co-opted Sept 25

Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe co-opted March 26

The following Councillors resigned during the year and we thank them for all they did:

Cllr Robert Golesworthy resigned April 25

Cllr James Prothero resigned July 25

Cllr Simon Morris resigned Feb 26

Cllr Tom Owen resigned April 26

Cllr Phoebe Jenkins resigned April 26

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2025—2026

Community Spaces:

- Maintenance of green spaces and access areas
- Protection of sensitive land
- Gipsy Castle Playground
- Allotments at Warren Close
- EV Charging point

Biodiversity:

- Delivery of Section 6 Biodiversity Duty

Governance:

- Open and accessible meetings
- Clerk additional training and qualification



EVENTS

It's been another busy year for the Hay Town Council Events programme. Starting in July, Hay Town Council had another bottle stall at the Hay Summer Show. Through the generosity of local residents we had over 200 bottles and cans of all shapes and sizes donated, which could be won through a ticket draw. Everyone was a winner but it was the luck of the draw if you were happy with your prize! This helped us raise over £200 to go towards the Gypsy Castle play area.



In November we held the Hay on Wye Remembrance Parade. Due to a packed calendar, the band from last year were unable to support the parade again this year. We understood and were very grateful for the support they had given to the Hay Remembrance Parade. We were able to secure the services of the Gwent

and Powys Army Cadet force, who stepped in at the last minute. They gave a fantastic performance for the parade to and from the church performing a number of band favourites. I would also like to thank Hay on Wye Royal British Legion who managed the wreaths and lamppost poppies and conducted the 2 minute silence and wreath laying ceremony.

At the end of November, Hay Town Council supported Hay Chamber of Commerce and Hay Winter Festival with the turning on of the Hay lights. With the market place packed as always Hay councillors provided help with ensuring the event took place in the run up and marshals' for the event, ensuring that the event went off well.



The evening began with Santa arriving in style, accompanied by steam engines travelling down Castle Street to the Market Square, while Hay Fire Station brought along their fire engine to add to the excitement. Festive cheer was provided by the Hay Community Choir and children from Hay School, around the square, local community groups hosted a variety of stalls.

AS OF 1ST MAY 2026

Meet The Councillors :



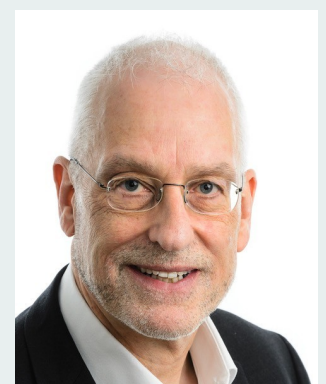
Cllr Fiona Howard
Chair person



Cllr Jeff Morgan
Acting Vice Chair
Chair of Estates



Cllr Gethin Williams
Chair of Finance



Cllr Ken Elleson
Chair of Premises

EVENTS CONTINUED



Cllr Alan Powell



Cllr Wendy Bielska



Cllr Alex Bielski



Cllr Burton Paul



Cllr Gareth Ratcliffe

There was a wide selection of food and drink available throughout the evening, creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere.

This year, Hay Festival invited Joanna Page, presenter and actress, to switch on the lights from the castle steps, marking the start of the festive season in Hay.

If it had not been for the incredible hard work of Councillors, Emily Daw, and Kelly Morris—along with the many others working tirelessly behind the scenes—it's quite possible there would not even have been a switching on of the lights last year, working with the community a new subcommittee has been formed.

In December Hay Town Council opened the Gypsy Castle play area to the public. The revamp of the play area saw the old wooden play equipment removed and replaced with a whole new set. The playground was given a wet pour rubber safety surface which is durable, slip-resistant, non-abrasive, porous and impact absorbing to give the best protection possible for children using the equipment. Hay Town Council supplied mince pies and hot chocolate on a cold, crisp winters day, with the play park opened by Gethin Williams, who was the driving force behind the project. The kids enjoyed the food and drinks and tested

thoroughly all the new play equipment.

Our final event of the year was the Easter egg hunt at Hay Castle. We were joined by other stall holders including, HADSCAL, Hay Navigators and Hay Summer Show, on a (luckily) lovely sunny spring day. We hid numerous eggs around the castle grounds throughout the day and lots of children (and parents) ran around finding them.



When they returned the eggs to the Hay Town Council stall they received a free chocolate egg. We had a great day and lots of kids got a free egg. There were some eggs left over and these were donated to the Hay Cartref Care home and the Hay Little Stars nursery. Hay Town Council would like to thank Hay Castle for generously allowing us to use the grounds for the annual Easter egg hunt.

Thank you to all who supported and attended any of the events in Hay on Wye over the past year and we hope to see you again in the next 12 months.

ESTATES

Hay Town Council, Estates Sub-Committee has responsibility for managing land owned, leased or licensed by the council and has to comply with statutory legislation e.g., Occupiers Liability Act 1957 & 1984 which covers duty of care to the public, Environment (Wales) Act 2016 covering biodiversity. This land comprises of the Old Railway and Bailey Walk footpaths, The Gliss river-side area, Black Lion Green, Gypsy Castle play area, Brecon Road car park, play area and recreational facilities, plus various grassed areas around the town.

Maintenance of pathways and woodland is done by the volunteers of Hay Community Woodland Group, who carry out regular inspections of trees and ensure the footpaths are clear and safe. Any work that is beyond the ability of Hay CWG will be carried out by contractors. Grass cutting is carried out by local contractors, the work going out to tender every two years, mowing is carried out approximately every two weeks from April until September.



Dog fouling continues to be a problem on the footpaths, it's not as bad as prior to the four red bins being installed in 2016 but, unfortunately, there are still some thoughtless and irresponsible dog owners. So, if you have a dog please be responsible and do the right thing, "bag it, bin it". We would also like to remind everyone that the four red dog poo bins, along the Old Railway



Footpath, are for bagged dog poo ONLY and NOT for general litter. It would also be appreciated that, when you put your bag of dog poo in a bin you ensure it is tied up.

Powys CC have a garden waste collection scheme so please use that or compost it yourself, do not throw it over your garden fence

We conduct a regular survey, to check for any safety issues throughout the HTC estate and identify problems that previously may have

gone unnoticed. A councillor is allocated an area of land and reports back to the clerk on any problems found. The frequency of inspection is based on the perceived risk e.g., Bailey Walk and Old Railway footpaths will be assessed weekly due to the high footfall and tree cover, whereas open areas such as

ESTATES CONTINUED

playing fields will be inspected monthly. We encourage anyone, whether resident or visitor, to report to the clerk if they encounter problems.

Apart from the issues mentioned above, 2025/26 has seen a number of projects completed under the direction of the Estates Team:-

April '25 and the new financial year started with the replacement of rotten fencing at The Gliss, above the fishing platform.



December '25 saw the opening of the new playground at Gypsy Castle, which was completed under the direction of Cllr Gethin Williams with support from the Claire Bunton - Town Clerk

A number of trees came down during named storms this winter and were cleared away by Hay Community Woodland Group.

January '26 saw the Old Railway Footpath swept, removing mud and debris built up over many years.

Early Spring '26 there was a major development for the community, HTC leased an area of land at the back of Warren Close to the local allotment society. All plots have now been taken and many are well on their way to their first harvest. Thanks to local legend, Simon 'Syd' Morris, who took the lead on this project.

Toward the end of March '26 dead, diseased or dangerous tree were removed under our, previously mentioned "duty of care to the public". The majority of these were in the Hay Conservation Area so planning permission had to be sort from BBNPA.

April '26 two barn owls fell off their perch on the Old Railway Footpath, both were saved and kindly repainted and relocated by local chainsaw artist Danny Thomas.

Completed our Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 report for 2025. This is done biannually and cover's biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems throughout Hay. It can be viewed on the council website.

We've received nothing but praise for the works described above and continue to make Hay a place we can all be proud of. Some of the projects have caused disruption, we thank you for your patience.

Cllr Jeff Morgan (Chair of Estates) together with Cllrs Fiona Howard, Alan Powell, Alex Bielski & Gethin Williams

PREMISES REPORT 2025/26

The Premises Sub-Committee has continued to oversee the management and maintenance of Town Council-owned buildings and facilities throughout the year. Below is a summary of key updates and ongoing matters relating to council premises.

Public Toilets

The main public toilet block at the **Craft Centre** and the toilets by the **Clock Tower** continue to be a critical facility for both residents and visitors. The Craft Centre in particular is often the first impression of the town for the many visitors to Hay.

The extremely heavy use of the public toilets, particularly during the summer months continues to put a strain on the maintenance of a quality service both in terms of time and



financial resources. The committee continues to focus providing an ongoing service fit for Hay. This means regular cleaning and prompt repairs when necessary while continually looking for opportunities of upgrading the infrastructure to make it easier, more economical and more sustainable to operate.

Hay Town Council

The full council meets monthly, usually on the first Monday of the month, unless this falls on a Bank Holiday. The council also has five sub committees who meet every 1-2 months depending on requirements. Where possible we allocate councillors to sub committees that make the best use of their knowledge and experience.

The Council employs one member of staff on a part time basis, our Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. You can contact our clerk on

townclerk
@haytowncouncil.gov.uk
or 01497 808019

And our clerk

Claire Bunton



HAY TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES.

The Council has a number of standing Committees and Working Parties, councillors are appointed to serve on some of these. The standing committees are:

FINANCE
ESTATES
PREMISES
HR
EVENTS
PLAY
LIGHT UP HAY

Light Up Hay

Planning is already underway for next year's event and the annual turning on of the town's Christmas lights. Building on the success of previous years, the project aims to bring the community together, support local businesses, and create a welcoming, festive atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

We are currently reviewing how best to deliver the event, including opportunities to enhance the celebrations and involve more of the community. Light Up Hay relies heavily on the time and enthusiasm of volunteers, and we are always looking for extra help—whether with planning, fundraising, installation, or on-the-day support.

If you would like to get involved or find out more, please get in touch. Your support can make a real difference in helping this much-loved event continue to grow.

THE PAVILION & THE PLAYING FIELDS

The Pavilion remains one of Hay's most actively used community spaces. It continues to be well-utilised by a variety of user groups and is booked every evening of the week. This level of use reflects the Pavilion's important role as a community hub.



There is still availability for daytime and weekend hire, and we encourage local organisations, businesses, and individuals to make use of this excellent facility for meetings, workshops, and events.

Looking Ahead

The Sub-Committee remains committed to maintaining and improving council facilities, ensuring they are accessible, safe, and welcoming for all. As we all face increased economic challenges this year we will continue to actively explore funding opportunities for building improvements and will be working closely with local stakeholders to address issues as they arise.

We would like to thank all users, staff, and volunteers who support the management and upkeep of these vital community spaces. In particular, we would thank the outgoing Chair of the subcommittee, Simon Morris for all his hard work in the post.

Cllr Ken Elleson (Chair of Premises) together with Cllrs Fiona Howard, Alex Bielski, Gareth Ratcliffe & Alan Powell.



Hay Town Council

Have your say

**Hay Town Council is
updating the place plan.
Have your say and help
shape the future of
our town.**

Please complete the consultation:
<https://forms.gle/gUAjeJH5yTevZLJC7>



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The council's finances remain strong this year. We have successfully maintained our overall financial position in line with last year, despite delivering major projects such as the development of the Warren Close allotments and the installation of a new play park in Gypsy Castle.

Together, these projects involved expenditure of more than £70,000, with over £45,000 secured through external funding sources, including grants and public donations. This means that residents of Hay have gained two valuable community assets for the future at a cost of less than £25,000 from council tax contributions.

Both projects also received significant direct financial support from the public, demonstrating strong community backing and helping to bring the schemes to fruition on a quicker timescale. As Hay serves as a hub for neighbouring communities, many of its services are used by people who do not contribute through local council tax. The crowdfunding model therefore provides an effective way for non-residents to support projects that benefit the wider area.

Looking ahead to next year, we intend to build on this approach by using crowdfunding as part of the funding strategy for the Light Up Hay initiative.

In conjunction with Wholy Cow we also added a milk bar to the Brecon Road recreational facilities, based on a commission model the milk bar gives the council significant extra income while only incurring the extra energy costs. A great way for the council to raise funds with very little risk while enhancing our existing facilities for residents

During the year, the council also made the difficult decision to increase public toilet fees. While not taken lightly, this step was necessary to ensure that the facilities can cover their operating costs and allow for reinvestment. This will help maintain high standards of cleanliness, hygiene, and functionality for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

The accounts are currently with the internal auditor and will be submitted to Audit Wales after the accounts have been approved by the Council in June 2026 and an audit opinion will be received later in the year. They must therefore be regarded as 'Not yet Audited.'

THE PRECEPT & FINANCE

Income and expenditure in the financial year which ended on 31 March 2026 is summarised as follows:

Balances brought forward from 2025/26	88335
Income from local taxation	95402
Receipts other than from local taxation	89233
Sub-Total	256835
Staff Costs	30247
Total of all other Payments	155707
Sub-Total	185633
BALANCE C/FWD IN TO 2026/27	87016

The value of fixed assets of the Council are £262,189.00.

November to January is the time of year for the finance subcommittee to prepare its precept. The precept is the request put into Powys for the funds required to cover the council's running costs. These costs include general council administration as well as specific items such as the public conveniences, pavilion, play parks, and river walk maintenance.

For the For the 2025-26 financial year, the annual council tax for a Band D property in Hay-on-Wye was, according to the official Council Tax Explanation & Charges by Area from Powys County Council, £2,247.89 for a relevant comparison our neighbouring town Talgarth is £2,247.13

For the 2026/2027 year the 10% increase from Hay Town Council and the Powys CC separate increase has brought the cost to £2,369.56, an increase of £2.34 a week.

We are constantly seeking to keep the costs to the residents as low as possible while maintaining service provision.

Council Assets

The Council manages key community assets including:

- Old Railway Footpath
- Bailey Walk (SSSI land)
- Black Lion Green
- The Meadows
- Gypsy Castle playground
- Brecon Road playground,
- Tennis Courts,
- Recreation Facilities and car park.
- Warren Close land
- The Gliss canoe access
- Wyeford Road land
- Public Toilets Oxford Road
- Public Toilets Broad Street

Town

Enhancements

Following a successful grant application to Powys CC, a Town Enhancements sub-committee has been established. In consultation with councillors and local organisations, a number of exciting improvements will be introduced over the coming year. These include an information trail throughout the town, new welcoming signage for visitors, and a specially designed bench dedicated to Richard Booth, which will be installed in time for the 50th anniversary celebrations of his proclamation as 'King of Hay'

Hay Town Council

The Council Offices
Recreation Facilities
Brecon Road
Hay on Wye
HR3 5DY

townclerk@haytowncouncil.gov.uk

01497 808019



LOOKING AHEAD & CONCLUSION

2026/27 will be the final year of the current council with elections due in May '27. As outlined above, the council has a number of projects it is aiming to complete this coming year, providing a strong foundation for the new council to build upon and continue delivering improvements for the community. As a council we do not work in a vacuum and welcome ideas from the community to improve the town. All councillors are friendly, engaging and welcome contact with residents, don't forget councillors live and/or work in the community as well. So, if you have any concerns or ideas please speak to a councillor or email the town clerk

ABOUT US

The Council Office can be found at the Recreation Facilities on Brecon Road. Office Open Hours are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9.30am - 2.30pm. Term Time only. If you would like to speak to the clerk outside of these hours please email to make an appointment.

