

Annual Report April 2023



Message from the Chairman Councillor Meryl Flashman



Paddock Wood Town Council aims to provide residents with a high standard of service, and I want to take this opportunity to update you on a number of key achievements and set out some challenges and opportunities for the year ahead.

This has been my busiest year as Chairman of Paddock Wood Town Council with many things going on which have required the involvement of the Town Council.

Town Council members, along with our consultant, continued to attend the hearings relevant to Paddock Wood about the draft local plan being held until the summer of 2022. Since then, we have continued to follow developments with the Inspector asking that some of the draft local plan policies be revisited. This may reduce the amount of housing being placed in Paddock Wood due to concerns about building on the flood plain. The downside is that there will be less money to spend on infrastructure projects.

Alongside this the Town Council has been taking forward its own Neighbourhood Plan and more detail on this can be found in the annual report. I should like to take the opportunity to thank all the members of the steering group who spent so much of their own time pulling together the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Without their support Paddock Wood Town Council would not have been able to produce this document. We look forward to the referendum which will take place in the Autumn.

Last summer Tunbridge Wells Borough Council announced that Paddock Wood would be losing its one hour free parking. Along with our Borough Cllrs, County Councillor and the Business Association the town council successfully fought a campaign which resulted in the retention of the one hour's free parking in our two car parks. Unfortunately, this is likely to only be a short term victory with TWBC likely to renew their attempts once the elections have taken place in May.

During the course of the last year the Boundary Commission has undertaken a review of the TWBC electoral and boundary arrangements to make sure they are fair. Their review included two rounds of public consultation and their final recommendations are due in May 2023. It is expected that Paddock Wood will in future only have 3 Borough Councillors and that part of Paddock Wood will be combined with Capel and Pembury to form a new ward. The Town Council along with all but one of the other rural parishes fought hard but it appears unsuccessfully to prevent this and other changes happening.

Recently, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council voted to declare the Wesley Centre surplus to requirements in their latest Asset Management Plan. This was despite strong local opposition which was extremely disappointing. At this time the future of the Wesley Centre is uncertain.

On a positive note, I was very excited to be handed the keys of the new Paddock Wood Community Centre at the beginning of March. The next challenge is to prepare the centre for

Directory

HEALTH

Doctors

Woodlands Health Centre 01892 833331

Dentists

Aycliffe Dental Practice 0844 3756868

Marden Dental Surgery 01622 831556

Optometrists

Patrick Duff 01892 838608

Elaine M Yorwarth 01892 833017

Chiropodists

Deborah Hanger 01892 837277

Osteopaths

Carol Michie 01892 836089

Tim Nelson 07711 531451

Hospitals

Tunbridge Wells Hospital 01892 823535

Maidstone Hospital 01622 729000

Hospice in the Weald 01892 820500

NHS non-emergency 111

Dental Emergency 111

EMERGENCIES

Gas 0800 111 999

Electricity 0800 404 090

Power cut 105

Southern Water sewage leaks 0330 3030368

Southern Water supply & leaks 0800 820999

Flood Emergency 0345 9881188

Environment Agency 0800 807 060

SERVICES

Paddock Wood Pharmacy 01892 833203

Paddock Wood Library 03000 413131

Little Hoppers Vets 01892 883403

Putlands Veterinary Surgery 01892 835456

RSPCA (Cruelty line) 0300 1234999

Folly Wildlife Rescue 01892 543213

Tonbridge Job Centre 0345 6043719

EDUCATION

Paddock Wood Primary Academy

01892 833654

Mascalls Academy 01892 835366

Adult Education 03000 412222

NURSERY & PRE-SCHOOL GROUPS

Barnies Day Nursery 01622 872788

Bumble Bees Day Nursery 01892 835502

Discoveries Montessori 07971 289867

Little Pickles Parent & Toddler Group

01892 837617

Scalliwags Pre-School 01892 835980

Trillium Montessori House 07848 855820

SUPPORT SERVICES

Police (Crime in progress) 999

Police (Non-urgent crime) 101

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

DAVVS 01892 570538

Victim Support 01622 688550

Social Services (KCC) 03000 414141

Trading Standards 03454 040506

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
01892 526121

Paddock Wood Borough Councillors:

Paddock Wood East

Cllr. Rodney Atkins 01892 833115

Cllr Suzanne Wakeman 07940 824286

Paddock Wood West

Cllr. Matthew Bailey 07968 067075

Cllr, Ray Moon 01892 835201

Elections take place in May 2023 to elect a BC in both East and West wards.

Kent County Council

24hr Helpline 03000 41 91 91

Member of Parliament

Greg Clark MP 01892 519854

RELIGION

P W Baptist Church 07934 063893

P W Christian Fellowship 01622 832267

Church of God Worldwide 01634 238780

St Andrews Anglican & Methodist Churches

01892 837617

St Justus Catholic Church 01892 833699

Salvation Army 01622 871055

Service & Welfare Organisations

Age UK Tunbridge Wells 01892 522591

Childline 0800 1111

Compaid 01892 834539

Headway 01892 619001

Hi Kent 01622 691151

Kent Ass. for the Blind 01622 691357

PW & District Lions Club 0345 8339564

PW Community Advice Centre

01892 838619

Community Storehouse 07582 142948

P W Royal Naval Ass. 01622 872281

Relate (Tunbridge Wells) 01892 529927

Royal British Legion 0808 8028080

St Johns Ambulance 01892 520873

Samaritans (Tunbridge Wells) 116 123

West Kent Mediation 01892 834539

Community Policing

Your Community Safety Unit is a group of local police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) with a sergeant and inspector dedicated to serving your community. The team is made up of officers based in your area, supported by additional officers from the wider force.

They work closely with local authorities, local organisations and community leaders to find useful, long-term solutions to local problems, while maintaining their wider focus on reducing crime across Kent.

They have recently introduced a messaging service called My Community Voice. The service helps residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams. The service sends updates about the local area directly from the police officers themselves.

Community Warden

The role is funded by KCC. A community Warden:

- can tackle low-level crime and antisocial behaviour (such as graffiti, littering, fly tipping and vandalism)
- can take names and addresses and control traffic
- is a reassuring uniformed presence
- is fully trained to the **Community Safety Accreditation Scheme**
- encourages communities to work together and make things better for everyone
- works closely with **Kent Police** and other professional authorities
- talks with local people, offering information and advice
- takes part in local community activities.

A Community Warden is **not** empowered to make arrests.

To contact the warden covering Paddock Wood please phone 07969 583924

opening. I must thank all those members of the working party who have and continue to support this work.

We continue to be fortunate with both our office staff and our estates staff. Our thanks go to them all.

I would also like to thank all the Town Councillors for their contributions over the past year. We are all unpaid volunteers who give up our own time in order to represent our community. Our powers are limited but we aim to work with and influence the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council whenever we can. In May 2023 elections will be held to elect a new town council. After 20 years of being a town councillor and five years as Chairman I have very sadly, due to my husband's ill health, made the decision not to seek re-election this year

If you require any further information regarding matters affecting Paddock Wood, please do get in touch with us via the Town Council office or the Town Council website. You can also follow the Council on Facebook and Twitter.

Community engagement statement

1. Introduction

1.1 Paddock Wood Town Council aims to provide services of high quality and to represent the interests of the area. Its conduct is governed by statute. This statement outlines the Council's intentions with regard to community engagement.

2. The Community

2.1 The Council is directly responsible to the people of its area, who collectively form 'the community'. Within the community there are a variety of different bodies with whom the council must also engage.

2.2 This group includes:

- Business and their representative bodies,
- Those who use the services provided by the Council, whether residents or not,
- Non-residents working in the Town Council area,
- Visitors, whether tourists or those using the town's facilities and shops,
- Voluntary groups including church and youth organisations,
- Schools and other educational establishments,
- Other statutory bodies providing services within the Town Council area.

3. Aims and objectives

3.1 The Council aims to ensure that residents and the groups above are appropriately involved in its decision making process.

3.2 Whenever possible and practicable the Council will encourage the involvement of community members in order to identify their needs and concerns.

4. Opportunities for community involvement

4.1 As a matter of good practice, the Council engages with the community in a variety of ways, including:

- Providing access to the Council's office on a daily basis (Monday to Friday),
- A web-site www.paddockwood-tc.gov.uk which includes a wide range of information about the Council and its work as well as about the Council Members themselves,
- A presence on social media,
- The publication of a regular report online,
- The publication of an Annual Report summarising activities in the year in question including accounts,
- Displaying throughout the area the agendas for all Council and Committee meetings, including a clear statement encouraging the public to attend,
- Advertising the annual timetable of all Council and committee meetings,
- Providing a specific period for public questions at the beginning of each Council meeting,
- Nominating Councillors to attend meetings of other organisations and groups,
- Organising the annual town meeting open to all residents,
- Publishing contact details for councillors in the Annual Report,
- Holding regular councillor surgeries,
- Surveying stakeholders,
- Use of social media,

5. Opportunities for formal representation to the Council

5.1 The Council encourages the attendance at meetings of individuals or organisations.

5.2 On a day to day basis, the Town Clerk is generally available to meet those who may wish to attend the office in order to discuss matters of interest or concern. The town council address is The Podmore Building, St Andrews Field, St Andrews Road, Paddock Wood TN12 6HT. Tel 01892 837373 or email clerk@paddockwoodtc.co.uk The office is normally open between 9 am and 4 pm, but visitors should call in advance to make sure the clerk available.

6. Involvement in partnerships

6.1 In addition to nominating representatives to attend meetings of voluntary groups and organisations, the Council often works in partnership with other organisations such as the Police, Borough, and County Councils, where formal representation is required.

7. Specific areas for community involvement

7.1 The Town Council leads in the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting and may invite presentations from guest speakers on a topic of current and particular interest to the community.

Kent County Council
www.kent.gov.uk 03000 41 4141



KCC is a larger authority than TWBC with a bigger budget. They manage the services that concern the whole of Kent that are better looked after on a county rather than a local level.

KCC's responsibilities include the following:

- education/schools
- highways maintenance including road, footpaths, verges and gritting. They are also responsible for pedestrian crossings, street lighting, and scaffolding and skip permits.
- major planning, such as changes to main highways or county wide housing
- fire and public safety
- social care for elderly residents
- libraries
- waste disposal (TWBC collects it but KCC disposes of it safely)
- trading standards

If you need further help with a query, please call their Customer Service team on **01892 526121** or visit the Amelia Scott, Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1AW



Tunbridge Wells Borough Council take care of the essential, day to day services for people who live in the borough of Tunbridge Wells. i.e. those that require local knowledge and are better run on a smaller scale by staff that know the area and have specialist expertise. Their services for residents include:

- **Bins & Recycling** - Bin collections, what goes into your bins, report a missing bin, North Farm waste recycling centre, bulky waste collection, civic amenity refuse collection, request a new bin, recycling sites, litter and dog fouling fines, garden bonfires, and disposal of other waste
- **Parking & Roads** - Car Parks, Parking and bus lane fines, litter and dog fouling fines, parking permits and season tickets, Blue Badge holders, getting around the borough, bus passes, safety car, road works, street care & cleaning, car club, electric vehicle charging points, vehicle seizures.
- **Planning** - Planning for householders, how to make a planning application, planning enforcement, planning policy, building control, house naming and numbers, conservation and heritage
- **Council Tax** - Paying your bill, reducing the bill, empty homes review, council tax support, banding and amounts to pay
- **Benefits** - Housing benefits, council tax support, Welfare reform, advice on other benefits, benefit fraud
- **Housing** - Affordable housing, private sector housing, homeless, housing standards & pest control, park homes and caravans, home safety, immigration visits
- **Community** - Education & learning, childcare & pre-school, access and disability, community centres, halls for hire, volunteering, West Kent Wheels to Work, community grants and funding, twin town, community safety, safety car, help for the Armed Forces, Love Where you Live, community rights
- **Sports, Leisure and Culture** - Assembly Hall, sports centres, TW Museum, public toilets (funded by Paddock Wood TC)
- **Animals, Noise & Pollution** - Noise nuisance, air quality, pests and infestations, light pollution, lost and found dogs, dead animals
- **Voting and elections** - Annual voter registration, local elections
- **Business** - Taxi licensing, premises licences, business rates, food hygiene, health and safety, Environmental health, enterprise and re-generation

7.2 The Town Council holds, when necessary, consultations on major infrastructure projects which have an impact on the community.

7.3 From time to time particular topics arise which are of sufficient community wide interest to justify the organisation of a public meeting. The Council may also undertake consultation on a specific issue with a particular group.

8. Role of Council Members and Officers

8.1 Councillors are the elected decision makers of the Council. Members of the public are welcome to contact Councillors to raise any issues.

8.2 The Council's officers are staff who are employed to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council, which means he/she has overall responsibility for the provision of Council services.

About Paddock Wood



Paddock Wood is a small town with an increasing population which lies between Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. Unlike many of the surrounding villages Paddock Wood is comparatively new and owes its existence to the railway, which arrived in 1842.

By 1851 a sizeable village had grown and by the turn of the century Paddock Wood was the hub for a network of branch lines throughout the Weald.

It was the railway that brought the thousands of hop-pickers to the area for their annual hop-picking holiday. Although some travelled on to other areas, Paddock Wood was becoming the centre for the hop growing industry so many remained in the area.

Ideally located for London and the South Coast, Paddock Wood has become a busy commuter town. There is a diverse range of commerce and light industry, and it is the centre for the distribution of fruit and vegetables to and from Europe. It also continues to be a centre for hop growing.

As a small rural town Paddock Wood has much to offer including an interesting range of local shops, good schools and excellent sports facilities.



Introduction to the Town Council

Paddock Wood Town Council is divided into two wards. The East Ward has seven members and the West Ward has six members. Although elected to a specific ward, members can speak on any issue and not just those related to their ward.

Full Council meets on the 3rd Monday of every month, at the Day Centre, Commercial Road. Meetings commence at 7.45, unless otherwise stated.

The Council has five Committees:

- Planning and Environment (P&E),
- Estates,
- Finance,
- Personnel,
- Governance

The P & E committee meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month. The Estates Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of every month, except January and August. The Finance Committee meets in June, November and January to review and set the budget for the following financial year, and the Personnel Committee meets as and when required. Governance Committee meets quarterly. Other meetings are arranged as and when required.

The Council employs a full time Clerk, a part time Deputy Clerk and a part time Financial Officer/Assistant Clerk. They are based at the Town Council offices in the Podmore Building, St Andrew's Recreation Ground. The Clerk normally works 8.30am – 4pm, with time off in lieu for evening meetings. The Deputy Clerk works 9am – 1pm, Monday to Friday, also with time off in lieu for evening meetings. Whist the Financial Officer/Assistant Clerk works fifteen hours a week spread over three days.

Also employed is a full time Estates Manager, and two full time ground staff who work 8am – 4pm and are based at the Memorial Recreation Ground.

Two casual members of staff are also employed, one to clean and look after the Day Centre and the other one to lock the gates at the Memorial Recreation Ground and Foal Hurst Wood each day.

The Clerk acts as the Proper Officer of the Council and the Deputy Clerk is the Cemetery Clerk and also administers the Planning Committee.

Who does what? A guide to local Government

Paddock Wood is represented by four borough councillors on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and one county councillor. All three tiers of government are independent of each other. The higher tiers do not have authority over the lower tiers.

In reality all three try to work together for the good of the local community. The borough and county councillors are invited to attend town council meetings where they have the opportunity to brief the town council on relevant issues, and where town councillors can ask questions of them.

The town council may seek the help and/or support of the borough or county councillors on issues which fall under their remit.

Paddock Wood Town Council

Paddock Wood Town Council owns and pays for the upkeep of the following sites:

- 5 playing fields plus pavilions
- 5 children's play areas & the skateboard park
- Foal Hurst Wood, Orchard Meadow & Green Lane Spinney
- The New Cemetery & Closed Church Yard
- The War Memorial & Town Centre Benches
- Town Council offices & St Andrews Hall at St Andrews Playing Fields
- Town Council workshops at the Memorial Field
- Paddock Wood Community Centre
- Open spaces at Cobbs Close, White's Corner & Mount Pleasant
- Five balancing ponds
- 3 allotment sites
- 5 bus shelters

The Town Council also funds the hanging baskets and planters in the Town Centre as well as the Christmas lights and Christmas trees.

The Town Council leases the Day Centre from the Borough Council and is responsible for the running costs and maintenance of the building. The Town Centre toilets are also funded by the Town Council.

The Town Council assists with and funds the cost of the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade. It has also purchased and maintains 4 defibrillators.

The Town Council also provide a grant to the Community Advice Centre annually of £12,000 for their work. There is an even greater need for their services in the current climate. The council also provides grants for other local groups as requested.

A contribution of £10,700 is also made towards the running costs of Putlands Sports and Leisure Centre.

Paddock Wood Community Centre



Picture courtesy of Simon Reay

On Friday 3rd March 2023 the Chairman of Paddock Wood Town Council, Meryl Flashman, formally received the keys to its brand new Community Centre from Malcolm Clarke Managing Director of Baxall Construction Ltd. (The boarding has been left up around the centre in order to allow the grass seed to germinate and grow.)

However, much remains to be done before the centre can become fully operational.

A company, Paddock Wood Community Centre Operations Ltd, has been set up to manage the building and prepare it for opening. It is anticipated that the centre will be ready for use by the Summer. Shortly, this company will be looking for voluntary directors to be part of its management structure. If you are interested in this please let the Company know via the

Town Council and further details will be provided.

At this current stage however, the priorities are to appoint a Community Centre manager, to lease the nursery, and equip the halls ready for use. You would not believe how much time it takes to complete all the necessary paperwork, get the necessary insurances and risk assessments in place as well as open a bank account and set up a website and booking system to mention but a few tasks.



The final step will be to set up a café for public use. The kitchen has already been equipped with a cooker, dishwasher, freezer, fridge, and other basic essentials suitable for professional and general use.



Who are the Town Councillors? (Until May 4th 2023)

	<u>Committees</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Henry Atkins	Estates Finance, Governance (Chairman)	
Rodney Atkins	Estates, Finance, Governance	
Trevor Bisdee	Planning & Environment (Vice Chair), Governance, Estates	
Derek Boyle	Estates (Chairman)	Community Centre Board, Royal British Legion
Meryl Flashman	Estates, Finance (Chairman), Chairman of Full Council	KALC, Business Association, Neighbourhood Plan steering group, Community Centre Board
Sarah Hamilton	Governance (Vice Chair), Personnel	
Don Kent	Planning & Environment, Governance	Neighbourhood Plan steering group
Andrew Mackie	Planning & Environment, Governance	CC Centre working Party, Neighbourhood Plan steering group
Raymond Moon	Estates, Finance, Personnel,	Allotments, Bereko, Community Centre Working Group, Foalhurst Wood, Hop Pickers Line
Mike Ridger	Planning & Environment,	CC Working Party, NP working Party
David Sargison	Estates, Planning & Env't	Medway Valley Line, Hop Pickers Line, CC Centre working Party
Robert Turk	Estates (Vice Chair) Finance, Personnel (Chairman)	
Carol Williams	Personnel (Vice Chair), Planning & Env't (Chairman), Policy, Vice Chairman of Full Council, Finance (Vice Chair)	Community Centre Board, Youth Council, Neighbourhood Plan steering group, CC Centre working Party

Estates Committee

Yet another busy year for the Estates Committee and the Estates team this year and I would like to pass my thanks on to my fellow councillors, Carl and the team for all of their collective hard work serving the town and its residents.

We started the year dealing with the clean-up and making good from an illegal incursion onto the Elm Tree playing fields and into the Cemetery. We try our best to continually review the security of our sites, but those who want to illegally trespass onto our land use industrial power tools to defeat the steel bollards that we install at great cost.

The Summer saw the start of the work on expanding the areas of the town that we are letting rewild to become managed grassland and eventually wild flower meadows. This is to encourage more pollinators and other wildlife into the town and to improve the areas where residents walk and exercise dogs respectfully.

Over the course of the year the committee has focused our efforts on expanding the tree planting programme that was first proposed to us by Cllr David Sargison. This effort was greatly accelerated by securing an annual budget for tree-planting and the efforts of the Estates Manager (Carl) in applying for and securing funding and trees to add to the programme of over £6,000. This has meant that we have been able to plant over 500 new trees from young whips to more established trees across many sites in the town. The varieties of trees that we have planted so far are Willow, Silver Birch, Black Poplar, Wild Cherry, Hawthorn, Hazel, and Rowan, so a good mix of native trees and some which are in decline nationally, so an important local measure to boost numbers of a number of species.

The tree-planting programme is now an established annual commitment by the Estates committee for the town and when taken in conjunction with other measures to promote wildlife in the town and at Foad Hurst Wood, we are working hard to improve the natural environment for all residents.

This will be my last report as chair of the Estates Committee, as after 8 years as a town councillor, a year as Vice-Chair and then 6 as Chair of Estates, I am standing down as a councillor. I am immensely proud of the work of the committee and the improvements that we have made to the town's green spaces and I look forward to seeing the trees that we have planted, growing to maturity.

Cllr Derek Boyle
Chair of the Estates Committee

My First Year as Estates Manager

I started working for Paddock Wood Town Council on the 1st of April 2022, it has been a very busy year. I have spent time learning about the sites under my care and the history of them. I have quickly discovered that in my role no two days are the same from mowing grass, weeding flower beds to looking after the estate's buildings, all requiring different skills and knowledge.

In my first few months of working for the town council, the work was summer gardening, so weeding borders and mowing grass before we then moved on to cut the hedges around the town. The year passed very quickly and soon we were into the winter work of shrub pruning and maintaining football pitches. A big effort over the winter has been to control our shrubs which had started to over grow onto our neighbours' properties, trying to be good neighbours we have brought them back onto our side of the boundary.

This year the council applied for free trees from various organisations such as the Woodland Trust and have been provided with nearly 500 whips (small tree) of native species including Black Poplar trees which have been planted around the town at various locations.

The town centre planters have been planted with winter bedding and you can currently see lots of colour from the bulbs which were planted in October.

The estates team are looking forward to the start of the mowing season for what will be my second year of working in Paddock Wood.

By Carl Smith
Estates Manager

**ARE YOU AGED BETWEEN 11-18?
FREE ON THE 2ND MONDAY EACH
MONTH (6-7PM)?
WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON ISSUES
AFFECTING PADDOCK WOOD?
THEN JOIN PADDOCK WOOD
YOUTH COUNCIL !**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE ON 01892 837373**

PWYC REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PADDOCK WOOD, COMMUNICATING WITH PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL. ABOUT ISSUES IMPORTANT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. PWYC WORKS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

WHO ARE WE?
WE ARE MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS AND INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS IN PADDOCK WOOD. THESE GROUPS TYPICALLY INCLUDE:
UNFORMED ORGANISATIONS
CHURCH GROUPS
SPORTS CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS
SCHOOLS
INDIVIDUALS

ANY YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN 11 AND 18 YEARS CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF PWYC. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING TO SEE HOW THE YOUTH COUNCIL OPERATES.

PWYC IS LED BY A MEMBER OF PWYC, NOMINATED AND ELECTED BY THE YOUTH COUNCIL. ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE ANNUALLY IN MAY.

THE LEADER WORKS WITH A TOWN COUNCILLOR TO AGREE THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND LEADS THE MEETING. A TOWN COUNCILLOR PROVIDES SUPPORT WITH MEETING NOTES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

OBJECTIVES

- TO IDENTIFY ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE TOWN AND WORK ON FINDING SOLUTIONS.
- TO YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE ON ISSUES SUCH AS LOCAL FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS.
- TO MAKE LINKS WITH KENT YOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL TO SHARE IDEAS AND MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE AWARE OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE COUNTY.
- ADVERTISE THE RANGE OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES WITH PADDOCK WOOD.

MEETINGS
PWYC MEETS ONCE A MONTH ON A MONDAY EVENING BETWEEN 6 AND 7 PM. WITH NO MEETING IN AUGUST DURING THE SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS. MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL MEETINGS DURING THE YEAR OR IDENTIFY A DEPUTY WHEN UNABLE TO ATTEND.



Youth Council

Cllr Williams attended KALC training on Communicating with young people and was approached afterwards to write a piece on PWYC for the NALC News. The following information was submitted:

In 2016 Paddock Wood Town Council established a Youth Council (PWTC) in response to a number of factors:

- * Town Council was developing a Neighbourhood Plan
 - * the Council was in the early stages of developing plans for a community centre
 - * there was a feeling among some young people that there was little for them in the town.
- We were keen to get ideas and feedback from young people.

We invited all young people's groups (Guides, Scouts, Church Groups, Schools, Army Cadets other groups & individuals) to nominate one or two young people (11 to 18 years) to represent them. The aim was to bring ideas to share at Youth Council & feed information back to their groups.

We started with 15 young people, with a core of 10 regular attendees. Membership has varied over the years with challenges at times & we are about to go out to groups again.

Since PWYC was established young people have been involved in many activities including:

- * contributions to the Neighbourhood Plan at varying stages of development with input from the Primary School, teenagers from Church & other youth groups. These contributions took a variety of forms including presentation of survey results, pictorial representations of what our town could look like and involvement in discussions
- * establishing interest in litter picks & environmental issues, an issue which is very important to our young people
- * contributing ideas for improvements in areas young people feel unsafe
- * designing their logo
- * leading organisation of the Platinum Jubilee Picnic and music event, with young people stewarding at the event.
- * establishment of a Young Person of the Year Award, for contributions to the community, an individual group or sport or for sheer bravery.

We are proud of our Young Peoples' contributions to our town. One of the benefits of having young people involved is their creativity and lack of focus on 'what can't be done', but a clear view of how things could be. We are just about to have a further challenge with membership, as half our members will finish school and head for university this year, but I look forward to ongoing work with innovative & motivated youngsters who are committed to improving their community.

Cllr Carol Williams, Paddock Wood Town Council

Planning and Environment Committee

In the last year the Planning Committee has had to focus on some major planning applications and providing feedback on the draft Local Plan. This has involved working with a planning consultant to ensure we represented the issues relevant to Paddock Wood. Members of the P & E Committee were able to attend hearings and contribute to the discussion via the Planning Consultant.

The major planning applications at Swatlands and to the East of Paddock Wood (Redrow & Persimmon) are part of the draft Local Plan but have been considered ahead of a decision on the plan. We have attended Design South East Meeting related to both these applications & submitted our objections to the Planning Officers at TWBC.

Cllr Carol Williams
Chair of the Planning Committee

Governance Committee

This Committee has continued to develop and update a wide range of policies regarding most aspects of the Council's work and responsibilities. The Committee has recently been renamed the Governance Committee and its responsibilities amended as the Town Council has employed a Human Resources company to help it discharge its duties even more effectively.

Personnel Committee

This has been a very quiet year for the Personnel Committee with many of its tasks now being completed by our HR company. The key actions have involved the recruitment of a manager for the Community Centre and the preparation of a job description for another member of the Estates Team in the future.

Finance

The Town Council continuously monitors our expenditure and examine very closely how and where we spend the money. Every project has to be considered and evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness, and benefit to the community at large. Our internal and external auditors have once again approved our accounts and governance arrangements.

The Town Council's Finance Committee meets four times a year to monitor council spending and to set the budget for the following year. For 2023/2024 the Town Council has approved a precept of **£757,956**. This equates to a **41.7%** increase on the previous year. The Precept is an annual amount set by the Town Council in order to pay for costs contained within a set budget.

The budget for this year is higher than previous years as it includes costs associated with opening and running the new Community Centre for 2023/24.

As most bills in 22/23 have increased over the rate of CPI, the Council has reviewed its expenditure to minimise outgoings wherever possible.

The additional budget for costs relating to the Community Centre for 2023/24 is **£207,031**. This is expected to reduce significantly in future years as the Community Centre becomes established and a nursery tenant is in place.

A Band D Council Tax bill is made up of	2022/23	2023/24	% increase
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	£137.83	£141.96	3.0%
Kent County Council	£1461.24	£1534.23	5.0%
Kent Police	£228.15	£243.15	6.6%
Kent Fire and Rescue	£82.35	£87.30	6.0%
Paddock Wood Town Council	£161.25	£228.50	41.7%
Total Annual Charge	£2070.82	£2235.14	7.9%

The CPI rate used for calculation of the budgets was **10.1%** (Sept 2022).

For each £ of your bill, this is the split of where your money goes.

	2022/23	2023/24
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	6.7p	6.4p
Kent County Council	70.6p	68.6p
Kent Police	11p	10.9p
Kent Fire and Rescue	4p	3.9p
Paddock Wood Town Council	7.8p	10.2p

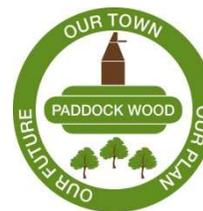
Although the % increase for PWTC looks large, it is a small proportion of the total Council Tax for a Paddock Wood resident.

Grants

Every year the town council allows a sum of money to be handed out as a grant to local organisations. Details of how to apply can be found on the town council's website.

In 2022/23 grants were made to the following organisations:

Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre	£12,000
St Andrew's Church clock restoration	£500
Samaritans	£250
Baby Umbrella	£500
The Scouts	£500
Paddock Wood Lights Up	£500
Paddock Wood and District Lions	£500



Neighbourhood Plan

The Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan is progressing well and In July 2022 Paddock Wood Town Council agreed that they were happy with the latest version of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Following this, responsibility for taking the next steps in the process was transferred to TWBC who publicised the plan as part of a Regulation 16 consultation which lasted for eight weeks between September and November 2022. At the same time an independent examiner was appointed whose job it was to consider if the plan met the basic conditions for a Neighbourhood Plan and complied with any legal requirements.

The Independent Examiner's final report was received earlier this year and recommended that the Plan proceed to referendum subject to certain modifications. It is important to note that the Examiner's Report was a 'Fact Check'. It is for all intents and purposes the final report and was not an opportunity to question or challenge the recommendations.

Our consultant from Troy Planning identified a couple of errors in the final report and has now made the required alterations to the NP document and the final referendum version of the NP should be found on the Town Council and TWBC websites.

The plan now has to jump through a lot of hoops at TWBC. The Borough Council elections cause yet another delay which means that the next steps towards the referendum cannot be taken until July when the document is presented to the Planning & Transportation Cabinet Advisory Board and then the Cabinet.

It is hoped that the referendum will take place in September 2023. There will be no further news until the date of the referendum is announced.

PLEASE REMEMBER THIS IS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TWBC DRAFT LOCAL PLAN.

ITS OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN. ONCE ADOPTED TWBC LEGALLY HAS TO USE IT WHEN MAKING PLANNING DECISIONS.

Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan can be found on the Town Council website <http://paddockwood-tc.gov.uk> and the TWBC website